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**DESAI'S STANCE ON SIBLING RELATIONSHIP IN HER NOVELS**

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Since human relationship describes the mental and emotional springs, therefore, an artist can weave a story about it. The innermost psyche of the protagonists is revealed through their interaction with those who are emotionally related to them on the basis of kinship. Naturally, no other than own siblings are nearest in the household surroundings. They bear a natural bond to share everything during their childhood when they are away from their self-interests. They share both pleasure and pain on equal footings. This kind of bondage helps them grow not only physically strong but also mentally healthy. However, lack of such bondage cause adverse effects. They lack confidence as well as pragmatic approach to face the real situations of life. In case of Anita Desai's novels, we find that most of her works refer to the latter circumstances. We find incompleteness everywhere; some characters struggle for their social positions, the others for their mere existence. As they grow, their sibling-affection generally reduces. With the expanding families and other interests in individual lives, the emotional bondage between the siblings begins to vanish gradually. In such situations, they generally fall prey to hollowness of life.

Siblings play a unique role in one another's lives that simulates the companionship and personal importance of parents as well as the power and assistance of friends. Because siblings often grow up in the same household, they have a large amount of exposure to one another, but this relationship tends to be more egalitarian than with other family members. Furthermore, sibling relationships often reflect the overall condition of cohesiveness within a family.

As mentioned here, siblings have a great role to play in forming the atmosphere in a family. They not only have impact on the minds of the parents and make them think about children but they also influence the personalities of one another within the bounds of the same family.

“Siblings generally spend more time together during childhood than they do with parents. The sibling bond is often complicated and is influenced by factors such as parental treatment, birth order, personality, and people and experiences outside the family” (Leder 1).

In Anita’s novels the sibling relationship bears great significance because it is responsible up to a large extent in shaping the course of action for the other members of the family. Sometimes the impact is positive while at other times it is negative. But one thing is sure that it has a great significance. When it acts positively, it becomes the tools of sharing emotional ups and downs and thus helps in getting rid of many problems for the siblings. But, when it acts negatively, it becomes burdensome and influences the entire family negatively and the atmosphere of the family is gripped with pain, misery and other sufferings.

In the novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* the chief protagonist Sita, is deprived of motherly care and affection. Her father does not have any time to share emotional moments with her as he is always surrounded with the aura of a family head. Though she lives amidst a crowd, yet she finds none to provide her company in the proper sense of the term. The thing that can provide her a kind of shelter and sharing of emotional sentiments is her sister, Rekha’s, emotional support. But she only aspires for it as her sister keeps herself quite busy with the affairs of her father. Gradually, as she watches that her father is more inclined to her elder sister, she develops within her a jealous feeling for both her father and her sister. On the other hand, Rekha, being more close to her father, is happy. As a result, sibling rivalry generates between the two and she does not develop an intimate relationship with her sister. “Sibling rivalry sometimes is responsible for generating anxiety, depression and low-esteem later in life” (Rimm 1). So is *clearly* the case with Sita. At the same time, parents’ attitude is also largely responsible for such kind of psychological disorders. Taking sides and giving undue favor to one of the siblings can also cause havoc in other’s behavioral patterns.

The novel *Clear Light of Day* is the story of four siblings. Their parents are totally focused on their social status and position. They are much concerned about their family image and their primary aim is to maintain it. For the purpose, they spend most of their time in playing cards and socializing in club in Delhi. The responsibility of looking after Raja and Baba falls on Bim, after their parents’ demise. It is hard to perform the responsibility in that tender age, and yet she bears it. But when the four grow up, their vision of childhood vanishes away. They have their own

dreams and their own lives. The younger siblings no more need Bim, neither as a sibling nor as a caretaker. Tara got married to escape Old Delhi. Bim refused to sacrifice her responsibility towards her younger brother. She causes no interference in the lives of her sister Tara or her brother Raja. She faces all the odds of life patiently especially looking after her mentally challenged brother Baba. But her long years of solitude and struggle cast their spell on her personality and moulds it. A few years later, when Tara visits her sister, she finds her a completely changed person. Bim acts like a tyrant. Her soft temperament is replaced by rude and straightforward reactions. She does not have soft corner even for Bakul, Tara's husband. She has become somewhat tough in her nature. And it is the natural repercussion of her solitary life. She is reluctant to any change. She refuses to bring any changes to the household. Her isolation turns her into a dry-natured person. Change in her is the result of her inner struggles - struggles with the self. This changes her perception of life.

