Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

During the 1960s Indian society underwent a lot change. The influence of the west on life and attitudes had become prominent. Modern education has only helped women to review their situation. This struggle leads her to the predicament from which she cannot escape easily, though fight hard. The rule of British brought about a number of significant changes in the social and economic status in our society. The colonial rulers described the social customs of the local people as degenerate and barbaric which they believed were sanctioned by religion. As a result, the colonial rulers took upon themselves the massive task of civilizing the barbarians by instituting an orderly, lawful and national procedure of governance. With the consolation of the British power in India, English also began to exercise its influence on the intellectual life of the people. Indian educated people gets further information about Western Knowledge because of the English language. So the women get the status in the society. The culture and traditions of India have a distinct entity of their own, and the enlightened youth of India, though well versed in English, were not to lose their cultural identity. There were not a few among India’s elite who were moved by a genuine desire to present before the Western readers a true picture of India through imaginative literature. This literature came to be designated ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’.

The term ‘Indo-Anglian’ was used as early as 1883. Indo-Anglian writing is still young stream rolling ahead with strength and vigor. The word Novel was used until the seventeenth century which means a short story of the kind written. It is collected by Boccaccio (1313-75) in his Decameron. It had got the present meaning as a book telling a long story in prose. (Kirkpatrick E.M., Chambers Universal Learners’ Dictionary, 1980, p.486). It is a fictitious prose narration of characters and actions. It is a representation of real life which is portrayed in a plot. It is a story longer and realistic as written by Boccaccio and other writers of his time. Now the novel is the most widely read of all kinds of literature. So it appears that it is fairly new. The eighteenth century people
who first start to write and to read the sort of books that we now call novels. After that the reading of novels became a fashion. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) is sometimes called the father of the English Novel. He showed that books need not always be full of history or philosophy. The novel had become dream of the people in the 1920s and 1930s like cinema. So that the demands for the supply of sentimental and romantic novels. Though novels have been in existence a long time now, there is, in comparison with the traditional forms of literature, still a sort of upstart quality about them. There are people who, despite the high example set by Cervantes and Henry James, insist on regarding the novelist as the lowest form of literary practitioner. (Anthony Burgess, *The Novel Now*, 1967, p.58)

Some modern critics believe that the novelists of the past have paid too much attention to the story or plot and too little to psychology. Against this there has grown up something called as the anti-novel. Somerset Maugham says that the anti–novelist tells the story for its own sake as a debased form of fiction. It seems the stories are deeply rooted in the human animal as the sense of property. Firstly men used to gather round the camp-fire or in the market place to listen to the story. So the desire of story-telling is very strong among the people. For most people the telling of a story remains the important thing in a novel, just as it was in the novella of Boccaccio’s time, the romances of the middle Ages, and the prose fictions of classical times. However the most modern novels differ from these more or less distant forbearers in a number of ways. Literature has a sociological background of class and community distinctions. In both the ways Literature tries to entertain the reader. Literature deals with a large variety of subject–matter. Novels have as much subject– matter as poetry. By searching deep into the core of human experience it creates several categories. The popular among them is the novel which depicts social demands and responsibilities. (Heath, 1990, p.43) Some of the novels deal with educational institutions, directly or indirectly. These novels are enjoyable and fascinating. Everything in these novels happens so abruptly that the reader suddenly feels exalted. The most famous literature is always called as a piece of art which is determined as entertainment. It is rarely supposed that the famous literature only entertains the reader. This literature is more acceptable as entertaining and
futile as quite unfound able in other literary forms. It depicts the experiences which are not general in nature. It emerges from real life situation. In the ancient history of India, women have been glorified in reality, a contradictory state of affairs existed. A political and social movement influences the lives of women. There was a drastic change in the position of women with the advent of British rule.

Women became very much confident as well as motivate because of liberty. There was a confidence in the mind of woman for their future life. Women had the freedom to choose their life partners and they also had access to education. Women also enjoyed a certain amount of economic independence as they used to engage in spinning and weaving activities at home. Some women used to help in farming activities also. It is true that literature takes a particular notion to an extreme point where everything looks realistic. And to make this literature entertaining the writer always tries their level best to make the realistic into unrealistic and the unrealistic into realistic. The colonial rulers were sympathetic towards the suffering and oppression of Indian women. When we think of the novel as the form of Literature, we refer to the literature of the masses which finds favor with large number of people. Literature of masses in general may be in any form like ballads, verse as well as tales. Novels are realistic and picaresque. Satire is also a major form of the novel which is popular among the readers. It reflects a whole range of dramatic monologue and comic turn to full-length play. Literature is highly selective in dealing with notions and sentiments of the contemporary people. It is a kind of democratic literature which creates the reading classes. In short, literature is for the people and about the people who have no extra capabilities to understand symbols and mythological implications. But their experiences attitudes and beliefs are in a particular social atmosphere. These people are common and so are their experiences.

Literature can give delight and instruct the people about the cultural differences. In the twentieth century, literature and art turned out to be the art of the masses. It shows their relationship with the changing society. The language is so normal and entertaining that it captures the mind of the reader immediately. The writer follows a style which seems somewhat colloquial and conversational.
That is why the most serious criticism of literature is concerned primarily with immediate effect. Literature depicts the experiences which are not general in nature. It can be said that that literature depends on the people who are culturally and educationally advanced. The choice of literature sticks to the common reader who has an urban origin. One perhaps ought not to leave the twentieth century novel without referring to the phrase Indo-Anglian. One can only express the hope that with the radio serial and various kinds of television programmed taking over the more superficial functions of fiction as entertainment. The novelist may find clever field for the further development of the novel as a real art form. So the novelist must pay attention to the fiction which needs weight as well as intelligence. It is said that emergence of symbolism and naturalism in the literary work perhaps indicates a tentative direction. Such a combination would allow the inclusion of the pressing events of the day. The infusion of a symbolic tradition into naturalism would transform minor items into major significance. So it would not cut the writer off from immediacies like local politics, class structure, personal goals, the nature of ambition, and all other pressing details of daily existence. So the novel can give the definition of man in his society. Regarding the status of women in the Pre-Vedic period, the information is very scarce and ambiguous. The available data carries the male point of view. Ancient scriptures and literature have accorded a high place to the woman by treating her as a paragon of beauty and virtue.

