CHAPTER IV

GAURI

GAURI is a great departure in Mulk Raj Anand's fictional writings in the sense that it is his first novel in which the protagonist is Gauri, the woman, around whom the entire action of the novel is centered. Hence the justification of the title. Formerly it was entitled as THE OLD WOMAN AND THE COW, but later it was changed to GAURI which seems to be more appropriate because here the author gives priority to women, recognizing the power of the female through Gauri. Anand has created many women characters both Indian and European in his various novels but he has not given them the heroic status of Gauri except Janki of HE BIG HEART. By and large, they tolerate the barbarous treatment of their men silently without lodging any protest. Janki is however an exception. She chooses to live with Ananta only after the death of her old husband whereas Gauri decides to resist the arbitrariness of her husband by leaving him for ever. She is in search of liberty and freedom for herself as well as for the emancipation of the Indian woman. Janki is merely one of the characters in HE BIG HEART whereas Gauri has been conferred the status of the heroine of the novel. She is a radical departure from the traditional notion of the woman as a frail vessel, as an angel in the house, and as a seductress or temptress. Anand presents her as a person who frees herself from slavery and inferiority and asserts her existential dignity and becomes in the process Mahakali.

Of course, the novel deals with various socio-economic evils,
but here the problem of male-domination over the female, especially in the context of the Indian rural scene will be focussed. The innate superiority complex from which the average Indian male suffers, causes him to dominate over the women-folk needlessly. He therefore feels that this nature of behaviour is his birthright and so for him all sins are forgiven. The novel throws tremendous light *inter alia* on this major issue. Gauri through her consciousness revolts against the suppression of women:

Gauri's progress from under the shadow of the hoary and holy Dhauladhar to the modern hospital in a city is a journey from tradition to modernity. It signifies for her a change from bondage to freedom, from meekness to self-assertion, from weakness to strength. In sum, it is the transformation of a cow into a tigress.1

Mulk Raj Anand studies effete traditions of the rustic Indian society and ably brings out its limitations vis-à-vis the Indian village life. But at the same time, he does not lose sight of those traditional elements which still have their importance in the Indian social context. Gauri stands for all that is the best in both tradition and modernity. She undergoes a remarkable transformation through her experiences such as her contact with Dr. Mahindra who employs her in his own hospital. Dr. Riemenschneider's critical comments are justifiable in that

Gauri is not also intended to play the role of a revolutionary woman. Her struggle is much more fundamental. She is fighting to be accepted as individual and not for the equal rights of men and women.2

Gauri's problem is existential in that she wants to live with full human dignity.
Jack Lyndsay correctly writes:

The Old Woman and the Cow (GAURI) takes us once more into the village with its obstinate immemorial bases and its upsetting currents of change. Because the old patterns hold fast and resist the new pressures, and because so much of the old ways of life are integrated with expressions in myth, the new developments can be powerfully defined in terms of legends, we see both the ways in which these legends obstruct and the way in which they help to clarify what is happening.

Anand is consciously making use of the myth of Sita of the Ramayana who was banished by Rama because the latter had been told by one of his Ministers who had overheard a washerman quarrelling with his wife and saying that he was not Rama who had accepted Sita after she had stayed in Ravana’s palace. Alastair Niven also emphasises the mythical basis of the novel:

This is the first novel in which Anand makes major use of one of the epic tales and it marks an interesting development in his art. A writer who has so often found himself bound to resist the paralysis of legend now deploys it for his own creative ends.

Krishna Nandan Sinha too rightly observes that The Old Woman and the Cow (GAURI) uses the Sita myth to create a new legend of a heroic peasant woman in a small-minded village. His novel is thus an attempt at a 'Creative Myth' in that he uses the structure of the old Sita myth and breaks it to give to the reader a new vision of a woman who through struggle becomes liberated and awakened. Another critic Gillian Packham states:

He (Anand) has often expounded his view that the traditional myths need to be reinterpreted. He considers that the old myths are based upon a particular view of God and fate and that since man’s view of his gods and of his fate had changed he has had to relinquish his dependence on the old myths.

Anand emphasises the need of explaining the old myths dynamically with a view to achieving psychic transformation of men and women.
Gauri's whole life seems to be an extraordinary struggle for survival. Her husband Panchi's driving her out of the house does not dampen her spirits. On the contrary, the reader is filled with amazement to find her strongly defying him which is not possible except for a morally awakened person. Here Gauri exemplifies the moral force as well as the spectacular power of the Indian womanhood. She in fact, seems to be the concretization of Anand's ideal of woman because she imbibles those qualities on which the latter places particular emphasis:

If one is to survive at anything like the human level...then one must struggle afresh believing that the only life is the life of spiritual struggle and that this is continuous and eternal.

Anand virtually sees the meaning of life in an endless struggle and Gauri comes up to his expectations because she must protect human dignity at all costs, daring to challenge the world of shallowness asserting herself like an Amazon -- the Goddess Mahakali, exhibiting her characteristic power and strength. The novel is a tribute to Anand's greatness as an artist that he transforms an ordinary domestic story of rural environment into such a vast dimension by enriching it with the traditional myth of India. She has to encounter the man-made world, that is the masculine world where woman is completely and ruthlessly overshadowed by man. In his other novels, Anand's most female characters are secondary or more precisely, servile to the male characters as in real life in India. But Gauri is a remarkable creation which is a rare specimen of strength embodying an unusual ethical sense of things which makes her defy the injustice and wrong meted out to her, particularly at the hands of her husband Panchi.
All the preceding statements by different authors concentrate on one major point, that of the mythical basis of the novel. In this novel, Anand gives a special description of the shocking treatment given to the women-folk in the Indian society. The reader will not find any difficulty in realizing that the novelist is primarily protesting through Gauri against the male hegemony over the Indian female. Moreover, the socio-economic structure of the country precipitates this evil aspect of the Indian society which actually suppresses half of the country's strength by depriving the Indian female of her human rights for living a full life and from making any contribution to the society in any form whatsoever. Anand draws a vivid picture of the pathetic state of the Indian woman but at the same time, he shows her power when Gauri refuses to put up with injustice and liberates herself from the male domination. Here the novelist deals with the existential issue which has become the universal problem in the modern society. In the analysis, references from the novel will focus on the struggle of Gauri, the heroine and her ultimate emergence as Goddess Mahakali.

An attempt will be made to deal with protest against the male domination over the Indian female. But before the novel is discussed in this perspective, the story in a nut-shell will prove useful.

The novel tells the story of a peasant girl Gauri, daughter of the petty widow Laxmi, of the village Piplan Kalan, married to an orphan, Panchi of Chota Piplan. Gauri is submissive, gentle and as docile as a cow. She is both loving and reticent whereas Panchi is illiterate, thick-headed and rather a fool.
The novel starts with the procession of Panchi's marriage. The bridegroom is riding a pony. All of a sudden, when the marriage party is quite near the bride's village, the pony refuses to go ahead which is taken as a bad omen. Finally on their arrival, the bridal party is given a formal welcome. Immediately after that, Laxmi's maternal brother Amru humiliates the bridegroom and his uncle Mola Ram, by passing insulting remarks about the band players, saying that it is composed of 'Mirasis and Bhands' and that the bridegroom has come on a hired horse. Further, Panchi's uncle is informed that the bridal party cannot be entertained for more than one night. The retired Havildar Mola Ram considers it as an insult, little realising Laxmi's weak financial position, particularly on account of the draught that year. On the other side, Amru is so greedy that when he finds that the ornaments which Mola Ram has brought for Gauri are fake, he asks Pandit Bhola Nath to stop the marriage proceedings. Laxmi also feels sad at this revelation but somehow checks her feelings and the marriage ceremony is completed. Panchi is happy and the wedding party returns to Chota Piplan.

