



A Minor research Project

On

‘WOMAN TO WOMAN’:

**POLITICS OF RELATIONSHIPS AND POWER IN WORKS OF
JAISHREE MISRA**

Submitted by

Dr. ANITA NAIR

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Aluva-683561, Ernakulam, Kerala

(MRP(H)-658/12-13/KLMG070/UGC-SWRO KLMG070 dt. 29 Mar 2013)



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

Submitted to

The Deputy Secretary

University Grants Commission

South Western Regional Office

Bangalore



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Declaration

I, Anita Nair, hereby declare that this project titled '**Woman to Woman': Politics of Relationships and Power in Works of Jaishree Misra** is a bonafide work done by me.

I also declare that this work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any academic qualification, fellowship or other similar title of other university or board.

Place : Edathala

Date:

Dr. ANITA NAIR

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Acknowledgement

I would like to bow my head before the grace of God, the Almighty, for having blessed me with the completion of this project.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of the University Grants Commission, South Western Regional Office, Bangalore, for providing me this opportunity to do this Minor research project.

I am indebted to every person who was a source of encouragement in the fulfilment of this exercise. The College management and my colleagues have been supportive all the way.

The project would not have been completed without the invaluable support of my friends and family and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their forbearance. The fact that I am doing this at the end of my career makes it even more remarkable and valuable for me. I owe a great deal to my husband, children and grandchildren for their unmitigated love and encouragement.

Dr. ANITA NAIR

Contents

TITLE OF THE PAPER	Page No
Chapter One- Introduction	1
Chapter Two - The Urban Dilemma	10
Chapter Three - The Female Perspective	40
Chapter Four- Power Tactics in Relationships	66
Chapter Five - Conclusion	92
Bibliography	100

Abbreviations

The following primary source materials have been abbreviated throughout this study.

The abbreviations used are shown below;

A Scandalous Secret- *SS*

Secrets and Sins - *S&S*

Secrets and Lies - *S&L*

Synopsis

‘Woman to Woman’: Politics of Relationships and Power in Works of Jaishree Misra’

The study entitled ‘Woman to Woman’: Politics of Relationships and Power in Works of Jaishree Misra’ concentrates on three of her prominent novels. *Secrets and Lies*, *Secrets and Sins* and *A Scandalous Secret*, are similar in titles but pursue very different themes. An underlying aspect of these three novels is the portrayal of women characters in contemporary urban settings and the problems they face and hope to resolve. The study has attempted to trace the growth of the female protagonists in the three books through many adversities, more emotional than physical, to an ultimate empowerment.

The essay titled ‘Cross-Cultural Diaspora’ presents the vision of women writers projecting new visions of ‘elsewhereness’ and developing “what may be called discourses of double displacement.... (which have) three recurring tropes in their work- home and family ethnicity and identity, body and sexuality-through which they articulate a perspective of women’s experience of exile in particular and women’s alienation in general. “Home is a metaphorical symbol that dominates and is linked to “issues of marriage, motherhood, child-rearing and parenting, all of which acquire specific nuances when sited in diasporic locations. The immigrant women’s struggle to negotiate a new territory, culture and milieu are often wrought with pain, fragmentation and psychic alienation” (Sriram *Indian-American Diasporic Literature* 21).

The study is divided into five chapters that each cover a facet of contemporary life in India and abroad. Misra’s experiences both in the country of her birth and in England colour the pages of these works and reflect on the growth of the female characters.

Chapter One introduces the topic, giving an insight into Jaishree Misra as a writer who takes up the different components that are integral to women's identity such as marriage, motherhood, parenting, and belonging to view them through the prism of diaspora.

Chapter Two titled *'The Urban Dilemma'* pursues the lives of urban female characters belonging to families in India, some of whom migrate to the United Kingdom. The focus is on how urban norms affect these characters through the culture variations they face. Other points of interest are how these women pursue various life styles and fulfil their expectations so far as personal happiness is concerned.

Chapter Three, *'The Female Perspective'* deals with contemporary awareness of urban feminism and the re-invented Indian woman who deals with it. Urban thinking and life style also plays a key part in developing the female persona in these works. The woman character moves from a traditional stand to a new understanding of the reality before her. This growth is facilitated in many instances by urban male who exhibits a different way of dealing with the needs of the women they associate with. These male characters are more adaptive and able to facilitate the transformation which happens to the female.

Chapter Four, *'Power Tactics in Relationships'* traces the way that the characters seek to find a fine medium between unspoken taboos as well as the new permissiveness that exists in society today. The present day urban Indian scenario sees the bonds between people being tortured by power tactics, the shift in which causes much disruption and anguish. The perpetual power struggle affects women greatly and they are at a loss, pitted against men, other women or suffocating in the embrace of family constraints. The power tactics employed by these characters are the motivation for breaking free, albeit in the own terms of the women concerned. Female characters grow empowered in the process and

seek to thrust off the chains of discrimination and thus evolve according to their own level of comfort.

This study of these three novels of Jaishree Misra depicts the evolution of the urban woman first through the recognition of the circumstances she faces, to the appreciation of herself as a woman. She does not fight against her barriers but goes forward to create a life she can be happy with. Chapter Five, concludes the study with an overview of the transformation of the contemporary urban female through the support of a female sisterhood that enables bonding. Jaishree Misra, talking to Nisha Paul, states her belief that the power of female friendship raises life to another level. The potency of the strength of such friends 'standing by you in a crisis' as well as a joyous moment 'without being demanding in any way' is reflected in the pages of Misra's fiction ('Secrets and Disclosures.' *Verve*. June 2009).