In classical literature, women have been considered as embodiments of the elements of beauty in nature. The idea of pativrat was emphasized. It was believed that a woman finds fulfillment only as a wife or life-partner of a man. This image of the woman has persisted over succeeding generations and this idea contributed to the subordination and the low status accorded to woman in society. During the long years of Muslim rule, there was a general degradation in social life. This was due to the breakdown of social institution and the topping of traditional political structures. There was general unhappiness and unease and women was the worst affected due to the changed social and political scenario. There were so many barriers for the colonial rulers. The new ideas and innovative thoughts specifically rooted in the social customs that affects the life
style of the society. The social and moral principles were given new dimensions to motivate women of the modern world. Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction deals with the predicament of women as they have to face conflicts and adversities. In these novels there is clash between flesh and spirit. Apparently, in the novels of these writers we perceive some basic similarities with reference to an unknown force that governs the human life. These novels deals with mankind predicament in the universe. This study has several dimensions. It has its own significance as a study of these writer’s vision of the life in terms of the predicament of their women characters in the selected novels. The image of new woman and her quest and struggle for identity of her own is emerging in the Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction. Hence, this modest attempt is to study the innermost, deep rooted predicament of women through the selected novels. Indo-Anglian and Hindi literature continues to grow and flourish, and attain higher and higher peaks of excellence. The themes of loneliness, of rootlessness, the explorations of the psyche were explored in their novels. It continues to change and grow, and adapt itself to the changing Indian environment.

The novelists project woman’s nature in desperate situation and her predicament. The protagonists demonstrate the changing facets of Indian womanhood. Each faces a conflict between personal desires and societal expectations and their condition is further aggravated by the sense of predicament. One of the most striking similarities between Indo-Anglian and Hindi writers is the predicament and isolation of the major characters and grief resulting from it. The works of these writers are analyzed generally from a modernist perspective in terms of subjective psychology and predicament. Though India had always assumed a superior position on the spiritual front, society on the whole was plagued by evil practices. Child marriages were very common. There were an alarming number of widows and remarriages were prohibited. The widows had to lead a life of restrictions. In some parts, the custom of Sati was prevalent. There were always discussions in the debates relates to the women who are in full misery. According to Geraldine Forbes, “The first historical accounts of Indian women date from the nineteenth century and are a product of the colonial experience”. Both accounts of the British
missionaries and the Indian reformers postulated a theory of a golden age, after which there was a long period of stagnation and decline. The protagonist of Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction is caught in difficult and unpleasant situation have to be studied. The reformers were highly selective in accepting the liberal ideas from Europe. The conservative elements in Indian society such as caste distinctions, patriarchal control in the family, acceptance of the sanctity of the scriptures, preferring the symbolic significance of the social practices—all these were retained by the early reformers.

The reformers and the nationalists embarked upon their various uplifts schemes for women based upon the basic dichotomy. New norms were framed to organize the family and rules were laid down for the correct conduct of women. The point of difference arises when women are expected to cultivate and nourish the godlike qualities more than men. Due to their feminine nature, women are spared the tasks of the external world. The material pursuit of finding a livelihood and assuming the role of the breadwinner is not the job of the woman. So women are in a better position to express the spiritual and godlike qualities through their appearance and behavior. The family, being a part of the larger social organization, could not be protected for too long from the influential changes in the external world. Now days it is necessary to pay attention to the various changes in the society relates to the spirituality. So there should be first step that happens at home for the spiritual quality. Since home was the sphere of the woman, it was her duty and responsibility to protect and nurture this quality. Women were expected to retain their essential feminine virtues and not become westernized. There will be rules and regulations for the lives of men and women. The extent to which women could be westernized had to be different from that of men. Partha Chatterjee says, “The nationalists thought that they had solved the problems of women”.

The whole process of social reformation with emphasis on female education and ultimately female emancipation was an endeavor to teach women to discharge their wifely duties in a better fashion. Through education, women learnt to be better wives and perform their roles of wife and mother effectively. At that point in time, this learning itself was a great achievement. Thus the new patriarchy entrusted women with a new social responsibility. Indo-Anglian and
Hindi works shows that woman is frustrated socially and psychologically. She pines for liberty, status as well as pleasure. But she remains aloof from these expectations. After so many struggles, she gets anything like man. For these expectations she went through many predicaments in her life.

Woman’s predicament arises when she runs after liberty, status as well as desires and thus frustration by society, family and fellow beings. As they don’t gain what they expect, they became failures and frustrated being and they meet the end. The new woman created by the nationalist ideology was endowed with a superior culture. She was contrasted with the western woman and the woman of the lower class. Attaining the superior national culture through her own efforts was seen as a mark of the woman’s newly gained freedom. Female education was also one of the key interests of the reformers of the nineteenth century. Freedom of education should give to females which is the right of them. There was a fear among the Indians that women were being exposed to the harmful influence of the west. There was relief when Indians themselves opened schools for girls in the eighteen fifties. After the schools were started, there were debates on formulating a proper feminine curriculum and providing the most suitable type of education for women. The constituents of modern school education were considered important for the new woman.

The question that the promoters of female education faced next was the medium of instruction. Language barrier is also one of the important factors which are faced by rural area. English language will be used as medium which seems as difficult for uneducated women. Practically it was considered difficult as most women were conversant only in their mother-tongue. Women’s right for education becomes more essential for the new confident woman. The nationalists feared that English medium of instruction would devalue and displace this social position of women. Nevertheless, education helped the nineteenth century woman to voice her deprivations. Women started defining their needs and tried to redefine their future. The colonial rulers were sympathetic towards the suffering and oppression of Indian women.

