



A Study of Family and Female Selfhood in Kavery Nambisan's *Mango-coloured Fish*

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Abstract

Kavery Nambisan's *Mango-coloured Fish* is about a young woman called Shari @ Sharada. She belongs to a well off family in madras. Her life is controlled by her dominating mother, silent father, and familial expectations. She is engaged to Gautam, but still is confused. She becomes restless thinking about the marriage and her life after marriage. To escape from this pressure, she goes to Vrindaban where her brother Krishna and his wife Teji live. This journey gives Shari some space to think alone. She remembers her childhood days. She recollects her tough relationship with her mother, the kind relationship with Parvati aunty and Paru uncle, old relationship with a blind friend Naren who was very important to her. Shari realizes something very important from these reminiscences. She has understood that she has spent much of her life to please others and hide her true feelings. In Vrindaban, Krishna and Teji's simple and laborious life is contrast to what Shari's family now leads- false respect and societal pride. Their life makes her understand that love, marriage, family, respect all are more complex than her previous understanding. Towards the end of the novel, Shari decides that she could not marry Gautam just for her family's wish. She stops behaving falsely to herself and others. Her decision to stop the marriage for a while is her first true self decision. She learns to listen to her inner voice, accept her past, and to select her own future. This paper analyses the portrayal of female selfhood, family authority and self-directed choice in the novel. In this novel, female selfhood is attained neither as romantic fulfilment nor as simple rebellion, but as the courage to reject false obedience and treat 'own' thought as authority.

Keywords: Female Selfhood, Family Agency, Marriage, Autonomy.