

**Influence of People in the Decision Making of Women Before and After Marriage
Portrayed in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe**

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Abstract

In most families in our countrymen play an active role in deciding is almost every family issue. Women were not even consulted on their opinion about those problems. Does woman in families is not capable of deciding at the needed time, or they were trained in that way is the biggest question? Mostly, a woman in her family woman was not given suggestions. Instead, her parents or relatives took her decision and insisted on abiding by it as it was their culture. After marriage, her decisional rights were inherited by her husband. Meanwhile, she loves to live her life or forgets to decide what she wants. In our society, only the level of influence over a woman's decision alone varies but not the decisional authority. How far others influence a woman's decision affects her life and the remedy for this unnoticed but serious issue. The answers to these questions are explored in Anita Nair's novel *Ladies Coupe* (2001).

Keywords: Woman's decision, influence, decision making, independent decisions, wrong decisions, crucial situations, family harmony.

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Introduction

Decision making was always influenced by the knowledge and capability of a person. It is the most important skill every human being should possess. Women, the most important part of the family and society, lack or fall back to decide wisely in crucial situations. They were low in deciding and depended on their family members in every situation. It starts with their parents and ends with their spouse or worse with their next generations.

Decisions made in home management range in importance from major once in a lifetime. For example, the choice of a marriage partner is indeed an important decision and not to be taken lightly, but it is only in fairy tales that they live happily ever after (Knoll 1973)

The above quote mentions the present condition of women and their decision in today's scenario. The crucial situations of life come to people when deciding on their career and their spouse. Most women fail on their own decision or hearing others' pronouncements in deciding about their marriage because of their lack of decisional ability. The quote shows the reality of life because life is not a fairy tale or a feature film to reflect things perfectly, as we expect them to be. It clearly states that women cannot mostly choose a perfect partner for themselves. That crucial decision falls in the hands of the eldest male of the family. So here are the questions, does others' influence on a woman's decision affects her life? If so, how far does the other's influence affect women's decisions? What are the remedies to curb down its cause-effects on women's lives? The quest for the responses to these queries is explored in the renowned writer Anita Nair's novel *Ladies Coupe* (2001).

Anita Nair is one of the most prominent and modern Indian writers with an international reputation. She was the ingenious and most innovative director in an advertising agency in Bangalore.

Anita Nair, like veteran Anita Desai, started writing at the age of seven or eight, and both of them began doing so in their moments of emotional outburst (Mishra 100)

Women in this novel. Despite proper education, women's decisions always depended on others' influence and indulgence in every issue. This was portrayed by Anita Nair in her

every novel. When she wrote A Collection of Short Stories, her debut book, she realized her addiction to writing and dropped her advertising career and took full-time writing.

The major characters whose language affects the protagonist and other women character's decisions were Akila's mother, Karpagam (Akila's friend) and men at the beach in Akila's life, Sheela's father in Sheela's life, Ebenezer (Margret's husband) in Margret's life, Siddharth (Janaki's son) in Janaki's life, Sharmila (Prabha's school friend), Pramod (Prabha Devi Husband's friend) in Prabha Devi's life and Murugesan, Periyamma, Sujata Akka, Muthu in Marikozhundu's life. They all influenced the women in this novel positively and negatively but mainly influenced the women's decisions. The ways these people influence via their language over women's decisions in this novel were portrayed as follows.

First of all, no good wife could serve two masters – the masters being her father That way, there can be no strife, no disharmony. (Ladies Coupe P.14)

These are the words of the mother of Akila (the protagonist). Akila's mother was always cared for and looked after well by her father in all ways and means. So it happened as a habit for her mother to be dependent on people for her living. When Akila's father died, Akila insisted that her mother take music classes to children nearby to help their family. But Akila's mother said that women always tend to obey their father, husband, and son. So her husband is her master even though he is dead, she was not willing to obey or work under other masters. So her mother neglected to take classes. Akila's mother insisted on this rule a lot which naturally made Akila follow it without her knowledge. It stopped her from thinking on her own.

The authoritarian character of the traditional joint family entails decision-making powers concentrated in the position of the eldest male members (Rao 1982)

As Rao said in most of our families, the eldest man in the family plays an important role in deciding almost everything in the house from finance to almost every decision of the family member, which makes the other members in the family incapable of doing anything, especially women in the family, who gets affected to this addiction of 'too much care'. This makes them too much depended for every deed on the male members or the male children of

the family. This makes them feeble and incapable of deciding on their own. Thus Akila's mother also follows the same as others do.

