CHAPTER - 4
IDENTITY

4.1) SECTION--- I: MARIAN ANDERSON

This chapter will have again six sections each one is devoted to each woman-writer. The aim of this chapter is to focus their efforts of getting themselves free from the social tyranny and found the place for themselves in the same world and how far they have succeeded in their search for identity. In fact many complex issues entrapped their identities and they were condemned to endless sufferings. Black women writing is the struggle of their lives with their own self-identity in the society, struggle to find a voice and claim selfhood in a world that repeatedly devalues all things feminine. (Brownley Kimmich XIII)

4.1.1) Initial struggle:

Marian Anderson is one of the greatest artists of 20th century regardless of race, color of nationality. In her initial years she toured Europe, Africa, South America and requested to sing at the White House only. Through her singing she brought out all the tragedy of her rejected and despised race. She was spiritually strong woman to face the dehumanizing acts of racism. In one of her songs, ‘Were you be There When They Crucified My Lord?'; she brought the immense sorrow and agonies of those people who knew what it meant to be crucified. She had carefully selected her songs which very significantly reflecting the plight of ‘her people’ and country. Some of them were ‘America’, ‘Sweet Land of Liberty’, ‘Nobody Knows the Trouble I have Seen’, ‘My Lord What a Morning’, My Soul Is Anchored in the Lord’ and many other German Lirder and Italian aerials. She ends her every program with ‘Negro Spirituals.’ She says, “They are my own people and music. But it is not for that reason I love to sing them. I love the Spirituals because they are
truly spiritual in quality. They give forth an aura of faith, simplicity, humility and hope.” (Newman, 1990 18)

She faced constant, daily humiliation right from the childhood and even after becoming world famous singer. She fell in love with music at an early age but success did not come to her easily. After her father’s death she did all the odd jobs of whites. In her childhood she cleaned and scrubbed the houses of white families just to get food for the family and provided support to her mother. Then from the age of 10 she earned small amount of money by singing in the Church meetings. With the support of family, friends, neighbors, teachers, people of the Union Baptist Church and fellowships she could study abroad, first in London and then Berlin.

4.1.2) Life with Segregation and Discrimination:

Like many other black artists in the days of segregation, she had to go to Europe to gain musical training and recognition because the local music teachers were not ready to train her professionally just because of her color. Despite her extraordinary talent of music, she was the victim of poverty, racism and White’s prejudices. She shares one of the most important and proud memories of the family that calling her mother’s White employee and informing her that Annie Anderson would not be returning to work. Due to her musical talent she could seek the guidance of the famous American impresario, Sol Hurlok.

The most dehumanizing incident of her life that the D.A.R. denied Anderson, as she was a black woman to perform at the Capital of Nation. Mrs. Roosevelt resigned from the Organization in protest. Marian was very much hurt by the racial inequalities in her country. This event highlighted the agonies of Black people and their struggle for Civil rights but lifted her status with dignity.
4.1.3) Achievements and Honours:--

The famous concert at Lincoln Memorial after some months of that incident proved that her musical talent could shatter the color line. Four years later D.A.R. invited her to perform at Constitution Hall in China Relief concert. She reacted, “I felt no different than I had in other hall. There was no sense of triumph. I was very happy to sing there.”(120)

She was awarded with numerous awards as the Spingarn Medal, given annually to the American Negro who has made the highest achievement in an honorable field of endeavor, Presidential Medal for freedom, National Medal of Arts, Grammy Award for Lifetime achievement and Bok Award of 10,000 dollars; given to an outstanding citizen of Philadelphia whose service brings special credit to the society. She received many times honorary degrees of Doctor of Music from Howard Universities, Temple Universities and Smith College. In 1955 Marian became the first black singer to perform a principle role at the Metropolitan Opera. In 1958 she was invited as a delegate to United Nations and was appointed ambassador for U.S.

As she wanted to give back to the society so she established ‘Marian Anderson Scholarship’ She wanted to help young artists regardless of race, color and creed who have an urge to pursue artistic career. Three trustees administered it. She was directly involved in many social and religious organizations and encouraged many young artists and made a point to help the young singers. She was also associated with Young Audience, an organization that presents school concerts with professional musician. She gave benefit concerts for CORE and NAACP. During World War II and the Korean War, she entertained troops in the hospitals and bases. She says, “I got things done by just showing up.” She was definitely a role model for the black musicians who followed her. Many African-American operas and concert singers including Leontyne Price and Kathleen Battle have credited Marian as their inspiration. Price recalled the recording, “I listened, thinking this is
beautiful, it was a revelation and I wept.” (Kozinn 1996, 20) She was fully committed to her work against all social injustice and repression.

4.1.4) Going Beyond Self with right Attitude:--

At every concert she was welcomed by enthusiastic audience even the newspaper reports and reviews highlighted her performance on the front pages. Some of them, “Superlative musicianship.” The New York Tribune critic of her concert wrote that there was, “innate warmth” in her higher tones and her personality, commanding presence and the impression she gives her listeners of being absorbed in each song were persuasive as usual. (Stevenson 27) Times wrote of her as a “dedicated character, devoutly simple, calm and religious. Taubman wrote ‘tall stately woman, with an abundance of graciousness and good humor.’ Olive Downas wrote for her as a ‘contralto of shining range and volume, managed with suppleness and grace.’ A prestigious conductor Toscanini declared, “a voice like her is heard only once in a 100 years.”(158) She maintained the dignity of stage shows and achieved international recognition and admirations. Her performance is seen as a historic event at the dawn of the Civil Right Movement.

