

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Postfeminism has developed into an influential concept among women writers, providing varied experiences and scope for different perspectives in their writings. As feminism has been debated in the postmodern world, a changed vision matches the present world's needs. Feminism, to some extent, cannot solve the varied problems that modern women/society face. In her essay *Postfeminism*, Sarah Gamble quotes Sheila Tobias' words from *In Faces of Feminism* that "if feminism is going to survive the coming decades, it has to be different". Gamble continues that "the question is what form, exactly, will this difference take? I don't think it is difficult to see the attractiveness of popular Postfeminism, its rejection of theoretical language ensures that it remains widely accessible. Its repudiation of victim status seeks to empower its readers"(Gamble, *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism* 43). In her view, Postfeminist debate tends to take shape around issues of victimisation, autonomy, and responsibility. It is critical to define women as victims who cannot control their lives. Gamble outlines that postfeminism embraces a flexible ideology that can be adapted to suit individual needs and desires; it has a heterosexist orientation and seeks to develop an agenda that can find a place for men as lovers, husbands, and fathers as well as friends.

Postfeminism focuses on the real-life experience of women, women as human beings and as an individual in society. They try to view gender as unworthy and regard an individual's potential and intellectual skills. They believed that absolute equality could be gained by acknowledging gender differences. They try to view males/females as different in every aspect, but these differences do not make one

superior and one inferior but complementary to each other. They also consider the presence of other gender orientations like transgender, gay, lesbian, and queer people. Post Feminism tries to give voice to them through their writings. They give importance to the diversity of experiences in an individual's life.

Postfeminism is an ideology that encountered much criticism from every part of life for its subversion of the rigid notions of previous feminist movements. A primary interest of this new ideology is its concern regarding feminine nurture instincts. Such instincts and desires were formerly considered anti-feminist by second and third wave feminists because childbearing and rearing would force women to be domestic and minimise the chances of getting out of the house and finding a career, and would confine women to the four walls of a home. However, Postfeminism argues that a woman's mothering instinct cannot be undermined. This makes them unique and powerful, and females' qualities like love and care towards other beings are instinctual a distinctly feminine trait. Earlier feminist movements consider motherhood, sexual desire, and emotion impeding women's liberation. They even consider marriage as a social institution where patriarchy exercises power over the female individual.

Another focus area of postfeminism is femininity, which earlier feminists have ignored. They identify that to be equal to men, women must reject the traits that make them feminine. They are against the glamorous representation of women. They seek to be masculine to become more acceptable in a male-dominated world. They moved away from a woman's feminine identity by turning away from feminine attributes. Previous feminists want women to be more like males, with a strong sense of freedom and an uncaring attitude. They demanded utter rejection of family, marriage, and motherhood that obstruct women from being independent human beings.

Postfeminism emphasises successful female individuals. Angela McRobbie observes that every girl should have a life plan to make her life successful in a Postfeminist world. Although Postfeminism epitomises motherhood, at the same time, it promotes single-living individuals who have complete control over their lives. Postfeminism is disapproved for its contradictions; some Postfeminist writers hint at the search of single women for a perfect partner, their anxieties in single life, loneliness, and alienation. The writers present a glamorous and colourful life of single women enjoying their life at parties and pubs. A criticism against postfeminist discourse is it's focuses on white middle-class women with careers and earnings. Women of the third world, of colour, and the low class, are overlooked in most Postfeminist writings promoting popular culture.

Postfeminism advanced preferences and choices for women. They can choose to be homemakers and motherhood or exit from home to pursue their dream career; otherwise, they can balance both career and home. The harmony between work and family is a significant concern in some postfeminist works. Female sexuality has become a crucial area of interest in Postfeminist writings. They try to view women as powerful images of sexuality and express them in several ways by portraying strong and seductive women: the female body is used as a sex symbol to exercise power, a conception against traditional feminists. Postfeminism shows that individuals have the right to define their identity, and society must respect it. Their choices and decisions regarding their desires and sexuality are entirely theirs, and society does not play any role.

Postfeminism redefines the role of men in the private sphere. The position of men in families has become an area of consideration. Both men and women show equal concern towards family and profession. Men appear to share the burden of

domestic activities; fathers who parent at home full-time show the emergence of this new trend. It stresses the necessity of a father in children's emotional, intellectual, and social growth. Postfeminism values family and companionship between men and women in building up a family. Motherhood and fatherhood are perceived with equal importance. In Postfeminist writings, one thing became unique, the change from 'woman focussed' to 'human focussed'. Postfeminist discourses reinforce the notions of love, marriage, family, and femininity that are taken over in earlier feminist movements.

