INTRODUCTION

The Journey or Quest has been a favorite motif or theme in literature for centuries. Quests continued in Modern literature. Journey as a motif has deeper significance relative to the literal meaning. The related words are voyage, expedition, excursion and pilgrimage. The word ‘Journey’ terms in two aspects: Physical journey and Inner journey. Generally, this common word implies the act of travelling from one place to another. Here it refers to physical journey. Homer’s The Odyssey in which Homer tells of Odysseus’ journey to get back to Ithaca from Troy best exemplifies journey as motif. The Odyssey then is the archetype for all the adventure/quest stories that have come after it. Thus, a person goes on a journey wins his reward. The reward is not always pleasant or expected but it is usually just. An Inner journey calls allegorical interpretation. Rainer Maria Rilke asserts, ‘The only journey is one within.’ It involves a psychological path that results in a realization of oneself. Inner journey comprises Emotional and Spiritual journey. Emotional journey is termed by the series of emotions that is caused by an event that leads on to further emotions either good or bad. In Surfacing, a Canadian fiction, Margaret Atwood has revealed an emotional journey from innocence to experience, a quest in search of self-identity and one's individuality. Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist is a symbolic masterpiece, states that we should not avoid our destinies, and urges people to follow their dreams. The novel tells the tale of Santiago, a boy who has a dream and the courage to follow it. His search has a symbolic significance.

Spiritual journey is often taken at mythological level. Mythological, this kind of journey is to find one’s inner truth, to find God in oneself. The renowned Italian writer Dante and classical writer John Milton connect their writings to reveal the
quest for meaning in life. Their works like *The Inferno* and *Paradise lost* exhibit the spiritual journey of man and man in relation to God. Therefore, it has a mythical significance too. The journey is often a metaphor for discovery. It serves as a symbol. It is something as if, the main character goes through changes, or discovers something about them. It is about soul's exploration of the world. For instance, Joseph Campbell *The Hero with a Thousand faces* in which Campbell discusses his theory of the journey of the archetypal hero found in world mythologies. Hence, the word ‘Journey’ points various interpretations. Regarding its philosophical meaning, the word projects itself to the journey of life in which man passes through various phases - Birth, Childhood, Youth, Marriage and finally inevitable Death and another journey to the other mystical world.

Various writings present this journey motif with different purposes. *Journey of Magi* is a poem by T.S. Eliot, which at surface level, is a poem about the journey taken by three kings towards Bethlehem on the birth of Jesus Christ. Allegorically, it shows the three stages of sacrament of penance (contrition, confession and satisfaction). When a Christian has sinned, he should feel guilty, confess to god and then he will be satisfied. However, Eliot, after converted into Christianity, found no enlightenment. His old life and luxuries are lost to him forever. He cannot continue with his old beliefs and it is for this that he wishes for his own death. Only being dead one can feel satisfaction and see enlightenment. In S. T. Coleridge *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Journey is presented physically, spiritually and emotionally. It is also expressed in Hawthorne's *My Kinsman, Major Molineaux* and *Young Good man Brown*. In these stories, characters change sometime between the beginning and the end of the story. In addition, religion plays a part in each of these stories. In Rohinton Mistry's *Such a long journey*, there is no literal journey but inward voyage to find
one’s identity in alienated strange foreign land. Joseph Conrad also presents a psychological quest/voyage to self-exploration in his *Heart of Darkness* (1922). It is a discovery of evil that lurks in the heart of individual. Hence, the result is a spiritual journey into the dark region of oneself.

Feminist texts witness journey motif in their writings distinguished from male writings. Earlier, female writings followed androtexts (texts produced by men) but gradually, they developed identity crisis. These women writers adopt it as a way to find self, identity and individuality. ‘Journey’ as motif serves to them to have an insight into their formed ideological self, to come out of this webbed cocoon-like structure of society. Their works represented the conflict between traditional norms of Indians and Western modernity. Philosophers, no doubt, have spoken about human nature, which theoretically includes women’s nature too. However, they have made a distinction between male characteristics and female characteristics. Talking about Western influence, it is to be noted that many western thinkers have biased ideas about female identity. Rama Mehta, a great Socio-Legal thinker, in her critical work *The Socio-Legal Status of Women* writes that Plato believed in equality of man and woman. He wrote the great *Republic* where he advocated for women-guardians of the state. Aristotle’s approach to women is functional. He says that “the man controls the house as father, husband and the master. He adds that women are naturally inferior. They are meant for procreation. Man provides the form, woman, the matter. Aristotle has distinguished man-woman difference based on his theories of slave” (Mehta 15).