Indo-Anglian and Hindi writers focus on the image of new woman and her struggle for an identity of her own. There is development happens in various
qualities of women because of only education. The new women were aware of their boundaries of action. Women 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. Education was expected to inculcate these virtues in women. In this way the process of disciplining was adopted. It was decided that formal and basic education was necessary for the new woman. Geraldine Forbes says that, “Female education was informal and largely limited to practical matters”. Men who were the first recipients of modernization had proved that modern education would bring about cultural refinement. A remarkable change was evident in the attitudes and manners of the English-educated men. They wanted the same kind of transformation in women without upsetting or disturbing the woman’s place at home. The achievement of educating themselves without upsetting their traditional place was taken as a personal challenge by women. It was the duty of the woman to carry on with religious observances, and keep the family united. By virtue of education, the position of the new woman did not change drastically since the basic attitude towards the women remained the same. The new middle class which came into existence at this time was caught up in a situation where both the external and internal spheres were rapidly changing.

Indo-Anglian and Hindi writers write about revolutionary changes during the last fifty years. Some writer’s emphasizes on woman basically in the role of an ideal wife and mother. The woman in Indian society has always been identified as daughter, sister, wife or mother. The woman’s role has thus been defined in terms of her relationship to man. Roles outside this sphere i.e., woman as an achiever, as a leader, or as a strong individual, has often been underplayed. In a male dominated society, the woman’s individual self gets very little recognition and self-effacement is the normal way of life for her. The Indian woman, as part of this set-up, was forced to accept it and has lived with it for ages. The laws of Manu had a very negative impact on the status of women. Women had to operate within the strict parameter any transgression was
punishable. Manu advocated early marriage of girls and prohibited widow remarriage. The husband was accorded the status of a God. According to him, “A virtuous wife should constantly serve her husband like a god, even if he behaves badly, freely indulges his lust, and is devoid of any good qualities”. He further goes on to deny all kinds of freedom to women. He urges that women lack control over them and become licentious if left free. Woman will always used as a tool by man so that they do not get freedom. On the one hand Manu holds the opinion that women should not be allowed any freedom and should always be guarded by men. Quite paradoxically, he also says that women should be treated with respect. He says, “There is no difference at all between the goddesses of good fortune who live in houses and women who are the lamps of their houses, worthy of reverence and greatly blessed of their progeny”.

All members should give respect to them because the family which gives respect to woman, there will be always the appearance of goddess. Otherwise home will find always in melancholies and filled with so many disturbances. Therefore members of the family must give respect to women. This attitude of Manu has led men to consider and treat women as object that need to be cared for and looked after. The reverence that Manu spoke about gave rise to the ideals of chastity, purity, virtue and fidelity that were imposed upon women. Since men were also bothered about their own safety, welfare and well-being, they tried to keep the women happy. Manu cautions about the repercussions if the women are unhappy. The laws of Manu led to the degenerate position of women in society. Though Manu is self-contradictory, he wanted women to be treated with respect. In reality, the situation was different where women were subjected to abuses, beating and inhuman treatment in order to keep them under control. Manu grants permission for all this. The woman is necessary for progeny and the perpetuation of the family lineage, yet she is despised and considered sinful and the root of all evils. This kind of oppression continued to have its stronghold over society for a long time. It sought to mend certain unjustified social practices like child-marriage, denial of education and freedom to select their life-partners among women. In practice, there was no perceivable change in the condition of women. The Bhakti movement which was born during this period brought about alternations in the social and religious life of
women. Saints like Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, Meera, Kabir and Ramdas supported the right of women to religious worship. Their conception of the status of women was not radically different from the prevailing attitude regarding womanhood. The movement succeeded in securing religious freedom for women. Due to religious freedom, women acquired a certain degree of social independence.

The system of Purdhah was not strictly followed. Women used to attend kathas and kirtans which freed them from the arduous and routine tasks of domesticity. It also became a platform for socializing and discussing the common problems. Since the time of Manu, education was denied to women. The saints encouraged women to educate themselves so that they could read the religious books. It is fascinating to see the unveiling of images of woman in several Indian literatures. The colonial rulers adopted a strategy of sermonizing by Christian Missionaries in order to civilize the natives. Through this success, they wanted to spread superior and enlightened Western knowledge. The underlying idea was to bring forth a belief in the Indians regarding the uselessness of their traditional customs. This was a policy adopted by the imperialists in order to establish supremacy over weaker nations. By laughing at the customs and practices of the colonized nation, the imperialists gave rise to feelings of inferiority and worthlessness in the Indian people. This was a deliberate tactic employed by the imperialists. Raja Rammohan Roy has been heralded as the father of modern India, a champion of women’s rights and a feminist. Geraldine Forbes says, “He campaigned against the self-immolation of the widows. He has been acclaimed for championing the cause of women and starting the reform movement. His personal relationship with women was far from ideal”. Raja Rammohan Roy married thrice and accounts of his life have no evidence that he looked for companionship with his wives. He was also not on good terms with his mother. Geraldine Forbes is of the opinion that Raja Rammohan Roy seems less than an ideal champion of women’s rights, since the voices of the women with whom he was related were not allowed to be heard. Along with Raja Ram Mohan Roy another social reformer who needs to be mentioned is Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. Through his relentless efforts, he tried to legalize widow remarriage. Up to now there is no solution to the several
problems which are in the life of women. The new woman formed by the various types of theories that relates to patriarchy. There are so many differences in the life of new woman which is not relevant to traditional patriarchy. The nationalist contrasted the position of the new woman with that of the woman in modern western society.