Akila being the eldest daughter of the family, was restricted from deciding things on her own. As she once decided to go on an outing, she was asked to get permission from her younger brother to go out and stay. Despite being the breadwinner of the family, she was forced to ask permission from her younger brother for every deed. This made her feeble in deciding things in her life, which had reflected drastically in her life. Akila was not bothered as a person in her family. She worked for her family, and even after her brother started working, no one in the family bothered about her marriage. Even though she was frustrated about that, she never showed it to anyone in the family, as she was trained, she never spoke about it to anyone. Akila, in her thirties, loved a guy named Hari, a guy younger than her. Akila felt happy when Hari proposed to her. She was finally feeling happy with her decision about Hari, which was the only worthy decision she took after a long time.

'She must be his elder sister.' 'Don't be silly..... Filling her day, I'd think' (Ladies Coupe P.152)

Akila, happy with Hari's companionship, felt guilty about her relationship with the younger guy. The men at the beach doubted her to be Hari's elder sister or a woman who ditched her husband for her pleasure. These words pricked Akila a lot. This made her feel low about herself, leading her to take a painful decision to leave Hari and her love for him forever. As she never decided anything in life and was in utter confusion, she left the most precious possession of her life. Even though Hari sent her greeting cards and letters every year, she did not reply to any of his letters. Akila started to continue her job of sacrificing her life. As Anita Nair Said in an interview:

To me, Akila, in some sense, enjoyed being a martyr. She is not an exceptionally strong woman. She is just somebody who has coped. (The Hindu, 2 Dec.2001)

Due to her mother, brother and sister's influence all over her life, Akila forgot to live her life. Because of her fear, she left her most valuable possession (Hari) in her life. She starts to sacrifice her life for her family as usual. Her fear of life, family, and society had spared her nothing but a barren life in which her brother and sister still decided her life. Even after her

mother's death, she was not allowed to live her life on her own. Her sister the Padma lived with her, fussing with everything and everybody around. Frustrated with her life, Akila decided to take a break and go on a trip to Kanyakumari. Her brother insisted that she think over her decision to live alone as he said that women couldn't live alone. So for taking a break and to think over her decision, she takes this trip. There she finds five women coming with a solution to her doubts about life, the answer to the biggest question of her life, "Can a woman live by herself?" Those five women were Janaki, Sheela, Margret, Prabha Devi and Marikolandu.

She felt this queer rage uncoil within her..... 'Oh, leave me alone,' Janaki snapped (Ladies Coupe, P.30)

Janaki, (the senior citizen in that coupe) married Prabhakar at a very young age and lived her life happily with love and surprises from her husband. But when Siddharth was born, all her attention got shifted to her son. She gave her full attention, love, and care to her only son Siddharth. Even small matters like Prabhakar's mood shifts, reactions, and disappointments made her feel bad. When Prabhakar turns hot on Siddharth, she never fails to pound between them and supports her son. An incident happened at a shoe shop when Siddharth was a kid when he took a long time to choose his shoe; Prabhakar urged him to select soon. Janaki busted out her anger on Prabhakar for that. Janaki's world revolved around Siddharth when Siddharth came with his friends without announcement for lunch, and she ran out of food and gas was also empty, failing her son nearly made Janaki cry.

As the ages pass, Siddharth is getting married to Jaya. Janaki felt that ageing years are meant only for chanting and waiting for their death. Meanwhile, she forgot to live. Siddharth and Jaya lived alone. Siddharth will always speak about his father's death and his mother's state later whenever they visit their children. This almost made her panic; Siddharth's sole aim was to sell their own house and settle down. This always created confusion among them. When Siddharth said that Jaya Gave birth to a child, Janaki insisted on visiting them, but their visit, as usual, resulted in commotion.

Dad stops being so melodramatic..... I bloody well will take care of her side. (Ladies Coupe, P. 37)

As usual, when there was an argument between Jaya and Janaki, Siddharth took his wife's side and started to scold his mother, accusing her of being selfish. Prabhakar felt bad hearing his son's accusing words and asked Janaki to pack things to return to their native. All these days, Janaki always fussed over her husband, even though her husband was right. She always took the side of her son. But the supportive words of her husband and her son's accusations made her realize the importance of her spouse. Her son's words made her realize how important a husband is to a wife. She then realized her fault of standing against and accusing Prabhakar even though he was right. She then decided to live the rest of her life in a meaningful way by loving her husband and living her life. Thus the rage words of Siddharth made her realize her husband's value. Thus she advised Akila that women should always need a companion for her fulfilment.