Now Anand abruptly shows Panchi ploughing fields in his own village where he feels irritated because of overwork because he has also to plough his uncle's land in addition to his own. Consequently the bullocks become the target of his irritation which leads to a quarrel between the uncle and the nephew. On the other hand, Panchi's aunt Kesro never gets tired of cursing Gauri levelling false charges against the latter. She tries to create suspicion in Panchi's mind regarding Gauri's integrity. But Panchi who is furious
because of his quarrel with his uncle, does not listen to her and unexpectedly asks his aunt to divide the property so that he and his wife may live separately. Gauri is happy over this development because she already wants to live independently in order to get rid of her mother-in-law's ill treatment. Although Panchi is not given anything of the family property, they start living in a rented house belonging to a Muslim couple -- Rafique Chacha and Hoor Bano. Panchi then has to pawn Gauri's ear-rings for purchasing seeds and rations. Besides this, both Panchi and Rafique that very night come back home in a drunken state and the former beats Gauri ruthlessly. As a result of this, she feels terrified and tries to avoid him. Panchi tries to please her by stealing a mango for her from Lala Birbal's garden but is unfortunately caught red-handed for which he is much humiliated. Despite the maltreatment and consequent suffering at his hands, she continues to serve him like a devoted wife, exemplifying the Sita phase of her personality.

One day when Gauri tells him about her pregnancy, he is terribly shocked, partly perhaps because of his adolescent fears and partly because of his extreme financial straits. He ill-treats her and pushes her out of his house. In her mother's house too, she is an unwanted and unwelcome guest. There Amru sells her to an old Seth Jai Ram Dass, a banker of Hoshiarpur, for hard cash and also for wiping out the mortgage on their two houses, and to save their cow Chanderi. Gauri resists fiercely but in vain. She falls ill in the house of the Seth. A prominent doctor Colonel Mahindra is called in. On his advice, she is removed to his clinic, but later on, she plainly refuses to come back to the house of the Seth.
Dr. Mahindra gives her the job of an assistant to Miss Clara Young, a nurse working in his own clinic. There Dr. Mahindra's partner, Dr. Batra makes an attempt to seduce Gauri but she saves herself with the help of Miss Young who is slapped by Dr. Batra for the interference in his personal life. This episode besmirches the good reputation of the hospital. Miss Young wants that strict action be taken against Dr. Batra; but when Dr. Mahindra does not take any strict action against the defaulter, she feels humiliated and tenders her resignation intending to join the Mission hospital at Ludhiana. Dr. Mahindra makes up his mind also to send Gauri back to her husband because she expresses her desire to go to him.

At the other end, Panchi goes to Pipal Kalan to bring Gauri back and accosts Amru, threatening him with dire consequences if Gauri is not restored to him. But Amru's hired goondas beat him harshly, making him severely wounded. The police carries out an enquiry into the matter therein directing Laxmi to get Gauri back to Panchi. Laxmi along with Adam Singh, an elderly man of the village, goes to Hoshiarpur where Dr. Mahindra, after making them realise their blunder of selling out Gauri, sends her with them. She is once again restored to Panchi after the latter is fully assured that Gauri had been safe in Dr. Mahindra's clinic. Panchi is happy; but even then, he is not very cordial towards Gauri. This home-coming reminds one of the home-coming of Sita in its essential mythic configuration, though in terms of detail, Panchi feels so possessive towards Gauri that he does not even wish her to talk openly with Rafique Chacha. Unfortunately for Panchi, Gauri during her stay at the hospital, overcomes her reservations and as such
feels no hesitation in talking freely to other men, especially those known to her. This is not tolerated by Panchi mainly because of his narrow outlook and also his illiteracy combined with his stupid nature, jealousy and possessiveness.

Meanwhile, the village midwife Rakhi learns that Gauri will go to hospital for delivery. She turns against her and instigates Panchi, saying that the whole village is casting a slur on him because the village people are repeating the same thing against Gauri which people had said about Sita on her return to Rama from the captivity of Ravana. Panchi, instead of analysing the situation doubts Gauri's integrity and demands the proof of her purity. He is carried away by the village talk which reveals his disturbed mind when he picks up a quarrel with Raj Guru and Damodar -- the sons of Lala Birbal and Chaudhari Achhru Ram respectively, when they refer to Gauri in a slighting manner. Damodar strikes him so hard that his old wounds open up and he collapses on the floor, bleeding profusely.

At home, Gauri cares for him devotedly but being obsessed with the village talk, Panchi beats her demanding the proof of her purity once again. She most humbly tries to convince him of her fidelity; but instead of listening to her, he beats her for no fault of hers. She then defies him saying that if she is a curse on him, she will go away to Dr. Mahindra's clinic never to come back and that if he strikes her again, she would also hit back. She then leaves Panchi for good. Her love for the unborn baby leads her on to Dr. Mahindra's hospital.
Now the relationships of various male members with Gauri will be explored and examined in order to bring out the element of the male hegemony over the Indian female against which Mulk Raj Anand's protest is manifested in explicit terms. Gauri's struggle and battle will be dealt with in the paradigm of Mahakali—the Goddess Durga, that is Amazon.

The general feature particularly of the village life in India is that they often Christen the names of their wards after the names of the Indian gods and goddesses. Gauri is one of the names attributed to Goddess Parvati, the consort to Lord Shiva of the Hindu mythology. She is also called Shailputri, the daughter of the mountain. In The Mahabharata, she has been called Mahadevi—the great Goddess, the wife of Shiva and the daughter of Himavat, that is the Himalayas. In this great book written by Rishi Ved Vyasa, she has been referred to with different names depicting her characteristic features. The mention of this Goddess has also been made in The Puranas and the later works too. Here in this novel, Gauri appears in many forms. So far as the Shakti worship is concerned, Gauri is the eighth in The Nava-Durga series, that is, she is the eighth in the vision of God Brahma. Gauri literally means a great white radiance. In The Durga Sapatshati, she comes before Siddhidhatri who grants boons to the devotees.

Gauri has been shown as a pretty young peasant girl. She is happy before she is married to Panchi. The marriage proves a scourge for her as usually happens in the case of girls in the backward areas of India. Panchi who is an illiterate fool, has no
sense to recognise the dignity of his wife who does everything for him to the best of her capacity. He never tries to go deep into her soul and seems to have no principles to follow in his life. Hence there is no stability in his life. He is rash, wayward and a foolishly vain person who is easily carried away with the talk of others. Anand is indeed very realistic in portraying Panchi's relationship with Gauri and through her the cruelty meted out to woman. Just as Panchi regards Gauri as being inferior to him, in the same way, Amru has no regards for Laxmi, the mother of Gauri. Though Laxmi is keen to find a good match for her daughter, she lacks freedom and initiative under Amru's pressures. Amru dominates her totally. That is why his will prevails in arranging Gauri's marriage with Panchi. Amru's motive is purely mercenary and Laxmi of course, falls in line because of her poverty and dependence on Amru.