Critics like Angela McRobbie, Susan Faludi, Ann Brooks, Rosalind Gill and Judith Butler oppose and support this new trend in popular culture and media. They are conscious of the change in culture and media over recent years. These transitions are much more noticeable in literature as well as in society. Many writers believe that Postfeminism discredited the achievements of feminist movements. Susan Faludi considers it a backlash to feminist gains that the previous generation of feminists achieved. McRobbie views it positively as a progressive movement which can attain greater equality for women. Multiplicities of meanings are attributed to this current trend, which confuses literature. Postfeminism deals with how young woman constructs their identity in late modern society. Shelley Budgeon tries to view it with some merit and appraise its focus on individualism. Postfeminism broadens and opens feminist concepts within popular culture. Postfeminism defends itself by saying that feminism is irrelevant among the younger generation of women.

In the progress of feminism emergence of the 'New Woman' is a remarkable feature. New Woman gained much popularity among male and female authors feminist movements guaranteed education, equal working opportunities, and other rights to women, which enabled women to rise to the forefront of society. When

women became the earner, they became economically autonomous individuals. This was a significant factor in the development of 'New Woman'. New Woman is an educated, careerist woman in Europe who is rebellious towards social systems like marriage, family, religion, and other conventions. They prefer to remain single and have a strong urge for liberation. Even though they lead a family life, they work for self-development and emancipation. This concept strongly influenced literature and is often criticised for its licentiousness. Writers portray women with an intense sense of freedom, desire, and sexuality.

By analysing the evolution of Indian English Fiction, it is visible that women's status and liberation are the favourite subjects of writers of all ages. The works of early writers provide us with women who were traditional and submissive. They believed that home was women's world and family was their destiny. Education helped women to think freely and act according to their wishes. The transformation of Indian women appears as a laborious task because of the stronghold of age-old customs and traditions upon the lives of individuals. For a long time, educated and careerist women occupied the domestic sphere and were expected to act within the strict frame of traditions. Women's journey outside the home is a phenomenon of modernism. The process gains acceleration and popularity with the emergence of women writers. Women writers with different perspectives and a deep understanding of the feminine psyche pictured the emotional and psychological depth of the female inner self. They delve deep into women's minds and probe the actual needs an individual woman yearns for.

Women writers are also conscious of the feminist movements in the west. The women writers of Indian English Fiction are critical of patriarchal Indian society and its ways. With the rise of Women's Writing, the concept of female identity attained

much importance. Writers like Nayantara Saghil, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandeya, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Manju Kapur, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and many other women writers exhibited exceptional courage to develop a new type of women, who are free-thinking individuals and assert their individuality within the domestic space and outside it. They are individuals who prefer to compromise with tradition, even though some of their characters show rebelliousness a neurotic.

Modern women writers develop a new type of protagonist who need more space for their self-development. They challenge the customs, conventions, and beliefs that hold women from attaining true liberation. They develop their female protagonists as their mouthpieces to share their views regarding female identity. The writers want women to shatter the chains that bind them. Depiction of present-day women by the writers shows efforts towards self-development by asserting their individuality. They have their perspectives on what they need, their dreams, aspirations, personal and emotional life, and sexuality. In a convention-based family system, they feel caged and want to escape from that. In the journey towards self-fulfilment, they show the least importance to marriage, familial bonds, and social codes. They value individual freedom and will and take revolutionary steps in their life.

The writers are anxious to develop a unique type of female and hint at the transition in social and domestic settings favourable for the self-development of a female individual. They present a new domestic setting where women share equal status as men. Their works promote women who are educated, balance their homes, and work perfectly. The writers also exhibit the agonies' aspirations and efforts female characters endure during their journey towards self-realisation. Writers projected the struggles and tensions they pass through when repudiating social codes and customs.

A female individual's inner consciousness is often the focus in the works of modern writers. The writers candidly discuss themes like feminine sensuality, extra-marital affairs, and homosexual relations in their works. The writers are critical of marriage and the patriarchal social setting prevalent in Indian society. Its mission is to make female individuals find their own space to express themselves strongly. They portray powerful women characters who dare to break away from these conventions and give secondary importance to family, marriage, and familial bonds than their individual development and dignity. Writers like Jaishree Misra and Anita Nair represent postmodern women writers who made noticeable Indian English fiction changes. Their writings are about the challenges that a modern woman faces in her personal and social life as an individual. They try to redefine the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. Their female characters are distinguished for their brave decisions that could change their lives and open new spaces to explore.