She never did comment or express her hatred or anger toward press or anybody. Her reaction to prejudice and racism; it is like a hair across your cheek, you cannot see it, you can’t find it with your fingers but you keep brushing at it because the feel of it irritating. Because of racism and discrimination Marian stayed away from Southern America since the late 50s. But in February 1963, she undertook the first ever integrated tour of the state of Texas. Thousands of fans stood in the pouring rain in San Antonio just to welcome her arrival to the States. She was made an honorary citizen of Texas and met Vice-President Mr. Lyndon Johnson along with his wife. The tour of Texas hailed as a milestone in race relation.

She did not become aggressive opponent of racism. Rather she preferred to educate and enlighten her listeners through her own example and actions. As a role model
she never gave up hope for the future of both her people and her country. In 1990 Rosalyn Story wrote a book on Marian entitled *And So I Sing: African-American Divas of Opera and Concert* in that she says about Marian Anderson whose career had quietly and continuously broken barriers, dissolved hostilities and awakened the consciousness of an entire country, was the only singer whose presence could signify the real meaning of the event. The length and contour of her own journey, from poor prodigy to artist-ambassador in the span of half a century, mirrored the progress of an entire movement of people advancing toward artistic and social equality. Her life in simple terms defined the movement. She died on 8th September 1993 in Portland due to massive heart attack.

4.1.5) Identity And Acceptance By The Society: -

Keiler, a professor of Music at Brandies published *Marian Anderson a Singer’s Journey: The First Comprehensive Biography*. In that he traces the extraordinary life of a gifted singer who became a national symbol. He writes of the racism Anderson encountered as an African-American in the 1920’s, ’30’s, ’40’s, from the Voice teacher in Philadelphia who refused to teach her to the D.A.R.’s legendary decision to bar her from singing at Constitution Hall. Her nephew James Anderson DePrist, a music director published in 2002 the new paperback edition of *My Lord What a Morning* with 11 photographs and a touching new foreword. He had lots of praises for her. He says it is an inspiring story in her own modest words. From her humble but proud beginning in South Philadelphia to international vocal renown, music shaped her career. Tam Munoz Ryan and Brian Selznick created a stunning, beautiful 40 page picture-book *When Marian Sang* in 2002 which own all sorts of awards including a Silbert Honor. In 2005 the U.S. Postal Service honored her. Deputy postmaster General John M. Nolon dedicated 28th stamp in the Black heritage Stamp Series saying, “the stamp is a powerful reminder of her unprecedented contribution to music and to her great sacrifice for justice.”
Initially Marian was in a very miserable condition as discussed above and in all other chapters. Her life as a black girl servant working for White families and after realizing her singing potential how she struggled to be a good singer also discussed in detail. Marian through her passion of music, commitment, determination and perseverance achieved many laurels, honor and became the world-class singer. She became so popular that the whites had to give up their discriminating tradition and finally they had to give her chance to perform in the Lincoln Hall. The wave of acceptance and demolition of color and race bias was so strong that Mrs. Roosevelt had to resign from DAR to support her in protest.

She became the symbol of the greatest singer, ‘a voice can be heard once in a hundred years.’ (158) She became the symbol of the highest sufferings of Jesus Christ that was compared with the sufferings of Blacks (206). That helped to bind the society homogeneously removing all sorts of discriminations. She became the pride of her community and symbol of peace and inspiration for the singers and musicians. Due to her highest achievement she made the entire America proud. She led the whole population irrespective of Black and white and became the epitome and inspiration to the whole country.

The fact that a mere black girl, servant of the whites could achieve the highest position in her singing career gave her a very respectable position in the country that enlighten the Black community and helped them to get tremendous confidence to believe in themselves. The battle of equality for Marian had started in her own mind. She won the battle in her mind when she realized the singing potential. She struggled to overcome all the barriers through hard work, perseverance and with the timely help and support of her mother, family members, teachers and well-wishers to liberate herself. Her constant struggle made possible to achieve the status of a world-class singer with a purpose. The purpose of her life was not merely singing and entertainment but it has multidimensional aspects. Her singing brought social transformation. It not only changed her own life entirely but it helped her own black community to gain confidence from her life.
The people who were treated worse than animals got inspired to battle for equality. Because a black girl had not only done equally good like any other white singers but also surpassed the white singers by becoming a world-class singer. The fact that a black woman can be superior to White in some recognized field surely helps other blacks to gain confidence. This is like sowing the seed of realization in the minds and hearts of the entire black community. Therefore to achieve the highest status and honor is the ‘identity’ and due to this identity by a single person like Marian Anderson functions like a ‘light-house’ or a symbol to inspire them to overcome the color, race and gender bias.