The root causes of such situation of women are to be found in the structure of theology itself – a male-centered, male-oriented theology. Cecilia Arockiasamy in her article *Women in Christianity* states about the position of women based on perceptions. Talking about the middle ages she says that the downgrading of women
started in the middle ages. The *Summa Theologica*, the multi-volume work, Thomas Aquinas wrote between years 1266 and 1272 A.D., reflects official attitude toward women. Aquinas’ reflections on women, therefore, like most part of the Summa, skillfully combine the Judaic-Christian and the Greek traditions. For example, the Christian acceptance of the subordinate status of women finds expression in the Aristotelian idea that it is a natural state owing to man’s greater rationality. Aquinas accepts Aristotle’s notion that woman is a defective male lacking vital force, although from a Christian point of view, since God created woman, the creation of woman in general is not tainted by defect but is natural and ordered like every divine act. Thomas finds its parallel in Aristotle’s view that the male supplies the essentially human features in reproduction while the female merely provides the nutritive material. Following Aquinas, Christian Saints cursed woman and showered such abuses upon her as: ‘gate of the devil’, ‘a scorpion ever ready to sting’ and ‘the road of iniquity’, ‘the instrument which the devil uses to gain possession of our souls’, etc.

Tertullian, a Christian saint defined woman as the ‘destroyer of god’s image’. A 15th century Church document, *Malleus Maleficarum*, says: “What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature painted with fair colors” (Arockiasamy 168-173).

Susan Moller states in her book *Women in Western Political Thought* states that it is ironical that Jean Jacques Rousseau, a leader of French revolution, who talks about equality, fraternity and liberty, argues: “Women have in general no love of any art; they have no proper knowledge of any; and they have no genius” (Moller 99).

Woman’s sharply distinct position is due to those characteristics that are natural to her sex. In his *The Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau suggests that woman’s procreative
faculties make her unlike men who has been categorized in terms of a generally limitless potential, rational, creativity, woman has been viewed as functionally determined by reproductive role. The main criticism against Rousseau centers round the fact that woman is confined just to the domestic sphere. Secondly, he considered woman unequal, and then the denial of the intellectual pursuits of women. Schopenhauer describes women as “that under-sized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race” (Moller 100).

Judith M. Bardwick in *Psychology of Women: A Study of Bio-Cultural Conflicts*, states about Sigmund Freud, a psychoanalyst. He formulates about women that “the world is clearly dominated by men and he took the phallocentric viewpoint, emphasizing the penis as the source of power. Opposition to this idea originated with a few female psychoanalysts, notably Karen Horney. She was unable to rid herself of Freud’s view of life as phallocentric, but she ascribed the origin of phallocentrism to male envy of the creativity of the female uterus. All of the female reproductive sexual functions are considered to be passive. On one point Freud was quick to warn that social conventions also force women into passive attitudes. Bardwick asserts that it is certain that ‘feminine’ and ‘passive’ are everywhere but we also know that motherhood, which is the essence of femininity, is active and not passive. Freud further says that women, compared with men, remain more dependent on the love and appreciation of others to determine their self-worth (Bardwick 5-7).” In *Dependence, Passivity and Aggression*, Deustch (1944) quotes: “the feminine woman is passive-narcissistic. Passivity, in her definition, does not mean inactivity, emptiness, or immobility, but rather activity that is directed inward and has a vital content. According to Deustch, in all of the cultures and races with very few exceptions, feminine-passive and masculine-active are the norm” (Bardwick 123).
There is another profile of woman, also sanctified by religious writing and folklore. She is believed to be fickle and fragile. She is sensuous, a temptress, given to falsehood, folly, greed, trickery, impurity, and thoughtless action. She can thus be regarded as the root of all evil. Many ancient writings promote ideological ideas and maintain conventional Status quo. Talking about the ideas of Manu of the Indian soil in *Dharmashastras*, Paras Deewan says that Manu, the great law-giver considers wife the ‘half of the husband’ but at the same time admits that man is lord and master. “He must be adored and obeyed even if devoid of all virtues (Manu 101-102).” He says that “females should always be controlled by men: girls by their fathers, wives by their husbands, and widows by their sons. Village society has no place for spinsters” (Deewan 63). In the article *Identification* Douvan and Adelson assert:

The boy’s preoccupation and development of internal standards allowed one to predict his ego strength. In social relations girls are very much more mature than boys. The girl’s identity is critically dependent upon the man she marries and the children she has. She perceives her major task as assuring her acceptability as a person who will be loved, a person someone will marry. The adolescent girls interviewed focused on the interpersonal aspects of their future life, on their roles as wives and mothers. They anticipated their future roles in fantasy, and this imagined allowed a clear concept of their adult femininity and goals. (Douvan and Adelson 148-149)

Striving for some sense of independence, woman will vacillate between independence and dependence. The greatest independent sense of ‘self’ will be achieved when she
has successfully realized her potential in the interdependent relationships of wife and mother. Woman continues perceiving the world in interpersonal terms and personalizes the objective world in a way that men do not. In Indian society, woman’s plight is worst. Indian girls are considered as the daughters of Sita, an Earth Goddess who arises from the Earth at birth and returns to the Earth at her death. All these ancient holy epics as *Ramayana, Mahabharata* have led to the perception that women are inferior human beings, thus, “women’s reproductive function, the nurturing function, the domestic labor, etc., were not given sufficient importance while evolving social values and attitudes. Instead, man was socialized into believing that he was superior to woman and that woman, being inferior to him, was meant to serve him and be subservient to him. As a result, man today has little sense of respect for woman and he refuses to acknowledge the fact that all human beings are equal, regardless of sexual differences” (L. Raj 210-211).

It is ironical that the other form of woman, in the form of goddess Shakti, Lakshmi, is worshipped in Indian society. Abdul Hadi in an article *Women in Islam* talks about the ideas inscribed in Holy Quran that Mariam, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her chastity is worshipped as Lord’s devout. At the same time, The Quran deals with the rules for the mobility of women and the limits of their body exposure. According to Quran, “Women are not allowed to pray in the mosque along with men” (Hadi 148). From the childhood, a girl is taught and made to learn that she is a girl. Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*, briefly states: “Women again are not suited for certain occupations; a woman is by nature fitted for homework, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family” (Bardwick 173).

Our Indian Constitution has declared: “The State shall not discriminate against any
citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth” (Art. 15 [1]). The Constitution of India solemnly enjoins on each citizen the obligation “to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women” (Art. 51-A [c]). Though, Indian Constitution witness the right of equality yet this is not achieved to the full. Padmini Jesudurai in an article *Women and the Law* states:

There is a big gap between theory and practice, as far as the implementation of these laws is concerned. Any legislation will be meaningful, only if society receives it in the proper spirit. In other words, only a change of attitude will make the laws more effective and the condition of women more humane. (Jesudurai 37)

There are, of course, still a frighteningly high number of Indian homes where women continue to be stifled by conservatism; men handle homes where women have been consigned to looking after affairs of the home, while all other important businesses are meant for men. Women have surrendered to the traditional claptrap about the women’s-place-at-home-only. “The true woman”, Simone de Beauvoir remarks, “is an artificial product that civilization makes” (Beauvoir 285). Rashmi Gaur in her work *Women’s Writing* states that Passivity is treated as an essential feature of femininity, but a boy/man is encouraged to undertake, invent, dare and achieve self-realization. A traditional society imposes a destiny upon a girl from outside and encourages a boy to carve out his own. The patriarchal system enforces a mystique that suggests that the highest fulfillment a woman can attain is possible only through a man. Tennyson’s *The Princess* beautifully summarizes this attitude:
Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword and for the needle she;
Man with the head, and woman with the heart;
Man to command, and woman to obey;
All else is confusion.  

(Alfred Tennyson)

(Tennyson’s *The Princess*)

Such societal perceptions generate diffidence and escapist attitudes among women and make them unsure of themselves. “Women shall attain autonomy only if they are able to free themselves from such stultifying perception” (Gaur 144). “To be liberated,” Mrs. Indira Gandhi remarks, “a woman should be free to be herself” (Gandhi 265). Gaur critically explains, “Girls are nurtured on the myth of the Savior-hero. The society cherishes the myth that a woman can realize her true worth and happiness only, if she finds appreciation by a man. All women are systematically trained to seek the justification of their existence in men” (Gaur 106). Judith Bardwick exhibits:

Normal women express a most fundamental need for and give value-priority to those role activities we call feminine. Their sex-role identification is feminine and they are most strongly involved in the welfare of their families, in creating a home, nurturing their children, and in maintaining their own lovability. However, since the culture rewards occupational-role activities, to the extent that women have achieved success in these activities a second perception of the self is as one who is able successfully to pursue these achieving activities. Achievement in traditionally ‘masculine’ roles may form a strong
secondary component of self-identity and a basis for self-evaluation.

