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## Extensive Growth of Nuclear Family in Anita Desai's Fiction

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Anita Desai's fiction depicts the contemporary India. In the fiction of Anita Desai, the renowned writer of the contemporary India, the patriarchal culture and the personal conflict of identity of women of Indian society have taken new shape. Anita Desai, born on June 24th in the year of 1937, clearly portrays in her fiction family, society, which brings both people and place luminously alive involving the skill of shifting views of past and current and also she competently illustrates the unaltered real nesses of the Indian society in the subtlest way. She weaves a conundrum of chaotic incidents, experiences, and images of human life into fictional form. "My novels," says Anita Desai, - "are part of my private effort to seize upon the raw material of life – its shapelessness, its meaninglessness, that lack of design that drives one to despair – and to mould it and impose on it a design, a certain composition and order that pleases me as an artist and also a human being who longs for order"<sup>1</sup> Ambitious sentence construction teamed with the unconventional syntax that is her so very original marks Anita Desai as the novelist of the era where reality so very well harmonizes with fantasy. Psychological development of character is the basic crux which dominates almost all the works of Desai while making her characters to stand apart. With her remarkable style, Anita Desai is seen in some of her novel often patronizing the effectiveness of escapism, again seldom turning around to face the questions with an upright shoulder. Essentially romantic, truly pulsating and effectively realistic, Anita Desai is definitely one of the Indian writers who with their pen tried to alter the clichéd dogmas of the contemporary Indian society. Her novels portray the failed marriage relationship which often leads to alienation and loneliness of the characters causing the emergence of nuclear families.

This paper, "Extensive Growth of Nuclear Family in Anita Desai's Fiction", intends to quest for the evolution of family in the fictional work of Anita Desai and also aims at analyzing the plots and myriad of characters in the fiction of Desai with reference to social and cultural situations, which govern and direct the Indian family. Further, the true nature of conventional Indian family and steep pace of change in the true nature and function of Indian family, which paces towards an industrialized and urban social ethos from agrarian and rural family, are also examined. The family in the fiction of Anita Desai, written between 1963 and 1996, is contended that it represents typical transition and evolution of modern India from traditional-social order to an urbanized cultural ethos. The socio-cultural ambience of the family mars and moulds the values, attitudes and manners of individuals in terms of their personality and interpersonal relationships. The chaotic difficulties in the process of radical and rampant

transition mounted by industrialization, urbanization and the ever increasing impact of Western way of living styles are also attempted to explore in this article.

Throughout her novels, Desai focuses on personal struggles and problems of contemporary nuclear life that her Indian character must cope up with. She maintains that her primary goal is to discover "the truth that is nine- tenth of the iceberg that lies submerged beneath the one-tenth visible portion we call Reality."<sup>2</sup> She portrays the cultural and social transformation that India has undergone as she bestows her focus on incredible power of family and society and the relationship between family members, paying close attention to the trials of women suppressed by Indian society. Prasad rightly says, "Anita Desai took the literary world by storm with her very first novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, which apparently strikes the reader as a poetic place."<sup>3</sup> Apart from her poetic sensibility, it is her keen perception of reality and her powerful imagination that have gone a long way to shape and fashion the nature and extent of her theme of pessimism within the limits of life in India. Nevertheless, Naik holds that if Anita Desai's fiction is "able to advance from the vision of „aloneness“ as a psychological state of mind to that of pessimism as a metaphysical enigma -and one hopes it will - Anita Desai may one day achieve an amplified pattern of significant exploration of consciousness comparable to Virginia Woolf at her best."<sup>4</sup>

The family, as a symbiotic and biological unit, consists of husband and wife with socially permitted sexual relationship and children they may beget, is the pivotal social organization among all the social organizations. Since, a family is a social unit it consists of a bunch of individuals related through marriage, blood, sexual relationships, socially recognized as one household with a common house. The steep growth of Indian family, which is a joint family with cultivation as common vocation, is the result of an agrarian society. The breadwinner and elder male in the family is considered the head of the joint family. The head of the family may be great grandfather or grandfather since child marriages were encouraged which caused aged to live amidst a couple of generation. Therefore, siblings and kith and kin like sister's father-in-law, maternal grandfather and grandmother were also added up to the family. As a family, they used to share prosperity, property, legacy, famine, and happiness and sorrow equally. All the important decisions of the family like choice of profession, marriage and education for the young inmates were taken by the 'Karthā' or the head of the family. 'Karthā' was the whole and sole answer for and responsible for his family and its traditional rituals. He is felt as supreme dictator who craves for the utmost respect and reverence to his mighty supremacy from all the family members. All the behaviour and expressions were governed and demarcated by their traditional customs passed over to them through the flux of past generations.