He picked on her and found fault incessantly, Who is the boy I saw you talking to near the park gates? (Ladies Coupe. P. 69)

Sheela (the second passenger in the coupe), a fourteen-year-old girl, woke up sobbing. She said that she was going to her native to attend her grandmother's funeral. Sheela was a very brilliant girl; she was loved by her Ammuma (Grandmother) a lot. Her Ammuma was the one who taught her how to behave like a woman, and she even does not hesitate to teach Sheela how to behave with her husband in future. Sheela's father, who was once a very kind person, started to quarrel and shout at her for unnecessary reasons; this irritated her a lot. Her father has forbidden her to do the things which were once allowed by him. She was fed up with her father. Even at the hospital and public places, it never stopped. She loved her Ammuma a lot, and only Sheela understood her grandmother's state of mind when she was about to die. The only supporter and the Godmother to Sheela was her grandmother.

But Sheela still went to the hospital canteen and ordered a tumbler of pepper rasam The flames raged, but the demons stayed locked. (Ladies Coupe. P. 71,72)

Once when Sheela was in the hospital when her mother's brothers came and insulted her father by their grey and greasy talks, he felt bad. Again he shouted at Sheela and insulted her in front of everyone without any reason. This time, she felt enraged and wanted to shout at her father and those filthy relatives who enraged her father with their nonsense prestige. She

wanted to question each one, including her father and pleaded with them to leave her alone. She enhanced her anger with a pepper rasam and later felt it worthless and curbed her anger with a double scoop of Rum' n' raisin and caged her demon.

Sheela knows how health and beauty conscious her grandmother was. When she heard of her death, she could not bear the loss; she felt that she lost even the last companion she had. She wants to fulfil her grandmother's wish and starts to beautify her grandmother's corpse.

There was no time to clean her up..... she didn't care. She knew Ammumma would have pleased. (Ladies Coupe. P. 74)

All the people got panicked seeing Sheela's work on the corpse. All were furious, and they started accusing Sheela of what she had done with her Grandma's corpse. Sheela, for the first time, did not mind their scolding or accusations. Instead, she felt happy that her grandmother would be pleased with her. She does not bother or cares for her father's words or how he reacted to her deed. Sheela's father's accusations have moulded the flowery heart of her's into a flaming stone. From there on, she decided to think and decide things on her own. Thus she declared being independent is always a better option in life.

God didn't make Ebenezer Paulraj a fat man. I did. I, Margret Shanthi, did it with the sole desire for revenge. (Ladies Coupe. P. 96)

Margret (the third passenger in the coupe) is riding back home after making a regular visit to the health centre, which deals with obesity. She is returning to her place after admitting her husband, the proud Principal Ebenezer Paulraj. Margret was not a bad woman; instead, her husband's words and deeds killed her soul and unleashed the demon of hatred in her heart. Margret was an M.sc graduate who wanted to do her higher studies. But Ebe suggested she do B.Ed. She abode by his rule and settled down as a chemistry teacher in the same school where Ebe was principal. She was happy when she was Ebe's little girl, abiding by all his wishes. It lasted till she saw his real face when Margret became pregnant. He made her abort her child against her wish in the name of future and settlement.

Abortion is considered a revolting crime to which it is indecent even to refer. (Beauvoir 502)

Margret felt bad hearing what he just said, as there is nothing big in aborting a child. As Beauvoir referred above, abortion is considered the cruellest crime in the world. Killing a child before entering the world is the most forbidding deed on earth, but Ebe made Margret do it without guilt. He even justified his deed by mentioning that nothing in their holy book referred to abortion as a sin. The worst thing is that he even wished Margret 'All the best' before entering the operation theatre for abortion.

I love it when you call me Ebe, I want you to remain like this all your life.' (Ladies Coupe. P.111)

When Ebe said these words, Margret's love and goodwill she had over Ebe shattered into pieces. Margret was shattered when she came to know the real reason behind the abortion. His words filled rage in her, but she could not say this to anyone. Even her parents adore and support Ebe in all his deeds. Ebe adored the foreign culture, maintained physique in proper shape, and enjoyed every weekend with parties at home. Because of this reason, he does not want Margret also to change. These words of Ebe enraged and changed Margret; she found ways and deeds to show her aversion towards him. She ate a lot to curb her anger down, which reflected on her physique.

