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THE JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY IN PREETI SHENOY'S *LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT*

Dr. Kishorkumar G. Gaikawad

Asst. Professor, Dept. of English
Dadapatil Rajale Arts and Science College,
Adinathnagar.Tal: Pathardi,
Dist: Ahmednagar. Maharashtra.
Email-gaikawad.kishorkumar@gmail.com

Abstract:

The theme of self-discovery is a prominent and recurring motif in Indian English literature. Authors such as Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri often explore characters' journeys of self-realization as they navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity, personal desires and familial obligations. These narratives frequently depict protagonists grappling with cultural hybridity, displacement, and the search for belonging, as they strive to reconcile their Indian heritage with Western influences. Through introspective prose and nuanced character development, Indian English literature illuminates the transformative power of self-discovery, portraying it as a means of overcoming internal conflicts, challenging societal norms, and forging authentic identities in a rapidly changing world.

*This research paper explores the journey of self-discovery in Preeti Shenoy's *Life Is What You Make It*, focusing on the protagonist, Ankita, as she navigates the complexities of identity, mental health, and societal expectations. The narrative*

highlights Ankita's struggles with depression and the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles, illustrating the challenges faced by contemporary women in India. Through a feminist lens, the study examines how Shenoy portrays the inner conflicts and triumphs of her characters, emphasizing themes of resilience and personal empowerment. Ankita's journey symbolizes the broader quest for self-acceptance and the importance of pursuing one's passions amidst adversity. The paper delves into key moments that catalyze her transformation, showcasing the significance of support systems and personal agency in the healing process. By analyzing the intersections of mental health and societal norms, this research contributes to the discourse on women's literature in India, advocating for greater awareness and understanding of mental health issues. Ultimately, the article underscores the idea that self-discovery is a dynamic process, encouraging readers to embrace their individuality and carve their own paths in life.

Keywords: *Self-Discovery, Mental Health, Empowerment, Identity, Societal Expectations.*



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