

Mother-Daughter Relationship In Preeti Shenoy's *When Love Came Calling*: A Study Using The Framework Of Social Action Theory

Shalini Jane Anne Rebello^{1&2*} & A. Lourdusamy³

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Social Science & Humanities, Srinivas
University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

² Assistant Professor, Yenepoya Institute of Arts, Science, Commerce & Management
ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-1395-9662; Email ID: shalinisequeira1@gmail.com

³ Research Professor, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas
University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.
ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-9011-6212; Email ID: swamysac@gmail.com

Area/Section: Social Science

Type of the Paper: Empirical

Type of Review: Peer Reviewed as per [C|O|P|E](#) guidance.

Indexed in: OpenAIRE.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14463722>

Google Scholar Citation: [IJPL](#)

How to Cite this Paper:

Rebello, S. J. A. & Lourdusamy, A.(2024).Mother-Daughter Relationship in Preeti Shenoy's *When Love Came Calling*: A Study Using the Framework of Social Action Theory. *International Journal of Philosophy and Languages (IJPL)*, 3(2), 56-63. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14463722>

International Journal of Philosophy and Languages (IJPL)

A Refereed International Journal of Srinivas University, India.

CrossRef DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47992/IJPL.2583.9934.0034>

Received on: 23/11/2024

Published on: 14/12/2024

© With Authors.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 4.0 International License](#) subject to proper citation to the publication source of the work.

Disclaimer: The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by Srinivas Publications (S.P.), India are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of the SP. The SP disclaims of any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.

Mother-Daughter Relationship In Preeti Shenoy's *When Love Came Calling*: A Study Using The Framework Of Social Action Theory

Shalini Jane Anne Rebello^{1&2*} & A. Lourdusamy³

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Social Science & Humanities, Srinivas
University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

² Assistant Professor, Yenepoya Institute of Arts, Science, Commerce & Management

ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-1395-9662; Email ID: shalinisequeira1@gmail.com

³ Research Professor, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas
University, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.

ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-9011-6212; Email ID: swamysac@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*Parents have a vital role in forming a child's character, and one of the most unique relationships a person can have is between a mother and her daughter. The greatest blessing a woman can receive in her life is to become a mother, and the most invaluable relationship she may cultivate is with her daughter. The bond between a mother and daughter is distinctive as they can function as best friends, competitors, partners in mischief, and companions at different times. A mother consistently offers unwavering support to her daughter, regardless of the circumstances. Moreover, as the daughter matures, she becomes her mother's close confidante, fostering a unique bond that they cherish together. A mother sees her own childhood, innocence, fears, past experiences, adolescence, and love reflected in her daughter. She can always act as her daughter's greatest role model, sharing crucial lessons necessary for thriving and achieving success. A mother's words provide the most potent comfort, support, and motivation. However, there are instances when the dynamics between a mother and daughter can become complicated and may grow challenging as the daughter reaches maturity. Any unhealthy patterns that develop in their relationship can harm their connection and adversely affect the friendship and closeness that are vital components of it. This analysis seeks to explore the mother-daughter dynamic in the novel *When Love Came Calling* by Preeti Shenoy. Given the significant influence maternal figures have in teaching life lessons and essential emotions such as empathy, kindness, and love, this relationship can serve as the foundation for societal functioning. A "healthy" mother-daughter bond fosters intimacy and closeness while also permitting independence and space. This dynamic changes at each phase of life, from childhood to adulthood.*

Keywords: Family, Mother, Daughter, Preeti Shenoy, Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Latin word "familia" is the root of the English word "family." A family typically resides together under one roof and forms deep connections among its members. Family ties can be established through blood relations, marriage, or adoption. The immediate family includes parents, children, siblings, and spouses. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins are all considered to be part of an extended family. With urbanisation, there has been a rise in nuclear families, while joint families are becoming increasingly rare. Having a caring and supportive family is crucial for providing steadfast support throughout life. Family bonds do, in fact, have a big influence on how people behave. Joyful families maintain emotional connections and share strong values. They contribute to building confidence and resilience in facing life's challenges and fostering good relationships with each other. They dedicate quality time to each other and share a strong sense of belonging. Additionally, family members look after one another and serve as role models for the younger generation. They assist one

another during difficult times and demonstrate strength in such situations. Furthermore, their expressions of gratitude towards each other help to maintain closeness.

