CHAPTER - VI
CONCLUSION

6.1 GENERAL

Chapter VI, the last chapter of this study clearly sums up the contents of the above chapters. The various aspects discussed in the previous chapters are R.K. Narayan's place in Indian writing in English, his conception of Indian women in his major novels and their categorization such as traditional, transitional and moderns, the status of women in India and the problems faced by them. Finally this chapter focuses the various causes of the sufferings of Indian women and it also suggests the possible remedies for the problems discussed.

6.2 THE WORLD OF R.K. NARAYAN AND SELECT LITERARY REVIEWS

R.K. Narayan's reputation as an Indian writer in English and his depiction of Indian women are clearly revealed in the first chapter. Narayan's prolific literary career which now spans seven decades includes novels, short stories and works of nonfiction. Since his entry into the international literary stage in 1933 his books alone comprise fifteen novels, nine collection of stories
and eleven works of non fiction, includes volumes of autobiography and collection of essays. As in the words of Ralph J. Crane, "He is without doubt one of India’s best known writers and he has received considerable recognition for his works both in and out of India." (Crane 69)

The greatness of R.K. Narayan is confirmed through the various honours and titles showered on him. He is the recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award (1961), the PadmaBhushan (India’s most prestigious literary award, 1964), the National Association of Independent award, USA (1965), the English speaking Union Book Award (1975), and the British Royal Society of Literature Arthur Christopher Benson Medal (1980). He is fellow of American Academy and the Institute of Arts and Letters. He has been awarded honorary degree by a number of Universities and he is frequently touted as a future Noble Prize Winner. In 1985, he was nominated to the Rajaya Sabha the upper house of Indian parliament, for his contribution in the cultural field. During a six year term, he spoke up for India’s children, drawing attention to a school curriculum that literally weighed down their satchels. A great walker, he campaigned for the environment and the preservation of parks and urban open spaces. In 1987, he received the Soviet Land Nehru Award. Many universities conferred honorary doctorates on him. In 2000, he received the Padma Shrusban India’s second highest civilian award.
All his fiction has been printed in England and America as well as in India and as a result he has received considerably more critical attention from overseas than most resident Indian writers. He is included in all major international reference works dealing with contemporary fiction. There is a lengthy entry on him in contemporary Novelists and another equally thorough entry on him in the recent Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English, and he is one of the relatively few foreign authors included in Margaret Drabble’s prominently Canonical Oxford companion to English Literature. Hilary spurling in ‘Encounter’ comments that Narayan “… reminds the reader irresistibly of Chekov, partly because both approach in the same spirit of ironic detachment, the same problem of how to cram an unruly, wholly or semi oriental world into an alien European art form.” (Spurling 77)

Thus R.K. Narayan has frequently been considered as minor image of various European canonical writers, as if it is only through such comparision that Narayan can be afforded any credibility. Such comparisions resulted in the total negligence of Narayan’s individuality.

But the majority of the later critics have focused on Narayan’s realism, humour, irony, comedy, narrative technique and so on. Many critics celebrate Narayan’s great fictional creation: Malgudi. Nihal Fernando’s introductory
Narayan’s skill as a realist is strikingly apparent in his evocation of Malgudi. At one level it is Narayan’s capacity for the accurate depiction of physical detail that enables him to communicate with such ‘extraordinary vividness’ the essential native of Malgudi, and through this, the sense of a typical south Indian township, Narayan’s delineation of the topography of Malgudi—its streets, shops, offices and natural and man-made landmarks—is remarkably concrete; as Nirmal Mukherji has put it, Malgudi is so real that it becomes hard to believe that it is after all just an imaginary town. (Fernando 75)

The most interesting discussion on Narayan’s narrative strategies comes in a review by B.C. Harrex. He offers a lively and engaging celebratory retrospective of fifty years of Narayan’s fiction on the occasion of Malgudi’s golden jubilee. In particular he discusses Narayan’s narrative strategies, including “the metamorphosis of facts from personal life into fictive form”
which he illustrates with a fascinating extract from an interview with a real-life Sampath, the man behind Narayan’s characters of the same name in the novel ‘Mr. Sampath.’