The traditional Indian family has been an array of colossal relation like parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and their children. The traditional agrarian family was based on economic and social functions. The pivotal vocation of the family was cultivation and rearing up of cattle. While the male members perform the out-door tasks, the female folk look after the

domestic hustle and bustle of activities. The 'Karthā' or the head of the family was final arbiter in taking any family decisions. Taking care of the young, infirm, diseased, hopeless members, helpless widows in general and aged in particular was the primary social and emotional onus of the family. The religious head of the family was the wife of 'Karthā'. All the members shared their joy and woe among each other. Marriage was pious and sanctioned deed which was paid reverence and accolade. Marriage was favoured, since wife was needed at home, at times on the farm and children served as useful workers. A well-known Indian proverb deteriorates the women status, "Raising girls is like watering someone else's lawn." Marriage provides a woman with an acceptable social identity in the same way that initiation into the caste does so for a man. Marriage is a pivotal need for the women. The traditional responsibility of the woman for child care, looking after other members of the family and her less physical strength make her subordinate to her husband in most of the countries of the world. Family is treated as the traditional structure with which concept and perception of sex inequality are enforced. The woman's fate is muddled up with the family whose fate, in turn, is related to society.

In the choice of mates, caste, and custom, efficiency and suitability were emphasized over love and affection with the advent and velocity of Science and Technology, amalgamated with the rise of cities, the families' structure and function have been exposed to profuse changes plethora resulting in decline and deterioration in the number of inmates in a family. As a result, the nuclear families emerged in lieu of traditional families. In this post-modern era, the nuclear families are smaller than the traditional families. In contrast to the traditional family, emancipation to modern family has been given not restricting her to the four walls of the house.

The women were emancipated from conventional anomalies and familial atrocities. The master-slave bond between wife and husband has been paved the way to partnership and mutual respect. However, the female economic participation in recent times has received considerable attention from the social scientists owing to build modernized society. The employment of the wife in a professional occupation does empower her with resources and higher levels of prestige which, in turn, affect the structure of power in the family. The patriarchal authority has now tilted towards friendly relationship between parents and children. There is much transparency of thoughts and less inhibitions in parent-child relationship. Wealth and power came into force in place of caste and vocation.

The family in the novels of Anita Desai reflects this crucial transition from the agricultural to industrialized, from joint to nuclear, from the rural to the urban. Anita Desai's novels also reflect the radical pace of shift in interpersonal relations, consequent upon socio-cultural changes. Her fiction not only speaks of gradual dissolution of the institution of family as a hub social unit but also of the emergence of the nuclear family with all its complex psychological problems of love, companionship and emotional security.

Desai's fictional talent is sublime in selecting plot, story, character, language and narration. Each one of her novels is kaleidoscopic world of human relations: family, husband, in-laws, brothers, sisters and the children. As Weir Ann Lowry says, "She has dealt frequently with female protagonists – young and old, rich and poor, single, married or widower"<sup>5</sup>

Desai also interested in search for dilapidated-psychological condition of her women characters which paved the way to them to grow nuclear families. **Cry, the Peacock** (1963) is the first fictional work of Anita Desai. It is the apathetic portrayal of childless neurotic young wife Maya and her lawyer-husband Gautama. . The novel is a very interesting study of neurotic fears and anxieties caused by conjugal incompatibility and dissonance, coupled with age-begotten superstitions. J.G. Masilamani observes: "Anita Desai explores the inner world where fantasy and experience alternate with psychedelic effect ... the novel begins with the death of a god and ends with the death of the heroine." <sup>6</sup> **Darshan** Singh Maini aptly suggests that: "There is something in the grain of this novel, which connects it with the myth poetic and subliminal of Indian life and reality". <sup>7</sup> The novel ***Cry, the Peacock***, deeply delves into the theme of disharmony of the conjugal relationship between husband and wife. Desai looks in to the reasons for marital disharmony, which leads to the emergence of nuclear family, and illustrates how such discord lays its rampant influence on family. Sometimes, the inability of an individual to be responsive to the behavior patterns of her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship, while sometimes it is on account of varied levels of sensitivity that strained relationships occur. In this novel, Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their incompatible temperature. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, while Gautama realistic, insensitive and rational. Meena Belliappa aptly says, "The incompatibility of character stands revealed – Gautama who touches without feeling and Maya who feels without touching". <sup>8</sup> Maya is poetic and high-strung Gautama detached, philosophical and remote. Maya has tenderness, softness and warmth, Gautama is hard and cold. May is fond of nature, but Gautama has not found time to appreciate it. The matrimonial bonds that bind the two are very fragile and tenuous. The grown tension between them reaches its climax when Maya kills Gautama and then commits suicide. A traditional woman can never think of such selfishness but Maya stands as an enigma of modernity. The climax of the story lies when Maya's attachment with her father further develops into an "Electra Complex" which again acts as the catalyst in the deflowering of her marital relationship with her husband.