The unwavering affection that exists between mothers and daughters is hard to describe. A mother's life revolves around her daughter. The bond between a daughter and her mother begins at the moment of birth. As the daughter matures, their connection deepens, yet their feelings remain distinct. Even if daughters don't always express it, there is a strong attachment between them. A mother's embrace is always available to her child, even when things go wrong. This beautiful relationship can weaken for various reasons, affecting both the mother and daughter. It is important to address the issues and repair the relationship in such situations.

Puja's strict mother forcibly sends her to a rural area in Kerala to spend her eight-week summer vacation to do volunteer work. There she comes across Arush, studious and shy who has come from Britain to spend 12 weeks as his parents belong to this place and has never been over here. Arush, an artist who was traveling to India for the first time, was excited to work at a rural camp. They are clearly different from one another. However, with no proper internet and no other distractions, they fall in love. When calamity strikes, Arush discovers that India is not always the idyllic postcard he had assumed it was, and Puja is forced to face the hard truths of life. Puja leaves her home secretly to meet Arush in the UK. But her mother especially realises her mistake of not understanding Puja leading to reconciliation in the end. The mother-daughter relationship between Chaitra and Puja is explored in the novel, *When Love Came Calling*.

Literature is a mirror of human life, offering a narrative space where actions, decisions, and their underlying motivations are explored in depth. The present study analyses the select novels of Preeti Shenoy from the perspective of Social Action theory. This sociological critical theory maintains that the relationships and meanings of the individuals that comprise a society are what shape it. Social action theories look at the reasons behind people's decisions to adopt certain behaviours. According to social action theory's founder, Max Weber (1864–1920), there are four different kinds of social action: two social and two logical. People's interpretations of circumstances shape social actions, according to the symbolic interactionist school of social action theory. Applying Social Action Theory to literature allows readers and scholars to uncover the deeper motivations, societal influences, and cultural contexts that drive characters' actions and shape narratives.

Types of Social Action

- Instrumental Rational Action: In order to accomplish a goal, social actors determine the most effective method.
- Value Rational Action: Taking action toward an objective that is deemed desirable in and of itself.
- Traditional Action: Typical, regular, or routine behaviours carried out mindlessly or without conscious decision.
- Affective action: Action that conveys emotion is referred to as affective action.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this article are:

- (1) To explore the importance of family bonds.
- (2) To examine the challenges of navigating parent-child relationships during adolescence.
- (3) To discuss the role of communication in strengthening parent-child ties.
- (4) To highlight the role of conflict resolution.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE/ RELATED WORKS:

Lal, S. (2017) explores the several facets of mother-daughter relationships in Githa Hariharan's works. This study's only goal was to teach people to learn from the mistakes made by fictional characters so that they don't make the same mistakes in real life and may coexist peacefully with each other [1].

Gupta, R. (2019) highlights the factors that lead to estrangement between mothers and daughters, noting that daughters often struggle to understand the socioeconomic challenges their mothers face. He also

offers insightful perspectives on the emotional pain mothers endure as they stifle their own dreams and aspirations for the sake of their daughters, even in these concise portrayals of motherhood. Through the portrayal of the patriarchal system, where even educated contemporary women find themselves torn between the responsibilities of motherhood and their desire for professional independence, she enriches her representation of the mother-daughter relationship [2].