Gauri is never taken into confidence about her marriage. It is as if she had nothing to do with it. The novelist is drawing the attention of the reader to this evil aspect of the Indian social life. The daughters are never consulted particularly in the villages, about this most important event of their lives on which hinges their destiny. In the Indian scriptures, woman has been given the status of a Devi --- Goddess or a deity but in practice, her condition is miserable as she is subject to the male world. Marriage is the only aim for her which often results in a hellish life. A girl friend of Gauri, Kamali puts the reality relating to the dominated life of the Indian woman, before her; "You know that a woman can never do anything right. She cannot do anything for herself, there is no hope for her... except marriage." (106)
The parents get worried from the very day of her birth because she is regarded as a burden—a curse. The fact is, that she is discriminated even in the family from her very childhood. Gauri's plight is typical of the hopelessly low status of the woman in the tradition-bound Indian society. Anand has this aspect of the inferior position of woman in mind when he writes:

Obviously, woman in India has sometimes been exalted as a goddess, but mostly pampered as a doll or kept down and oppressed. Unlike the European woman, who began to react against the low status that came to be assigned to her after Luther by the formulation of an ideal woman as the equal of man, complete by herself, mistress of her own sex and free to use it as she likes, to accept or refuse motherhood, the Indian woman merely drifted along and became bound to man, more and more as a slave, less and less as an individual apart.

Naik's contrast of the position of the European and the Indian woman is justified because there has been a tremendous and welcome change in the awakening of the former which has resulted in her emancipation after European Renaissance; whereas the condition of the latter has not improved much in spite of the Indian Renaissance which, among other things, has laid stress on the equal status of woman. All the socio-religious reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Vinobha Bhave made strenuous efforts to eradicate the evil of the slavery of woman. Of course, their efforts do not seem to have gone waste completely because the emergence of Gauri in full power in the last chapter of the novel shows the realisation of their dreams, even though in practice the Indian woman's lot is still pitiable like that of Gauri.
Regarding marriage, the same old practice of following the well-beaten path is being carried on. Not only among the peasantry but even in the well-educated families, the proposed couple is given a chance merely to have a formal look at each other. Since this type of an interview is always initiated from the boy's side, he as such, enjoys the power to reject or select the girl. The girl is not supposed to indulge in such an effrontery because she is to accept whosoever is imposed upon her. Besides this, parents or guardians are the final arbiters especially in the case of girls. Gauri is beautiful, active and intelligent. She could have certainly got a better match than Panchi, if Laxmi and Amru had sincerely tried for that. The parents play havoc with the lives of their daughters because they have got to get rid of them anyhow. But sometimes the financial circumstances handicap the parents or guardians who being unable to meet the demands of the dowry, are compelled to give away their daughter to the first possible groom. Laxmi is the victim of poverty. Hence her dependence on Amru who exploits this situation fully by taking advantage of her helplessness. Though he may be having sexual relations with her, his love is not real because he dominates her in everything by acting the master of the house almost all the time.

It takes several months to make preparations for the marriage which ends up in a fiasco. At the very outset, the marriage ceremony of Panchi and Gauri does not seem to go off very satisfactorily owing to superstitions of the people such as the 'bucking' of the pony and Panchi's stepping over the threshold before the oil is poured on the doorstep which are regarded as
ominous signs indicating 'the beginning of troubles' and foreshadowing further difficulties.

What Anand seems to say is that the marriage should unite the couple in a true bond of love and that it should not be convention-ridden. The girls are handed over to their in-laws like goats and sheep. Amru being greedy is concerned with the gold ornaments alone and is not in the least concerned with the welfare of Gauri. His greed can be seen when he asks Mola Ram to show him the dowry which they have brought for her. As soon as he finds that the jewellery is fake, he wants to stop the performance of the marriage ceremony when he says to Pandit Bhola Nath, "We have been undone! They have only brought cheap gold plated jewellery in the dowry..." (20) Laxmi also feels sad at the counterfeit gold as the price of her daughter. Ironically, Gauri's mother's name is Laxmi which means Goddess of wealth, but she is so poor that she has to sell off her daughter. However, she instructs the priest, "Complete the holy verses and don't mind my brother, Amru... I shall think that I have given Gauri to these people in charity." (21) Thus it seems that whereas Amru is concerned more about wealth, Laxmi even though slightly greedy is more concerned about Gauri's happiness and the consummation of her marriage. Indirectly they are selling her out. Even then, Laxmi at the time of departure of the marriage party advises Gauri to be like Sita. The author ironically ridicules the idea of giving undue stress to false modesty and female chastity in the context of Laxmi's own life. Panchi tries to govern Gauri's life completely after marriage while Laxmi has to dance to Amru's tunes proving
thereby the superiority and the domination of the Indian male. He manages to maintain this position in his dealings with woman in all his actions. In the Indian society, the role of woman is subservient to male because she has been conditioned to act like that and accept her situation ever since her childhood.

At her in-laws' house Gauri's arrival somehow coincides with the fall in the family fortunes. Panchi's aunt is like a serpent always poisoning the ears of Panchi against Gauri. He begins to doubt her fidelity without verifying the facts whereas Gauri is not less than a Goddess. She is beautiful, attractive, charming and graceful, appearing every inch a Goddess Mahalakshmi who represents purity, beauty, cleanliness, kindliness and harmony. Gauri is not devoid of these values or virtues. She gives love and tenderness to her husband who is ever blind to notice her virtues. She is not only an efficient house-wife but is also an example of self-effacement in the service of Panchi. Despite all this, Panchi treats her arrogantly. Gauri thus, exemplifies the real condition of the Indian woman who is the worst victim of male domination. Husbands like Panchi are commonly found in the Indian society. They are unable to recognise the true worth of the female. Many Indian wives are still treated brutally and physically manhandled by their husbands.

Gauri's life becomes more and more difficult because of her husband's suspicious and dominant nature. Though Panchi is no match for her, he assumes the airs of being a tough and superior person instead of carrying out the role of a loving husband. When he is forced to plough his uncle's two acres of land in lieu of the
latter's lending out his bullocks to plough his own land, he becomes irritated against his uncle Mola Ram's exploiting nature. Unfortunately he shows his weakness by holding Gauri responsible for all his troubles. He mumbles like a mad man "Ohe, listen my bullocks who shall I tell this to — my Ram Rahan; my fate .... Ohe, only after I have married, all my troubles began ...." (30)

Quite fantastically, Gauri — a new comer in the family is held responsible for various misfortunes which befall Panchi and with which she is not the least concerned. Every sensitive reader will find himself provoked to raise his voice of protest against this perverted way of thinking. Such an irrationally deep-seated biased thinking is, in fact, nothing except the release of Panchi's pent up emotions over Gauri who has become powerless by the continuous domination of man.

If Panchi's relationship with Gauri is analysed along psychological lines, it is found that the former is the victim of psychological imbalances because of his deep attachment with his aunt Kesro who also becomes overconnected with Panchi because of her own husband Mola Ram's long absence from home. Mola Ram being in the army, cannot stay at home except when he is allowed a few days' leave. Moreover, Panchi is conceited because he is brought up without a proper male model with the result that he is weak in his ego which he tries to compensate by striking a very macho posture towards Gauri. Kesro continues to complain to Panchi against Gauri with a view to preventing him from developing deeper relations with her. As a result, he whispers to himself while slouching:
She has ruined me. She sone! She has destroyed our home. This Gauri... To be sure, Gauri, the incarnation of the Goddess Kali.... My aunt Kesari is right when she says that this bride is the incarnation of Kali, the black Goddess who destroys all before her, who brings famine in her breath and lays bare whole villages like Kali Mai in the temple of Dharamshala, who wears a garland of skulls round her neck. They say Kali holds a sword in hand, murdering men and trampling on the body of her spouse Shiva.... Could Kesari be right? One, it is not true.... For if it be true?.... Then.... (30-31)

Kesari thus creates a split in Panchi’s personality whose consequent cruelty to Gauri is the revelation of his own weakness. Internally he is afraid of Gauri because he thinks her to be possessed of the power of Goddess Kali, but the very next moment, he thinks that if it had been correct, she would have also trampled him. Panchi’s problem is that he is unable to think rationally because he is unconsciously under the spell of maternal anima which is generally very powerful in the Indian psyche. He is immersed in mother anima which stands in his way to develop healthy relation with Gauri. He is unable to break the bonds and ties which have become part and parcel of his psyche. There is a conflict not only between Panchi and Gauri but also between Gauri and Kesari because of this very reason.