The nature of much earlier criticisms of Narayan’s fiction is succinctly questioned by Feroza Jussawalla in her somewhat evaluative – cum –revisionist essay entitled “when ‘Sweet mangoes’ turn to ‘Malt vinegar.’”

Narayan’s themes are very similar to those of several contemporary and overtly political writers in the International Literature in English: nationhood, post colonialism, dehybridization of contemporary man by the process Sulman Rusdie has called ‘migration metomorphosis’. But in Narayan’s work these themes are intertwined with his reader’s interest in perennial issues of character, humankind’s hope and fate. (Jussawala 90)

Few critics like Terrasa Hubel and Britta Olinder look at various aspects of roles and presentation of women in Narayan’s fiction. Teresa Hubel in her essay on The Dark Room convincingly demonstrates that it is a novel about a particular period of Indian history during which time, the 1930’s women’s
movement in India intersetted with freedom movement. She shows how Savitri ‘is betrayed by a patriarchal system that allows her husband the freedom of infidelity but derives her the right to economic independence’ and argues that ‘The Dark Room ‘ “is a testament to a particular kind of female loneliness and loss.” (Hubel 114) Britta Olinder examines the nature of power and powerlessness of Narayan’s female characters. The absense of women in ‘The Vendor of Sweets’ derived the following comment from Ralph J. Crane

Indeed, the apparent absence of women from this corner of Malgudi, may even be designed to show the absence of women from the Indian psyche, or the way Indian women are frequently forced to inhabit society’s shadows.(Ralph 81)

These selected reviews and analysis are intended to prove the fact that Narayan’s a reach is a broad one. The second aspect highlighted in this study is the status of women in India and R.K. Narayan’s handling of Indian women in his major novels.

From the previous chapters it can be derived that this study provides a valuable glimpse of Indian women in transition as revealed by R.K. Narayan in his major novels. It examines how women characters in Indo-Anglian novels
coped with changes in their lives and with the rival pulls of tradition and modernity in their search for identity, independence, fulfillment and love. It also answers the difference between tradition and modern and proves that tradition and modern are antithetical. If one wished to be modern one must discard all tradition. Alternatively one must resist modernity and remain rooted in tradition. In this view tradition is equated with old outdated ideas and beliefs and customs and practices and modernity with progress and new ideas.

6.3 INDIAN TRADITION AND INDIAN WOMEN

Before moving further, it will be proper to talk about Indian tradition. As rightly stated by Vakati Panduranga Rao in his article ‘The Telugu Scene’

We have a wonderful tradition that cannot be anything but Indian. We worship what we kick and vice versa. The stone becomes the Siva; the Cow becomes the maata; the slave becomes the devine mother. Probably there is an under current of feudalism in us that can only make us look up and look down, but not look at. So it is with the Indian woman. She is the great mother, the crown-root of our family tree and so
logically lies under the ground in mud and darkness. 
She is to be worshipped and also to be burnt.  
(Rao 69)

An Indian women’s self perception and also the society’s expectations from her for long been largely determined by the complex of ideas and values and beliefs condified in ‘Manusmriti’. Women are both biologically and emotionally givers. Tradition has shaped them into life-affirming and loving beings. They represent love, chastity, compassion, kindness, altruism and emotion. The values that the women embody are essentially the love of the ethical and moral code of most religions. At heart women are religious and traditional. That is why they believe that non violence and compassion and sharing will solve the problems of the world.

The detailed analysis of R.K. Narayan’s women characters in the earlier chapters proves that R.K. Narayan has indeed has succeeded in portraying the growth and development of Indian women since independence. He himself proclaims in an interview with Alex Hamilton, that

....Compare my new novel ‘The Painter of Signs with ‘The Dark room’ that’s a contrast. The new liberated woman and the traditional housewife
completely suppressed, you see a whole social change. (Hamilton 16)

He has portrayed the new trends with deft touches. Most of his women may not fit into the Western feminist frame but some of them certainly refuse to toe the line drawn by the Sati-Savitri-Sita stereotype.