In *Ancient Promises*, the central character Janaki is an ideal example of the new woman. Through her life story, Jaishree Misra stresses the importance of motherhood and fatherhood equally; more than that, the writer shows that becoming a mother to a child with special needs made her life fruitful without perishing in despair. The writer also stresses the futility of arranged marriages. Janaki is forced to get married when her parents discover her love affair. This shows that a woman cannot have the freedom to decide how her life must be. She feels tired of fighting against her parents and believes that her parents will not choose a life that is awful to her. An insensitive husband and dominating mother-in-law make her married life miserable. Her only hope in her sorrowful life is to become a mother, and her hopes become vain when she gives birth to a child with special needs. Janaki's sole aim in life is to make her daughter feel better. For that, she gains a degree in special

education from London. Meanwhile, resuming her affair with her lover adds optimism to her life. For her, it is a relief from her loveless and comfortless married life.

To her, motherhood becomes a means to accomplish her inner strength and power. It benefitted her to realise her identity as a powerful woman who could recapture her life as she desired. As a mother, Janaki's efforts are significant. Her determination to move abroad with Riya, her daughter, is ultimately for her daughter's well-being. To her, society around her seems unfit for a girl like Riya. Her real journey to self-realisation starts as she becomes a mother. Her mind became vacuum when she realised her child was mentally disabled. However, the belief that only she could take care of her made her strong. This provided her with the courage to move forward in life by ignoring people who ridiculed and condemned her. The writer not only celebrates motherhood but poses severe attacks on Kerala/Indian community for their patriarchal marriage system. Through the marriage of Janaki, the writer shows how the existing social system is blind to a girl's wishes while making a significant decision in her life. The writer expresses that nobody, including her parents, seeks a girl's opinion about her preferences in a marriage relationship.

The troubles Janaki faces in her husband's household are inexplicable. The writer hints at what a woman expects from marriage through the life of Janaki. Her husband is a person who escapes from all the responsibilities of a husband and father. Even the birth of a child with special needs does not move him. Her old lover's support as a reliable partner is an absolute comfort for her. Nobody can blame her for choosing to spend the rest of her life with him. The writer also presents a contrast between the perspectives of the old-generation and new-generation women regarding marriage, widowhood, and divorce. Janaki's mother and her grandmother belong to the old traditional type of women characters. The reaction of her grandmother and

mother when she discloses her decision to get a divorce from her husband shows the difference. Both her mother and grandmother believe that by the death of their husbands, their happiness and life had ended. By depicting Janaki's ill-treatment in her husband's house, the writer points out the injustices a woman suffers when she has an identity to establish and is rebellious to the injustices she faces.

The plight of women in *Afterwards* is the same as Janaki. Maya, too, is caught up in an unhappy married life. She somehow wants to escape from that terrible life. Her situation becomes more pathetic as her parents are not ready to accept the real problems she faces. Like every other person, they believe that she lives a happy life with all the luxuries. All the luxuries she has seem meaningless when handling her suspicious husband. There are some misconceptions in society that a luxurious house, a wealthy family, and a well-settled husband are the only things that a woman requires in her life to be happy. Maya says nobody believes that she has sorrows and leads a miserable life. Everybody wants to see the colourful side of her life, and her parents, too, are unmindful of the real problems.

When nobody was there to comfort Maya, she sought the help of a foreigner named Rahul Tiwari, who came to live in her neighbourhood. When she realised that Rahul was attracted to her, she saw it as an opportunity to escape her married life. She creates situations to get closer to him and shares her real problems with him. When her husband discovers her relationship, she runs off with Rahul. After her escape, she suffered harsh treatment from her family. They perform her death rites because she spoiled the name of an age-old traditional family by eloping with a stranger. Nobody enquires why she choose such a way of life. If her parents had supported her, she would have never taken such a rebellious step. She prefers to be free from a suspicious man to have a comfortable life. Her choice may not be agreeable to a

society that prescribes specific behavioural patterns to women. She dares to break the conventions that threaten her dignity and happiness as a free individual.

Afterwards, presents a different type of male characterisation through Rahul Tiwari. He is represented with sensibilities more akin to a female. His sense of sympathy and benevolence towards Maya, his supporting attitude, and kindness towards Anjali Maya's daughter remind him of a woman. Through the character Rahul, Jaishree Misra pictures how a father ought to be. Even though he is not the biological father of Anjali, he displays much care and deep-rooted affection towards her more than her biological father, Govind. After Maya's death, the social service department suggested he must return her to Govind, and he was shattered. The way he took the whole responsibilities of Anjali after Maya's death is remarkable. When Anjali left for Kerala, he even thought of committing suicide. Without Maya and Anjali, he felt deserted and insignificant in living. When he meets Maya's mother to perform her death rites, she assures him that he will not lose the love of Anjali, which provides him hope to live further.