(Bardwick 19)

Dr. Saryu Ruthela exhorts: “Status quo relegates women to domestic roles and legitimizes male dominance. Ernestine Friedl, a social anthropologist, has held that male dominance and gender roles are culturally determined . . . Women liberation has come in India also during the last 40 years of so. It emphasizes equality, liberation, status” (Ruthela 2-6). Patriarchy prevails in Indian society. Authority within the family is vested in the males most often in the eldest lineally related male. He is the principal decision-maker. It is considered that female thinking is less analytic, more global and more preservative. But it is also to be noted that the stereotyped male, like the stereotyped female, is not creative. While independence and autonomy are perceived as masculine characteristics, a high degree of sensitivity is feminine.

In her concluding remarks, Judith Bardwick says that “A woman does value the traditional qualities and roles and these are part of her own internal criteria of normal achieved femininity. Femininity, when it is defined by the traditional role behaviors and attributes, continues to be an identity that is evaluated by other people and is conceived of in terms of others’ responses” (Bardwick 210). Sex roles have become stereo-types as put forward by text books from ancient times. “In the Anusthasana Parva, Bhisma is said to have remarked that woman is not endowed with strength; hence she always requires protection from man” (Ruthela 46). As Neera Desai puts in *Women in Modern India*:

> Ideologically women was considered a completely inferior species, inferior to the male, having no significance, no personality; socially,
she was kept in a status of utter subjection, denied any right, suppressed and oppressed; she was further branded as basically lacking the ethical fiber. The patriarchal joint family, the customs of polygamy, the purdah, the property structure, early marriage, sati (self-immolation of the widows) or a state of permanent widowhood, all these contributed to the smothering of the free development of women (Desai 49).

Sebasti L. Raj in *Quest for Gender Justice* puts forth that “Woman is internally oppressed by wrong social conditioning and a wrong value system which she acquires through the process of socialization. These values condition her in such a way that she believes that the way she is made to live today is the right way for her as a woman. From her birth she is socially conditioned to develop values and behaviour patterns that are exclusive to the female sex. As a result, even as a young girl, she begins to desire what society wants her to desire. As she grows older she has to suppress forcefully many of her feelings that go against what is expected of her. She does not have enough courage to go against the established pattern. She, thus, grows up as a stunted and male-dominated personality and develops a value pattern that will keep her in a subjugated status. She is also conditioned interiorly to be happy with that situation” (L. Raj 211).

The result of such socialization process is that women today do not have self-confidence; and they tend to consider themselves inferior human beings. Sebasti L. Raj further adds that Though women in all cultures are considered inferior to men in every way---in virtues, talents, physical strength, etc.—and are treated accordingly, there is one area where women are recognized as superior to men, i.e., in physical
beauty. But instead of appreciating the beauty of woman as a gift unique to womanhood, man has found ways to exploit her in that too and has made her a doll or a show-piece. The consumerist philosophy and techniques too have hypnotized women and have made them symbols of beauty, to be looked at, to be admired, to be enjoyed. Women, on their part, have fallen easy victims of this hypnotism and they have been socialized into considering themselves as show-pieces. By this mistaken culture of making themselves attractive, women have dehumanized themselves and they measure their worth only based on their physical appearance. In the same way, men too look at women primarily as an object of beauty and pleasure rather than as a person worthy of respect and love.

Taking turn to female writings, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* was a cataclysmic essay demanding equal rights to women as early as 1792, though, the issue gained ground only after 1869 when Mills’ *The Subjection of Women* was published. *The Feminine Mystique* (1964) by Betty Friedan and *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1953), have greatly motivated public opinion. In her essay *Men and Women* (1920), Virginia Woolf has analyzed the man-woman relationship in a historical and literary context. She frankly says that the history of mankind is in fact the history of the achievements, aspirations and the failures of men only. We know nothing about the status of women – their feelings, responses, attitudes, attributed or predicaments. It is only through fiction that we get some intimate, although second hand, knowledge about the lives of women within a particular time span. All these works aim at exploding the myth of male superiority. As the 1970’s showed a shift of attention from the androtexts (books by men) to gynotexts (books by woman), the centre of study was history styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women termed as gynocritics by Elaine Showalter. Elaine
Showalter posited three major phases of the feminine that can be seen in the writings of 1950s and ahead and that she claimed were common to all literary subcultures: A phase of imitation, a phase of protest, a phase of self discovery, a turning inward, and a search for identity.