**Cry, the Peacock** explores the psychological consciousness of the female protagonist and is aptly illustrated amidst detail images. The plot unveils that Maya's father without thinking much, married her off to his own lawyer friend Gautama who was a middle aged man. Maya is bulldozed to stay under the brutal and tyrannical control of her husband and in-laws. Her mental condition is doleful and drab and she compares her mental condition to birds and creepers, leaves and clouds of dust. At several places Anita Desai symbolizes peacock to reveal and portray the anguish of Maya. Maya's position is like a trapped and caged bird. R.S. Sharma states: "The iterative symbolism of the peacock suggests Maya's struggle for life-in-death and death-in-

life”.<sup>9</sup> The marriage was never fruitful and slowly Maya turns into a psychopath whose emotional needs were seen to be collided with that of the extremely practical outlook of her husband. Extremely frustrated with the apathetic marital relationship with her husband, Maya looks back and around for the good days of her childhood spent with her father. She therefore relaxes her tension, eases her frustration by pondering unconsciously on how “peacock breaks their bodies” in order to relieve their own pain. Here comes the sense of violence, the feeling of killing or get killed which engulfs Maya who is unable cope up with her frustration generated amidst the throng of relations in traditional family. The violent desire of killing her husband awakening from her own frustration as revenge against his icy cold impassiveness and indifference hints the need of emergence nuclear families.

Anita Desai’s worry is primarily with human relationships and how in the dearth of meaningful relationships the individual suffer and how messed up and muddled up relationships in traditional family system has paved the way to the growth of nuclear families. She probes the psychic compulsion that may affect an individual in forging long term and significant relationships and how an individual is affected if he is unable to forge such relationships.

In *Voices in the City (1965)*, Anita Desai portrays the trio of sensitive characters and gloomy and apathetic members of a family who come to Calcutta from a Himalayan hill station. Nirode is a congenital failure. He, a nincompoop, finds himself alienated from his family and from society and engrosses himself in a life of nastiness and dissipation. Monisha, an expert of Russian and English literature is betrothed into a colossal and conventional family of Hindu Bengali Brahmins, with “generations of Bengali women hidden behind the barred windows of half dark rooms, spending centuries in washing clothes, kneading dough and murmuring aloud verses from the *Bhagabat Gita* and the *Ramayan* in the dim light of sooty lamps”.<sup>10</sup> Like Maya of the first novel she also commits suicide when still young and childless. Amla tries to find fulfillment involving herself with the life and art of a middle-aged painter. Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla are, as M.K. Naik remarks, “rebels against the stolid conventions of middle class life and long for creativity and self-expression”.<sup>11</sup>

Nirode, one of the main characters, is obsessed with the relationship of his mother with major Chadha and considers her a she-cannibal. She is having an affair in Kalimpong which itself is a consequence of dissonance in husband-wife relationship. Nirode's relationship with his mother is a love-hate relationship. We have veiled suggestions of his mother fixation and according to psychologists’ hatred often is a defense mechanism of the psyche to stop one from committing incest. The unlucky mother of the trio suffers from the ‘violence of non-communication’. Nirode experiences in her mother both a ‘sea-cannibal’ and ‘Kali’ where the “goddess and demon are one”<sup>12</sup> Perry D. Westbrook aptly observes that “Anita Desai’s first two novels both deal with spiritual collapses among upper Indians whose traditional religion and manner of life have been undermined by modern ways and concepts”.<sup>13</sup> If Maya’s tragedy in

**Cry, the Peacock** emanated from her obsession with a father figure, Nirodo's tragedy lies in his love-hate relationship with the mother.