Through the characters Arjun and Rahul, the writer underlines a change in male sensibility. A different type of menfolk, who are more domesticated, had a better perception of women, who partakes in equal responsibilities in domestic tasks, who support women for their self-development and provide space for it is focussed. Afterwards, the writer vehemently attacks arranged marriages. Maya says that she agrees with her parent's decision to get married because she has no reason to disagree with them. After her marriage, she lost all her freedom; her studies were dropped, and she was compelled to remain at home. Through all these years, she suffered under a dominating and doubtful husband. She often wants to run away from there with her daughter. She employed every method to get attached to Rahul. Maya is half-

successful in rewriting her destiny, but fate plays cruelly with her life. Her desire to get rid of marriage and start a satisfying way of life develops into the driving force toward her liberation. As Rahul was a better parent and acceptable to Anjali, her escape became easy. Her life may be miserable if Rahul cannot adjust to her daughter. The writer scrutinises the necessity of father figures who are equally significant as mothers for the overall development of a child.

In *Secrets and Lies*, the writer investigates the lives of four women who are friends from their school days. The writer details a change in a woman's life; a woman's friendship is generally considered to last till her marriage. After marriage, there is less chance to continue their relationships because women get typically less opportunity to maintain their friendship. The social condition has changed a lot; these four women are fortunate enough to continue their relationship in their thirties. The novel is about four women, Anita, Bubbles, Samira, and Zeba, lucky to share their friendships as grown-ups. Anita, Bubbles, and Samira live in London, and they are firmly connected, while Zeba, a celebrity film star, stays in India. The life of Bubbles and Samira illustrates the trouble of jobless wives who have no voice in their families. Bubbles is the wife of a millionaire businessman, and Samira is the wife of a corporate lawyer.

On the other hand, Anita, a single woman, constantly searches for an ideal partner after a relationship break. For Bubbles and Samira, the meeting of friends became a means to unburden their miseries and uncertainties in family life. They honestly admit that the happiest part of their life is the moments they spend with their friends. Bubbles is disturbed about her limited hold and involvement in her husband's business and personal life. She does not know his likes or dislikes and his issues in business. Whenever she asked him something, he used to say many complicated

things which she could not understand. Later she realised that he did this knowingly and was not interested in sharing his problems with her. She consoles herself that she enjoys a luxurious life and has whatever is demanded; raising her voice shows ingratitude towards her husband and family. She remained a dutiful mother, wife, and daughter-in-law. She displayed slight rebelliousness by doing tasks that her husband had forbidden her from doing. She envied women with careers moving busily through the streets and independent women. She considered Anita luckier than her because she had complete control over her life. Those who view it from the outside feel that Bubbles enjoys a luxurious life and make fun of her if she reveals that she has sorrows. Her plan to start a business firm is unacceptable, and she considered herself good for nothing except being a homemaker.

Considering herself as an appendage to Binkie's mother, who holds complete control of her life more than her husband, Bubbles feels miserable. Her early marriage and less education made her less confident in life and in her abilities. When her children had grown up enough to look after themselves, she felt empty and dull in life. Later, Bubbles get interested in her physical trainer Giovanni. When the four friends met in India, Zeba Khan suggested her plan to start a charity organisation for street children and abused kids. She wants Bubbles and Samira to take control of her organisation. This opens a new belief that she got the opportunity to express her personality and skills. When she returned to London as a different woman with self-respect, she discovered her husband's homosexual relationship with his friend John. She realised why he was not interested in her. She is not shocked but feels dejected that it is late for her to know the thing that other members of the family already know. She returned from India with some plans in her mind. She neither prefers to be a shadow anymore and without any confusion, she can decide on her relationship with

Gio. As the novel ends, there is a redeemed woman in Bubbles when she becomes capable of standing on her feet. She is neither meek nor an obedient daughter-in-law. This indicates that economic independence can be a way to women's emancipation.

Samira's situation is not different from Bubbles. She is desperate about her husband's loss of interest in her after becoming a mother. After being a mother, the physical changes that she had undergone made him distant from her. When her husband made fun of her appearance, she took it lightly and did not pay attention. When he gave her an exercise kit for her birthday, she was humiliated and realised that his jokes were not for fun. For these years, she lived according to his wish. She belongs to the traditional mode of wife, who is like a shadow of her husband. For her, everything is surrounded by her husband's wish. She blindly follows his prejudiced view and does not have an opinion of herself. He never considers her an equal partner and provides less space for her thoughts, desires and aspirations.

Akbar's aloofness is the fundamental cause of Samira's disinterest in life. She gradually realised that she has become a person who had the least importance in her husband's life. When she disclosed her plan to visit India, he suddenly opened up his plan for a tour with his colleagues, and he preferred their daughter must accompany him. She was shocked by his words, and this incident was an awakening to realise her value and role in the life of her husband and family. At the meeting of four friends in India, she disclosed her fears about ending her marriage. She cannot live without a job or support and is forced to cling to her married life. When Zeba Khan suggests that Samira and Bubbles must be in charge of her charity group, she gets the courage to question her husband for the injustice that she is suffering.