After Independence, in the fifties-sixties, Britishers imprinted their impact in all walks of Indian life. The Post modern era has witnessed a phenomenal success in feminist writings of Indian literary tradition. Emancipator women’s writing has emerged strongly in all Indian languages, seeking to subvert the man dominated social order, forging reversionary myths and counter metaphors by women writers like Kamala Das (Malayalam English), Krishna Sobti (Hindi), Ashapura Devi (Bengali) and others. Thus, the struggle in women writing turns towards one’s self and one’s psyche. They portray the lacerated self’s struggle for freedom of expression in an incarcerating milieu asserting the autonomy of women. The endeavor was to break the typical feudalistic patriarchal mould. Indian women writers bring forth the suppressed desires, lust, sexuality, the need for asserting themselves to find a voice and identity through their experiences. In Indian English poetry, Kamala Das is the first woman poet to crack the mould and establishes an attitude the Indian readers were quite unfamiliar with ---

*I wore a shirt and my Brother’s trousers
Cut my hair short and ignored my womanliness.*

Consequently, women write to celebrate their womanhood; they sing women’s dream and speak their bodies. Their writing impact their very existence in the socio cultural milieu. Early the suffering wife, the weeping widow, or the sacrificing mothers were
the only images found in fiction. In such novels, submissiveness was still considered a
virtue. There was no room for woman who was not virtuous. Women either upheld
conservative ideals or they were labeled immoral. After the entry of women into the
writing arena, suddenly there was a shift in the traditional virtue syndrome. Instead of
extolling the so-called virtues of the sacrificing, submissive woman, and these writers
started presenting the fighter and bold spirit of women in their novels.
As Vijayalakshmi Seshadri (1995) points out, these women writers from the 1950s
were deeply impressed by the effects of modernization, industrialization and by the
exposure of western life style on traditional Indian society. Seshadri writes that
women’s fiction of 1960s focus on the ideal of the patient and suffering woman
subjugated to the male dominance. In Indian English fiction, the literary prototype of
Sita-Savitri-Shakuntala was the mould for many female characters. The influence of
Sanskrit literature on the early women writers was quite obvious: they borrowed the
novel as a genre from the west and the “native myths” from Sanskrit tradition. Sita is
submissive, loving and obedient wife of Rama in Sanskrit epic *Ramayana.*
Shakuntala is the chaste, patient and enduring wife of king Dushyanta in Kalidasa’s
*Abhigyaana Sakuntalam.* Savitri is the wife of the invalid Sathyavan and she rescues
her husband from Yama, the God of Death, with sacrifice and unswerving loyalty ---
all these images representing Ideal Indian woman.
The big change in the women’s writing came with the 1970s when women writers
started to transform their own experiences as women as well as their femininity into
literary expression. The suffering and submissive model of Sita-Savitri-Shakuntala
was replaced by the ‘new woman’. In these years a class-oriented fiction emerged: the
new woman is in fact an urban middle class woman who still suffers but not in silence
as she used to be. The generation of women writers from the 1970’s broke with the
past literary tradition. These women writers were more concerned with the individual rather than social or collective issues. In the 1970’s, with the emergence of the new woman, there was a shift from the collective to the personal, from the communal to the individual. Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence* (1983) is a metaphor for these new women’s writing. The silence is finally broken and women speak out to have their voices listened.

Many contemporary women writers describe the conflict between modernity and tradition. Naresh K. Jain (1998) considers the clash between tradition and modernity as a Eurocentric and Colonial construct. This view may be debatable. Besides this issue, Naresh K. Jain proposes some more issues in female writings: Subordination vs. Autonomy, Dharma vs. Personal goals, Sexual Purity vs. Sexual emancipation, and Silence vs. Speech. With the new women’s writing starting in the 1970’s, the conventional plot of the novel was replaced by the quest of the new heroine. Moreover, “the journey to selfhood and freedom that constitutes the burden of the ‘female experience’ becomes a cultural motif” (Seshadri 60). The topic of self-exploration, which pervades the entire production of the contemporary women’s writing, gives the heroine a questioning status, thus liberating her from all the mythological and constraining stereotypes. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Mad woman in the Attic* analyses the development of women’s writing as their emergence from the image interpreted by man. Kamala Markandaya’s women, howsoever aware of their rights, do not prefer to exercise the same as in *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954).