Feminist writing is a Western import born of Western compulsions and as with most Western notions. We were attracted to it as capable of answering to needs which we imagined must be ours as well a clear sign of intellectual imbecility. Gone were the rosy cheeked, coral lipped, starry eyed, snowy white skinned, innocent women of the fiction. The present age abounds in portraits of women who speaks of torment, guilt, dread, imprisonment as the four walls of her private world. She is bored, depressed, neurotic, jealous, seduced, betrayed, guilty and at the brink of suicide.

What seemed like a mighty wave in the countries around the world appears as little more than a ripple in India. For, the exposure of Indian society to the full spectrum of the economic industrial and social problems has begun recently. More over the age old tradition here is not so easy to shakeoff and consequently the problems of the evolving woman here centre more around
family and economic independence. Even so the women are raising their voice against all prejudices and forms of oppression.

6.4 EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

It is a credit that writers like R.K. Narayan have made a sincere attempt to portray a woman who is not content to be a duplicate Sita or Savitri. There is a new breed of woman who is questioning the very institution of marriage and the double standards of judgement applied to women and men Panduranga Rao rightly admires that

Given the limitations of tradition and its inhibitive influence one cannot but admire the guts of these women who have taken it upon themselves to question and question logically what come to be accepted as a divine fiat in matters of man-woman relationship and the related areas. (Rao 75)

6.4.1 Traditional Women and their Plights

When women break away from tradition as attempted by Savitri in 'The Dark Room' all she could hear is this echo "Go back home, woman, there is no escape." Thus a woman who protests against her depersonalization and
annihilation and who walks out of home to live and be human is made aware of the futility of her actions. Habit, realization of the futility of her rebellion to whatever we may ascribe her final decision, she knows this like Sita of yore. She retreats home, aware that her life will be what it has always been, painfully uninteresting. Clearly the forces of cultural and social inculcations are too strong to be completely overcome. We find the Indian women being torn between individual desires and societal expectation.

In a tradition-bound society like our Indian society it is no wonder that writers like Narayan has reflected such types in their novels. This study also affirms that Narayan’s world is indeed filled with such type of traditional women. The problems faced by women varies according to their social, cultural, educational and economical status. Chapter three shows how the problems of women grew as they grew. A chronological study of Narayan’s women reveals how women suffered right from their birth. The tradition-bound Indian society considered the very birth of girls a curse. The existing dowry system is the main cause of this negative attitude. As rearing a girl child is more expensive and risky than a male child, people dreaded the very birth of girls.

After their difficult entry into this world, the girls have to under go lot of difficulties in this chauvinistic society. Descriptions were shown even in education. People were keen to educate only the male child as he was considered
the bread winner of the family. They firmly believed that a girl’s place is only at home, so they were reluctant to give her education. Even when she was educated, she was trained only in domestic traits. Only such subjects which would help her to run her family were taught to her. This is because a girl is viewed only as a wife and a mother. Therefore the one and only idea instilled in her mind right from her birth was ‘please the male’. This became the soul purpose of her life.

The next stage is the married life. After marriage, a girl becomes a woman and she has various roles to perform. As she grows her responsibilities increase. She has to play the role of a daughter-in-law, wife, mother and mother-in-law. Of all the roles mentioned here the most difficult roles are a woman as a daughter-in-law and wife. The third chapter vividly pictures the problems faced by women while performing these difficult roles.

The inborn feminine traits of the traditionals never allowed them to move away from tradition. They never opposed or questioned their menfolk. They were the true followers of Manu. They even felt glorified in their sufferings. Accidentally if some women had rebellious attitude, the people around them curbed that in the beginning itself. Women were brain washed right from their birth to be polite, submissive and obedient. She was expected to be chaste and faithful even when her husband was unfaithful. In any adverse situation only she
was found fault with and advised to be patient and tolerant. A fine example here is Savitri, the wife of Ramani in 'The Dark Room.' While she was grieving over the infidelity of her husband, her friends advised only her to be tolerant. They even quoted examples from great epics to support their ideas. But at one stage when she refused to be an ideal Savitri and questioned her husband she was thrown out of her house at midnight by her callous husband. He expected her to only sulk in the dark room. Her sudden disappearance shattered Ramani. But finally when she returned home after a few days, though he was relieved of all his anxieties, he never showed it. He failed to notice even the tremendous transformation, which has overcome Savitri.