The novel ***Voices in the City (1965)***, also deals with the incompatible marriage of Monisha and Jiban. Monisha's husband is the prisoner of conventional culture. He believes that a woman's most important roles in addition to child bearing are cooking, cutting vegetables, serving food and brushing small children's hair under the authority of a strict mother-in-law. Monisha feels that her privacy is denied to her. Her husband is busy with his middle rank hectic government job and finds no time for Monisha to share her feeling. The theme of alienation is treated in terms of mother-children relationship which itself is a consequence of dissonance in husband-wife relationship. Monisha also lives with an equally unhappy and starved life. She is alienated and psychologically isolated both from mother her husband. The graph of her mental life can be constructed from her long searching and self-confronting entire in the diary. Her relationship with her husband is characterized only by loneliness and lack of communication. He reckons his wife as good for nothing in consequence. He does not bother to enquire his wife, when he misses money from his pocket even. Monisha's ill fated marriage, her isolation, sterility and psychological stress, pains and pans of living in a joint family with a loveless husband push her to breaking point. The pivotal instinct of love which ties the conjugal bond tight is invisible in her life and eventually she kills herself.

Desai's third novel ***Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971)*** deals with toils and moils of a bunch of Indian immigrants in London. Adit Sen, the twenty-seven year old Bengali Hindu, reaches London and hankers to loves sentimentally whatever that is English. In that process, he marries a British Christian, Sarah James, Secretary to the head of a school. But soon Adit's dream-love vanishes that mounted in him the nostalgia of his motherland India. He decides to be a father in Indian soil and comes back to India with his pregnant wife. ***Bye-Bye Blackbird*** focuses is a the East-West encounter as revealed in the lives of hopeless Indian emigrants to Britain.

In Desai's fourth novel, ***Where Shall We Go This Summer ? (1975)***, the heroine is a middle-aged woman in her forties with four children and expecting the fifth. Sita is daughter of a freedom fighter, while her husband Raman is a factory owner and down-to-earth realist. Raman's father and Sita's father were friends. Even after twenty years of her marriage, Sita lives in a world of fantasy and make-belief and she has a strong father-obsession. But as the narrative progresses, she undergoes transformation and draws herself away, as Anita Desai herself puts it, "from the father's husband-world to the real one, muted and dull, of which the husband is the grey and unexciting representative".<sup>14</sup>

Anita Desai chooses marital discord as the subject matter of this novel and highlights how the inability to lay bare one's soul and express freely one's fear and anguish result in the snapping of communication between husband and wife. Different parameters that are attitudes, individual complexes and fears added to this gap between the husband and the wife resulting in

familial and marital fissures. Raman and Sita have irreconcilable temperaments and attitudes to life. The ill-assorted couple of Raman and Sita are confronted with the same problem of husband-wife discord. Sita represents a world of emotion and feminine sensibility while Raman is a man with an active view of life and the sense of the practical. Sita is a nervous, sensitive middle-aged woman with explosive and emotional reactions to many things that happen to her, she always wants to escape reality and does not want to grow up and face the responsibilities of adult life. On the contrary, Raman represents the prose of life. He represents sanity, rationality and an acceptance of the norms and values of society. He is unable to understand the violence and passion with which Sita reacts against every incident. His reaction to his wife's frequent outbursts is a mixture of puzzlement, weariness, fear and finally a resigned acceptance of her abnormality. He cannot comprehend her boredom, her frustration with her. In this novel theme of alienation and lack of communication in married life is discussed by writer. Sita finds herself alienated from her husband and children. She remains an ignored personality since childhood. She is the product of broken family. She yearns to have the attention and love of others but her father remains busy with his chelas and patients. Even after marriage, she remains lonely. Her husband also is busy. He fails to fulfil her expectation. As a result, there is marital discord, tension between husband and wife. **Where Shall We Go This Summer?** may thus be seen as a parable on the inability of human beings to relate the inner with the outer, the individual with society. It is a story of illusions melting away in the cold light of the everyday and the commonplace. It does suggest that a life of complete inwardness is not the solution to the problems of life. Nor is the other extreme of complete conformity and total draining out of the individuality and of the imagination of the human being the proper way out of the dilemma. It shows that human happiness consists in harmonizing the opposites of life.