Vijayalakshmi Seshadri uses “the term feminine aesthetics while discussing their essential dilemma facing the women writers in India. Feminine aesthetics finds its expression in the female author’s conflict between their loyalty to the dominant
tradition and their compelling need to break through the conventional barriers to establish a new tradition” (Seshadri 9). Jasbir Jain terms this self as the ‘ideal self’. Maya in Anita Desai *Cry, the peacock* breaks the good girl syndrome but in the last she herself commits suicide as she dares to deviate from the societal norms. Another contemporary writer Shashi Deshpande, an award winning novelist presents her female characters that belong to Indian Middle class, are brought up in a traditional environment and struggling to liberate them and seek their self-identity. She has displayed a series of girl children, where each girl faces a different problem within the family. Violence against woman, whether physical, mental or emotional, is an issue that crosses all borders and all classes of women. The Indian woman has, for years, been a silent sufferer.

In novel *Roots and Shadows*, Deshpande projects the educated women who are unable to enfranchise the traditional background in which they are reared. The novel *A Matter of Time* moves beyond feminist concerns and raises the existentialist question. Shashi Deshpande among the writers of the present day highlights the image of the middle class women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. All her protagonists are in the quest for self-definition and self-exploration. She portrays her heroines in a realistic manner. As *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the novel reveals the life of Sarita, who is always neglected and ignored in favor of her brother; she is not given any importance. Deshpande focuses her attention on the emotional suffering as in *Roots and Shadows*. She explores the inner self of Indu, who symbolizes the ‘new woman’, is married to Jayant but her feminine instinct for articulation is suppressed and Mini inculcates in her all the traditional feminine qualities since her childhood. Akka got married to a man who is much elder than her. She has to tolerate the scathing and bestial sexual advances of her husband. Shashi Deshpande has emerged
as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Focusing on the marital relation, she seeks to expose the tradition by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in the family. Her novels reveal the man made patriarchal traditions and uneasiness of the modern Indian woman in being a part of them. Her young heroines rebel against the traditional way of life and patriarchal values. The words which we always associate with what we consider to be the concept of an ideal woman are self denial, sacrifice, patience, devotion and silent suffering.

In India, right from the past, women have faced several problems. They have been constantly struggling to find a meaningful and respectable position for themselves. Clearly, everyday speech and expressive language and literature help to naturalize these ideologies of gender. But language does not merely reflect social constraints. Individuals use language in different and inventive ways and disrupt what is given or considered normative. According to Sheila Rowbotham, a feminist writer, in her work *Woman’s Consciousness*:

> Language conveys a certain power. It is one of the instruments of domination . . . The language of theory – censored language – only expresses a reality experienced by the oppressors. It speaks only for their world, for their point of view (Rowbotham 32-34).

A picture of changing images of Indian women who are under a voyage struggling to find their identity is exhibited by Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli*, Nayantara Sahgal’s *Rich like us*, Githa Hariharan’s *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Anita Desai *Cry, the Peacock, Where Shall we Go This Summer?, Voices in the City*, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala’s *To Whom She will*, Kamala Markandya’s *Two Virgins* and Santha
Rama Rau’s *Remember the House*. These are some examples which highlight the status of a woman in Indian societies. Among these Indo English novelists, The novels of both between Rama Mehta and Manju Kapur oscillate between the imitation and protest stage, and reaching the finally to the self discovery.

Rama Mehta, an award winning novelist, was born in Nainital India, in 1923, one of those first few women to be appointed to the Indian Foreign Service but had later resigned from it. The works to her credit include *Inside the Haveli* (1977), *The Western Educated Hindu Woman, The Hindu Divorced Woman* and *From Purdah to Modernity*. A Science graduate from H.P. University, she passed L.L.B from the same University. She did her LL.M. degree with a Junior Research Fellowship. She died prematurely in the year 1978. With a rural background, she feels closer to the weaker sections of society. Rama Mehta was awarded the Sahitya Akadami Award in 1979 for *Inside the Haveli*. Besides these delighted works, Rama Mehta has involved herself in creating stories for children as *The Life of Keshav*. Her critical work *The Socio-Legal Status of Women* presents her critical and iconoclastic ideas on women and their identity.

*Inside the Haveli* is a delightful book that gives us insight into the day-to-day lives of the royal families of Rajasthan in India. In specific, we get a glimpse into the family code and rules that govern the women of Rajasthan. The purdah taboo is critically explored by Rama Mehta in this novel. Geeta, pivotal character, struggles to find her true female identity. The specific place Rajasthan acts as a microcosm representing the condition of Indian Women throughout India and thus representing a macrocosmic image.