*Fasting, Feasting*, presents characters like Uma, Aruna, and Arun in the role of troubled siblings who live intricate relationships and face various hurdles in their search for identity on many occasions. A close analysis of the novel clearly reveals that Desai tries to throw light on various issues relating to these children's psychology in seeking their respective space in the household as well as on social canvass. In expectation of a son, when her mother delivers a girl baby again, the presupposed name Arun is changed to 'Aruna'. Later, the long cherished dream of both parents is fulfilled and turned into reality with the birth of male child, Arun. The family celebrates the birth of Arun as he never did at the birth time of Uma and Aruna. Fasting on the part of girls and feasting on the part of the son. Busy with attending kitty parties and club meetings, Uma's mother finds no time to spare for girls. So it was feasting time for Mama Papa and on the contrary, their young daughters were fasting. They were miserable due to the orthodox restrictions. Uma's younger sister Aruna, who has developed her personality as a strong-minded and self-imposing person, is very opposite to the personality of Uma who is meek and submissive. She was also fanatical and an egotistical girl from the early childhood. She looks down upon Uma's submissive and unquestioning nature, and never shows warmth, affection or reverence to her as a younger sister. Aruna's extrovert nature can be the result of relatively independent and carefree childhood. Being eldest, Uma has to shoulder so many responsibilities and has to face so many odds while being younger to her, Aruna never faced such handicaps. Aruna also has relatively pleasant looks as compared with Uma. Overall, she has a smart personality and is active and full of self-confidence. She is impressive in manners and etiquette.

She despises household work and believes in freely spending time with her friends. She is not friendly with Uma, rather she often bullies and threatens her. Uma is deprived of all what her younger sister is provided with. She feels like a step sister in her own family. Thus, the novel clearly leaves a message that a happy and conducive relationship between siblings can prevent them from traumatic feelings of isolation and worthlessness. Had Aruna, Uma and Arun enjoy a pleasant relationship, Uma's plight would not have been such tragic.

*Voices in the City*, presents the depression, frustration and void of minds of the main protagonists of the novel - Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. Anita tries to explore and analyze their perceptions of life. They initially belong to one world but with the passage of time their experiences shape their thinking differently. All these three characters pass through different situations and are made to face various oppressive forces – sometimes outer but most of the times inner. They do not see any music in harrowing hollow life in Calcutta where they want to seek their identities. All their efforts prove to be futile as they are not able to achieve anything worthy. Each of them falls victim to the isolation in their own way, an escape from which is nearly impossible. Monisha, the sister, who herself is the victim of her own circumstances is well aware of what is going on with her brother. She knows as to why Nirode is passing through troubling waters. She knows the reasons of her brother's successive failures. She knows how her brother who excels at many talents has not been able to prove his mettle to the world. She knows the reason behind the her brother's frustration. At the core of her heart, she wishes success for him. But, she is as helpless as Nirode is. Like her brother, she is also passing through a critical phase of her life. Again and again he tries to explain, to plead, to convey something which no one understands or approves or accepts. Always he is beaten down, spurned, turned away into an anonymous solitude he seems unable to accept. The talks go on. The tales go on - The tales of suffering, the tales of suffocation, the tale of isolation, the tales of miseries, the tales of fate and tales of destiny. They go on and on. Commas keep appearing, but there comes no full stop. Just then, the full stop comes when Monisha puts herself into fire. *Voices in the City* also deals with the sibling isolation. Victims of this isolation are brother Nirode and sister Monisha. Both have a quest for life but meet with failure and get isolation and loneliness. Mrs. Desai brilliantly depicts the sentiments of the brother and the sister and the moments they share together.

Anita Desai presents various aspects of sibling relationships through her novels. Different shades of behavior and treatment between different siblings have been presented in a faithful manner. The novelist records them from a psychologist point of view. As we view from the novels, these relationships are simple as well as complex. Their nurturing and bringing up is largely

responsible for shaping them. A healthy relationship is generally the result of conducive and harmonious environment at home. In most of the cases, parental neglect is the major reason behind the social complexes that siblings develop.

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