The image of the new woman was also different and distinct from the traditional patriarchal one. Even though educated, a woman could get recognition only when she was good and adept at house work. The woman could venture into the outside world without losing out on her essential feminine virtues. An attitude of women as well as the materialistic world affects the life of men. Due to the adjustment with the outside world, men could not look into the affairs of the home. This loss had to be compensated by women and this was done by asserting the concept of spiritual purity. Women assumed leadership roles. As leaders, they addressed women’s issues concerning female education, child marriage, the practice of Purdhah and their status in the family. Geraldine Forbes says that these women spoke from a specific class orientation and hence in a limited way they understood many of the problems shared by all women. They did not share the same economic base of women in the rural areas. Their perceptions were based upon the experiences of women like themselves. The institutions which these women started served the purpose of unfortunate women of their class. Women belonging to other classes were untouched both by the reformers and the new women. During the Nationalist Movement, women belonging to liberal homes and conservative families, urban centers and rural districts, women single and married, young and old came forward and joined the struggle against colonial rule. Politics completely altered the lives of women.

Women’s participation in the national struggle was welcomed by men. In a deliberate attempt, the Nationalist leaders developed contacts with peasants, workers and women’s organizations to demonstrate mass support for the movement. Geraldine Forbes correctly analyses the situation that the women were amazed to find political participation approved of by men who wanted their wives to behave in home like the perfect wives in religious texts. The distinct spheres of the public and the private still continued to exist but the codes of appropriate behavior for each were redefined and given political meaning.
The emergence of Gandhi in the national scene brought forth a number of changes both in the social and political fronts. Gandhi emphasized those women leaders must be pure, firm and self controlled like the ancient heroines. Gandhi wanted women to participate in the freedom movement without sacrificing family honour or prestige. Frustration, isolation, alienation, loneliness are the different types of predicament of women. From the beginning women frustrated in the society. It has spread almost all over the spheres of human life in our age.

As far as Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction is concerned the women predicament refers to the frustration has a special significance. The women feels totally frustrated in social, practical, economic and religious fields which have developed a highly destructive tendency. The rapid growth in industry, science, technology accompanies an increasing awareness of alienation in human life. Woman feels lonely in the face of vast external world. Her loneliness is intensified when she feels the sense of belonging nowhere. Indo-Anglian and Hindi writer emphasizes the frustration of major characters and the grief resulting from their frustration. The women in their novels were frustrated before universe. The grave problem is that the conditions of practical life arouse in woman a sense of frustration. Hence frustration is a predicament element in Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction. The term such as frustration, isolation, alienation, and loneliness is synonymously used in our discourse. Yet, they are different from each other as they depict woman’s different mental reactions and physical conditions. Psychologists refer to an extraordinary variety of psychosocial disorders, including frustration, loss of self status, despair rootlessness, loss of beliefs or values. In short, frustration is a feeling of being alienated from others. Isolation is outcome of being lonely which has been a permanent feature of entire humanity. The race of woman has always desired the company but frustrated from it.

Frustration has a certain place in Indo-Anglian and Hindi fiction. It can be seen as a significant aspect. The political movement started by Gandhi led to the breakdown of the woman’s world confined within the domestic walls. Women questioned the female education programmers of the reformists which stressed upon conformity and only enabled them to perform their roles as wives and mothers more effectively. The complete segregation of domestic and public
life that was the accepted norm was also questioned during the Satyagraha movement. At that time women from all caste and community took part in the movement and his careful study revealed to him that women were patient and showed antipathy towards violence. He concluded that women were well suited for constructive work. Geraldine Forbes says that reconstruction of new ideal happened for Indian woman. Women were caught up in the fever of the times. They did not have time to analyze their situation. Women were engaged in the various movements and struggles which revolutions their lives. They were triumphant over their achievements. In literature, women came to be represented in the nineteenth century due to the influence of the various reform movements. There is declaration of various policies which made changes in social happenings, apart from it being a record of the various movements. By the beginning of the twentieth century, female education had received wide support and social approval than in the preceding century. The atmosphere was congenial for writers to raise issues concerning women to a wider readership. A general feeling existed that the institutions of family and home were being threatened by western ideas. The western ways of life was suddenly forced on the natives. The conditions which are bound to happen will be acceptable as well as adjustable. But the Indian could not allow this imitation to enter their homes. New norms had to be formulated to withstand the onslaught of the western way of life. The nationalists pay attention to the freedom for females which are the goal. In this way, women in India were bound by an entirely new kind of subordination.

Mulk Raj Anand (1905) is one of the most important writers in Indian English fiction. He has been severally described as a humanist, a socialist, a Marxist. He has also depicted the predicament of the Indian woman who is a victim of the social injustice. There is a shattering sense of women predicament in his novels. He focused on the reform movements which brought a change in the attitudes of women. He is regarded as a champion of the outcasts and the weaker sections of society. He has depicted the predicament of the Indian woman, who is a victim of the rigid social order. Mulk Raj Anand strikes at the sentimentality of the Indian woman and their weak acceptance of the inferior status assigned to them. At the same time, he perceives in them a great potential
for constructive work which often goes waste due to the chauvinistic attitudes of the men folk around her. He stresses the need for the emancipation of women, suggesting to them to break free the hearth and venture out into world. In the novel, *Gauri* (1960), the female protagonist belongs to a poor family in a village. She gets married to Panchi, a peasant, in the neighboring village. As marriage occupies a very important position in a woman’s life, especially in the Indian context, Gauri is looks forward for a happy life with her husband. By nature, Gauri is loving and caring, meek and docile and has a sense of service. She is a perfect example of the typical Indian woman. She shows utmost respect for the elders and is well-versed in the scriptures. Very soon, trouble starts brewing between Gauri and the mother-in-law. With immense patience, Gauri puts up with all the humiliations, misery and ill-treatment. When she becomes pregnant, she is asked to prove her chastity and this breaks her patience barrier. Gauri’s story runs parallel to the myth of Sita, the epic heroine of Ramayana. Women down the ages have been linked to Sita because of their immense patience and self-sacrificing nature. Gandhi also revoked this image of Sita during the freedom struggle. By stressing the importance of the Sita ideal, men down the ages have exercised control over women. Women also due to their inescapable conditions have tried to live up to the expectations of the Sita ideal. The reform movement and access to education brought a change in the attitudes of women. The freedom movement led to the complete destruction of the traditional image. But this was an urban phenomenon, which was limited to the upper and middle –class woman. Sita ideal affects the daily life of women who are in rural areas. In these areas, the effects of reform movement were not visible.