Shashi Deshpande underscores this theme of self identity in her work *The Binding vine*---
Standing still I searched,  
Stretching out my arms,  
Sinking deep into the earth,  
Like the banyan roots,  
Seeking the spring of life.

(Shashi Deshpande, *The Binding vine* 151)

Manju Kapur is hailed as an eminent novelist who, by her protagonists, is in search to find self-syndrome. Manju Kapur was born in 1948 in Amritsar. She graduated from the Miranda House University College for women and went on to take an M.A. at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an M. Phil. at Delhi University. Manju Kapur lives in New Delhi. The Works to her credit are - *Difficult Daughters* (1998), which fetched her Commonwealth Prize in Eurasia Section, *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009), and *Custody* (2011). Manju Kapur speaks for the middle class and even has been earned several comparisons with Jane Austen for her sharp-eyed, finely turned character portraits that are caught in tricky situations. All the major women characters whether they are Virmati (*Difficult Daughters*), Astha (*A Married Woman*), Nisha (*Home*) or Nina (*The Immigrant*), all are on the verge of secluding themselves from the company of man. These four women characters are under a psychological Journey, searching a place for them in the male dominated society ab intio. Social and moral values are like bondage to them, so all of them are leading forward in an ambiguous manner in the midst of relentless urbanization and therefore reaching western influences.

*Difficult Daughters* novel is beautifully written with a story that is fascinating in so many ways. Spanning three generations, this story centers on a woman born at the turn of the 20th Century into a Punjabi family. It tells of an illicit affair and its wider
political and social implications as well as not least the bothered issue, for Indian women, of marriage versus education. The Protagonist Virmati falls in love with a neighbor, the Professor who is already married. She gets pregnant and so the professor has to marry her and bring her home to stay with her first wife and children. Thus Virmati finds that the battle for her own independence had created irrevocable lines of partition and pain around her.

The second novel *A Married Woman* is the story of an artist Astha whose desires for her carrier and every now and then extra marital relations challenges the constraints of middle class existence. Astha’s life becomes a black cave when she desires to write poetry, make sketches and participate in Ayodhya Movement. Her childhood is the peaceful duration of her life. At her young age she falls in love with boys Bunty and Rohan and after her marriage with Aijaz. In fact, Hemant her husband finds no place in her life. His condition is worse than that of rubber stamp because whether he permits, or not, if she decides to go, she goes irrespective of her husband, children or mother–in- law’s bothering about her. Ashok Kumar says:

Manju Kapur has exposed a women’s passion with love lesbianism, an incompatible marriage and ensuing annoyance. With passion to revolutionize the Indian male sensitivity, she describes the traumas of her female protagonists from which they suffer, and perish in for their triumph. She is stunned at the intensification of fundamentalism and the augment of religious zealots to uplift and elevate the country by a crusade and establish paranoia by presenting evil as a historical necessity. (Kumar 165).
Actually, Astha reaches one the turning point of her life when she meets Aijaz. Previously, she mutely succumbs to the will of her parents, but when Hemant discards her views on poetry and paintings. Hemant sees her emotions in the poem as an attack on male-dominancy. But she gives up writing and continues rather sadly to draw, sketching with the soft pencils and colored charcoal. Hemant makes her understand several times that she is married now and her responsibilities towards family are more than other responsibilities. Later on, during a communal riot her friend Aijaz Khan dies. She cannot stop her tears and sentiments. Manju Kapur has well portrayed the irritation, anguish and travails of Indian middle class women who are at a loss to condemn social conventions and traditions. Although she tries her best to find her place in family and society, she reaches nowhere because of her moral imbalance and unnatural wishes to be in communion with Pipee, the widow of Aijaz Khan. And this new engagement becomes an origin of new clashes between Astha and her husband. She takes notice sincerely of whatever Pipee says. Astha and Pipee both are living under illusion of making themselves free from male bondage but when their freedom is weighed on the scale of morality, values and maintenance of family peace, they stand nowhere. Their remaining identity turns to naught.