Following an analysis of the novel, Goel (2014) concludes that Virmati and Ida challenge the traditional roles assigned to women. Both demonstrate a strong yearning for self-fulfillment, despite belonging to different generations. The personal and intimate experiences of Virmati and Ida have enabled Manju Kapur to boldly address even the most difficult topics [3].

Sharma, A. (2017) seeks to explore the relationship between mothers and daughters in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, particularly highlighting Gauri's emotional distance from her daughter Bela. Gauri embraces the American ideal of self-sufficiency for her personal life and career. She becomes so absorbed in a foreign culture that she neglects her duties and becomes disconnected from reality, love, and familial bonds. Although Gauri expresses remorse for her thoughtless actions, the damage inflicted on her father and daughter remains irreparable, and her behavior cannot be excused [4].

Ewaidat, H. (2021) asserts that in the two short stories, Tan, who blends her Chinese heritage with her American education, along with Davis, who has no ethnic background, examine the failures in communication within this complex relationship, seeking to rebuild this deeply impactful connection [5].

Pushkala, D. R., and Kannan, P. (2020) aim to explore how ethnic family dynamics are illustrated in R.K. Narayan's works, seeking to show that the novels of Narayan vividly embody ethnic characteristics. This analysis of ethnic aspects in selected novels by R.K. Narayan specifically focuses on the Tamil Hindu community in South India. The primary emphasis of the study is on family relationships. The results emphasize the crucial role of ethnicity in mirroring societal values. The focus on South Indian Hindu culture is connected to its traditions and religion, which have largely preserved their original form, unlike other parts of India that have been significantly influenced by foreign invasions. [6]

Sharma, S. (2024) discusses the complicated relationship between a mother and daughter, the role of motherhood as it is placed on women, and how it affects their relationship with their children. The relationship between a mother and her daughter may suffer as a result of societal expectations for women to be good mothers. The way in which a daughter builds her identity in connection to her mother. The mother-daughter connection as it is depicted in Indian women writers' works is the subject of this essay[7].

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This study is limited to Preeti Shenoy's chosen works and their effects on interpersonal interactions using Social Action Theory is limited. When *Love Came Calling*, a novel by Preeti Shenoy, serves as the primary source for this study's exploratory methodology. Peer-reviewed articles, scholarly papers, and relevant internet sources are also examined. Google Scholar has been used by the researcher to conduct a thorough literature review on the topic.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

5.1 Instrumental Rational Action:

At the start of the novel, Puja had no life goals or a plan. Puja was constantly told to follow her passion, put in a lot of effort, enjoy her work, and remember that everything in life happens for a reason. However, no one in her family gave her advice on how to find her passion. She was living a careless, unfocused life because she had been raised in an opulent environment. Puja spent a lot her valuable time on social media. She had received 54% in the board examinations and was admitted to a reputable

college to pursue a Bachelor of Business Management degree because of her mother's connections. She received two suspensions from school: one in class 11 for skipping class and another in class 12 for participating in a foolish practical prank on the replacement instructor. Her inability to consistently receive good grades had been a continuous source of disappointment for her parents. She was frequently compared to her elder sister Divya. Concerned about her daughter's future, Puja's mother encouraged her to be goal-oriented. She wanted Puja to earn a distinguished degree and succeed professionally. The CAT is a crucial test in India that enables applicants to enrol for management degrees at the best Indian universities, such as the Indian Institute of Management (IIM). The Holy Grail of education for many Indians is an IIT or IIM designation. In order to secure a seat at one of the best Indian universities, such as the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Puja's mother urged her to take CAT coaching lessons. Puja's older sister, Divya, completed her MBA at IIM and secured a position at a foreign bank through campus recruitment. She desired that Puja follow Divya's path.