Another good example cited in the third chapter is Mr. Sampath's wife. Her state is more pitiable than Savitri herself. She lead only a shadowy life. She was nervous and afraid even to stand before her husband. She never had any personal wishes and throughout the day she slogged for her family. Her mind was filled only with the thoughts of her husband and children. Like a dutiful, devoted Indian wife she fulfilled her duties unquestioningly. For all her sacrifices and devotion she got only her husband's infidelity as a prize. Her utmost docility and submissiveness only encouraged Mr. Sampath to seek the company of the glamour doll Shanthi. When the secret was out all she could do was to fret in darkness. She dare not question her lord. She could seek only the
help others to question her husband. Atleast Savitri had the courage to confront her husband directly. So many years of married life had not given Mrs. Sampath even the right to question her injustice.

It is not only these illiterate home birds who were afraid to rebel against tyranny and exploitations but even the educated house wives like Brinda in The ‘Financial Expert’ stuck firmly to their traditional role. When her husband Balu sought the company of cheap theatre girls, though she was a Post graduate, she sought the help of her father-in-law to check her husband’s activities. She was afraid that she would be thrown out of her house, if she rebelled or questioned. Such women inspite of their education, considered suffering in their husband’s place far better than leading a lone life.

Most housewives felt glorification in their submissive role. They considered house keeping and child rearing as the soul purpose of their life. They felt proud and happy performing their domestic duties. Women like Susila in ‘The English Teacher’ is the best example of this type. The soul purpose of her life was running her family. Even when her broad-minded husband forced her to focus her interests on other useful activities, she was keen in her domestic works alone. Majority of the Indian women are such types. They are so accustomed to their traditional role that they cannot accept anything untraditional.
As traditional women enjoyed their status as mothers and grandmothers, they hardly found any difficulties in these roles. As mothers they were willing to forget the inferior status, provided that made their children happy. Grandmothers, as the elder numbers of the family were given due honour and respect by the menfolk. Their experience and wisdom made them the most respectable and feared member of the family.

6.4.1.1. Various Factors which Affected the Traditionals

The above analysis clearly pictures the pitiable position occupied by the traditional women in an Indian household. From this study it can be derived that the following are the possible factors which affected the traditionals. The first and foremost important aspect is the personal traits of the Indian women. Their inborn feminine traits such as docility, gentleness, submissiveness, obedience and tolerance never allowed the traditionals to question or oppose exploitation in any form. It made them easy victims to male dominance.

The next reason for the sufferings of the traditional is lack of education. Majority of women dealt in chapter three are uneducated. Had they been educated properly, they would not have become easy victims of male dominance. For example Savitri in ‘The Dark Room’ would not have attempted suicide or
suffered in the streets or finally limped back home if she had the courage to live on her own. Self-confidence is the essence of education. All these victims lacked confidence and courage because they were not properly qualified. While Shantabai in the same novel could easily walk out of her husband, Savitri failed miserably due to lack of education. Inspite of her daring attempt, her inability to look after herself both mentally as well as physically drove her back home. If she had education, she would have got a decent job and led a peaceful life. It was only the difficulties which she faced before seeking a job and her meagre income, which actually frightened her and made her feel insecure and deserted outside home. The same is the case with the other ladies dealt in this chapter.

Lack of economic independence is the next important factor, which imprisons women at home. The traditionals, as they do not have any regular income, they have to depend on their husbands for all their expenses. Sometimes they have to please their men to get even the basic needs. Savitri's fiery words

What is the difference between a prostitute and a married woman? The prostitute changes her men, but a married woman doesn't; that's all, but both earn their food and shelter in the same manner. (DR 120; Ch 7)
Beautifully reveals the pathetic condition of the traditionals. Just because they sought financial help from their husbands they suffered in silence. If they are educated, they can feel completely free earning their own livelihood.