In the company of Pipee she also realizes the national issues and participates in Ram Mandir and Babri Masjid issue and casts aside the family issues. Hemant tries to make her remember her sacred obligations: “You seem to forget that your place as a decent family woman is in the home, and not on the streets. You also forget this New Year’s Eve and we are going out (172).” In the end, Astha reaches nowhere. Ultimately, she had to come back to her family and readjust herself in ancient traditions.
The wave of cry for identity also keeps on flowing in Manju Kapur’s third novel *Home* where Nisha, the single protagonist revolts against family system. But she never crosses the boundaries of morality and values. The large portion of her life has passed under the shadow of her aunt Rupa. Rupa is also much conscious of her freedom and identity. First Nisha has to fight against the notions of her mother who considers her daughter a mere helper in the Kitchen. Lala Banwari Lal dies and Yashpal takes back Nisha to please his mother, now there is less interest in school and Sona expects her in the kitchen all time. Nisha is horrified to discover that “her mother’s idea of a daughter was one who helped her every time anybody ate.” Sona who is always concerned with making her daughter homely and good wife says, “That Masi of yours has ruined your head. What does a girl need with studying? Cooking will be useful to her entire life.” Despite her unwillingness, Nisha has to participate in all Pujas. She has to learn the art of service and domesticity. When she is discovered manglik, she becomes an enigma to her parents. She is not easily sent to do her English honors from Durga Bai College. From this stage her life changes to a great extent. She meets Suresh but she is a modern girl with traditional views. She maintains her chastity and never let Suresh violate her chastity. When her affair with Suresh comes to light she has to face many quarries and each member of the family looks her with suspicion. She becomes the prisoners in her own house. Sona curses her:

This girl will be our death. My child after ten years, tortures me like this. Thanks God your grandfather is not alive. What face will I show upstairs? Vijay gets his wife from Fancy Furnishings while my daughter goes to the street for hers. (198)

But Suresh responds coldly on the issue of marriage and gives priority to the wishes of his family rather personal inclinations. She is badly cheated. She is conscious of the
happenings around her. So, she adjusts herself to the situations. Nisha turns into a business woman who deals in salwar suits. He father encourages her and now she is free to decide on the issue of marriage. But she consents to the match with a family who will let her work. She marries thirty four years manglik widower, Arvind. She is also much conscious about her business and future identity. So, she does not give up her business, she bears the four-fold responsibilities of being wife, daughter in law, mother and business woman. When she gives birth to twins, one girl and one boy, she looks satisfied with her role as mother and daughter-in-law. Ultimately she realizes the satiety of family and says: “Surrounding her were friends, relatives, husband, babies. All mine, she thought, all mine” (337).

Her fourth novel *The Immigrant* is again the story of Nina; thirty years old English Lecturer who is also struggling to make herself settled somewhere. Suddenly a marriage proposal from Ananda, a dentist in Canada comes to her. She also moves in dilemma on the issue of her marriage because she does not wish to leave her long attained career. But in compulsion of her mother and relatives, she has to marry Ananda. In Canada, she does not prefer to sit idly at home. As she is a working woman, her inclination to do something in foreign land grows more. She proposes to do job in library but Ananda assure her that ‘it is not easy making it in a new country’s and after all it is very silly because she is starting a family. She tries to have a baby but she is not fertilized. After several attempts and appointments with doctors, she moulds herself again to be independent. She succumbs herself to studies and goes to library to study but her interest in going to library diminishes because the study of different boos becomes ‘appetizer’. Along with her interest in studies and settlement of her own, she also grows hungry of having more sex with Ananda. Unfortunately, their consummation bears negative results. Then an anguishing discussion goes on
between Ananda and Nina. She again firms her feet to be independent and before having a child, she wishes to settle herself and says: “I miss home – I miss a job – I miss doing things. I feel like a shadow. What am I but your wife?” (237). Instead of discussing anything with Ananda, she believes more in advice of women. Manju Kapur is a keen observer of women psychology. Altruistic tendency has developed in the protagonist. During her job in library she meets Anton who proves a greater succor to take Nina to her doom.

In the company Anton, she feels much relaxed and it is kind of experience for her self, her peculiarity, autonomous and her independence. She regulates her meetings with Anton and becomes more passive towards Ananda. Within a short span, she is seduced badly by Anton. In heavy suppression, she leaves Canada for the cremation of her mother in which she finds no assistance from Ananda. Her life becomes more intolerable and she flies to university of New Brunswick interview. Manju Kapur summarizes that life was what you made of it. You look at a glass and call it half full or half empty. You could look of the window and see the key or stare at the mud. How often had he heard his parents make these distinctions between types of people? Well, he knew what manner of person he was. And Nina was definitely his opposite (Kapur 330). The novels of Manju Kapur voice well the sentiments of women and their self-introspections. Virmati, Astha, Nisha and Nina, all are searching for their grounds interestingly from a wrong threshold.
WORKS CITED