During their undergraduate breaks, Puja's mother and sister were the type of people who attended internships to boost their resumes. As a prosperous physician, her mother wished for Puja to have a promising future. She had a modest upbringing, but she was highly driven, put in a lot of effort, and established a goal for herself at a young age: to leave her Belapur one-bedroom house. She was admitted to every medical college after passing all of the entrance exams. She even took a loan to pay for her own medical bills. Her father was a clerk, and in order to pay off the loan, she had to start working early. Furthermore, against her choice, her mother, Chaitra, signed her up for an eight-week community development program in a remote Wayanad district to work at Aswathy Bhawan, an NGO, during her summer vacation. The Wayanad NGO served Dalit women, tribal people, and underprivileged kids. Volunteers were needed for marketing, teaching, gardening, and an art project and were served three organic, traditional home-cooked meals. Puja's mother instructed her to participate in a community development program in order to make the most of her vacation time. Puja thought it was terrible enough to force someone to perform unpaid labour. She was being moved to a rural village when her pals were taking vacations in far-flung locations. For forcibly sending her to a location like this, with terrifyingly curving roads that rise up, on and on for what seems like an eternity, Puja loathed her mother.

5.2. Value Rational Action:

Children who are raised with a set of values and beliefs are more equipped to contribute positively to society. Puja's ultimate choice to focus on early childhood development is consistent with value-rational behavior. She learns to appreciate the inherent fulfilment of assisting people and genuinely improving their lives while working with children at Aswathy Bhawan. Her resolve to alter her professional path and put her own fulfilment ahead of social acceptance is motivated by her newfound passion. At Ashwaty Bhawan, she realized that she had a talent for working with children. She took pleasure in teaching them, grading their assignments, and having a positive impact on their lives. She enjoyed making a difference for those kids and felt appreciated there. After completing her degree, Puja aimed to pursue a course focused on early childhood development. She planned to join an organization like Ashwaty Bhawan to gain experience before eventually establishing her own center for underprivileged children. She now had a clear vision for her future. Her initial reluctance to follow a management course indicated a gap between her personal beliefs and the societal expectations placed upon her. Puja's mother supports her decision saying,

'I am happy you have a plan. I am not going to insist on your doing a management degree. Just do what makes you happy. Thank you for being open and honest' (Shenoy, 2020, p. 227) [8].

5.3. Affective Action:

Mothers and daughters have complex, deep relationships, which makes any painful experience all the more agonizing. A daughter's relationship with her mother is destroyed and she suffers greatly emotionally as a result of her actions. For them both, it can be a complicated and emotionally taxing scenario. In this situation, it is imperative to comprehend, communicate, and show empathy. Both parties need to be honest about their sentiments and work toward a solution through patience and conversation. Sometimes the healing of wounds is aided by recognizing the underlying causes, which include misunderstanding, unfulfilled expectations, and divergent viewpoints.

Following the incident in Wayanad, Chaitra urged Puja to concentrate on her CAT entrance exams. She wanted her to stay focused in life, regularly attend coaching classes, and successfully pass this competitive exam. Puja was unable to obtain the voluntary work certificate at Ashwaty Bhawan because she had not officially finished the program. Chaitra held Puja responsible for associating with various people and getting arrested for drug possession. She felt embarrassed by her daughter's actions.

‘You have ruined the reputation of this family. I have worked so hard to reach this position today. Your father has worked so hard. Not only do you put zero effort in your studies, but you also cause trouble. We could excuse you, Puja, if it was just once. But this is how you have been from class 11. What is wrong with you? Why can’t you just take things seriously?’ (Shenoy, 2020, p. 109) [8]

The news channels were covering the event involving Puja and Arush at the hospital. They reported that Arush, a British citizen who sought to purchase cannabis, was attacked. They edited the footage to exclude the segment where Puja mentioned Sujit and explicitly stated her innocence. The reports discussed the earlier seizure of ganja in Wayanad and the arrest of a female student from Kochi related to the incident. The media also involved her parents, highlighting that she was the child of a well-known businessman and that her mother was a respected surgeon. However, when she asserted that Arush was not involved with drugs and that the television stations were fabricating stories, they did not believe her. Her mother was worried about their reputation, which had been tarnished because of Puja. Her mother said,