The Indian joint family system is well-known for the constrained relations between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. In this novel, Kesari is a terrible mother-in-law who always keeps nagging Gauri. Panchi’s psychological predicament is further accentuated by the traditional Indian society which lays down that the daughter-in-law must surrender to mother-in-law. He finds his aunt deriding Gauri when he reaches home after his quarrel with his uncle.
Control her, if you can!.... This bride of yours;..... She has begun to answer me now, when she was meek and obstinately silent before!.... From the day that this witch from the big Piplan set foot in our house, we have had bad luck. You know the crops have withered and burnt up. The bullocks have fever and there is no sign of rain!.... The sweeper woman! The Shameless! (37)

Resro represents not only the superstition and fatalism of the Indian woman but also the traditional notion of the relation of the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Resro's relentless attitude towards Gauri may probably be the result of her suppression by the menfolk of her own family. The roots of this disease can be traced in the Indian culture which gives priority to man over woman.

Resro exploits every situation to arouse Panchi's anger but he ignores her, demanding separation and partition of the family property. Resro attributes his desire of separate living to Gauri's bad stars. "Oh what curse against our house has prospered! I am sure it is this unlucky bride." (39) Gauri expresses her happiness at the prospects of living independently because of too much victimization by Resro who overhears it and shouts:

She asks for separation, folks. The witch! The whore from Piplan! Sulking in the dark room to win her husband's sympathy!.... Don't I know your tricks? Filthy woman! (42)

It usually happens in the Indian homes that the couple is not provided with full freedom or privacy with the result that the husband and wife find themselves unable to relate to each other. The women of the house indulge in eavesdropping like Resro and make a mountain of a molehill. The vigilant eyes of Resro prevent Panchi from going near Gauri.
But Panchi insists upon separation asking Gauri to accompany him to his friend Raj Guru's house till further arrangement since he has no house of his own. Kesro seizing of the opportunity cunningly shouts "Hai hai son! Do you want to lend your wife to the Sahukar's son, blind one! Don't you see that already he had been coming and going here frequently and ...." (44) Panchi becomes jealous when Kesro talks of Raj Guru's visit to his house in his absence. He loses his temper in no time and relentlessly beats Gauri till she falls down and there is no going away to Raj Guru's house. It is the deep rooted cultural maleise which makes the Indian male, jealous, suspicious and cruel in his relation with woman.

What Anand is trying to point out is that the true bond of love does not take place because of the narrow values and rigid belief systems operating particularly in the backward areas like the two villages of Pipan Kalan and Chota Pipan. His protest is against the Indian male what he is on account of his culture and Sanskaras. In India, at least theoretically, the woman has been given an ideal status but in actual life she is more than a slave, whose pathetic state shows an alarming schism between theory and practice.

After her marriage, Gauri's hetaira aspect of the feminine has been unfolded brilliantly by Anand. She gives love and tenderness to her husband keenly aspiring for establishing their common world in which she will fulfil all her duties befitting this aspect of woman. She endeavours to take roots in the new
environmment and is ever prepared to suffer the sorrows, sufferings and frustrations gladly with Panchi. Her love, loyalty, devotion and worship of her husband is total. Panchi still acts like a typical Indian husband when in the tender moments of love Gauri requests him not to beat her in future to which Panchi sharply reacts showing his dominating nature. "But the husband has to chastise the wife if she goes wrong...." (47) Panchi's attitude clearly represents the old defunct values according to which the average Indian husband treats his wife.

Panchi, no doubt, at times in the novel, shows his distrust in orthodoxy and its rigidity but finally the decadent cultural values prevail upon him. According to Niven "he [Panchi] convincingly embodies a generation without belief, resentful of the past, afraid of the future." 10 Though Panchi is caught up in superstition, he certainly shows the boldness of living in the house of a Muslim couple, thus breaking all the caste barriers for which he is condemned and his uncle even conspires, though unfailingly, to get him excommunicated from the brotherhood.

Rafique Chacha and his wife Hoor Bano provide shelter to Panchi but even then Hoor Bano protests against the Indian male's injustice to the woman. When Rafique and Panchi come in a drunken state and the latter begins to abuse Gauri unnecessarily. "You are the shameless one and not she! The poor girl has been waiting with your food all cooked and ready. And though you two have been drinking, and I suppose eating, she has not tasted a morsel." (66-7)
Despite all hardships, Gauri looks after Panchi taking care of his needs. In so far as her benevolent attitude is concerned, she even washes the face of Rafique Chacha when he falls down in mud under the influence of liquor. She also helps Hoor Bano in her chores but Panchi, being of suspicious nature misinterprets it as a conspiracy against himself. "Come woman, don't sit sulking there like an old woman! Betrayer of my salt!" (67) He then beats her pushing her away. Obviously, the woman is not allowed to do anything of her own, no matter how good her action may be. If he likes, she is supposed to love him and if he beats her, she has to bear the pain silently regarding it as her fate. Though Gauri succeeds in getting herself free from the constant nagging of her mother-in-law, she does not cease to be the helpless victim of the mistrust and brutality of her husband because of his stupidity, naivety and whimsical thinking. Still Gauri is not lacking in her extraordinary love for Panchi. Anand explores the manifold aspects of the feminine power, energy, and divinity through Gauri, whereas Panchi has been shown lacking in all these qualities. Panchi, like an average Indian, considers women as an inferior being whereas Gauri's assertion and ethical behaviour seem to stress the point that every one "ought to realize his [her] spiritual potential."

"Truly speaking, Panchi is not worthy of her respect. She even presses his feet standing by him through thick and thin but when the prayers fail to bring rains, he foolishly attributes this to his karma or fate. Sometimes there is an urge in him to
defy God but ultimately he blames Gauri for this natural phenomenon and even beats her who naturally begins to avoid him because of his impulsive behaviour. Needless to point out, that the way to the development of eros is blocked. To avoid Panchi is her silent protest against the former’s brutality.