Gauri is also a victim of this oppressive burden of Sita. An escape from this situation comes in the form of her travel to Hoshiarpur. Destiny drives her to this town and a lot of transformation takes place in Gauri. She comes into contact with Col. Mahindra, a doctor by profession. The colonel is a liberal-minded young man with progressive ideas. Under his tutelage, Gauri is transformed into a person with a strong will and individuality. The necessary of education and the benefits thereof were unknown to Gauri. The transformation in Gauri is due to her contact with the urban centre. Many women of her class
were silently putting up with the atrocities, but Gauri succeeds in putting an end to her troubles. All the traditional gods that Gauri believed in did not come to her rescue. Col. Mahindra endowed with virtues like a sense of responsibility, service and wisdom is the modern god who helps Gauri to come out of her predicament. She becomes a nurse learning the art under the guidance of Col. Mahindra and devotes her life to the service of mankind. Mulk Raj Anand is also a product of pre-independence India. In his treatment of Gauri he achieves what the nationalists failed to tackle. The task of uplifting the working class women was discarded by the nationalists as they could not feel the problems of the working classes. Even educated women could not solve the problems of these classes. As most of them belonged to the middle class and upper class, they could not empathies with the condition of the lower classes.

In spite of not being educated, Gauri is successful in carving out her future through her employment as a nurse. This is also a pointer to the fact that women had started entering the professional sphere. Gauri, though belonging class succeeds in breaking free from the traditional bondages. Given her rural background, where women still suffer in silence. Gauri is a path-breaker. With her new found confidence, she triumphantly leaves her house and husband to work as a nurse in Col. Mahindra’s clinic. A moot point is that when women were granted the permission to enter the work sphere, some specific jobs were meant for them such as nursing. Her choice of becoming a nurse is in keeping with the ideals of the nationalists who, nevertheless, wanted women to join the work force but take up jobs that were appropriate to their feminine nature that is the nurturing and caring aspects emphasized. Moreover, women who entered these professions were from the lower class. Mulk Raj Anand is influenced by Gandhi so far as the uplift of the down-trodden and untouchables are concerned. He has faithfully depicted such characters and advocated their betterment. All his pre-independence works deal with this subject. Anand’s Gauri is a post-independence product. Despite the changes in the society, some families were still clinging on to age-old values and traditions. Education of women, which the nationalists thought would lead to the ultimate liberation of women, had failed. The basic social structures, social practices and patriarchal controls hardly underwent any change. The lives of women continued to be the same as earlier
generations in the post-independence period. The nationalist idea of allowing
women to seek education but giving primary importance to her place at home as
house-wife and homemaker still holds good. Education did not give women
economic independence. Women were still not allowed to work and this made
them helplessly dependent on their husbands. A working woman is not treated
with respect. Modernization and the western influence did not succeed in
generating a change in attitudes and thinking. Education has failed to liberate
women in the real sense of the term. Mulk Raj Anand places the character of
Gauri when for a brief period sexual discrimination disappeared in reality as
well as literature. Anand has shown great sensitivity in his characterization of
Gauri. Gauri does not compromise with her situation. She is able to stand on feet
and dictate her future. Through Gauri, Anand questions the ideal nature of man-
woman relationship-that of the dominant male and submissive female. The
novel shows the shift of the author’s sensibility towards women in fiction.

Raja Rao (1909) is a great son of mother India. He is an Indian novelist
in English belonging to the first generation. He is the child of the Gandhian Age.
Kanthapura is the first novel of Raja Rao which was written in France. The
novel Kanthapura has a vivid and realistic picture of the Gandhian freedom
struggle. Raja Rao has brought the Indian atmosphere thoroughly well into his
study. Kanthapura portrays women as taking major roles. It unveiled the
immense potential of Indian women. Women are in the forefront but Raja Rao
focuses that it is not in defiance of their men. Women rise to the occasion and
release their inherent potential but they do not do it independently. Raja Rao
gives a glowing description of the village Kanthapura. Most of the activist like
Rangamma, Ratna and Achakka are widows. Raja Rao portrays a positive image
of women as forces of harmony and survival which is effectively described as
the end of the novel. In the midst of the chaos created the police, women sit and
sing. A child is born and a Brahmin child widow nurses the baby of a weaver
woman and the barriers of the caste are transcended by women. Women are
shown as upholders of stability. When Moorthy, the protagonist turns to Nehru
symbolizing power politics; women adhere to Mahatma Gandhi, who stands for
village autonomy and social reform. Women have an uplifting role and they say,
Ravana will be slain and Sita freed and we shall be happy. The women characters have been skillfully delineated by Raja Rao.