‘I want you to have no contact with him whatsoever. Do you hear me? No contact. I don’t want you involved with any of these idiots. They are all riff-raff. Scum of the society. Do you understand?’ (Shenoy, 2020, p. 151) [8]

Puja very well knew that Arush had gone to face Sujit because he couldn't stand what Sujit had done to her. However, her parents were unwilling to hear her side. Her mother confiscated her phone and laptop. After seeing the news on television, the principal of Puja's college called her mother and decided to suspend her. The coaching center also informed her that Puja had not been attending any coaching sessions. She suspected that Puja was meeting Arush daily and was eager to uncover the truth from her. Puja admitted that she had indeed been seeing him. Her mother felt a deep sense of disappointment in her daughter. ‘You deserve to be whipped,’ her mother said ‘Just tell them to take her to the lock-up again. Maybe she will learn a lesson. Maybe she will learn not to lie.’ (Shenoy, 2020, p. 227) [8]

The strength of the bond between parents and children largely relies on clear and truthful communication. By actively listening to children and expressing oneself with respect, a positive dialogue can be established. The best way to repair a strained relationship is to address the pain felt by both parties, allowing for forgiveness and the ability to move forward from past grievances. Puja and her mother experienced a lack of effective communication. When Puja secretly left home, her mother recognized her error in imposing her own opinions onto her. In the end, Puja demonstrates maturity and underscores the importance of open communication.

‘I understood one thing on this journey. That no matter who you choose to love, we must always remember that family comes first. If there are misunderstandings, we need to speak and sort out things, rather than running away. Running away just creates more problems. I wasn’t thinking and I am sorry. I apologise for everything I have done.’ (Shenoy, 2020, p. 227) [8]

Unconditional love and support create a sense of safety and self-esteem in children, and they thrive when they feel valued and embraced by their parents. Although Puja's mother cared deeply for her daughter, she was imposing her own beliefs on her. This lack of understanding led Puja to secretly leave her home and travel to London to see Arush. Upon realizing her error, she discovers Puja's emotions after reading her diary. She conveys her feelings through an email.

‘I am still in shock I have never once paused to examine my actions or the effect they would have on you. I was hell bent that you achieve academic success at any cost, little thinking about what it is doing

to you. Since that was what I wanted all my life, I couldn't comprehend why you would not want that. You are such a bright girl and I felt you were wasting your potential. Now I see the futility of it all. If it is going to make you hate us so much, if it is going to make life so unbearable for you that you can't even stand seeing me, I don't see the purpose of it.' (Shenoy, 2020, p. 218) [8]

In any family, disagreements will surely arise, but how they are resolved will determine how effectively the relationships function as a whole. Family members become estranged and resentful of one another as a result of unresolved conflicts. Emotions play a key part in shaping families, influencing how members relate to one another and see their own roles within the group. Partnerships and relationships can be strengthened via open and sincere emotional expression. However, suppressed or inappropriately expressed feelings can lead to tension and conflict. Compromise, active listening, negotiation, and empathy are all effective conflict resolution strategies. Her feelings, such as rage, defiance, and opposition to expectations placed upon her, drive her reactions more so than any deliberate reasoning. In the end, Puja's parents comprehend their daughter. In the case of Puja and Chaitra, typical examples of affective action include the expression of emotions and anger towards each other.