Her life serves the purpose of awakening to this social change and it enlightens the minds of black and the whites to dissolve all sorts of bias to achieve the homogeneous and harmonious society. She became the symbol of dreams and aspirations of the entire community. Her life has the power to transcendent from poverty to affluence, from slavery to freedom, which also has the power to change the mindset and subsequently the customs, traditions and beliefs of the people. It is in the minds the barriers, the discriminations, the hatred exists. If the mind is free from all these evils, the individuals, the community is united harmoniously. As dreamt by the saints and poets like Rabindranath Tagore “Let my country awake into that country of freedom” Her life is a success story and such people have the capacity to change the world. Ultimately she got her own identity, accepted by the whole world. She considered herself very lucky that she has witnessed the time of change that is not yet reached. She is quiet hopeful as she writes, “I am fortunate in many ways. Best of all I have lived in a time of change and the end is not yet. It has been good to see these changes taking place in our America, good for all of us. I have a great belief in the future of my people and my country.” (P.308)
4.2) SECTION II
ANNE MOODY: COMING OF AGE IN MISSISSIPPI (1968)

Anne Moody a devoted Civil Right activist overcame all the obstacles of discrimination, hunger, fear of death being black and struggled to survive. While telling about the movement she puts her feelings and emotions in that which is very rare. She described internal racism of light brown to darker complexion among black community. She makes us visualize her sit-in at Woolworth, her fear of assassination and Civil Right Movement. She felt insulted when she saw White people asserting their power. She writes about the frustrations of Black community who are submissive, who don't raise their voices and always live in fear.

It is the story of a brave, ambitious and dedicated young African-American women's journey and experiences during 1960's Civil Right Movement. In that period she overcame the threat, adversity at a young age, growing up poor, female (by gender) and black (by race) in the rural South where she had lots of problems, as she wanted so badly to understand the discrimination of Whites. She wanted to stop the killing and raping of her fellow black friends and their struggle with other black people of the community.

4.2.1) Initial Period of Struggle: -

Anne Moody, the oldest of nine children had a very tough time when her father isolated them for the sake of wine, gambling and another woman. Her mother got another White soldier Mr. Raymond and had more children from him. At the age of nine she has to work like a responsible member of the family to get food and clothing for the family. Very soon she realized the importance of education as the key to success and self-respect. So she worked harder as waitresses and housemaid to put herself through education. Then also she excelled in school, college received
good grades and even in sports as a Basketball champion. It was her childhood experiences that framed her activism. She describes a White lady to whom she was serving, “She was one of those whites who would let her dog occupy a seat at her dining table before she would a Negro.” (p.110)

After the lynching of Emmett Till she got involved in Civil Right Movement and encouraged other blacks to fight for equal rights. She says, “I realized that the universal fight for human rights, dignity, justice, equality and freedom is not and should not be just the fight of the American Negro or Indians or the Chicanos. It is the fight of every ethnic and racial minority, every suppressed and exploited person. Every one of the millions who daily suffer one or another of the indignities of the powerless and voiceless masses. And this trend of thinking is what finally brought about my involvement in the CRM.”

4.2.2) Identity And Acceptance:-

She became the active member of NAACP, CORE and SNCC the organization that was convincing people to register for voting rights. Through her firing speeches and recruitment efforts she participated in the movement. But she did not neglect her studies. In 1964 she received her B. Sc. Degree with excellent grades. She got involved in the famous Woolworth lunchroom sit-in and participated in the March at Washington D. C.

Moody has two major published works, Coming of Age in Mississippi (1968), and Mr. Death: Four Stories (1975), number of uncollected short stories. In 1969, Coming of Age of as well as a Mississippi received the Brotherhood Award from the National Council of Christians and Jews and the Best Book of the Year Award from the National Library Association. Her short story, "New Hopes for the Seventies" received the silver medal from Mademoiselle magazine.
She admits “I never really saw myself as a writer. I was first and foremost an activist in the Civil Right Movement in Mississippi. In the end she left the movement, as she was doubtful about the Black liberation. When I could no longer see that anything was being accomplished by our work there, I left and came back to see through my writing that no matter hard we in the movement worked, nothing seemed to be changed, that we made a few visible little gains, yet at the root things always remained the same and that the movement was not in control of its destiny, nor did we have means of gaining control of it. We were like an angry dog on a leach that had turned on its master. It could bark and howl and snap, and sometimes even bite, but the master was always in control. According to Encyclopedia Britannica in 1972 she became the artist-in-residence in Berlin, Germany. She lives in New York where she continues to write and serve her community as a counselor for New York City’s poverty program.

Her autobiography is not other story only but it is the uphill battle that all Black people fought for. Her aim was to change human relationship of black and whites and to bring overall empowerment and to eradicate segregation and discrimination. She felt humiliated when white people asserted their power. Anne declared in 1963 that ‘As long as I live, I’ll never be beaten by a white man.’ A timid girl in due course of time gathered abundance courage to revolt against all discrimination not for herself but for her own community. It arose interest and curiosity throughout the world because she makes us feel and visualize how difficult to be a child of poor sharecropper, black and woman and the events took place in 50’s and 60’s.
4.3) SECTION III
JERENA LEE, ZILPA ELAW AND JULIA FOOTE:
SISTERS OF THE SPIRIT (1986)

4.3.1) Importance of Religion: --

Religion has played a prominent role in the transformation of Afro-American societies. That was the period when social and religious customs prevented women from preaching. They were not allowed to preach since it was the 'men’s domain.' According to St. Pauline’s doctrine women are not supposed to speak in public. They can pray and exhort in their homes. Their ministries demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. These women outlined their spiritual journey and trials. We get a picture of their lives as strong women who had gone through the ordeals of discrimination, racial exploitation and gender-bias to preach the gospel of God. They opposed vehemently the Church authorities and asserting their right to preach as a god-given gift.