Ratna is a child widow who has been powerfully influenced by modern ideas and who does not regard being a woman as a matter of shame and inferiority. Achakka is revealed by her manner of narration and her comments on persons and events. Her function is representative and her strength lies in being anonymous. Narsamma is the old widow, orthodox and conservative. She has a great love for her son and she has high hopes of a brilliant career for him. She is not wicked and crooked but only orthodox. Rangamma is educated woman who well acquainted with the day-to-day developments elsewhere. She is a lady who is deferent, soft voiced and gentle gestured. All the orthodox men and women revolt against Moorthy’s way of doing things that the Swami, the custodian of the Santana Dharma, threatens to excommunicate the whole Brahmin community of the village. Only Ratna, the young widowed daughter of Kanthamma turns out to be the spiritual helpmate of Moorthy. The threat results in Narasamma’s suicide, but Moorthy continues his work undaunted with more vigor and determination. Rangamma, an enlightened lady shows active sympathy for the cause of Moorthy. The whole village is disturbed by the violent scenes at the Coffee Estate. Then Moorthy undertakes a self-purification fast, which brings him closer to the common people and closer still to Ratna. His arrest causes a great commotion among the villagers who become politically conscious. Much to the relief of all, the cunning Bhatta goes away to Kashi to wash off his sins. Raja Rao creates archetypal images of women in the novel, Kanthapura. Woman is the earth as well as air and fire that which seek against that which is sought. Woman is the meaning of the word that reminds man of that which he is and reminds her through him of that which she is. Woman sustains life; she is the preserver of the home and a protector of culture.

Raja Rao sees woman as Shakti as mother earth and the theme of Shakti worship runs through the novel. Different forms of Shakti are manifested through the women of Kanthapura. Women of Kanthapura involved in the Satyagraha procession against the British government. When the police ill-treat them with their sticks and boots, the women think, move and act as one for they are one. Inspired by Gandhi they become the very incarnation of Shakti. The
novel describes the civil disobedience struggle put up by the men and women of Kanthapura. It begins with the graphic details of the place which is just a village of South India. A new life of revolt comes to be injected into the men and women of the village. They believe in Goddess Kenchamma who is the protector of the villagers. It consists of the merchants, the moneylenders, widows, the priests, the peasants and the professional weavers and potters. In the village Bhatta, a Brahmin and Waterfall Venkamma are on one side looking at the whole issue with considerable misgivings. Women of the village give helpful hand to the men by starting spinning khaddar on the spinning-wheel. The women also supported the men in the task of fighting the authorities. They decided to fight against the British to the last. The women characters in the village are odd and some of them good. Waterfall Venkamma who goes on roaring day and night, against her, as one might say she has a verbal acid on her tongue. The character is unimportant from the point of view of action but she is quite memorable because of her oddity.

Ratna may be called the modern version of the new widowhood in the sense that she defies the village women with all their dirty ideas of a child widow like her. She calls them old country hens. She is bold enough and becomes a help mate to the heroine, but one cannot call her a heroine proper. She easily symbolizes the new widowhood. They are critical of her radicalism in society. She has traits of leadership as well. Narsamma, the mother of the hero is a pathetic figure of rank traditionalism. She has not been able to rise above the stinking conservatism of her village. She has borne eleven children. The removal of untouchable is pollution for her. She takes the excommunication by Swami as the biggest bolt from the blue and succumbs to its severe effects. Rangamma, another woman in the village is comparatively more refined those others. She is liberal and understands the meaning of the new movement in the village. Since she has been painted in the white pigment as one might say that she is much too colorless for this obvious reason. She may be great for her gentleness and modern outlook. There are so many incidents that relates to freedom movement. There were affairs against British so that the policemen have been sent to the village. Waterfall Venkamma is opposed to Moorothy because he has refused to marry her second daughter. According to her Moorothy
is of loose morals. She resents that Rangamma’s house should become a congress house, with the books and literature of the movement. Now the free spinning wheels are going to be distributed even to the Sudras there. In the Brahmin Street Moorthy persuades nose-scratching Nanjamma to spin and in the first month cotton is supplied free to the spinner. It is also gives work to the workless. Nanjamma objects to it because spinning is not the work of a Brahmin. Moorthy points out to her that the money which flows away to England will remain in the country.

Next scene gives clear-cut example of predicament. When Rangamma’s sister Kamalamma coming along with her widowed daughter Ratna. That time Bhatta rises to leave the place. In her character the novelist shows the displeasure of the people because Ratna as widow does not conform to the required social standards. They don’t approve Ratna as an Indian widow and she resent the fact that a widow should be living as if on a penance, particularly when she was married when barely ten years of age. Bhatta thought that she cannot bring bad name to the family which of the Chanderhalli origin. Ratna’s father is his second cousin but he does not like her modern way. The revolt against casticism is steadily uniform in the novel. There is a strong feeling against the pariahs on the part of the potential Brahmin, Bhatta and his other associates Moorthy, on the other hand, forms anti-caste organization peoples of the country. Narsamma, the mother of Moorthy spits at the pariahs and towards their hutments. The novel on the whole is no doubt a faithful record of the socio-political climate of the time when the civil disobedience movement sets in the country. This novel is a typically beautiful story in which Raja Rao has added all the technical and aesthetic devices.

An old woman of Kanthapura tells the story with all the flavor of the rich picturesque village language. Her story telling is absolutely subjective. She narrates the story of those stirring times from her point of view and the traditional Indian way of storytelling is used with telling effect. An old woman goes on revealing her mind in telling the story and her views as well as her superstition and likes and dislikes are all evident in her story telling. In fact she comes alive in the pages of Kanthapura. Her language has the proper flavor of the earth and the limitations of limited knowledge are also evident in her story
telling. The house of the rich widow, Rangamma, becomes the centre of all activities. Goddess Kenchamma is the one providing timely rains, curing people of their illness. The cultural life of the village revolves round the temple of the goddess.

Anita Desai (1937) is a very famous writer in English literature. She published her first novel in 1963, Cry, the Peacock. In her novels, she focuses upon the personal struggles and the problems of the Indian women. The main character Maya faced various problems in her life. Anita Desai successfully tunnels into the chaotic world of Maya’s consciousness. Her neurosis also denotes a collective neurosis which tries to shatter the very identity of woman in the contemporary society dominated by man in which woman longing for love is driven mad or compelled to commit suicide. The whole events given by the writer which are fully relates to the matters of marriage life of the main character. The heroine of the novel wants to lead a satisfactory life. She always pines for the sexual satisfaction. Already she was the daughter of a wealthy father and she married a person who senior to her age. Maya has so many habits that maintained by up to now. But her husband does not like anything as well as no poetic mind. The main character Maya thinks that Peacock always have struggle for survival and the writer used it as a symbol in this novel. In this novel, Anita Desai has depicted the failure of marriage between Maya and Gautama. She is the pioneer of the psychological novel in modern Indian English literature. Female characters are dominant in her novels. Here she externalizes the interior of Maya’s psyche.