In her fifth novel, **Fire on the Mountain** (1977), all the major characters are female characters. It deals with the theme of in communication and lack of understanding in marital life. Nanda Kaul is, an old widow of an ex-Vice-Chancellor, who cogitates on the varied roles that she has performed as a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother in her past and present Life with the Vice-Chancellor had long ordeal with only the duties and responsibilities of her position without any love attached to it. She is disillusioned with her selfish, infidel husband, who "treated her simply as some useful object".<sup>15</sup> The pivotal concern of this novel is about the association and collaboration between Nandya Kaul, who lives as a hermit in an isolated house in the hills, and Raka, her great granddaughter. M.K. Naik aptly sums up the theme of this novel: In "Fire on the Mountain" two alienated souls confront each other. Nanda, an unsentimental old widow living as a recluse in an isolated house in the hills, and Raka her great granddaughter, a shy, lonely school girl, a convalescent guest who is a 'recluse by nature, by instinct' as opposed to Nanda a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation."<sup>16</sup> She played the gracious hostess all the time for her husband, who "wanted her always in silk, at the head of the long rosewood table in the dinning-room, entertaining his guests". In the words of Gopal N.R., "She is so busy raising the family and discharging the duties of mother, housewife and hostess that in the evening of her life she is happy in her seclusion



even though it is partly voluntary and partly circumstantial”.<sup>17</sup> “Outwardly Kauls were an ideal couple to university community but from inside it was all empty, the whole social role and socializing was a mere sham”. Her life with her husband was “lacking in composition and harmony”. The psychological seclusion of the lady is echoed by the landscape of the mountain - rocky and barren. Her wish to be lonely and secluded is seen in her apathy to receive her great grand-daughter. “Discharge me, she groaned. I’ve discharged all my duties. Discharge”. Carignano offered her the anonymity and escape she longed for. Mrinalini Solunki rightly observed: The novel tells of falsity to which Nanda is forced to. Her conjugal life was not peaceful. It was not all love and sincerity but the terrible betrayal of her husband prompted her to a life of silence. The children were alien. The graces and glories were a fabrication, to drive the present. “Her relation with her husband did not involve her inner “self”. The novel gives an impression of her happy life with her husband, but the last page of the novel reveals that the whole story was a white lie. There occurs another failed marital relationship in the novel – the relationship between Raka’s mother and her excessive drinking and aggressive father. But the writer has focused on the plight of Nanda Kaul, who is deceived and betrayed by her husband. “Lack of understanding of the partner’s expectations and temperaments is chiefly responsible for the marital discord of Mrs. Kaul” “Her option for total isolation is not related to the spirituality of Indian thought. She does not opt for this isolation willingly, but circumstances have left no other way out for her. Her long involvement with the people and the affairs of the world gave her neither satisfaction nor a sense of belongingness. Therefore, in a bid to survive she opts for withdrawal, for an existence away from the world of messages and visitors”.<sup>18</sup> Thus Anita Desai lodges her protest against unhappy married life in the phoney world through her female characters.

Desai’s sixth novel, **Clean Light of Day** (1980) is a familial story of a Hindu family from old-Delhi in general and the personal sacrifice of Bimla Das in particular. She is the eldest daughter of the house. When she appears in the novel, she is a middle-aged spinster who serves as a lecturer in history. An all-rounder as a student, she serves as a guardian angel and mother-spirit of the family members. They are her brothers, sisters, the old maid and her won parents. Bimla continues with the traditional virtues of a guardian, stubborn, and unmoved. Hers is a relentless struggle to hold the home that falls apart. She plays a parent-figure as she forgives her brother Raja and sister Tara when they choose their own life-mates, becomes a life-long nurse to the ever ailing and retarded younger brother Baba who exhibits animal silence. She is as celestial as the clear light of day that pervades throughout the family with her divine love. The breaking away of the family coincides with the partition of India. For John Leonard, “Clear Light of Day” is a wonderful novel of silence and music, about the partition of a family as well as a nation”

**In Custody** (1984), Anita Desai, presents the agony of Deven Sharma, a self-effacing, meek and mild personality. He is temporary lecturer in Hindi in Lala Ram Lal College, at Mirpur, a suburb of Delhi. His belief in the apparent goodness of the world around him is the

cause of his frustration and anguish. His infatuation with the literary achievements of one famous Urdu poet Nur, whom he imagined to be an ascetic and magical genius ends in total frustration and disillusionment, when he realizes that the old poet's creative days are long since over. Deven eventually emerges as an epitome of failure as a teacher, as a friend, as a connoisseur of art and more miserably as a husband and father. The novel centers around an ineffectual but well meaning young man whose problems are not just personal and private but public and social.