Like Bubbles, Samira, too, has some plans in her mind as they return from Delhi. Samira has transformed into a different person who dares to question her husband. She is no longer afraid of his shouts and is bold enough to face what comes after this. She is even ready to end her marriage and has a clear picture of what to do when she gets out of her family life. Both Bubbles and Samira make themselves liberated as the novel ends. Anita, who is searching for a perfect man, accomplishes her mission. She establishes a relationship with Hugh, her colleague. Anita, bored of her single life, found Hugh as understandable and with whom she could share everything. On the other hand, Zeba is a woman who uses her beauty and charm for her accomplishments. She seduces famous directors and becomes the queen of Bollywood. She leads a lonely life because her orthodox parents left her when they heard gossip about her. To make her life more meaningful, she decided to start a charity organisation for the welfare of street kids and abused kids. Through these activities, she tries to create some meaning in her life.

The women characters of Jaishree Misra display an extraordinary sense of liberating themselves from the chains that bind them from attaining freedom of self. Their inner self is in a constant struggle toward emancipation. They assert their individuality firmly even though they are caught up in adverse circumstances. They are true representatives of the modern new woman of Indian middle-class society. They are educated and progressive individuals and possess a sharp vision regarding their existence and destiny. They are skilled enough to rewrite their lives as they desire by giving prime importance to their dreams and successfully achieving them. Even though they had to sacrifice many things, these sacrifices ultimately enabled them to accomplish a life that pleases them by being true to their selves.

A close review of Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe'* shows that it is a cross-section of Indian society. The novel presents a space where women can share their anxieties, sorrows, and happiness without the prejudices of patriarchy. Ladies' coupe is a compartment exclusively for females and the women characters feel free to express themselves without any inhibitions that women face outside. Though the women characters are from different classes, they all share some common problems, precisely their struggle for identity, subjugation in a male-dominated society, society's double standard, and discrimination according to gender. *Ladies Coupe'* is simply a journey of Akhila towards self-discovery.

Meanwhile, the writer travels through the lives of other female characters that share the same coupe. Akhila is constantly confused while thinking of her future. She is tense that there is nobody to take care of her. She aspires to get a peaceful life herself. She constantly struggles to detach herself from the bondage with her sister, Padma. She needs to answer the question that troubles her mind " Can a woman live by herself?" and "Does she need a man to complete her life". To her, the journey is to find an answer to these questions. The other five women in the coupe are Janaki, Prabha Devi, Sheela, Margaret Shanti, and Marikolanthu. Each of these women shares their life story so that Akhila may get an answer to her questions.

In Janaki's story, there are glimpses of a powerless woman who always occupies a subordinate place to her husband. She is the eldest woman in the coupe and an over-pampered wife and mother. She openly admits that she has internalised from childhood that a girl's destination is marriage and home is her kingdom. She is under the care of her father and brothers; after marriage, her husband takes the role, and after the death of her husband, her son is there. She states that she does not get the opportunity to be strong and ends up as a fragile woman. Hence, she looks down upon

strong and independent women who manage themselves. At a certain point in her life, she becomes tired of getting too much dependent on her husband and son. The thought of depending on her son after the death of her husband disturbs her very much. She dreams of having her own life with her own rules and wants to avoid being submissive.

Prabha Devi's life is similar to Janaki's, and she is brought up blindly accepting the traditional roles that a woman should participate in society. She is groomed perfectly to become an ideal wife and mother by making her skilled in sewing, cleaning, pickling, and cooking. Even her education is a means to obtain a suitable alliance with a wealthy family. She has been given a convent education because that prepares her to be fashionable and speak English. Her father considers her a burden at her birth, even though they have four sons. This shows popular belief among rich and poor in Indian society that a girl child is a liability. After her marriage, her life changed totally. She gets an opportunity to visit New York with her husband. When they returned, she became a transformed individual. She became more fashionable and modern with her changed outlook. Later, she is mistaken for her liberal behaviour, which shocks her. Later she remained content in accepting her traditional role of a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law.

When Prabha Devi realised that her way of life has turned dull and monotonous, she transformed herself into the Prabha Devi, who was full of spirit and passion for life some years back. She began her metamorphosis by learning to swim within eight days. She is the kind of woman who could free and liberate herself whenever she wished. She is less anxious about others and firmly believes in the hidden power of her self. She understands her inner strength and tries to assert her individuality. She states that she will not raise her daughter as her mother raised her.

She has a different view in contrast to her mother on woman's individuality and life. Her life is an inspiration to all women who assume that their lives are over when they age.