Anita Desai skillfully explores an enduring existentialist predicament with her profound understanding of human psychology. Her adroit handling of stream of consciousness and montage technique, her aesthetic concern for structuralism, her lyricism, her symbolism and her imagery reveal her remarkable originality and ingenuity as a powerful novelist. Cry, the Peacock is resolved into three parts and the opening part of the novel depicts what leads Maya to her neurosis. Maya, a childless young wife married to a reputed lawyer, Gautama who is twice her age. She is described mourning over the death of her dear dog, Toto. The death motif is built skillfully into the very structure of the story. Maya, though obsessed by death from the beginning, is responsive to the
poetic beauty of life. The resultant tension in her projects the misery of her existence very well. The part second traces the beginning of Maya’s compulsive fear. It describes Gautama’s obvious nonchalance to it. It also describes the hollowness of martial life in a wider context. Maya’s death-wish is ultimately transferred totally to Gautama who indulges in a long discussion on death with her. In part third, Anita Desai depicts Maya’s regression to an infantile state, to the world of her father, and her final leap to death which very well balances the structure of the novel. Desai has constructed this novel very carefully, demonstrating her early aesthetic concern for structuralism in the novel as an art form. The husband-wife alienation creates by the temperamental incompatibility between the two. Gautama and Maya stand in sharp contrast with each other as opposed archetype. Gautama is a pragmatic as well as unimaginative and unsentimental. Anita Desai created the main character Maya who is sensitive and has the gift of poetic imagination. She gives the acute difference between Maya and Gautama. Maya cannot believe on the dead body of Toto so that she rushed to wash her eyes. There are so many events where we find the communication gap in between Maya and her husband Gautama. Always there is a quarrel happened in between Maya and Gautama.

*Prem Chand (1880)* published a collection of short stories which became very famous among the people. He tried his level best to write fiction in the language Urdu. Premchand became famous in the new art fiction and inspired by the various activities of society. Always he pay attention towards the problems of the people that focused by him in his writings. Prem Chand very clearly noted that the women should be engaged themselves in various activities within limitations. He always gives more and more importance to the realistic as well as social happenings. He says that not a single woman has to suffer in silence. So Premchand wrote minutely about the problems of women in his writing and emphasis the unsolved problems of women relates to the various caste and communities. He inspired by the work of national, political and social heroes and follows ideas related to the revolution. He had written so many novels and short stories that became very famous. In his first novel, *Seva Sadan*, Prem Chand emphasis that every people must hate the sin that done by the sinner; but have some soft corner to the sinner. Among his novels, Seva Sadan,
Rangamanch, Ghaban, Nirmala and Godan became very famous. He was a great
novelist as well as social reformer. He always pays attention towards the social
problems which are criticized by him. He says that literature is best medium for
educating public opinion. He always on the firm opinion to equal opportunities
would be given to all in social activities.

In his novels we find the social system always had various problems. The main
characters also pine for the satisfaction as well as ideas that relates to
revolution. The main characters like Suman who attacks upon the dual standards
of the society. People like Munshi Abulwaja, Seth Chimanlal and pt. Dinanath
who leads a double life. The people who victimized of social as well as
economic forces also change their attitudes. Such type of activity finds in this
novel. This novel is provocative and incisively revealing amongst politicized
literatures addressing prostitution and social conventions in colonial and
Gandhian India. Individual characters represent political positions held by
classes, castes, and genders, and plot lines resulting in the interaction of these
groups expose hypocrisy and challenge the societal pillars of religion and
morality. This novel is fascinating and highly interested in the politics of India
during colonial rule and the Gandhian era. It is a remarkable taste of the form of
a politicized novel.

*Mrudula Garg (1938)* who question the institution of the society. She
expresses her view about her sexual self without hiding anything and sticks to
the conventional framework. She shows the dissatisfaction which is the outcome
of a routine kind of existence. Mrudula Garg focused on the predicament of
female due to the fulfillment of their ambitions. Her female stays within the
social institutions not due to conformity. Her fiction emphasized the relationship
of female and male with psychological as well as sociological approach.
Mrudula Garg’s novel, *Chittkobra* deals with a woman of modern times. Garg’s
woman has shed all inhibitions and acquired new candors about her sexual self.
The main character of the novel Mannu who created as modern woman that gets
benefit of education. She evinces interest in various arts and is herself an active
participant in theatre. She is married to a highly successful businessman,
Mahesh. Both Mannu and Mahesh are persons with a modern sensibility.
Mahesh has the ambition to become a flourishing businessman and works his
way towards prosperity. He is also well educated. In modern times, men prefer educated wives. It is a symbol of social status. But they do not treat them as intellectual partners. In fact, an intellectual relationship between man and woman does not exist in many cases. Mannu being educated has a great urge to take up a job. But certain compelling circumstances at home put an end to her desire. In the absence of any support from her husband or his family, the job of looking after the children and maintaining the house is entirely her responsibility.