But she again tries to keep Panchi in high spirits when the latter, in his attempt to bring sweet mangoes to the former, is caught red-handed and put to great humiliation by Lala Bhiral and Mola Ram. "She becomes almost eloquent, certainly more vocal than she ever had been and even sought to persuade him back to normality by pressing his limbs and with a sly humour which was uniquely her own." (82) But his anger does not cool down until he kicks the tumbler of tea which Gauri offers to him. Incidentally he condemns the armic theory, the British rule and the Congress Sarkar:

"Brahmin dogs told - karma! The White Sahibs were aliens and had sucked blood of the country, as Gandhi said. The Congress Sarkar could have dammed up the rivers, or dug new wells and given the villagers the gift of water. But the white caps were in the big thief bazar. And then big schemes for giving water and power were affording bribes, so that by that time all the money was eaten away by the contractors, there were many more mouths to feed — that was karma! The wisdom of the landed gentry lay in not killing the peasants directly. They and the money-lenders gave even loans on mortgage of jewellery, so that they could suck life-blood up slowly, invisibly... only the humble could be punished for stealing a few mangoes, but the big banias could pile up one story upon another on to their houses. There must be some justice in the world!" (83-4)

The above extract shows that Panchi is well aware of the exploitation of the small man in multiple forms but the sad aspect of his personality is that he always makes Gauri the target of his
anger. Nevertheless Gauri's attempt to get him out of his disappointment is commendable. Even then, she is not given the position which she should have been given on account of fine traits in her character. On the contrary, she is treated as a mere chattel. Panchi is incapable of looking deep into her profound and sincere love. He looks upon her merely as a 'flesh-pot'. That is why he is rapturous only in his response to the appearance of her physical charms.

From now onwards, Gauri's role as Mahakali Amazon begins to take shape, at least, in her relation with Kesro. Here she shows the power of her autonomy. For example, when one day Kesro comes to Panchi for reconciliation, the latter blames Mola Ram for all his troubles; but Kesro with her vile tactics again creates doubts in Panchi's mind about Gauri's bad luck. Trying to defend her husband, she speaks "He is not altogether to blame. It is that war he went to ... And it is said so in your horoscope ... Our house would break up with the coming of an inauspicious girl .... And it has happened as the astrologer said." (87) Thus Kesro is intentionally and indirectly putting the entire blame on Gauri and in a way, trying to woo Panchi away from her. But Gauri like Goddess Kali—the embodiment of strength and power—becomes a great challenger to Kesro's selfishness, jealousy and ill will, roaring thus:

Get out of my house, witch! Get out, you oppressed me enough when I first came as a bride until you and your husband turned us out. Now don't come interfering in our lives. If you have no husband, go to someone else, but do not lay hands on my husband! Go, get out! .... Evil woman! You want two husbands! Your own for beating you and mine for loving you. Acha! I want give you my husband! So go!.... (87-8)
Evidently, Gauri wants to curb that evil side of tradition which has appeared in the form of Kesre. She braves the reality with unusual strength, turning her away from her presence.

Seeing the danger at the door, Gauri challenges Kesre powerfully asking her to go away but when the latter attacks her moral character calling her the daughter of the whore, she drags Kesre and turns her out. Panchi feels surprised at the cow-like gentle Gauri's extraordinary strength, who appears to him as the incarnation of Kali. Gauri, in reality, is intended to show the path of liberation to the Indian woman. The Amazonian role of Gauri has, in fact, been shown as the master-key to the solution of her problems. Gauri is Anand's exceptional fictional work in which the wretched condition of the Indian woman through man's selfishness and ignorance has been rendered very beautifully in artistic terms. Gauri reverberates with life acting upon the collective consciousness of this vast country. Even Panchi becomes inspired by her power. That is why he wishes himself to be as strong as Gauri. He then makes love to Gauri whose love is always soothing for him. But in the innermost recesses of his heart, Kesre's talk of horoscope has taken roots. Panchi shares his views regarding Kesre's charges against Gauri with Rafique who advises him not to trust the angry woman.

So far as Gauri is concerned, she is rather worshipping Panchi in order to win him over, with the intention to obliterate any trace of antagonism, distrust or hatred on the part of her husband. She keeps the secret faith that if Meera Bai could melt the heart of Lord Krishna with her devotion, then surely she too can win.
Panchi's faith. She shows her unusual sense of patience in bearing her husband's sudden and arbitrary fits of impulsiveness. Panchi also resolves never to taint her 'pure soul' in future. But as soon as Gauri tells Panchi about her pregnancy, he is perturbed "for his dark soul was overwhelmed by the sudden adolescent fears of fatherhood and the dread of the child coming." (93)

Panchi often satisfies his sexual desire diabolically demanding immediate and total submission from her even in the matter of sex. He is bull-like and his love is actually calf-love. The following statement by Simon De Beauvoir throws light on this aspect of Panchi's personality:

> Just as he wants her to be at once warm and cool in bed, he requires her to be wholly his and yet no burden; he wishes her to establish him in a fixed place on earth and to leave him free, to assume the monotonous daily round and not to bore him, to be always at hand and never importunate; he wants to have her all to himself and not to belong to her; ....Thus she is betrayed from the day he marries her. 12

Little does Panchi realise Gauri's position. He rather reveals his cowardly nature and irresponsible behaviour when he slaps, kicks and beats Gauri harshly. He barks at her when she comes to press his legs. "Go to your mother's home, you of the devil stars! If the rains come, then I shall not believe my aunt Kesro! ....If not, I shall have died! And you and your brat can fend for yourselves ...." (94)

Panchi is unpardonably unjust to Gauri. His folly and cowardice can be seen when he doubts Gauri and refuses to own his own child. Of course, it may be due to the dread of poverty but none can go
to the extent of disowning one's own child and that too, at the cost of one's own wife. Panchi's treatment is brutal and humiliating to Gauri who regards him as her Lord and Master. She only wants his love, always standing by him wishing that they should bear the burden of life together by helping each other. Though Gauri feels shocked and is indignant, she is expecting his anger to cool down as it is done in the past many times. But contrary to her expectations, he becomes all the more furious and again attacks her moral integrity by expressing his doubt about the fatherhood of the child in her belly. Basically, he himself is so much starved and deprived of love and affection because of the death of his parents in his childhood, that he curses even the unborn baby. When Gauri requests him not to be so cruel, he shouts insultingly "Go, go, get out of my sight. Go to your mother, the whore! She can perhaps earn enough to feed you and your brat. Your uncle Amru has the food."(94)

Needless to say, Panchi is avoiding the responsibility of feeding an extra mouth because of his poor financial condition. But even then, his barbarous treatment with Gauri reveals the male domination over the Indian female. Falling at his feet, she begs of him with joined hands not to send her away but he becomes a real demon when he relentlessly slaps her on the face and beats her so much that she falls down. Such is the sad plight of the Indian woman.
Anand explicitly spells out the predicament of the woman in the Indian society. Speaking against the male domination of the female, Dr. Radhakrishanan writes:

Women are human beings and have as such right to full development as men have. In all human beings, irrespective of their sex, the same drama of the flesh and the spirit, of finitude and transcendence takes place.

Gauri is giver of life to Panchi but the latter remains a slave to his ego-centric will. One of the reasons behind it may be his orphan complex. Besides this, it seems that there is a contamination in his personality between the mother and hetaira aspects as enunciated by Tenny Welffe. It is perhaps because of this contamination that Panchi takes such a step, as to turn Gauri out especially when he is aware that she is pregnant.

It is the conflict of Panchi’s maternal anima and the Madhur bhava—the erotic sentiment. He seems to be in a state of ambivalence so far as his relation is concerned with Gauri who is shrewd enough to understand the incestuous relation between Panchi and Kesro. If Panchi had been able to unify these two bhavas that is love of mother and love of wife, he would have been a Vira in the Tantric sense. But as he cannot do so, Gauri is left with no other alternative except to go to her mother’s house where she is reprimanded by Laxmi and for which there is no justification.