5.4. Traditional Action:

Early life is a critical time in establishing a strong foundation for a child's future growth and character attributes. Given that they are the ones who bring their children into the world, parents are entitled to use their influence and authority over their lives. It would be extremely difficult for parents to constantly impose their own values and ideas on their children after they are old enough to make their own judgments. It is normal for parents to want the best for their children and make sure they aren't misled. When children are mature enough to form their own opinions, it would be quite challenging for parents to continuously force their own beliefs and ideals on them. Often, mothers desire their daughters to emulate them and uphold ideals or socially acceptable values, which can lead to conflicts, resentment, and an overall unhealthy relationship. Furthermore, society places a high premium on academic success. Parents frequently exert immense pressure on their children to achieve great things and thrive in this highly competitive environment. Nevertheless, this significant burden on children results in increased stress and anxiety, hindering their growth and learning. Puja's mother upholds the conventional ideals of academic achievement and career advancement. She anticipates that Puja will adhere to a traditional career and success route that reflects academic excellence and professional prestige. The difficulties of striking a balance between tradition and uniqueness are highlighted by this situation, which shows how conventional behaviour, even when it stems from well-intentioned actions, can unintentionally prolong bad relationships and emotional distress.

6. CONCLUSION:

The bond between mother and daughter in the novel is characterized by profound affection yet hindered by communication breakdowns and unfulfilled expectations. Chaitra, influenced by her own struggles and passions, imposes her beliefs and aspirations on Puja, hoping to see her daughter excel in more conventional, esteemed professions like her elder sister Divya. This creates further tension, and the drug incident only exacerbates matters; Chaitra is more focused on reputation than understanding her daughter's perspective. However, the dynamic shifts when Chaitra finds Puja's diary, providing her with insight into her daughter's true passions. Puja's experiences at Ashwaty Bhawan unveil her natural talent for working with children and highlight the need to make a meaningful impact on the lives of the underprivileged. This revelation signifies a new sense of purpose and direction for Puja, a stark contrast to the confusion and aimlessness that characterized much of her earlier years. Chaitra begins to recognize and value Puja's individual strengths and dreams, coming to terms with the fact that her daughter's journey to fulfillment may lead her down a different path than she originally envisioned. In conclusion, their relationship transforms from one dominated by control and misunderstanding to one of shared respect and acceptance. While Chaitra's intentions have always stemmed from love, it is only by loosening her rigid expectations that she can genuinely understand and support Puja's uniqueness and ambitions. Meanwhile, Puja evolves from a rebellious, uncertain young woman into someone with

defined goals and a sense of purpose, paving the way for a healthier, more balanced connection with her mother. In summary, Social Action Theory provides a framework to understand the motivations and actions of Puja and her family. Puja's journey from meeting external expectations to discovering her own goals and values highlights a shift from traditional actions to personal fulfillment. Her emotional responses bring about significant changes in her behavior, leading her to find a path that aligns with her true interests.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Lal, S. (2017). Novels of Githa Hariharan: A Planet of Mother-Daughter Relationship. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 5(3), 297-302. [Google Scholar](#)
- [2] Gupta, R. (2019). Feminist Discourses of Mother-Daughter Relationship in Shashi Deshpande's Select Novels. *International Journal of Latest Transactions in Engineering and Science (IJLTES)*, 8(2), 7-10. [Google Scholar](#)
- [3] Goel, M. (2014). An Analysis of Mother-Daughter Relationship in Difficult Daughters. *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, 5(2), 273-278. [Google Scholar](#)
- [4] Sharma, A. (2017). The Mother-Daughter Relationship in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Low Land. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 5(2), 703-706. [Google Scholar](#)
- [5] Ewaidat, H. (2021). Reconstructing the Mother-Daughter Relationship: Lydia Davis and Amy Tan. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 5(1), 324-335. [Google Scholar](#)
- [6] Pushkala, D. R., & Kannan, P. (2020). Ethnic Aspects of Familial Relationships in the Select Novels of RK Narayan. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 25(4), 23-27. [Google Scholar](#)
- [7] Sharma, S. (2024). Exploring the Dynamic Tapestry of Mother-Daughter Relationships in Indian English Literature. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 9(2), 11-13. [Google scholar](#)
- [8] Shenoy, P. (2020). *When Love Came Calling*. Shrishti Publishers & Distributors.
https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/When_Love_Came_Calling/j5uo0AEACAAJ?hl=en on 20th November 2024.
