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**Anitha Desai's *The Village by the Sea: The Effort of Sustenance***

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at showing the relevance of the contemporary societal life of a common man's family who are entangled in familial bonding. It also exhibits the real life situations of lower middle class people like uneducated parents who are fully burdened with financial constraints, problems in leading the family with the bare minimum needs of life. To make matters worse the mother is sick and the father becomes a drunkard as he was duped by someone who promised to get him a good job. All these are narrated in great detail. by Anita Desai in this work "*Village by The Sea*". The setting of the novel at first is seen in a village later it shifts to a nearby city Mumbai. This is a common feature which is generally seen happening in the present scenario as many of the farmers and other daily laborers migrate from village to the city for their livelihood. The same sort of life and description among the middle class people is also found in other works like Pearl S.Buck's '*The Refugees*' and '*Devoted Son*' By Anita Desai. This paper throws light on the lower middle class people who face a lot of hardships but still succeed in familial bonding, developing good relationships and having an indomitable spirit in achieving success in the end by brushing aside all those hardships. Finally the story closes on a happy note as the siblings namely the brother and sister remain cordial in relationship throughout.

**Keywords:** Contemporary relevancy, Relations, Economical Reality, Plot, Characters & Setting

**Full Text:** Anita Desai's *The Village by The Sea* is written with a simple sensibility by touching the realistic elements in the life of a common man in Indian society. The novel gives a glimpse of the hurdles and barriers which are faced by a poverty stricken family in a small Indian village. The story is set in a small fishing village which is very near to the great city of Bombay, now known as Mumbai. The main characters of the story are Lila and Hari, two siblings in a family struggling to make both their ends meet. Lila is 13 and Hari is a year younger. They have to shoulder the responsibilities in order to survive the harsh realities of their family's precarious financial condition. With their mother chronically ill and their father being an alcoholic, they are in dire need

to earn money in order to run the household and educate their two younger sisters. As a result, both Hari and Lila had to give up their studies.

Owing to the above reasons life poses a serious threat to them to manage and live a normal life. Lila has only a few days of work as a servant and Hari works on a small plot of land in order to grow crops. The produce from the land is barely enough to fill their belly and his small fishing net never succeeded in an abundant catch of fish to quench their hunger. Hari is strong and wants to get a better job but he cannot tolerate the ruthlessness of fate acting on his family. He runs away to Bombay, without the knowledge of his family, leaving Lila to manage all things by herself. The way the siblings forge ahead in this story in spite of several short comings and their inexplicable poverty is remarkable. However a "Change is inevitable." There is a wonderful line from the novel emphasizing the same idea, "The wheel turns and turns and turns; it never stops and stands still" and finally the siblings succeed in their life by sailing over poverty that they were faced with during their early days.

At one point, Hari who is thoroughly frustrated resembles the character of Bakha, the protagonist of Mulk Raj Anand's '*The Untouchable*.' Hari is completely shaken as he had to bear the family burdens and he suddenly disappears from home in order to earn money elsewhere. He definitely knows his responsibility. He keeps his promise and earns money and sends it to his family. Likewise Lila being the elder child in the family bears the burden of the whole family single handedly on her shoulders and takes care of the rest of the siblings with motherly care and affection.

The way the siblings lead their life is narrated in such a way that they share all the travails and tribulations together and they stand united. They stick on to the principles as they do not have their parental support as the mother is bed ridden who cannot even look after her children when they were sick. Unfortunately, the father, who is supposed to be more careful towards the children in these circumstances is more negligent and spends a lot for his menial pleasures like drinking and other things.