Society also plays a vital role in the sufferings of traditionals. Man is a social animal, a ‘homosapien’. He cannot live without his society. For a social being, the reaction of the society is more important than his individual self. For most of the people satisfying the society becomes the prime object of their life. There is nothing wrong in respecting the society in which we live. The problem starts only when man starts overlooking the ‘self’ for the sake of his society. When a man put the interest of the society above all, he cannot behave normally. He starts harassing or ignoring the thoughts and feelings of his dear ones only when he forgets his own ‘self’. When ‘the self’ is forgotten man behaves abnormally. Victimisation of women is one such abnormal behaviors of man. Man fails to respect the feelings of one individual trying to satisfy many individuals in the society. Finally it can be concluded that in a tradition bound society like India there is no wonder that women are suppressed and victimized.
6.4.1.2. Remedial Measures

Every problem has a remedy too. In this scientifically advanced modern world nothing is left undiscovered or unsolved. Similarly the solutions for the problems of traditionals, can be as follows:

1. Burn tradition All the irrelevant and insensible Principles in our age-old tradition must be burnt. Tradition should help in the progress of man and it should not hinder his progress. Bow to tradition when it promotes you, stamp and crush it under your feet when it hinders your progress.

2. Transformation in women's personality. Say good bye to negative feminine aspects such as docility, submissiveness and fear. The traditionals should forget their role models Sita and Savitri. In tune with the changing modern trends, they can have new role models. If the transformation is only one sided, the problem cannot be solved. Men also have equal part in the sufferings of women. Therefore men also must undergo a transformation. If they adamantly stick to tradition, while their partners transform their personality, the very system of family will dissolve. The transformation must be mutual. While the women climb up the ladder, the men must climb down their pedestal so that both can meet on equal grounds. In short it can be said
that both men and women must respect each other’s feelings and lead a peaceful, friction free life.

3. Educate women. More importance must be given to women’s education. Special care must be taken to educate women who have their twin roles to perform both inside as well as outside their house or the family. Women are to be educated without any restriction or discrimination. Education alone can equip women to face the society boldly.

4. Get economic freedom. Progress does not end with education alone. Education must provide economic freedom. Women must not rest till they find a right profession. Economic independence helps a woman to identify herself. Once ‘the self’ is identified, nothing or none could keep women under control and hinder her progress. Economic freedom paves way to individual freedom.

5. Reform the society. As society plays a vital role in the progress of women, the purpose and the function of the society must be corrected first. As long as the society is bound by tradition there is no remedy for it. Once the role of tradition is correctly understood by the people, progress is evident. Unwanted elements need weeding. After the weeding naturally the ground is ready for growth and development. A society led by fruitful aspects of tradition will definitely move towards
progress. Once women are freed from all these clutches they can walk
towards success with steady, unswerving mind, will power and
determination.

6.4.2. Transitional Women and their Problems

The fourth chapter is about women of transitional nature. They are an
incredible mixture of both tradition and modernity. They are remarkable for their
contradictory behavior. They are both submissive and authoritative, silent, and
loud, tolerant and rebellious and dependent as well as independent. Narayan’s
are perfect examples of women of this type.

The major problem of these women are their fickle mindedness. They
are unsure about themselves. A close analysis of these women reveal that they
neither wanted to be all traditional nor all modern. They were afraid to break
away from tradition completely as they had no role models to imitate among
modern women. The next obstacle on their way is social acceptance. They were
so immersed in tradition that fearing social excilement they reconciled with
tradition. They both hated and feared tradition and similarly they were both
attracted and frightened by modernism. May be these traditionals enjoyed being
half liberated and half slaves.
Savitri in ‘The Dark Room’ though she yearned for self identity and acceptance, she lacked the courage to break away from family ties. She tries unsuccessfully to be modern but failed miserably and limped back to tradition totally defeated. This is the case with most of the traditionals. Though they longed to be free from the clutches of tradition, they were drawn back to tradition in the end.