In their journey for preaching they were robbed, assaulted physically and sexually but their strong faith in God acquired tremendous confidence and created their own dignified status and identity in the society. They faced multiple challenges and gone through the agonies of being black, female and poor. At last through their tolerance and perseverance they were accepted as women evangelists. Through this Spiritual autobiography William Andrews provides very useful and important information about these three women preachers who rejected confines the women’s sphere by preaching. It describes their successful efforts to challenge the restrictive sphere that society sought to impose on them. They shared with others their understanding of the holy life.
4.3.2) JERENA LEE

4.3.2.1) The Initial Period of Struggle:-

Sixty miles far away from family at the age of seven till the age of fourteen, due to the economic circumstances she was sent off to work for the Sharp family as a live-in servant. She embraced Christianity by attending the sermons of Richard Allen, the founder of A. M.E Church and experienced conversion. She went to him to ask for the permission to spread the Gospel. But she was rejected strongly just because she was a black woman. By reading Holy Bible she overcame the feeling of unworthiness. She experienced the Sanctification process which she describes, “As if lightening had darted through me and I cried, the Lord had sanctified my soul.” (p.33) Then after eight years she granted the permission to preach on the itinerary circuit and then hold prayer meetings in her home. He appreciated her by saying that, “I believe that she was called to that work.” With her conviction and dedication Richard Allen and she became so close friends that he took her to the Methodist Conference arranged preaching appointments for her. When she was on her religious duties to preach God’s word out of Philadelphia, he took care of her sons for two years.

4.3.2.2) Identity And Acceptance:-

Throughout her career of preaching, she insisted on preaching to mixed congregation i.e. black and white; men and women. Even large number of slaves when they heard that a free black woman is preaching, they walked 20-70 miles just to hear her at the Camp meetings. They used to walk down back at night only so that they could join their work in the morning. Though she was accepted by the society, she was oppressed and insulted to her ministry just because she was black and a woman.
She asserted the women's right by showing the evidences from Bible as seeing the Savior had died for the man as well as woman. If a man may preach, why not woman? (P.36) After her husband's death she became freer to travel to preach the gospel. She left her sick son with a friend while preaching thirty miles away from home. She wrote, "Not a single thought of my little son came into my mind, it was hid from me, lest I should have been deviated from the work I had to do, to look after my son." (P45) It was her priority to obey God's call than her personal problems. She traveled two thousand three hundred and twenty five miles, and preached hundred and seventy-eight sermons. For eleven years she could not see her aged parents.

She faces many difficulties in her prayer meetings. She used to walk sixteen miles in cold just to preach the word of God. Good as well as ill-behaved people attended her congregation. Sometimes she had criticized as 'a man dressed in female clothes.' She faced such difficulties with her belief that 'Religion is love- God is love' A White lady reported her after her prayer meeting that the Lord has awakened her with her preaching. In her own words, "The lord was pleased to give me light and liberty among the people." An elderly lady came to her and appreciated her by saying she believed the Lord had sent her for doing this work. (p.46) People used to sigh, weep groan and rejoice when they heard her in large congregation She overcame all the racial, gender and color discrimination due to her strong faith in God. With her attitude of gratitude she became the active member of Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. She became the first woman authorized to preach in the A.M.E. Church.

Within three years from 1833-39,2000 copies of her autobiography were sold at the Camp and organization Meetings. In 1849 she printed an expanded version up to 50th years of her autobiography. There is no official record or information about her cause of death or her settlement.
4.3.3) MRS. ZILPA ELAW

4.3.3.1) Initial period of Struggle:--

Her agony started from the childhood. At the age of twelve she lost her mother while giving birth to her 22nd child. She was sent to serve English family until the age of eighteen. There she was not exposed to religious practices. Like Julia Foote she was attracted to worldly pleasures 'the path of folly'. She lost her father also and got married to a non-Christian, Joseph Elaw. That was the reason she found her married life lacking in mutual sympathy. Being a non-believer he objected very strongly her ministerial work. The opposition was at the home front only. Still she remained a good, loyal and faithful wife throughout her marital life. She says, "I kept my Vows as with a bridle and sinned not with my tongue. (p.63)

In those days black children were not allowed to attend the school. So after his death she opened a segregated school in Burlington. A lady of color started teaching for those who were suffering due to racial prejudices and discrimination. It was such a noble cause that she was highly appreciated not only by Blacks but also by Whites also. She was introduced to every one who visited that city. She was convinced that it was her duty to help the needy and who are abandoned from their right of education. She was sick for a month and thought that she will not recover from the illness. But with god's grace and the well-wishers' co-operation she resumed her service to god.

4.3.3.2) Identity And Acceptance:--

In her sickness she believed that God has preserved her to preach the gospel. So Due to her illness and conviction of preaching she closed the school and started her religious work. She was not only empowered but her relationship with God became stronger. She attended her revival camp and brought hundreds of people closer to God. In 1817 she gave her first public speech. Till 1819 she was admired,
encouraged and accepted even by many Christian women. She devoted her life fully to spread the word of God. She set her own itinerary.

In 1828—she decided to spread the word of God to the slaves. She was arrested and kidnapped in her venture. She traveled to States throughout the Northeast and Mid Atlantic. She preached more than thousand sermons in and around Central England. While doing this she suffered lot of resistance due to her status of being poor, black female and preacher. She even faced the harsh criticism of Church authorities.

4.3.4) MRS. JULIA FOOTE

4.3.4.1) Initial Period Of Struggle:--

A woman-preacher till the age of seven knew nothing about the religion. But her mother insisted her to learn Lord’s prayers to go to heaven. She overjoyed learning the prayers. At that moment she felt that she is converted. (p.169) In her childhood she was deprived of formal education since the schools were not available for colored children. With her father’s efforts she could learn to read and write. At the age of ten she was serving Prime family in order to support her family. There she got an opportunity to attend the country school. She studied Bible faithfully. Her family was very religious attending the service regularly.