He dismissed me as someone of no significance (Ladies Coupe. P. 96)

Ebe always invited his admirers from school to his house every weekend. They always visit them, eat Margret's food, praise Ebe, and discuss the punishments for various crimes (Mischievous acts) of children and leaves. Ebe always wanted to be admired and praised. He will run for forty-five minutes every day and be a member of three visiting libraries and admirer of foreign music. He used to spend a whole day with the dictionary to fill in the crosswords, for nothing but to hear the praising of his disciples who visits him every weekend. When people tried to take the conversation to Margret, he would steal their attention by saying, 'She never know anything'. This enraged Margret and made her feel low in front of his admirers. He never gave her significance in front of his followers or others. She felt insulted and made feel inferior in front of others. No true gentleman will let his woman down in front of others; he will not even let others treat her like that. But Ebe's words of negligence enraged Margret.

James floated on top with his belly split open..... There is nothing fair about love or war, Ebe often said. And this was war. (Ladies Coupe. P.132)

Margret wanted to knock down the false pride of Ebe by any means. Their fish gave her the solution. They had fish named James and Joyce. They were named so by Ebe. Whenever given food, Joyce ate low, and James gulped lots. In the end, Joyce was sleek and healthy, and James died a pathetic death soon. This gave Margret her idea of bringing down Ebe's Pride. Ebe's pride lay in the physique, the gigantic look that brought terror in many faces as he entered school. She realized her folly, it was not she who had to change, but it should be Ebe who had to change.

Ebe ate. Breakfasts, Lunches, Dinners..... almost a year later, the fat found its home. What was mine became his. The sleek lines began to blur. (Ladies Coupe. P. 133).

Ebe is not James to show changes soon, so Margret waited. She lured Ebe by her coyly approach and made him eat fatty food. After one year, Ebe showed his changes; he became fat, uneasy to walk, had breath issues, he even cut down his regular rounds of school into two times a day. He even avoided parties and stopped inviting his disciples to home. He became much dependant on Margret for every deed.

Ebe slowly became a fat man. A quiet man. An easy man..... all was quiet and calm and watered down in our lives. (Ladies Coupe. P. 134.)

Margret changed Ebe into a fat man who was dependable on her. She was very careful about his appetite, which kept him from returning to his previous state. Margret never wanted his demon to get unleashed again, so she kept him fat. Margret again becomes pregnant and gives birth to a baby girl, who now studies in the same school they work in. Margret brought the inferiority complex in him, and he became dependable on her. She took him every year for health campaigns but was sure to maintain him with the same weight for their family's well-being. Now she is happy, and she even suggested the same as her view of Akila. Do your best to live your life happily, no matter what happens or who gets affected after all, and

no one bothers for others. The good, feeble Margret was changed, and her life decision was greatly affected by her husband's negligence and fierce words.

Has this baby, apart from ruining my business plans, added your brain as well? If you ask me, a daughter is a bloody nuisance. (Ladies Coupe. P. 169)

Prabha Devi (the fourth person in the coupe), the lady in her forties, was the daughter of a famous diamond merchant; Prabha Devi's father felt his daughters as a nuisance. He always wanted a boy who would flourish his business, and he considered the female child a burden. But Prabha's mother, in turn, loved her daughter more than her sons. So, she convinced Prabha's father by reminding him of the other option. She suggested that he could get his daughter married to another merchant to flourish his business. This convinced Prabha's father; he even started to give more preference to his daughter than other sons.

When Kripa said she would have to see the man before she agreed, Grandmother retorted, 'Who asks the chicken before grinding the masala?' (On the Wings of Butterflies. P. 48)

This was and is the state of most of the women in our country. Women were brought up in the most significant way that mainly suits their marriage. They were not allowed to think or decide beyond that. Like Krista, Prabha was also brought up with good education and craftworks needed to fit in a family. When her marriage age emanated, as per her father's wish, Prabha was wedded to Jagdeesh, the son of the great diamond merchant, and she started her life full of excitement; Jagdeesh was very kind to her. He loved her for her boldness and open-mindedness.

