ABSTRACT

Since eleventh century India has been a continuous downfall in many areas. To save the dignity and chastity, the women were generally kept indoor. The loss of liberty meant a loss of education, of valour and chivalry, and of scholarship. The introduction to Purdhah system reduced woman to the position of a slave, the status she still retains in the rural north. The women in the south, in Maharashtra and Gujarat, in tribal areas and in the North Eastern region are comparatively in this respect. The constitution provides equal rights to women but the poor rural woman even today are at mercy of landlords, moneylenders and petty officials. Freedom movement catapulted Indian women into the forefront. Women came to the front and the four walls of the home widened and broadened into the boundaries of the country. a woman does not stand alone. She is identified and defined by her relationships with others both inside and outside her family. Apart from this, a woman is also expected to conform to this multi-layered pattern of societal kinships. Irrespective of the community to which she belongs, she carries out the functions of the triple role of daughter-in-law, wife, and mother. Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Besides this various cultural and social factors are interlinked with the development and propagation of violent behavior.

Men generally take up stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women take up that of submission, dependence and respect for authority. The institution of family, while extending emotional support, love and care to the Indian woman, also exercises much control over her sexuality. In the traditional patriarchal Hindu family, the father holds absolute power over all members of the household. Women are perceived as threatening since their sexuality is destructive to man. Yet, on the other hand their fertility is needed for bearing their sons. On the whole, there is a deep-
seated fear of woman, since they possesses power that can be constructive and destructive. By stressing the importance of concepts of purity and chastity, men exercise control over woman. They were becoming educated and then becoming the educators. The schools were built along lines of conservative attitudes since observance of traditional customs were still emphasized. Through education, women had to learn to be orderly and economical, clean and hygienic, develop a sense of responsibility and be able to manage their homes in accordance with the new demands of the outside world. By the education, there is a development in womanly qualities such as chastity, self-sacrifice, submission, devotion, kindness, patience and love. Family is not an individual’s private territory as it appears on the surface it is part of a larger social system. Apart from being the most essential part of an individual’s life it has to constantly work with other subsystems of the society to function efficiently.

Indo-Anglian and Hindi writers focus on the image of new woman and her struggle for an identity of her own. Education, economic independent and consequent self-assertion have led to the emergence of the new woman who is confident. In the early twentieth century, some of the new women who had benefited from the social reforms and educational efforts of the preceding century started their own schools. Human Development Programme highlights that there is still no society where women fare as well as men. Women have been fighting to free their half of the total population of the world from male oppression. Women were engaged in the various movements and struggles which revolutions their lives. They were triumphant over their achievement as participants in the political life of the country. Woman is primarily characterized by the spirit of rebelliousness, visibly exercising its influence on all relationships, the boundaries of time and space notwithstanding. This spirit is manifested through diverse means and modes. A woman’s rejection of her assigned role inside the family and society, refusal to follow the traditional paths, inherent revulsion to the idealism associated with normal physical functions of the body such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth or procreation. In a society where young people choosing their partners is considered scandalizing, pre-marital affairs are not looked at approvingly,
though they are not a rarity anymore. Thus both men and women operate within strict parameters of social codes and taboos. Love in the relationship between man and women inside marriage is not spelt out in clear terms. Due to social conditioning, both man and women do not resort to overt expression of love. Woman feels lonely in the face of vast external world. Her loneliness is intensified when she feels the sense of belonging nowhere. The present study is a study of six selected novelists from the different regions of India where is religious, cultural and social ethos. Despite the religious, cultural and social backgrounds of the authors, and despite the different setting of their novels, there runs a common thread through their works that serves to bind them together. This common thread is the predicament of the women with a certain point of view. The present study is the investigation of the predicament of the women in the selected novels from the Indo-Anglian front are Mulk Raj Anand’s Gauri, Raja Rao’s Kanthapura and Anita Desai’s Cry, The Peacock as well as from Hindi fiction, Premchand’s Sevasadan, Mrudula Garg’s Chittkobra and Maitreyi Pushpa’s Alma Kabutari.