At that tender and sensitive age she was attracted towards the worldly pleasures such as attending party, dance and theatre. In one of the parties while dancing she fell down heard a voice, ‘Repent, Repent! When she did not dance, then her friends criticized her as ‘little Methodist fool’ She spent many days and nights in agony of prayers, asking God to have mercy on her. She thought that God has saved her from the sinful ills of the society. She was converted at the age of fifteen. She got marry at the age of eighteen to a sailor George Foote and moved to Boston. She joined A. M.E Zion Church and proclaimed the wonders of Sanctification to others in the church.
Initially her religious activities were objected and criticized by her husband. He threatened her to send her back to her parents. But very firmly she proclaimed that she had been called by God to preach. She felt that God had assigned her the duty to preach and teach his ways. So she was nothing but following the will of God. She argued with the Christian ministers and pleaded her case but could not get justice to her wish of ‘evangelist’. She compared her experiences of conversion with Saint Paul as Paul’s meeting with Jesus changed his life and carried a wish of God to preach the Gospel. Similarly She thought that Jesus has changed her life and inspired her to share the word of God with others.

4.3.4.2) Identity and Acceptance:

When she went to Philadelphia, her own friends criticized and opposed her. She says, “----- it touches tender spot, and had it not been for the precious blood of Jesus, I should have been lost.” (p.210) There she met three women who were suffered and discriminated like her. Along with them she started the series of meetings for the community. She was so much involved in her spiritual duties that she could not see her parents for six years. Her mother embraced her and said, “So you are a preacher, are you? When I first heard that you were a preacher, I thought that I would rather hear you were dead. But it is all past now, I have heard from those who have attended your meetings what the Lord has done for you and I am satisfied.” (p.212) It shows that she was opposed right from the home front but it is her strong faith in God that she could preach the gospel.

In 1855 in the city of New York A.M.E. Church trustee opposed her, because religion does not allow women to preach. But with her patient, faith in God and convincing arguments she won the authorities. She has very calm, silent and peculiar way of opposition. She says, “---the weapons with which I fight are not carnal and if I go to the place and invited to use the weapons God has given me, I must use them to His glory.” (p.214) After conversion she wanted to be sanctified.
The Church authority gave the reason that it is reserved for the old and she is too young for that. When she was preaching in Ohio, she received the news of her husband's death. She went home to Boston and made funeral arrangements and went to hold prayer meetings to Albany. In her preaching journey for a month she was sick. She resumed her preaching very soon after her recovery. This shows that she was fully committed and married to a cause that was beyond family. This commitment of going beyond the family and materialistic problems, in spite of her family and health problems she carried out her duties selflessly and that is what going beyond the self.

She wanted people of all class and creed to attend her meetings. Her sermons were welcomed by all i.e. black and white, men and women she reports, 'as if the lion and lamb are lying down together.' (p.214) In her meetings of White Methodist Church, she observed that colored people are not allowed to attend the service. She vehemently attacked the racial prejudice and discrimination by telling them that the Savior said, “Go and preach my Gospel to all.” (p.222) She was a teacher as well as a preacher. She emphasized on religious education as a means of survival of the black community. She told that through Sanctification, you would get rid of every form of sin.

For Foote it was a daily battle of racism, sexism but through her conversion experiences she became the role model for the community. She was oppressed strongly by the people when she tried to help others to understand God’s call to preach. She became the first woman to achieve the rights of full ordination to the ministry.

Through her sermons she had instructed the mothers, “Mothers, you know not what you do when you urge your daughter to go to parties to make her more cheerful. You may even be causing the eternal destruction of that daughter. God help you mothers, to do right.” (P.179) Being a good teacher she wanted her students to understand every thing whatever she had taught and use it in their practical life to

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make them sensitive, responsible and productive citizens of society. Through her sermons she preached we are all called to do the will of god and if you lack anything God will provide you with whatever you need to serve God. He provides you weapons for his people, offensively and defensively. Her autobiography is an example to those who are lost and unsanctified to see that their lives can be changed. Through the title of her autobiography it is suggested that she was on her way down a broad road to destruction but she was plucked from the fire and changed herself by adopting the ways of God.

These women traveled all over America and even England to teach and preach the word of God to all. Their stories would inspire us all that all women can prophesy those who feel that they have the gift of prophesy. Every aspect of their lives helps us to understand and inform the role of religion of 19th century African-Americans. These women were the active components to bring about social transformation.

All these women struggled and sacrificed their family and personal lives. They realized their potential and the call for this ‘divine vocation.’ By overcoming all the barriers of social and color discrimination they achieve the status of the preachers. They were deeply committed to the preaching of gospel of God. They detached themselves from personal and family interests. They did not revealed and highlighted their families and personal lives because as if they were always married to there own cause of exhortion and preaching. It was a call from Jesus in the form of ‘holy spirit’ i.e. angels, which was guiding them on their divine path. They themselves felt the Divine love and affection and they could not help but pass on the message of love. Their initial life was full of miseries and tormented by social discrimination. But once they realized the Divine power and wisdom of God, they got the confidence to overcome the fear of rejection, punishment and failure. So effective and spontaneous was their reaction and so great was the confidence that their trust and belief in God made them strong enough to break the customs, traditions and set laws of the men-dominated Church and society.
The fact is that Jesus Christ is a Savior of the world because he lived and died for saving the whole mankind from their sin. The logic is the Savior is complete so He died for all the men and women of Black and White community. It indicates that all are equal in the eyes of God. He it proves the equal status of men and women, Black and White that naturally permits women carry out all the important religious duties like their male counterpart. The Holy Spirit does not discriminate on the basis of sex. This realization of equality and brotherhood not only inspired them to aspire for the equally dignified life but also gives them enough confidence to do better.