Margaret Shanti is an exceptional character among the co-passengers. She is a chemistry teacher and has a remarkable capacity to apprehend and classify people according to chemicals. She could be considered the real powerful new woman. She regards herself to be like water, the universal solvent. As water is everywhere, everybody thinks it has no value. It is powerful enough to dissolve anything. Her husband Ebenezer Paulraj is a tyrant, self-absorbed and egoist man. He is selfish and takes great pride in his physical appearance. He is the principal of the school she works. He rules the school like a dictator and has less concern for others' feelings, including students. When she was pregnant, he forced her for an abortion. Later she realised that he wanted her to remain beautiful and disliked her being a mother. This selfish act drained her real happiness and love, and is vindictive toward him.

Margaret matches her husband to the oil of Vitriol, Sulphuric acid king of chemicals. It is the most vigorous and can burn anything. She says if water is added to it, it begins to splutter first. When the process is continued, it will lose all its properties, that is, the power of water. Likewise, she slowly takes revenge upon him by shattering his self-pride about physical fitness and beauty. She makes him obese by giving him too much food and making him suitable for nothing. Later she becomes a mother and leads a happy life. Margaret Shanti has the skill and courage to recapture her lost happiness and life. She devised her plans and rules to deal with her problems and find the most desirable solution by making her life more comfortable. She becomes a symbol of a liberated and self-fulfilled woman. She showed profound faith in herself to retain her life as pleasing to her.

The next noteworthy character is Marikolanthu, who belongs to the working class. She is a rape victim but does not appear in a deplorable state. Even though she is from the working class, she shows better practicability in life than other women passengers. In her words, the other women are only weeping over silly things compared to the hardships she faced. She is a genuine motivation to other women to think about how trivial are their problems. Since her childhood, she has been an ambitious individual. She became the right hand of Sujata Akka of the Chettiar Family and was sent to Vellore as a domestic maid to foreign lady doctors, Missy K and Missy V. She enjoyed her life there and disliked her life in the village. There she witnessed the homosexual relationship of the two foreign women. She does not feel contempt toward them. When she was raped, she considered it something that could be washed out when she bathes. When she got pregnant, things got worsened. She rejected the idea of getting married to the man who raped her. She takes a strong stand that she cannot accept a man who spoiled her life. She preferred to remain single. To her, marriage is not an essential thing in a woman's life. She is rebellious towards marriage because of its male dominance and less concern for females as an individual.

Without any guilt, Marikolanthu decides to abort the child and is unsuccessful. She regards that child as a curse upon her life. She did not give much care to the baby. She left the baby with her mother and only provided financial assistance to him. Her homosexual relationship with Sujata Akka and incestuous relationship with Sujata Akka's husband shows her complex mindset. She indulges in relation with Sujata Akka's husband because Sujata Akka is tired of her relationship with her husband. She wants to detain him from not going to other women. She misunderstands everything that she does for the sake of Sujata Akka, and she becomes desolate. She was not ready to surrender to fate. She reaches the textile mill with her son Muthu,

pawns him there, and goes to Vellore after getting a job, she takes back her son. In her life, she is the master; she knows how to make her life fruitful. She can be considered a perfect liberated woman with a strong will to seize her life.

Karpagam is another significant character and is Akhila's childhood friend. She is a widow and hates the appearance that society prefers for a woman who lost her husband. She does what is suitable for her to lead a comfortable life. She does not care about others' opinions and words regarding how she must live. She prefers her happiness and sets her own rules. She becomes the guiding force for Akhila to have a life of her own. The whole story revolves around Akhila's quest for self. She is regarded as the central character of the novel. At the age of nineteen, she shouldered the responsibility of the family. When her siblings were grown up and could stand at their own feet, she felt complete relief from the duties. When her brother comes up with plans for his marriage, she expects someone, including her mother insists on her marriage. Everybody is blind to her desires; she has turned into a person with no cravings, dreams, or aspirations in their mind. She was humiliated by this, that not even her mother understood her needs. Even after the marriage of her younger sister, nobody thought of life for Akhila. She repressed her emotions and desires. She always yearns for a happy life on her own.

The incident on the bus revealed her inner desire for the touch of a man. She secretly enjoyed the act even though the man was misbehaving with her. She prefers to travel by bus because the touch gives her some pleasure, which is very comfortable. She continued it for nearly two weeks until she was conscious that somebody was watching her. Her relationship with Hari, a man much younger than her, is unsuccessful. She quit that relationship because she felt that they were not a match together and the thought of age difference constantly haunted her. More than that, she

is embarrassed by other people's questioning glances when they are together. She leads a lonely life after the death of her mother. Her meeting with Karpagam is a turning point in her life. Karpagam gave her the courage to start a new life by detaching herself from her sister, Padma. She makes her brave and bold enough to discard others' words concerning her life. The journey is the consequence of her fierce determination to value her happiness and rules in life. The trip is to restore her lost vigour and spirit in life. The changed physical appearance shows her attitude. She ceased wearing a dull, coloured sari; instead, she chose to wear a colourful one. Her preference to travel alone for long distances is a revolutionary act that her sister and brothers disliked. From the life stories of other women passengers, she deduces answers to the questions that haunt her constantly.