The laws of marriage proclaim equal status to both the partners, but in practice it is different. For Mahesh, marriage is just a social obligation that has to be fulfilled. His responsibility ends there. For Mannu, marriage is everything that is loves sharing and working together. She expects love and companionship. Mahesh is happy with Mannu as she does a good job of house-keeping and looking after the children. She is also a good host to his friends about which he is very proud. Mrudula Garg’s *Chittkobra* translated into German language as ‘Die Gefleckte Kobra’ in 1987. Mrudula Garg’s Mannu married modern woman have an extra-marital relationship as a part of the process of their growing up and exploring her own personality. Manu strongly detests the idea of being reduced to the level of a show-piece. Having great intellectual potential, it hurts her that she does not have an identity. Her identification is always in relation to some person. She does not get any recognition. These are some of the questions that make modern educated women ponder over their situation. Even after years struggle, the woman has not really succeeded in possessing a distinct identity. Modernization has either led to her identification as an object or has treated her as a show-piece. Her presence in the house increases the beauty of the house.

Women in modern times do not like to be compared with others. They feel satisfied when they are recognized for their worth and abilities. With changes in the social and economics fronts, relationships in society have also undergone transformations. Extra-marital relationships are not a rarity. Men have been indulging in those. It becomes pronounced when women engage in such relationships. For generations, women have maintained silence over their sexual experiences since Indian society considers it shameful and a taboo. If a
woman talks about it, she is called licentious and ill-mannered. The modern woman is a thinking individual who needs to know herself. She is frank in expressing her attitudes and feelings regarding every aspect related to her life. Manu’s extra-marital relationship with Richard helps her to fill up the void in her life. It becomes a process of knowing herself better. She does not plunge into this relationship due to inadequacies in her marriage. Mannu loves her husband dearly. She is happy in every way, but still there is a vacuum. Richard helps fill this void. Though involved with Richard, she does not ever think of leaving her husband or family.

For Mannu, her husband, children and family hold a very important place in life. Staying within the safe precincts of her house, she undertakes this self-exploratory journey. Life in modern times is different from that of the earlier periods. It becomes very important for men and women to establish an identity of their own. A person is recognized on the basis of his or her achievements and worth. All other aspects become secondary. The attitude all over the world has become very individualistic. The strength of mind and the feeling of self-assurance of any educated person are apparent in Mannu. The nationalist ideal of liberating the woman through educating her gets fulfilled in the character of Mannu. The attitude of men by and large has remained the same. Though they marry educated women, they do not want thinking individuals. A woman is supposed to satisfy the man whom she marries and helps him in continuing the family lineage. Besides being educated, she should be accomplished in cooking, maintaining the house, attaching to guests and doing many such jobs. Men still think and feel that a woman should not forget her basic nature. The personal sense of morality has undergone a lot of change in the thinking of men. Free India proclaimed equality to men and women on the same grounds. The law makers did not make any distinction between the two sexes. Women of today are not ready to bear the burden so that men can be free from all responsibilities. From them, there is a demand for a just way of life. It was during the freedom struggle movement that women came into the lime-light and participated in various struggles. Post Independence literature throws light on the woman’s quest for her identity, addressing alongside a number of issues.
Maitreyi Pushpa (1944) who had written nine novels and collection of short stories. Because of her daring in writing, she became famous in Hindi literature. She won the SAARC Literary Award for Alma Kabutari. She also won other awards which include the Premchand Samman and the Sahityakar Samman for her overall contribution to Hindi Literature. Maitreyi Pushpa received liveliness and energy by the cultures and languages of Bundeli and Brij. She has a good command on the both languages. She did her post graduation in Hindi from Bundelkhand College, Jhansi. She started writing very late, yet in less than ten years, she has authored three collections of short stories and eight novels besides writing regular column in weekly Rashtriya Sahara. She is the only woman writer in Hindi who has chosen to write about rural India. Her writing is a constant struggle against the feudal system which still prevails in Indian villages. Her protagonists are always fearless women upholding feminine dignity, who suffer and resist the male domination. No other woman writer in Hindi grapples with and depicts the rural politics and reality better than Maitreyi. She is bold and forthright. For her powerful idiomatic language and uninhibited treatment she is the most talked about author today.

As a famous author, she has released Hindi literature from the closed and suffocating atmosphere of cities into the open spaces of villages and fields, in a way that no Hindi writer has done before. She has given new definitions to both our bookish titles and language. After independence, her work would be the third name after Rangey Raghav and Phanishwar Nath Renu which has burst into the skies of literature like a comet. The novel Alma Kabutari shows the real picture of the woman from primitive race. Alma, the central character makes her appearance fairly late in the novel. She breaks the polite mask of the well-bred society. But she is there in essence all through it. By the character of Alma, Maitreyi Pushpa showed the predicament of such women who belongs to the Kabutari race. She is the quintessence of all that a Kabutari woman stands for. In her abducted condition, Alma forced into becoming a sexual commodity to the kajjas. The kabutara legend has it that Rani Padmini, who is believed to have preferred dying on a burning pyre to falling into the wicked hands of aggressors, actually did not commit ‘sati’. She escaped along with a band of guerrilla forces and entered enemy territory eventually co-habituating and producing children
whose descendants are the Kabutaras. The novel has Alma, the modern day Padmini, of course without her guerrilla troupe. Being educated she is an oddity in the community. She shares the fate of her illiterate would be mother-in-law and her grandmother. Here is a fate of repeated sexual exploitation. Rana, her kabutara lover nurses ambition of becoming a policeman. He becomes Alma’s fiancé, only to later desert her. Alma’s father is killed by powerful forces to who is serves as an informer. In no time the now-orphaned Alma finds herself in midst of the political machinations of the region. However, she has one advantage that also proves disadvantage many a times. She is not only educated but also has an innate sense of individuality. The man’s world ruthlessly uses her as a toy to play with and gain pleasure as well as higher power from. She marries a dacoit-turned-politician and is soon widowed. She uses her newly acquired status to create a power base for herself. The story of Alma’s life and therefore the novel is full of dramatic events. The would-be mother-in-law’s rapist paramour falls to kabutara’s status himself. Alma’s lover becomes insane. All through Alma keeps up her spirits to rise as a phoenix and become a political leader.