*So are you at some university now? Prabha Devi asked, wondering
..... Sharmila wrote her number on a piece of paper and slipped it into Prabha Devi's hand. (Ladies Coupe. P. 176)*

Prabha Devi met her friend Sharmila at the airport with her kids and her mother-in-law. Sharmila was one of the most brilliant students in the class. Seeing her, Prabha thought that she would have finished her education and joined any college to fulfil her ambition to become a doctor. But what she heard and the reality was different. Her parents tricked

Sharmila. She got married to Naresh as they promised that she could study after marriage. But after marriage and children, she could not find time to study, so she left her studies. She saw her friend's ambition shattered before her eyes and decided to decide over her children and future setting. After coming back from the New York trip, Prabha's dressing and attitude changed, making her in-laws think weird. Jagdeesh did not mind her changes as he thought it was because of the trip, and it would fade away in the following days.

There are many ways in which pregnancy can be avoided we have been married for almost a year now, he said, caressing the side of her neck. (Ladies Coupe. P. 179)

The world is living on one side, but our men on the other side do not want to accept change. They never want their women to decide things on their own, especially after marriage. As saw early, Margret's husband decided on his wife's abortion. Here, well-educated and husband of modern thoughts (Jagdeesh) was surprised to hear his wife talking about avoiding getting pregnant early. She never said she would not give birth to a child. She just wants her own space in deciding the time. Jagdeesh even thinks of this as a shame and curses her in mind, and tries to convince her with his words. In both cases, men take control over women's decisions in every deed they do but showcased themselves to the world that they are modern. Jagdeesh could take his wife to be modern until it enhances his dignity in modern society. When it comes to personal life, he always wants his wife to follow his rules. Jagdeesh enjoyed Prabha's boldness and cunning to the extent to which it is allowed by him. He wants her to be modern for society but obedient to him. The level of authority differs, but dominance over their decision remains the same in all the cases, and Jagdeesh is not the exempted ones.

Prabha Devi became the woman her mother had hoped she would be. she was a good wife and an excellent mother. What more could a man ask for? (Ladies Coupe. P. 183,184)

Prabha Devi accompanied her husband to the clubs. When he played, she sat back and relaxed, and she felt great pleasure when men adored her beauty. Pramod was the one who was not lured by her beauty. She felt it as shame and tried to grab his attention in many ways, which led to a disaster. Pramod once came to her house and tried to misbehave; her motive of

grabbing Pramod's attention sent him a wrong signal. This incident affected Prabha to the core. She felt fear in her nerve thinking of the consequences when Jagdeesh or his family member learned about this incident.

Indian women are deeply linked to social, cultural, religious and regional features, and their identity is thus multi-layered. (Nubile 1)

As mentioned above, a good and normal woman abides and lives by our society's cultural and religious values. Also, Prabha decided to curb her anxiety to live and became a woman in her own house. Again back to live by other's decisions. Jagdeesh wondered and even missed the old Prabha who used to play, impress and argue with him for every deed. But he just thought that this change was natural with every woman after the first child and left it unnoticed. After all, every man wants their wife to be a good wife and a lovely mother. As Prabha joined that list, Jagdeesh did not think about that much. Jagdeesh did not care about his wife losing her individuality. Like many men, he also becomes happy when she becomes obedient.

Jagdeesh looked at her in surprise..... what was this sudden fascination to learn to bake, to do something more with her time, he wondered. (Ladies Coupe. P. 190)

Prabha was leading a mechanical life like doing household chores, looking after kids and so on. Jagdeesh never cared about things as he took over his father's business. He was very busy, and he found nothing new in here to spend time with. Once when Prabha saw herself in the mirror, she felt pity for the lost her. As usual, she went to pick up her son from his tennis class. She saw a swimming pool nearby; she thought of looking at the pool at the waiting time. The first touch of the pool aroused the dormant old Prabha inside her. She was much interested to learn swimming. But never wanted to learn from anyone but on her own. She does not want Jagdeesh to know about that. She said to Jagdeesh that she wanted to join the baking class. When Jagdeesh questioned her new class, she sneered at him before he even tried to say a word beyond. Jagdeesh felt the old Prabha after years, so he never said a word against it after that.