Desai, in her seventh novel, *Custody*, focuses on theme of marital discord and relationship problem. In this novel, Deven and Sarla lead an unhappy marital life. They are quite different from each other in their temperaments. Deven is a Hindi lecturer in a college and Sarla has no interest in literature. She is ignorant that she concludes her husband's frequent visits to Delhi for meeting his girlfriend. Sarla is a picture of an abandoned wife.

Her eighth novel, *Baumgartner of Baumgartner's Bombay (1988)*, is about a nowhere man, who is drifted from footlessness to cruelty till death takes hold of him. It is a powerful and poignant dramatization of the peculiar predicament of nationless wanderers. Hugo Baumgartner grows up as a solitary but happy child in a beautiful flat in Berlin where he finds his bright world overcome by the shadows of Nazi Germany. The horror of his father's self-immolation renders him poor and helpless. He leaves for India with a hope to make a home for his mother. The global war turns him into a homeless wanderer, while his mother undergoes unspeakable torture in Nazi Germany. As the war breaks out, Baumgartner is taken as a 'hostile alien' to a war camp where he is detained for six years. Then he comes back to Calcutta and learns about his mother's death somewhere in Germany. He becomes a recluse. He does not know the joys of married life nor loving care of a wife or shared moments of laughter and warmth with children. Haunted by an unexpected sorrow at his mother's death – the only important relation he had in life, Baumgartner experiences unfathomable depths of loneliness and misery. A chance – meeting takes place with a drug-addict, young German, Kurt. It is for a few silver trophies, won by the horse owned jointly by Baumgartner and Chimanlal, that Kurt kills Hugo Baumgartner.

Anita Desai's ninth novel "Journey to Ithaca (1996) portrays the spiritual journey of two generations of non-Indians; Laila the Egyptian and Matteo, the Italian. By a strange turn of events, Laila settles down in an 'ashram' in India with a 'Guru' who conforms to the image that she has been pursuing in her dream over many years. After the Guru's death, she is elevated as the spiritual head of the ashram. She is addressed as the "Mother".

The second generation of the spiritual quest coincides with the steady flow of hippies from the West to India in the early seventies. Matteo, the Italian, is fired with a longing for Indian spirituality from his early childhood. He, along with his German wife Sophie, travels to India, experiments living in different ashrams and finally chooses the ashram of the Mother where he surrenders himself to her. Sophie, who begets a son and a daughter during their stay in

the Mother's ashram, is amazed at Matteor's devotion to the Mother and begins to investigate her past and the circumstances that led to her being consecrated as the head of the ashram. The novel ends with the death of the Mother, Sophi's futile journey back to the ashram to reveal the secrets of Mother's past and Matteo's mysterious disappearance from the ashram.

### **Conclusion:**

In one form or another, the theme of marital discord dominates the contemporary fiction, may it be of British, American or Indian origin. It is one of the central themes in the works of D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Raja Rao, Arun Joshi, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Praver Jhabwala, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Anita Desai and others.

Marital discord, the conflict in married life, is as old as the institution of marriage itself, although it has varied in degrees from time to time and from person to person. In the pre-industrial era, men and women who came together in marriage shared cultural values, mutual commitment, trust and faith which subordinated the interests of the individuals resulting in the smooth relationship of the family. There were tensions and maladjustments in their marital relationship too, but the moral and religious convictions, economic dependence and the fear of social disapproval kept them together.

"Marital discord represents a breakdown in the consensus and co-operation of the married couples. Usually, marital discord originates when rivalry develops between the partners by internal and external manifestations like separation, physical violence and vituperation. They drift apart when they are unable to sort-out their problems which result in the strain and tension in their relationship." According to C.B.Mamoria, "Desertion and divorce are the final tragic denouements of family disorganization" (Mamoria.1960:384).

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