The tremendous positive response from black as well as white and their influence for changing the life for better to fill their life with Holy Spirit and love of God gave them the identity and acceptance by the society. Their autobiographies are nothing but give the message that all are born equal and they are one in the Holy Spirit because the Savior loves them equally. Hence they deserve equal rights and can achieve excellence in whatever field they choose. Their autobiographies have the capacity to give the same confidence to the other women of the whole world. With the sense of oneness these women acquired the highest position of responsibility and authority in both religion and public sphere.
4.4. SECTION IV
DALIT LITERATURE
SHANTABAI KAMBLE

4.4.1.) Initial period pf Struggle:--

In the former chapters the miserable conditions of Shantabai's childhood and the agonizing struggle for the education has been described. The guidance and timely support of the people like her teacher Mr. Patil and unflinching, never to die attitude of her father, her mother's life-long dream that lasted right up to her last breath gave her enough strength to have education up to Vernacular Final i.e. 7th std. It was as if the dream fulfilled and the promise given to her mother was kept up.

The emotional and overwhelmed Naja's (Mrs. Shantabai) father expressed his feelings, "My lovely daughter, I wish your mother was there, she would be so happy to see your achievement, fulfilling her dream. You are always lucky that two brothers are born after you in this house." (P.58)

This shows the complete paradigm shift in the attitude of her father because of her achievement and the identity she has acquired with education. The same father when she was born as a 4th consecutive girl child wanted to bury her alive to get rid of her. So this change in the mind is possible due to the identity, the achievement that gives tremendous confidence to her father and it could spread to the near and dear ones and to the entire family and community multiplying the confidence exponentially. The identity of an educated girl helped Shantabai to get a job and even marriage proposal early but without taking into consideration her opinion. (p.62) She got a job as a schoolteacher but she was always looked down up on by the society. She did not get the status and respect adequately because of her 'dalithood'

She did not get equal status in the family. Within a year of marriage her husband left her for another woman. She was in confused state of mind as her father had
accepted her identity within the same family the husband remarried when she was in her 7th months pregnancy. Due to the tedious journey at the appointed village and miserable physical condition, she lost her first male child. (p.75) There she got an opportunity to attend Dr. Ambedkar’s public address and was deeply influenced. She heard ladies saying, “Why should we worship the God of stone? See our living God.” (p.80)

4.4.2) Identity And Acceptance:--

The people in the Kadias village where she was appointed as a schoolteacher, tried to threaten her and the Sarpanch (Head of the village) told her that two lady-teachers were beaten and driven out of the village. But she gave a very confident answer, “I care for nothing because I am Mahar and have nothing to loose.” (p.93). She surpassed all kinds of exploitations of being poor, female and dalit. She was always treated with a biased and prejudices attitude because of the age-old roots of discrimination. But with her efficiency and hard work she could change the minds of the people and educational authorities. Due to her perseverance and good work as a teacher, helped her own children and the society and won the confidence and trust of the people who opposed her initially.

Thus the change in the mindset of the people, from her father, husband, relatives up to the upper caste people indicates the complete transformation in the mindset resulted into social acceptance and identity. Therefore we can say the process that started with the self-realization with the influence of her own mother, the philanthropists like her teacher Mr. Patil, Dr. Babasaheb’s dynamic personality and wisdom and of course her hard work and perseverance for acquiring education resulted in acquiring identity. The sincerity of her work as a school teacher and an educational officer gave 100% result of the school, increasing student’s attendance, overall progress of the students and implementation of new policies for the students all these factors were responsible for changing the mindset of the students, class and accept her identity as a good teacher and an efficient educational officer.
This paradigm shift in the attitude of the people from the world of discrimination and divide to the world of acceptance, cohesiveness and harmony are the achievements of Shantabai’s life reflected in her autobiography. Her life has this message that if you realized that you could achieve education in spite of the poverty and rigid walls of discrimination, you can achieve identity. It was possible due to her mother’s encouragement and dream for giving her daughter Naja, a better life and due to Dr. Ambedkar’s influence which is the best example that shows you are also equally dignified human being and you can also achieve the best. That is why a movie was telecast on television to highlight her life. There was a documentary film made on her life to be shown in America and for the world to know such a thing can happen in this part of the world.

Thus this autobiography serves like a seed of realization that has a capacity to inspire the ‘Dalit’ women to realize that they are equal and have the potential to achieve an identity by means of education and the area of their interest to acquire identity and serve the society. They not only fulfill their own dreams but also achieve the social transformation. This achievement is valuable because it is based on the non-violent means i.e. Lord Buddha’s philosophy since it helps to remove all the social barriers of caste and class.

4.5. SECTION-V
BABYTAI KAMBLE

4.5.1) Initial period of Struggle:--

While reading Babytai’s autobiography we feel that it is a remarkable social documentation of the society and an attempt to know you. Babytai lived and observed the miserable life of a dalit woman. Her autobiography is nothing but the description of the odysseys and predicament of dalit woman so she was
disturbed and shock to see the discrimination and inhuman treatment given to these women in their own family and society as well. It is a natural instinct that a person who has achieved something in life wants to share the same experience with others and pass on the message of a successful life so as to leave a permanent signature or footprint on the road to success chosen by him/her. This is a sort of knowledge transfer to enrich and to fulfill the lives of the next generation.