Similarly Rosie in ‘The Guide’ also did not have the courage to ignore tradition totally. When her husband proved a hindrance to her progress, she was bold enough to seek the help of another man. But towards the end she was very often reminded of her traditional role. As a dutiful wife she felt guilty about her transition. Even the cool and off handed treatment of her husband cannot keep her off him completely. When he unceremoniously threw her out of his life for her infidelity, she had the courage to face the world. She did not break completely. She was bold enough to think of an alternative. Unlike most traditionals she did not think about suicide. Confidently she turned her attention to her profession and sought the help of another man. In this aspect Rosie proves herself very modern in her approach. The bitter experiences that the transitionals underwent and humiliations hurled on them during their transitional period clearly explain why they limped back to tradition. Their deep-rooted traditional nature made them feel guilty about their new role. They led an empty and
meaningless life. They even felt soiled and unfulfilled. Nothing could make them happy. Rosie's life with Raju was professionally very successful. She reached the pinnacle of success. But personally she felt isolated, disappointed, guilty and totally lost. It is only this feeling of guilt and dissatisfaction which made the transitionals eager to compromise with tradition. Inspite of all the humiliations hurled on her by her husband, Rosie was eager to go back.

Same is the case with Roja in 'Talkative Man'. Roja the, commanding officer with all her commanding, authoritative and manly outlook, proves more feminine and weaker than even Savitri herself. While Savitri willingly walked out of her philandering husband, Roja expanded her net wider and wider to catch her slippery husband. Like her traditional role models, she did not mind her husband's affairs. She was too willing to forgive and forget her husband's faithlessness. Her inane traditional outlook may be one of the reasons why she was keen to have him back.

6.4.2.1 Causes

From the close analysis of the miserable life of these transitionals it can be derived that these women because of their inborn feminine qualities such as love, submissiveness, fear and self sacrifice, were torn between tradition and modernism. It is their own individual traits which are responsible for their defeat.
The life of the traditionals reveals lack of education and economic freedom as the chief causes of the sufferings of Indian women. But the analysis of transitionals show how inspite of their education and money, they too suffered in the hands of men. The chief cause once again is the personal traits. As they were only in the transitional period, they found it difficult to overlook their traditional qualities completely. Their oscillation between tradition and modernity made their life miserable.

Society also has its contribution to their sufferings. The transitionals were neither accepted by traditionals nor encouraged by moderns. The oscillation made their social acceptance very difficult. Transitionals were not sincere to neither group. So they were accepted by none. Thus this study proves that the reasons for the sufferings of transitionals are their individual traits and lack of social acceptance.

6.4.2.2 Remedies

The possible remedies for their problems are, transformation of their individual traits and transformation of the society. The transitionals can have new role models to follow. They should ignore their traditional role models completely. They should also be very firm and steady in their choice. By replacing blind love with mutual love, total submissiveness and sacrifice with
mutual understanding and fear and cowardice with courage and bravery, the transitionals can transform themselves totally and face the new world confidently.

Society which is the second major obstacle also must undergo a complete transformation. Indian society, being in the initial state of the transformation was not sure whether to support traditionals or welcome the moderns. Fearing the new changes, at first it was hesitant to support the transitionals. As the modern changes proved fruitful, slowly it started inviting the new ideas. At the same time it has its roots in tradition and so the transformation can occur only slowly. With the arrival of a new society, definitely the problems of the transitionals will come to an end.

Tradition and modernity are not opposed to each other. Tradition is not necessarily evil. If by tradition is meant all that is handed down to us from the past, then certainly not all of it can be bad. Tradition then is the repository of both good and evil and its use and abuse must be separated from tradition itself. Similarly modernity cannot be all good if it simply meant what is the latest. Everything in the present cannot be of positive value. Both tradition and modernity are mixed categories. They are value loaded. We must be alive to their
contradictions, tensions and oppositions and also be aware of their overlaps and interpenetrations.

6.4.3. Modern Women and their Problems

The penultimate chapter pictures a brave new world where the moderns are on the war path against all their victimization with renewed energy and vigour. In this new world there is no place for submissive traditionals or staggering transitionals. They have disappeared from the scene. The new world is fit only for women with daring modern outlook. The moderns are brave, strong, confident, dominant, authoritative, rebellious and all powerful. The best examples of this type are found in Narayan’s ‘The Painter of Signs’ ‘Waiting for Mahatma’ and ‘The Dark Room’.