At Kanyakumari, she becomes redeemed and self-fulfilled. She gains fresh perspectives regarding how her future life must be. At Kanyakumari, a transformed woman is seen who lets loose her desires and passions. She experimented with her life and is full of spirit and ecstasy. She seduces a man younger than her; when she returns, she tries to phone Hari, and the novel ends as Hari calls back. She has become a woman who has complete control over her life. She finds out that only she can make her self-fulfilled, and a man is not essential for it. She is entirely responsible for shaping her life, and her choices in her life must be pleasing to her self as a human being.

In the novel *Mistress*, there is a different picture of the female character. The protagonist, Radha, is a married woman who remains in an unhappy marriage because she has no choice. She is full of contempt towards her husband Shyam and regards him with low ideals compared to her. She never misses an opportunity to disdain him with her harsh comments. She believes him as a person who values money and looks

at everything with a business mind. They both have different opinions and attitudes concerning everything. She openly displays her disagreement with whatever he does. They are like two parallel lines that never met at any point. As Shyam is her cousin, she doubts that her marriage to him is a business deal with her father. She suspects that her father had offered him a considerable dowry for marrying her, as he knows her past. For Shyam, Radha is a long-cherished dream, and her father has taken advantage of it, which became a significant compatibility issue between them.

When a foreigner named Christopher arrives there to have an interview with Koman, her uncle and a Kathakali artist, Radha is drawn to him. To Radha, their sensibilities are similar and easily transferable. They have similar views regarding various subjects, and she develops a deep relationship with him. To her, indulging in a relationship with a stranger becomes a rebellious move to Shyam's over-possessing and dominating attitude. She and Christopher share similar anguishes and anxieties regarding their parentage in childhood. This similarity strengthens their relationship, and later, Christopher reveals himself as the son of Koman. Meanwhile, Radha becomes pregnant and grieves, indulging in an incestuous relationship with her cousin. When Radha discloses her pregnancy, she realises from Shyam that he is sterile. At that, she feels sorry for her actions and for betraying him. As the novel ends, she chooses to live a single life separated from Shyam as a penalty for her deeds. She prefers to be a single mother, and neither deserves Shyam anymore.

Another notable individual is Saadiya, a Muslim girl in Arabipattinam. She is a person with a strong urge toward freedom. She is always curious to know what lies beyond the walls. She lives in a community where women are denied freedom and dominated by moral, religious, and social codes. She drives herself free beyond the borders by developing an affair with Sethu and elopes with him. She disobeys her

father, one of their community's religious leaders. Her life with Sethu becomes troubled by the birth of their son. She wants her son to be a true Muslim, which Sethu opposes. To her, this is a severe blow to her selfhood and beliefs. Later she commits suicide because Sethu challenged herself that she could leave him without her son. Her self is entrenched in her religion, and she sacrifices her life to uphold her selfhood.

By analysing the female characters of Jaishree Misra and Anita Nair, it can be estimated that they belong to the new generation of females. They possess modern values and perspectives regarding a woman's life in general and about women's self in relation to society and family. The writers prioritise the choices that a woman makes in life and attacks distorted views of society regarding their choices. Their characters are unique in the suffering and conflict they endure while proclaiming their individuality and becoming emancipated and empowered individuals. Even though they seem powerless and submissive, they ultimately emerge as successful individuals after the trials in their lives. It delineates a prominent trait among Postfeminist writers focusing on successful female characters. Even though they appear pathetic, all-female characters eventually gain power over their lives. This makes the writings of Postfeminist writers stand apart. The protagonists never rely on their horrible fate but try to rework it to make them desirable. Female characters confirm to Rosalind Gill's notion as central to postfeminist discourse as "being oneself and pleasing oneself"(155). With their innate abilities, they design their life as pleasing to themselves by strictly conforming to their identity and feminine self.

The authors appear not to picture their female characters as victims of tradition, patriarchy, and other adverse circumstances. On the other hand, they render them survivors who redefine and restore their lost lives and affirm their identity with

their brave and bold individualities. Women caught in discontent marriages, women prone to rape and other problems are not displayed in a desolate colour yet treated as situations with better solutions when women face them boldly and fearlessly. Through the denial of marrying a man who raped Marikolanthu, the writer tries to change the attitude of society, which considers marriage as a means of retribution. The writer also tries to change the widespread belief that a raped girl's life is doomed and that she cannot expect any better days in her life. Victimisation is avoided in the majority of works produced by female writers. More prominence is given to women's attempts to overcome the limits and impediments they face in their journey to affirm their individuality.