Although she did not have the formal education, became aware of her inner strength, potential and talent, followed the path led by Dr. Babasaheb in the light of the Buddhist philosophy. Her life is a manifestation of ‘Atta-Deep-Bhav’ philosophy means ‘be your own light’, a true message of Babasaheb’s teaching. Her life is a fruit of the nourishment by this philosophy which roots go deeper, 2500 years old history of Buddhism. She recollected that a few literate people would gather and read Babasaheb’s newspaper ‘Ostracized Bharat’. Through his speeches and writings, she realized the importance of education. Her husband wanted their son to become a lawyer. But both, her father and she herself refused that because they thought that profession is not good and it leads to corruption. The lawyer had to manipulate facts, which was not in accordance with Baba’s teachings. All her children are well qualified and are placed on respectable positions.

Babytai’s autobiography is a manifestation of the journey from ‘agony to identity’ and going beyond self. The influence of Dr. Ambedkar on her father and family made the difference to give her life a proper direction. The seed of realization and spirituality was induced in her to get awakened and enlightened. Although her childhood and her life was not as traumatizing as other women in the community by virtue of her growing and living in the same community on one hand and the feeling of oneness, due to the spiritual awakening on the other hand always disturbed her very deeply by the miserable conditions of Dalit women around her. Hence her autobiography is the description of the agonizing plight of the existing society at that time. In her own words, “During my 50 years of life time I have observed minutely and the things which I perceived, have tried to depict in my writings because the life
of Mahar community at that time, when they were fully bound by the chains of slavery for millions of years, people of this community were enslaved. In order to show the future generations how they have lived in the slavery, my efforts are to make them aware the degrading, inhuman life that was imposed on them by a particular society. The most important thing is that we are saved from this perennial hell by our Bhima, this pending duty, that was waiting for thousands of years, was done by Bhima (Dr. Ambedkar) How could the future generations know if we don’t tell them the inhuman, insulting plight we have gone through?” (P.1)

4.5..2) Identity and Acceptance:--

The lives of thousands of Dalits with her own has changed due to Babasaheb after centuries. It was like treading the unexplored path through the dark and deep forests full of adversities for the first time. Her story is like the guiding light to show how to achieve this historical unimaginative feat. A small Mahar girl who was brought up in the society full of acute poverty, ignorance, superstitions and discrimination. The most miserable component of the society was dalit women due to her multiple exploitations, achieved a status of world-renowned writer and a poet. She was honored with the award ‘Dalit- mitra) for her life long service in the educational and religious field. She was at the forefront and pioneered in opening the Boarding school for the poor and deserving students. She was actively involved in the religious activities like organizing meetings of the community, formed a group for singing hymns on Babasaheb and Gautam Buddha, traveled all over the states visited many pilgrimage for spreading the word and teachings of Babasaheb. She was a well-known figure for her work in the fields of religion, education and social activities.

She has a dream to build a Ghatana-Mandir (Temple of Constitution) at Phaltan for immortalizing and highlighting Babasaheb’s work. This achievement of status, identity and acceptance by the society is the effect of teachings of Babasaheb with the foundation of Buddhism. Her life will definitely serve as a seed of realization and
spirituality to awaken the masses and to bring about the social change through non-violent means. Her autobiography and collection of poems have been translated in various languages such as Spanish, German and also included in curriculum of the school and colleges.

Despite of lack of formal education to be a prominent writer, poet, to be a founder of school and Boarding, to be a successful religious social worker brought her name, fame and recognition and acceptance in the society. This surely improves the confidence of Dalit women and the women word over. She has written more about the entire dalit women and community compare to her own life. Because she feels the oneness with the community and the inspiring ideology of Babasaheb having the capacity to awaken the entire Dalit community after the ‘hibernation’ of thousands of years, which is more significant for her compare to her own individual life achievement. In the foreword written by Maxine Brunson the autobiography states that Baytai Kamble is the first poet writer who has exposed the agonies and miserable life imposed on them by the society by virtue of caste ridden male dominated society. It is a very important document picturizing the socio-historical conditions existing until 50 years ago before the advent of Dr. Ambedkar’s revolutionary philosophy and ideology.

4.6. SECTIONS-VI

SHANTABAI DANI

4.6.1) Initial Period Of Struggle:--

A college student Shantabai Dani was deeply influenced by Dr. Ambedkar’s speech at the ‘opening address’ of H.P.T. College. She thought that Babasaheb in spite of achieving so many things in life was concerned about the upliftment of the downtrodden and oppressed fellow-beings of the community. He struggled and fought for giving equal rights to his people was exemplary. He sacrificed his entire
life and career for changing the miserable conditions of his people. He appealed the young generation to educate and do something for the society. So great was the impact on Shantabai’s minds that she decided to dedicate her entire life for this noble cause. She was charged and inspired to educate herself and dedicate herself to the social cause.

Dr. Londhe’s timely financial help for her education and her mother’s constant encouragement gave her strength to continue her struggle. The untouchability in her training period and also at her place of job, Winchoor, the difficulties in getting the basic needs like drinking water and restrictions to her entry in temple are examples of her inhumanly treatment she received as a teacher also. She suffered even after she was educated but was not accepted totally due to her status of ‘dalithood’.