She felt the years slip away from her. that nothing else that happened would ever measure up to that moment of supreme content when she realized that she had stayed afloat. (Ladies Coupe. P. 195)

Prabha enquired about the classes, and when she heard, there would be only summer classes for ladies. She decided to learn to swim on her own. First, she was much afraid of the water that surrounded her. But slowly, she started to position herself, walk, understand the pressure of water, and start swimming. That night she felt some sort of pleasure which she cannot explain in words; she even played with Jagdeesh, which she would do years ago. Jagdeesh was happy to see the old Prabha once again. Prabha felt herself living whenever she entered the pool. After many years she did what she desired; that thought brought her alive. After many attempts, she learned to swim upside down and let her body float in water, and it made her feel young and lively once again. She advised Akila to live her life as she wishes; after all, people will not bother what we do unless it affects them directly. Doing at least one thing that pleases us only will make us feel lively.

The woman gazed at her unflinchingly. 'Don't apologize..... what do they know of how cruel the world can be to women?' (Ladies Coupe. P. 209)

Marikolanthu (the fifth companion in the coupe) is a thirty-one-year-old woman. She introduced herself differently; her speech was full of aversion. She fussed over the conversation and the prior complaint raised by all the women who spoke before her. She said that they do not know what life is like; she is different from all others. She said that she is the one who faces real-life problems than others. Marikolanthu was born in a small village near Kancheepuram. Most of her village people work in Chettiyar's house and his silkworm factory. Her father alone lived with his land as he hated to work under the person who lived by killing the silkworms. But when her father died, Marikolanthu's mother had nothing to do but work at Chettiyar's house.

Marikolanthu, too started to accompany her mother to that house to look after the just born son of Chettiar's son. From then, Marikolanthu enjoyed the company of Sujata Akka (second daughter-in-law of Chettiar), the mother of the kid she looks after. A sister like Sujata helped her in all deeds. When Marikolanthu was at her puberty, Sujata sensed wickedness in the eyes

of the men at her house, including her husband. So she sent Marikolandu to her friend to work with them. Sujata's friend was a doctor; they looked after Marikolandu well and even promised to put her in nursing classes to assist them in the hospital.

Marikolandu was called back to look after her ill mother during the Pongal holidays. That changed everything in her life.

In the distance, I heard the calls. Bogi! Bogi!..... with my past, my future too had been torched alive. (Ladies Coupe. P. 240,241)

Murugesan (Chettiyar's first daughter-in-law's brother) envied Marikolandu, who enjoyed much more privilege than his sister. He raped Marikolandu to avenge her on a Bogi night and threatened her not to tell anyone. He even stated that even though she revealed his name, no one would believe her. She wanted to forget that incident, but that incident left a scar in her life; she became pregnant soon. As Murugesan said, no one believed her, not even her mother. As there was no other way, she was taken to Periyamma's house, where she got ditched again. Her Periyamma, who promised to abort the kid, instead allowed it to grow without Marikolanthu's knowledge. She tried her best to kill that child in the womb, but she could not kill the child. She does not even want to see his face, which reminds that brutal incident. Again a woman was not allowed to decide on what she wants in her life. In Margret's life, abortion ruined her life once; here, avoiding the abortion ruined Marikolandu'd live life. Even though she did not want, she gave birth to her child as her relatives insisted. She said it would be a companion for the rest of her life.

If it is not the husband, the relatives decide what the woman has to do. That is what happened with Marikolandu. After that, she went back to the doctors, who was ready to help her with her studies, they neglected to help her as Marikolandu's change, and her rude attitude will be of no use with nurse job. She returned to Chettiar's house for the job of looking after the insane wife of Chettiar. Her mother does not want her to take that risk, but Marikolanthu was adamant about taking that job. She thought that living with normal people would not help her come out of her mindset.

Shut up, shut up, will you? Get out of this house before I have you thrown out. (Ladies Coupe. P. 263,264)

After the death of Chettiyar's insane wife, Sujata never let Marikolanthu leave her. As she was with her from an early age, she felt happy with Marikolanthu. She was very frustrated with her life and marriage. As she got more money and privilege than others in the house, Marikolanthu too accepted staying with her. Marikolanthu left the money she earned with her mother to look after her son Muthu. She hates her son to the core but loves the company of her Sujata Akka. When Sujata worried about the affair of her husband, she consoled her mentally and physically. To get rid of Sujata Akka's problems, she allowed Sujata Akka's husband to visit her nights. When Sujata Akka found this, she accused, scolded and addressed her as a whore and asked her to leave the house. Marikolanthu even lost her mother, and her brothers refused to take care of Muthu. Marikolanthu does not even want to take care of Muthu.