Gauri’s Amazonian role becomes more pronounced when she is outraged at her mother’s hint of having another husband because she is so much devoted to him that she cannot think
of any other man taking his place. "Gauri refrained from
comment but looked so hard at her mother for the outrageous
things she was saying that the old woman could not complete
her sentence. "Mother, but I am already married!" (100)

The power of Gauri's moral character succeeds in cowing
down Laxmi, making her realise the wrong she intends to
indulge in. Obviously, Panchi is a fool to drive such an
ideal wife out of his house. Though she is sincere in her
love for him, she begins to realise her strength and
power when she thinks that she should have hit him back,
"with all her strength to make him realise the cry of that
innocent spark in her womb which he was frightened to see." (104) Gauri thinks of making her husband realise the reality
through her strength. In fact, she begins to assume the
role of Mahakali--Amazon which is clearly played for the
first time in her fight with Amru--the demon, in order to
defend herself from his cruelty. Then again, she manifests
her power in her fight with Seth Jai Ram Dass and Dr. Batra
against their sexual advances. Her friend Paro too, emphasises
the importance of one's own power that is the inner power
when Gauri shows her frustration saying that Devi is perhaps
angry with her. "Paro's instant reply is most timely and
befitting. "There is neither Devi, nor Kali. There is only
one's own strength." (106) Gauri wants to get away from her
mother's village because she senses the impurity and deception
of both Amru and Laxmi. So she invokes mother Kali, praying
for giving strength to her "Oh Mother ; you who are enshrined in our home and who gave me her name, come into me so that I have strength to bear this. And give me wings to fly away from here." (115) Gauri feels humiliated by the treatment meted out to her both by her mother and uncle Amru. That is why she wishes to leave the place forthwith. Amru and Laxmi have conspired to sell Gauri off to an old Seth Jai Ram Dass, the banker of Noshiarpur. It can be seen here that due to sheer poverty even natural affections are loosened.

Laxmi's callousness is both surprising and shocking when she agrees with Amru in the secret and fraudulent misdeed of selling her daughter off. She gives priority to her cow Chanderi over her own flesh and blood—Gauri when she says that it is a choice between her Gauri and her cow. True, Laxmi herself does not want to sell her daughter but Amru compels her to agree with him in this evil deed. Still she is the only mother in Anand's novels who has been shown as being so hard-hearted and greedy for money. Amru's intention of imposing his will on Laxmi is clearly conveyed:

No, no, you two stay here! .... You two women, mother and daughter! .... why, it is I, who am the outsider, now that you have come back. I shall take myself away and not spoil your wonderful felicity! Only, remember Laxmi, if Chanderi is taken by the money-lender Jawala Parsad, don't come begging me to feed you — and your dear daughter! .... I am finished with you .... (107)

Laxmi yielding to Amru tries to justify the action of selling off Gauri by saying that they are not going to murder her.
Gauri defies her mother:

What are you doing if you are not murdering me? .... Is this not murder? You will repent afterwards when you have to face your God! So don't do it! Mother, you who are my mother! I am begging you! .... (116)

Laxmi is moved at her daughter's pitiable plight. As a result of this, she falls at the feet of Amru repeatedly imploring him to spare Gauri. But Amru is the villain of the piece representing both the demons—Chand and Mund of the Durges-Sapatshati; the former represents lust and possession while the latter is symbolic of anger. Lust, possession and anger seem to be inalienable parts of Amru's nature. He is voluptuous as well. As for example, he cannot help casting his licentious eyes on Gauri who is his niece before her marriage. This clearly shows that though weak by nature, he is basically a lecherous creature. In the dead of night, he furiously thrusts Laxmi away trying to lift Gauri in order to make her sit on the horse arranged for taking her to Hoshiarpur. Gauri is burning with anger on account of which there is a scuffle between Gauri and Amru. There is actually a battle between Kali and Amru—the demon. Gauri shrieks like Goddess Kali, warning Amru: "Go away and eat the ashes! Monster! .... Don't torment me!" (117) In spite of a strong defence taken by Gauri, Amru lifts her forcibly pushing away Laxmi who comes to her daughter's help. In the beginning, Gauri succeeds in releasing herself from Amru's tight grip, but again, there is a fight between the two, and Gauri invokes Goddess Kali to destroy Amru—the demon. Once
again she rallies her powers and succeeds in liberating herself from his cruel hands. Ultimately, Amru somehow carries her on to the horse-back and takes her to Hoshiarpur to the house of Seth Jai Ram Dass but morally she is determined not to yield to evil forces.

Anand here depicts the actual plight of the Indian woman revealing her misery and helplessness in general which is really very deplorable. It does not matter if it is mother, wife or daughter. Here the mother and the daughter are both victims of male domination.

Though Gauri has to go to the Seth, she resolves to get rid somehow of this situation. Her experiences make her morally stronger. She has given a good fight to Amru and has by now been able to develop the aspect of Mahakali. This can also be seen when she "wrests the tumbler of water from Amru's hands and stares at him with eyes with the bright light of defiance from behind the liquid." (115) Thus becoming an adversary of Amru, she compels him to recognise her power as a great challenger to evil. In the house of Jai Ram Dass, Amru's sense of guilt is seen when the latter shows his helplessness to Gauri by telling her of his dire poverty. He accepts his defeat before Gauri when he says that he is a bad man but ascribes his evil ways to horrible poverty and to the exploitation of the poor by the rich. But Gauri knows his nature very well. She straightforwardly protests strongly against his violent and criminal nature. "You have ruined my mother's life and who knows if it is true or not true that
you poisoned my father." (121)

Obviously, Gauri is treated with callousness by Amru. Still her moral force seems to have increased. She does not hesitate the least in exposing Amru. In spite of her being in great distress, Amru dares not to take a stand and becomes perturbed having no courage to face her. He in fact, cannot meet her gaze. Hence he leaves the place which means acceptance of defeat at her hands. On the other side, it is a great moral victory for Gauri — the embodiment of Mahakali. Anand brings the primal power of woman to the forefront when he reveals Gauri's power in different ways. The novelist's comprehensive sympathy towards the plight of the Indian woman is explicitly manifested in this novel. Really it is the Indian woman's quest for the self through Gauri. She shines forth all the more when she raises her voice against the brutalities heaped upon the Indian female by the male members of the society. They actually turn demons in their dealings with them.

Gauri's Amazonian role becomes all the more distinct when she fights another demon in the form of Seth Jai Ram Dass who appears to be a symbol of Dhurralechana — a great devilish force who fought with Goddess Durga, that is Mahakali. Dhurralechana is a powerful demon who has sombre eyes and is therefore unable to see clearly. In other words, he has not the power to discriminate between good and evil. To Jai Ram Dass, Gauri is only curves and eyes and nothing else, exactly as
Mahakali was to Dhurralochana. Jai Ram Dass also seems to be a weakened form of Mahishasura because like the latter, he tries to marry Gauri who is by all means loyal to her husband. She fights this debauch—the buffalo-headed demon in the form of Jai Ram Dass giving him a crushing defeat. The Seth is a devil in the garb of religiosity because he pretends to be a religious man wearing the sacred thread around his bare torso."