The initial lessons of politics, which she learnt with her association of Dadasaheb Gaikwad and frequent visits of Dr. Babasaheb, helped her fast progress in the political career. She is a role model for value-based politicians. At the background of the politics of power and convenience, she guided and led people honestly and selflessly. The value-based politics calls for the sacrifice of worldly pleasure and demands a high price. Her battle was not only with the opponents but also with the alliance; stand by the honest role for achieving this goal, it was a challenging task. There is a situation of battle continuously arises has to faced with lot of confidence by keeping the drive of social change alive. You have to carry on this difficult path ignoring the opposition and criticism. Shantabai had adopted such difficult path and through this writing narrated the fierce battle of the contemporary movement of Dalit social change. The title is the true reflection of her life. It means situation of battle is the daily affair, every day and night. It is a continuous battle against the unfavorable conditions existing in the society for Shantabai.

On 3rd Sept.1959 the movement of landless peasants was started in Nasik district. Within two months 40,000 activists were imprisoned. The Chief Minister Mr.
Yashawantrao Chavan granted some demands. In 1978 Government of Maharashtra had sanctioned the issue of changing the name of Marathwada Vidyapeeth in Dr. Ambedkar Vidyapeeth. It resulted into riots particularly in Aurangabad and in many places all over Maharashtra. Dalit people were assaulted, their property was snatched away, buses were attacked, burned, women were abused, Buddhist’s Viharas and Dr. Babasaheb’s statues were broken, Killings, burnings of Dalits and whole villages were going on.

The height of all this, a 25 years old Dinkar Thorat, his tongue was cut and beaten mercilessly and murdered brutally. She was not a person just to wait and watch. She visited that sensitive area in police van and helped them in the form of clothes and necessary things. On 25th Sept. she wrote about the riots all over Maharashtra. That conflict was going on for long fourteen years. She was the devoted activist in every field such as education, politics and society. She considered ‘education as her religion’ (p.37) Right from the beginning she was working selflessly with some particular goal of serving poor and oppressed people. “The politics has been divided and cracked in so many pieces that I don’t wish to waste my energy for mending it. The allegations made through newspaper, the blames and criticism, the mud slinging at each other, the false ideas of status, obstructing each other’s progress and moreover they have forgotten the Dalits, oppressed for whom they are supposed to work. Hence I am better off with my educational field.” (p.195) She kept herself away from politics after the death of Dadasaheb. She was against the groupism, splitting from the aims and objectives of the Party. So she left politics and concentrated on education, as it was Babasaheb’s vision of progress through education, for that she had very constructive approach.

4.6.2) Identity And Acceptance:--

The people in the society started appreciating her personality as women called her ‘our Indira Gandhi.’ She was the only woman activist on the stage so dalit women used to come to see her. She was appointed as M.L.A. and deputed to attend the
conferences to the foreign countries. Her school and her administration attracted
the educational officers and become the honor for the society.

This shows in spite of all odds and unfavorable conditions her constant relentless
struggle continued through out her life. Her journey was against the existing wrong
ideologies and beliefs, which was totally based on Buddhist philosophy. She was
fully charged with the strong drive to struggle and achieve status of a teacher, social
activist, value based politician and respected minister. In 1988 she received from
Maharashtra Government Savitribai Phule Award for her remarkable achievement
in the field of education. In the same year Social Welfare Department had honored
her with the title of ‘Ideal Social Worker.’ Mr. Khobragade who knew her family
background extended 5000/-secretly for her only. She donated that amount along
with the amount of 5000/- of the Savitribai Phule award to the birth centenary
ceremony.

In her life she was honored with the prestigious awards, positions, recognitions and
felicitations as one of the respected persons of the society. For a girl who was born
on a Khadkali i. e. a barren and arid land at the outskirt of Nasik, who lived near a
stack of grass and slept under a tree becoming a teacher, founder of an education
institute, a respected minister of principles, active participation in Mass Conversion
and her interview conducted by Honorable Shirwadkar and her intimate friend and
writer of this book Mrs. Bhargave and spotless personal and political characters ----
- were great achievements fulfilling not only her own and her mother’s dream but
also increasing the confidence of the whole community exponentially. She herself is
very much contended and received lot of love and care from all the sections of the
society.

Up to the age 73, she was actively involved in politics occupied by solving the
problems of the needy. She had adopted the path led by Ambedkar. For her selfless
service to the humanity Maharashtra Government had awarded her twice. In her
life she was very closely associated with many people who helped her in her difficult
times. She says, “Many of my friends are from different class, caste and creed. In our friendly relations my caste, my age or even my position had never created any obstacles or any kind of differences among us.”(p.201) In her sickness, without expecting a single pie they would rush to her with a single phone call. If she tried to pay them, they would say, “Tai (elder sister), you have done so much for the society, we must do something for you. If we don’t do then we would be very unlucky.” (P.202)

The highest honor she received was of felicitating the Poet Laurel Shirwadkar when he received the prestigious Dynanpeeth Award in the presence of the Educational Minister Mr. Madhukarrao Chaudhari. Honorable Shirwadkar indicting Shantabai’s agonizing life suggests the title of her autobiography. This journey from ‘Agony TO identity’ described in this autobiography can definitely inspire not only the Dalit women but also all others in general to achieve the similar landmarks since it is very inspiring and confidence building. It gives the message for the generations that it is possible even for a dalit woman to achieve the highest positions and equality in the society if you realize your own potential by following the right path shown by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.