The new awakened women have good education, profession, money and success. But what they lack is a harmonious married life. Daisy’s life in ‘The Painter of Signs’ is a perfect example for the life led by the new liberated modern women. It can be derived that the modern women got their identification and liberation at the cause of their married life. Daisy considers marriage as an obstacle to her success and she firmly refuses to be tied down by such traditional bonds. Though Raman is too willing to have her as his wife inspite of all her conditions, she gives up marriage at the last moment and decides to lead a lone
life. Daisy, the family planning worker is a liberated woman in many respects. As a spirited adolescent she has rebelled against the suffocating joint family norms; now she has carved out a career for herself; established her identity; and gained economic security and emotional strength. With these resources, she can reject male support. As for social sanction, she does not let it hinder her decisions. Daisy’s energy, zeal and dogged persistence evoke admiration and earn respect from the villagers. She pursues her ‘steel-framed itinerary’ unmindful of sniggering men and giggling women. She has reduced her wants to the barest minimum. Her astonishing adaptability is chosen by herself. Thus ready to meet the male on their own terrain Daisy, unsmiling, serious and efficient challenges the male society. Besides Daisy, Raman fades into insignificance. He appears unheroic, weak-minded and often a comic figure. The reversal of roles is clearly indicated here. Daisy is the quester; the conqueror. She breaks all cultural ties as binding tags. Interestingly she is in the drivers seat, and Raman is willing to let her drive because

... two drivers cannot be at the steering wheel of a motor car. ... He was too willing to surrender himself completely to her way of thinking and do nothing that might leave him in the plight of Santhanu. No questioning and the wife stays, but any slight doubt expressed, she flies for ever.(PS 131; ch.3).
Despite all her conditions Raman is too willing to accept her as his wife. But fearing the consequence of marriage, Daisy withdraws her promise at the last moment and decides to continue her lone life. Her life clearly reveals the truth that when new concepts are stretched too far, it is not only man even women suffers. Narayan is aware of the sacrifice a woman has to make. Daisy cannot marry because marriage may hinder her activities. Daisy is not the only example of unmarried woman. Even Shantabai in ‘The Dark Room’ also decides to forgo marriage. She divorces her drunkard husband and leads a happy, contented lone life.

The life of Ponni, in the same novel shows how even inside the family bonds a woman can be liberated and modern. Though she is an illiterate, she has complete control over her husband. In her case it is only the husband who needs liberation. Her life is a humorous example of a modern woman. In the same novel the character of Gangu, a loud, feminist, pursues feminism and enjoys being a feminist. She craves to be modern just to insult tradition. Her husband too is a loud hypocrite who supports feminism just to become popular in the town. What ever the reason be, they both can be appreciated for their daring attempt to be moderns.
Bharathi in The Waiting for Mahatma is another example of a modern woman. Her total dedication to her work makes her post-pone her marriage till the end of the novel. Though she lives in the transitional period and is surrounded by traditionals, she can manipulate her lover. Like Raman, he is also made insignificant and weaker in front of Bharathi. She proves a friend, philosopher and a guide to her lover. This itself is a healthy progress in our dominant society.

6.4.3.1 Causes

Thus all the moderns had the courage and self confidence to face the new world all alone. Professionally they were very successful but in their personal life they proved miserable failures. With all their modernism and progress, they cannot have a peaceful and happy family life.

The reasons for their failure are once again their individual traits and the social set up. Though the moderns had all the positive qualities such as courage, bravery, authority, education, independence and will power, they lacked confidence in themselves. They were afraid to step into the family role because they doubted not only their menfolk but their own self. As India is still rooted in tradition, they feared that they too would become the victims of their mariage.
The next obstacle as usual is the society. The expectation of the tradition bound society made it difficult for the moderns to ignore their family bonds totally. An unmarried Indian woman is never a welcome guest in a social gathering. Her presence is considered an inauspicious sign. She is not socially accepted as an individual. Marriage alone could save an Indian woman from all her humiliation and troubles. Social acceptance was given on the basis of their marital status. So, the unmarried modern woman has to lead a lone life.

6.4.3.2. Remedies

The salvation of the moderns lies in themselves and the society in which they live. First of all the moderns should have the courage to face marriage and family life. They must be bold enough to fight within their family bonds and face the society confidently. Men also should join hands with women for their upliftment. They should encourage women to come out in the open to fight for their cause. Men should win the confidence and trust of women to entice them into marriage. Thus with mutual understanding both women and men must transform themselves completely.