Another noteworthy aspect is the evolution of the different types of male personalities in Indian English Fiction, especially in Women's Writing. Men who are highly acceptable and share the same sense of responsibility towards family were seen. Janaki's husband, Suresh, Maya's husband, Govind, Binkie, Akbar, Shyam, Sethu, Ebenezer Paulraj, Janaki's husband, Prabha Devi's husband, and Akhila's brothers belong to conventional patriarchal male chauvinists. Meanwhile, Arjun, Rahul, Hugh, and Christopher belong to male individuals who have broader perspectives on life. They are not self-centred as others and share responsibilities in parenting and building up a healthy family. They provide space for the self-development of the female characters and value their perspectives, desires, and emotions. They are more flexible in the modern world and guarantee more freedom for women.

The writers celebrate female sexuality and present their heroines as embodying elegance and feminine virtues. They are charming, educated, and have modern perspectives concerning their life and choices. Their choices in life are a

means to their affirmation of individualism and emancipation. Such women dare to rework their life if the choices seem inappropriate or create obstacles on their path towards autonomy. The writers focus on the notion that their characters are individuals who think and act like human beings and who have equal rights and space as human beings. There is a shift toward stressing the condition of a woman as a human being who experiences the same world as men. The writers attempt to wipe out the gendered behavioural patterns in society that demands complete adherence on the part of both men and women. Writers open up the double standard of society in dealing with men and women through their characters. The concern of writers moved from women in general to individual woman, their struggles, anguishes, anxieties, and dilemmas in a postmodern world.

Postfeminism is generally viewed in connection with popular culture. According to Ann Brooks, "there is a conceptual shift within feminism from debates around equality to a focus on difference. It is fundamentally about not a depoliticisation of feminism but a political shift in feminism's conceptual and theoretical agenda. Post Feminism is about a critical engagement with earlier feminism political and theoretical concepts and struggles due to its engagement with other social movements for change" (). Post Feminism represents a change in feminism, both chronological and theoretical. It marks a movement away from second wave equality discourses and recognises the impact of those discourses in the current world. The concept broadens feminist theory in connection with young women's engagement with feminism and popular culture. Devaluing feminism becomes a common theme while discussing postfeminism Angela McRobbie's notion 'death of feminism' asserts that postfeminism deconstructs ideals of previous feminist movements. In a neoliberal society sticking to strict rules is no longer relevant. This

causes a rethinking of some concepts of the second and third waves. Feminist researcher Anita Harris echoes the words of Ann Brooks's view that "new ideologies about individual responsibility and choices also dovetail with some broad feminist notions about opportunities for young women". Postfeminism is a concept that enables an understanding of how feminist discourse influences contemporary society. It does not imply that feminism is dead or suspended. It encompasses feminism's intersection with theoretical approaches like Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism and challenges some ideas and assumptions of the second wave.

A key characteristic of Postfeminism is that it aims to make women self-sufficient. As women became economically independent, they do not require to be financially supported by a male partner. This shift in society is a noticed feature compared to the previous generation of women. The increased opportunities for women in the public sphere are still an achievement of the second wave; a postfeminist world offers more choices and varied situations to explore for the young generation of women. Today women enjoy diverse prospects than the previous generation of women. Women can choose any career and access education in their desired fields. This gave women the legacy to be anything they wanted, more independence and more choice than the earlier generation of women.

Increased involvement of women in the public sphere deprived women of enough time of spending with family. The recent trend developed is to delay parenthood. They neither deny motherhood, but more prominence is given to things they want to achieve, like education, career establishment, and financial stability. Women of today do not prefer children at a young age because they value self-development before settling with family life. Women also envisage working by balancing motherhood and other domestic activities. Motherhood is not viewed as a

burden as believed by previous feminists but is perceived as a natural phenomenon in female life which enhances feminine virtues. Postfeminism not only projects a changing world for women but also probes the changing attitude of the menfolk. Changed women and men are given equal importance. As it focuses on femininity and what makes a woman feminine, it cannot be said to be anti-feministic, as some critics point out. They acknowledge the differences women have. Neither do they regard these differences as a means to degrade one gender and upgrade the other?

Postfeminism asserts its influence in popular culture, media, and films; its impact is evident in people's lives in society. It directs to a new world where gender differences are bridged, with more importance on the individual as a human being. The emergence of Chick Literature and discourses that provide prominence to beauty, glamour and fashion are gradually gaining popularity worldwide. In Indian English Literature, too recent writers exhibit this trend. A significant impact of postfeminism can be seen in media and in popular culture, which strongly influences people. Further studies can be carried out in these areas, which will be more enjoyable.