It was time Murugesan paid for what he did to me. (Ladies Coupe. P. 265)

Marikolandu left her village with her son. She does not want to keep him. As she refuses to take the money, which Sujata Akka has given as salary, she does not even have enough money in her hand for her survival. She sold her son as an apprentice in a mill for five thousand rupees. The boy was happy at the thought of entering the new school, and he went with them. Later she came to know that she left the boy with the people who belong to Murugesan. She thought that she had gotten her revenge at last. Murugesan's son was working as an apprentice under him. Later one fine day, she hears that Murugesan is dead; she sees people bring him to cremation. She saw her son too in the crowd who dances there; Muthu was left there to look after, the pile of wood burning in the hands of Muthu. For the first time, she felt her fault for leaving her son alone. She went near him, he smiled on seeing her, and there was no sign of anger in his eyes.

She felt realized folly, all these days, she worked for people she considered her relative, but they were never her relative. The reality is the one who was our own only belongs to the only person who will be standing by us until the end and us. She realized it and now working hard to pay back the money and bring back her son. Akila realized the reality of her life; none is ours who pretends to be ours. So we should lead our life without leaning on others for our life.

Akila recollected memories about her school friend and a widow named Karpagam's, whose words gave her the strength to take this trip alone.

I don't care what my family or anyone thinks..... it is nothing to do whether she is married or not whether her husband is alive or dead (Ladies Coupe. P. 202)

Akila met Karpagam at a departmental store and Karpagam enquired Akila about her marriage. She was shocked to hear that Akila was still single. When Akila gave reasons for her age, Karpagam snapped and scolded her relatives for leaving her like this. She also said that there is no age to live our life. She gave herself as an example, she is a widow, but she chose to wear a colourful dress, bindhi and flowers. She said that she sees them as the signs of her femininity, not as a sign of the married woman. Karpagam said that she never bothered what others said about her life. She lives it as her wish as it is her life, and she even wants Akila to move on live her life as she wishes. This only insisted Akila take this trip.

At last, with all other's views, she reached Kanyakumari. She lived there happily of her own will. At last, she decided to call Hari (Her Lover), whom she left ten years back. Akila never expected that she would get a call, but she did get a call from Hari.

Conclusion

All over our countrywomen were and are forbidden to decide; others took their decision; as we have seen with the life of the ladies and the decision they have taken were influenced by the people around them. In the case of Janaki, she felt her son was her life, and all her decisions revolved around her son and his well-being; when she saw her son's real face, she realized how many years she wasted without living. Then decided to live her life after that, in her way with her husband. In the case of Sheela, she was always fussed over by her father in every deed she did. She was tired of getting screwed for doing nothing. So, at last, she did, which will please her dead grandmother. Even though it enraged people around her, she never bothered at last.

While their relatives fussed over their decisions in the case of Janaki and Sheela, it was their husband in the case of Prabha Devi and Margret. Both the husbands play a dignified role in

the front of society but always wanted to rule over their wife's life and decisions, leaving them to live with nothing but to live as per their words. The amount of interference differs from person to person but not the attitude. When it reached saturation, both the ladies found their possible way to frame their lives and make them suitable to live for. In Marikolandu's life, it is the society that decides on behalf of her. But Marikolandu found the reality and her need at last by herself. Akila (the protagonist), who left her life and love for others, ended with a barren life. After Karpagam's suggestion, she decided wisely. Her long trip answers her question; at last, she was not afraid to call Hari (Akila's lover). She was strong enough to face her life on her own.

There are always other's suggestions in every decision we make, and it is normal. But snatching the right of deciding in their life or their decision is unfair. This happens with every woman all over our country. Our women were ceased from deciding their life needs. The relatives make influence women's decisions before marriage, and their husband does it after marriage. The woman was ceased to live, think or decide on their own. Thus this is very clearly portrayed above, and it is obvious that language plays an important tool in influencing other's decisions. Only the level of influence varies, but they were influenced. It was done in the name of love or by force. People should stop their indulgence by suggesting the ideas for doing work, but they should not impose it on the women to take it as their own decision. This is the only way to allow the women to lead and live their lives on their own. Women's decisional capability will increase only when they are allowed to decide what they want. Women should decide what they want on their own, for their well-being. They can take suggestions from others, but they should not take it as their decision. This is how women can deplete the influence of the other from their decision.

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