As stated earlier, the society also should transform totally so as to support the moderns in all their endeavors. Without social reorientation women's liberation is meaningless. From the above discussion it can be concluded that a
total transformation of individuals both men and women and also the society is the one and only solution for the various problems faced by women of all the three categories such as traditionals, transitionals and moderns. This over all transformation alone can lead Indian women to progress and success in the future.

6.5. CONCLUSION

The idea of being a lady undergoes a transformation in Daisy. Savithri is burdened by culturally imposed feelings of guilt and shame and she does not rise above them. Bharathi operates under unusual circumstances and rises above local restrictions to the level of a national figure. Ambika sows the seeds of resistance quietly. In Rosie we witness the confrontation between the morality of the heart and morality of social sin. Momentarily her sense of social conscience prevails- she struggles with her feeling of dishonesty and her sense of compromise. But she surmounts them puts up a brave front and faces the world on her own terms. Daisy is a phenomenon by herself. She provides a new pattern of behaviour.

The transformation of the passive feminine like Savitri to Daisy shows us how imaginative literature could trace the progress of the role of the woman from novel to novel. Womanhood in the process have been deromanticised
thoroughly. Daisy's revolt against the exploitative system to its logical conclusion entails the destructions of the family a social unit.

Through Daisy Narayan doesnot wish to advocate feminine totalitarianism. It is not a clarion call for revenge, for all the ills dealt out to Indian womanhood. There are no more Sitas or Savitris. Daisy has supplanted her elder sisters as the newest, most vibrant role model. Daisyism is bound to crop up here and there in fiction as well as in life.

The new female protagonist doesnot merely seek a change in her status. It is not that Savitri and Rosie want to do away with Raman and Raju or Marco. Nor does Daisy set out to prove that all men are bores. Each seek a higher level of enlightenment, a higher consciousness, a closer and conscious sharing of values and constant cooperation. The women now form a select group of enlightened individuals and the men are way down, in no way compatible as partners in life. The internal self searching and dissociation of life from external events leave the woman disillusioned. Such disillusioned heroines like Rosie or Daisy turn harsh, and cynical. They know a lot and suffer a lot.

The meek female has yielded place to liberated woman in modern India. Narayan doesnot give any social or political messages on her behalf. He accepts her sensibly, gracefully and whimsically. He doesnot show any bias towards either passive or the active feminine. Both Savitri and Daisy are treated alike.
Narayan does not give any solutions to the problems of women. He just underlines them. He also regrets the fact that woman is unable to achieve valuable independence, to be a complete human being. To remain as wife and mother she finds it is necessary to sacrifice other needs in her nature, to suppress part of her heritage. There is always need for adjustments even as equals. Even after adjustments a relationship either freezes or decays inexorably leading to unhappiness.

As Paul Verghese points out in his book 'Problems of the Indian Creative Writer in English',

Narayan posits a delicate balance of power in human relations. He does not, however sit in judgment or call the rightness or wrongness of the heroine's action in question. Through his heroines he shows us that the old stereotypes of women's roles are certainly crumbling around the edges, that the modern Indian woman tries the Herculean task of connecting tradition with modernity, education and career with domesticity. There aren't any simple resolutions for her predicament, anymore. Cinderella
and her Prince have vanished forever.

(Verghese 138)

In a world beset by problems, Narayan advocates acceptance of traditional norms for the sake of spiritual tranquility. R.K. Narayan is a great collector of old concepts, a sammler of order, of tradition. The past, according to him is an valuable heritage and is not to be slighted. Malgudi is changeless beneathe a veneer of change. What Narayan has done in his novels is he has defended culture and welcomed modern ideas simultaneously.

Thus the detailed analysis of R.K. Narayan's novels from The Dark Room (1938) to The World of Nagaraj (1990) clearly reveals the birth of a new era for Indian Women. Though her problems are different from her sisters abroad, probably in the next few decades life will throw up new challenges when her personality will have to become more chiselled and sharp. She may yet offer best solutions to the dilemma of woman the world over. Till then we may continue to oscillate between the extreme unable to say emphatic 'no' to all that is meaningless from the past and unable to utter hearty welcome to all that is good in the present.