(119) Laxmi exposes his hypocritical life when he tells a lie that Gauri has run away. She slaps him and calls a spade a spade. "Impotent—driving your first wife to death. And then making my daughter ill! And you dare to call me a whore! Shameless one!" (194) Laxmi's action is thus a strong protest against the female exploitation and the consequent cruelties. She does not stop here but further exposes the Seth:

Oldie! You who dared to buy my Gauri up at the age of sixty! Shameless one!... You talk of money!... You made me commit a sin! And now you talk of money!... Sinner that you are! Doing puja path all the morning!..... After eating seven mice, the cat is going on pilgrimage!.... (194)

Anand's total protest is obvious against the false life of the moneyed people who can indulge in any wrong-doing with the power of money. Laxmi lashes at Jai Ram Dass and exposes him, presenting him in his true colours. When Laxmi and Adam Singh, in search of Gauri, reach Dr. Mahindra's hospital, where the peon tells them that Gauri has run away after breaking up the hospital, she gets enraged and asks him
sarcastically. "How did Gauri break up the haspatal? With a hammer? Or with her bare bare hands? ....Hypocrites, you are not really ashamed when you want to take a woman but pretend afterwards that she corrupted you." (198)

Laxmi's anger is justified because usually the men blame women for their own weaknesses and limitations trying to cover up their own faults in this way. When the peon says that he is not at fault but it was Dr. Batra who wanted to seduce Gauri, she angrily snaps "I do not ask if it was you or your Dr. Batra who wanted to seduce my Gauri! You are all the same, blaming the women every time." (198) Thus Laxmi does not accuse any particular man for his injustice. She rightly understands and exposes the whole masculine world. The same Laxmi who is helpless before Amru, can challenge others in strong terms. She is afraid only of Amru, perhaps because she is economically dependent on him. Adam Singh is correct when he tells Laxmi "Fear the wrath of the Death God Yama since you have feared none before but Amru." (198)

Returning to the analysis of the character of Jai Sam Dass, it seems that he assumes many guises to conquer Gauri. In the beginning, he acts as the demon sugrave who represents outer sweetness but his intentions are not good. He tries to win Gauri with honeyed words and some presents. He tries to give her a 'costly dupatta' in order to woo her but she rejects these favours showing no weakness at all. She is firm in defending her honour. So she violently reacts pushing the Seth away when he tries to offer her "a betel leaf wrapped in a silver paper' which is a gesture of love and also tries
to lie with her in the bed. Still he tries to molest her which the latter resists and fights back stoutly giving him a stern warning "I am guarded by the goddess! So do not come near me or you will burn!" (134) For a moment, he feels frightened of her as though she is really possessed by Goddess Kali.

Anand's Gauri seems to have the divine sanctity of the Goddess Mahakali who is determined "to defend herself like the stone wall of a fortress." (133) In order to protect her dignity and honour, she assumes the role of a "silent stubborn mule" shaking off his hold over her body with a 'mad power' to roll away his unsteady body. In her second encounter with him "the resilience of the strong village woman exerting her legs and her body and her arms together." (134) As such, she becomes Chandi or Durga that is the great Goddess. She really appears in the guise of Mahakali to face Seth Jai Ram Dass's assaults in the form of Nachishasura. She is wrathful trying to 'tear him up like a tigress' just as Chandi prowled and attacked the Asura Nachishasura, pressing him on the neck with her foot, struck him with her spear, defeating the Asura completely. Gauri too shows her dashing spirit in her stubborn resistance to the immoral advances of this rich rogue — Jai Ram Dass. In her fierce battle with him, she like her prototype Mahakali curbs his pride.

Gauri resolves to get rid of this rich scoundrel by running away from his house to Panchi but she cannot materialise her plan because she falls ill. Her resolution to get out
of his house is clearly reflected in her thoughts at the time of her suffering from fever:

Oh, if only, if only she could get out of here! ... she would walk home! ... She felt, that, even with her fever on, and the weakness brought by her sickness and lack of food, she could walk all night and get home to Panchi.... And he would be so surprised he would immediately take her back. (131)

She is shifted to Dr. Mahindra's clinic on the advice of the latter because she tells him that she would die if she stays there. There Dr. Mahindra's partner, Dr. Batra begins to take great interest in Gauri because he is unhappy at home and as such, seeks pleasure outside. In fact, his unhappiness and dissatisfaction can be traced to his conventional marriage. Before he makes an attempt to seduce Gauri, he has sexual relations with another woman—a college lecturer after whose transfer, he turns towards Gauri showing his unbecoming behaviour in his "almost unabashed, open, crazy, headless passion for Gauri." (151) There is no love lost between Dr. Batra and his wife Savitri who is 'ugly and also snobbish'.

His unsuccessful marital life results in his evil ways when he starts gambling, losing money therein, over-drinking and coming home very late at night and even beating his wife. His wife fed-up with her life goes to Amritsar to her parents. Consequently, he starts taking too much wine. In the hospital too, he tries to molest Gauri but Miss Clara Young comes to her help. Still Dr. Batra tries to rape her but she with
unusual strength releases herself. Dr. Batra actually symbolises Nishumbha — the demon who represents great intellectual power having many realisations but has an undesirable and improper attitude. So he is a sort of Nishumbha, who has a powerful intellect because one can see that he is an efficient doctor but unfortunately his approach is negative and exploitative. He is full of self-aggrandizement and tries his best to exploit Gauri who somehow defends herself when she finds that "the whole weight of Batra's tough young body was bearing her down. And while his right arm enveloped her torso, his left hand covered her mouth." (153) Gauri does not yield to his shameful behaviour rather she with full might exerts "the freer legs and lower parts of her body to throw him away." (153) In spite of Gauri's strenuous efforts, he again succeeds in catching her. She, at first, feels 'suffocated' and 'defeated' but soon, the full might of Chandi or Kali comes into her and she fights fiercely to free herself. The novelist comments in this particular context:

From some unplumbed depth there arose in her, however, Kali, the energy of sheer negation, the hardness of whom she had brought against Seth Jai Ram Dass; and she heaved in an agony of uncertainty, turning on her side, so that the sozzled weight of his limbs shook and the hold of his hand relaxed from the slippery eel of her body. Go, she shrieked. (153)

Gauri is a powerful and robust character who is facing a great crisis in her life but assuming the role of Kali, she extricates herself from this intricate situation. She has shown that the woman does not belong to the weaker
section of society rather she is stronger than the male. In the Indian society, the woman is regarded as unequal to man with inferior status in actual life, therein making the former the victim of the male aggressiveness. So the female has to be a full human being in order to face this big challenge. Anand seems to suggest through Gauri's struggle that the woman should come forward and fight injustice. She should struggle hard in order to emancipate herself from the various taboos and restrictions imposed upon her.

It is humiliating that Dr. Batra slaps Miss Young when she interferes with his immoral act and tries to save Gauri from his satanic clutches. Of course, he might have acted like this out of his personal frustration but even then, his action cannot be justified from any angle. His crime becomes all the more tragic and serious when a woman receives such shocking treatment from an educated man like Dr. Rattan Chand Batra. He has no regards for this species of mankind. According to him 'women were two a pice'. The news of this incident spreads in the whole town and as a result of this, the partnership of Dr. Mahindra and Dr. Batra breaks up while Miss Young tenders her resignation and leaves for the Christian Medical College Ludhiana. So far as Gauri is concerned, Dr. Mahindra retains her with him for the time being till she is restored to Panchi. Dr. Mahindra's analysis of Dr. Batra's shameful behaviour has been correctly reasoned out when he speaks to Miss Young:
Perhaps the reasons are deeper than men imagine. Dr. Batra is a young man and I do not think he is very happy with his wife. You are a woman and you know that, at a certain age, sex is the be all and end all of life. And if it is unfulfilled, it makes people vulgar. (164)

Dr. Mahindra's deep probing into Dr. Batra's behaviour shows his incisive insight into the psychology of human beings. Dr. Mahindra's belief is that human nature is good. He tells Miss Young: "Every man has a conscience." And there is none so completely evil that has not some good in him? (104) He further explains Dr. Batra's behaviour in his talk with Laxmi and Adam Singh:

And though Dr. Batra should have consulted her pleasure before taking his, he had not done anything very bad. His wife wanted to be like the women of Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, buy a sari every week and play cards with the other society ladies in the club. And she did not want him. So Dr. Batra, who used to drink for pleasure, began to drink to forget. (210)

Anand is perhaps protesting against the unhappy lives of most of the couples in the Indian society which often result in frustration ending in making them indulge in anti-social activities. He is not favouring Dr. Batra's action but what he means to point out is that loss of eros makes man demoniac in his actions.

On the other hand, Panchi goes to Piplan Kalan to bring Gauri back after it has rained heavily. But when Panchi finds that Amru and Laxmi have sold his wife, he becomes extremely excited and begins "conjuring up visions of himself fighting this rascal and demolishing him as the
good Bhima had felled the evil demon Jarasandha in the epic Mahabharata." (177) He challenges Amru "Give me my wife whom you have sold or I will kill you! I say this by the oath of God!" (183) Amru, the scoundrel, gets him beaten up by his hirelings. Panchi is waylaid and given a sound thrashing. The case is reported to the police Inspector who after necessary enquiry directs Laxmi to bring Bauri back to Panchi. Consequently, Laxmi and Adam Singh go in search of Gauri and on their way to Dr. Mahindra's clinic stop to have whey at the confectioner's shop where the shopkeeper begins to ogle at Laxmi and asks Adam Singh if she is his keep. Laxmi sharply reacts to what the confectioner says:

In the part of the hills where I really come from, women always taught men to love. An aunt of mine had three brothers for husbands. Only, the one who was indoors left his shoes outside, so that the next one need not enter. As the five Pandu brothers shared Draupadi, so did our men. But when you shopkeepers came with your money you taught us hill people to buy and sell girls... I am not ashamed of having gone to bed with men but I am ashamed that I had to sell my daughter.... (196)

Laxmi puts forth the reality regarding exploitation of the poor when she finds a petty shopkeeper looking at her with lewdness. She exposes the moneyed people for corrupting the hill people who always held the values of love and amour propre --self-esteem dear to their hearts;
Laxmi is not only ogled at but several vulgar remarks are also passed against her. In a key passage, she denounces the Indian man's wilfulness and apathy towards the female:

What do you know of the desire that consumes a woman? You take her when you like. Then you turn away in the dark! Then you go to other women, considering them as whores! .... And you lay off without asking them what they feel! .... And then you sit in judgement on them if they look on men who are not their husbands .... In the Kangra hills once, woman was mother and wife to whosoever needed her — even as the goddess Devi at the temple of Jawalamukhi .... (196-7)

Laxmi is exposing inconsideration of the Indian male towards the female whose feelings and emotions are not given any importance. The man seems to be the sole arbiter of the destiny of the woman. The male chauvinists harass her to the maximum. She is actually "bound to fecund for the service of the hearth." 15

Laxmi's moral strength is reflected in her anger when Dr. Mahindra's peon informs her that Gauri has broken up the hospital. She sharply reacts to it calling all the men 'the sons of Shaitan'. Laxmi's protest against the excesses of man towards woman is really justifiable.

Dr. Mahindra's role in the novel becomes monumental when Laxmi and Adam Singh meet him in the later half of the novel. His voice becomes explicitly vocal against various social, economic and religious evils of the Indian society. He
realises not only the faults of society, but also fights them in his own way. He seems to be a true champion of modernity, though at the same time, he stands against gross materialism. He has an elevating and ennobling effect on the characters who come in contact with him. In Niven's view Anand "paces the implicit argument of the novel as astutely that Mahindra's final speeches are like flowering." He helps Gauri to get out of the dark life, saving her from the clutches of Seth Jai Ram Dass and Dr. Batra. Above all, her training as a nurse under his guidance creates self-confidence in her so essential for living a life. Here Gauri is able to come in contact with the outer world and to learn much that is hitherto unknown to her. Moreover, she develops the power of taking decisions and choosing for herself. This wide awakening finds manifest expression towards the end of the novel when she rejects the dead-life of Chota Riplan. Thus the character of Gauri undergoes a sea-change under his patronage. Niven is very correct when he points out:

Mahindra enters Gauri's life at the moment that she has dethroned the traditional gods. He is the modern deity in whose service she will eventually work. The new god works for the good of man, not for desire or for wealth.... 17

Niven here mentions about the evolution of Gauri under the ideal life of Dr. Mahindra to whom human good is the sole purpose of life. Mulk Raj Anand always shows his concern for the rural life. Even in the selection of Gauri, he deals particularly with the life of peasantry. Here
Aman's brilliant attempt to bring Gauri in contact with the modern element through Dr. Mahindra in order to bring out her latent strength is really commendable. Dr. Mahindra is straightforward, simple and really a great man with a distinguished personality of his own. He is a man of principles who believes that "under the shadow of intrigues, jealousies, horrors, everything would break if one did not do the right thing." (170) After the break-up of the hospital, Dr. Mahindra runs a free cottage hospital showing his magnanimity and prime concern for the poor and the needy:

We must end the cycle of poverty and death....The old dark ages are ending and new ages are beginning. Our people, long oppressed by foreigners, are free. Now we have to dedicate ourselves like bhaktas to Bharat Mata and humanity. And we have to struggle to build, to work! Work! So that everyone can eat and live and love....Our people are twisted. Perverted by blood-sucking Rakshas! Perverted!.....We must build new life on this chhartima.... (210)

Dr. Mahindra stresses the point that after the attainment of political freedom, people should live useful lives full of love for the mother land and humanity at large to get rid of the menace of exploitation. He truly proves a 'benevolent patriarch' for Gauri. If he had not helped her, her flame of life would have surely been extinguished.

Gauri's bitter struggle starts ever since her marriage. Panchhi's ghastly treatment, Amru's barbarity, Laxmi's callousness, Seth Jai RamDass's exploitation and Dr. Batra's immoral behaviour awaken her to the reality of life making her stronger in her determination to fight injustice imperturbably.
Preserving what is the best in tradition and embracing the new progressive trend of knowledge without which one cannot liberates oneself from the superstitious life. This new consciousness not only enlightens her own life but it also enlightens the path of those women who are leading miserable lives due to the exploitation of the male dominated world. Gauri is simple and divine—a complex of myth and mysticism representing the continuity of culture with a new faith leading to the freedom of the fair-sex. M.K. Naik observes that "Gauri represents some of the finest elements in Indian womanhood." 18 In spite of being a good woman, she gets the most painful treatment which is a clear indication of the sad plight of the Indian woman. Not only India but most other societies are also male-dominated where woman is considered as an inferior creature and is subjected to humiliation and cruelty. In so far as India is concerned, there is little improvement in the condition of females, though the Indian Constitution provides equal rights to both men and women. Anand is revealing this very aspect of the life of woman of the Post-Independent India because practically the Indian woman is still the subject to male-aggressiveness and the consequent ruthless exploitation. Anand not only depicts the misery of the woman in India, but he also raises his voice through Dr. Mahindra against the allround corruption:

All life in our country to-day, everything in it, has been poisoned by the importance given to money, property, and oppression.... And they put the fear into us all, first there were the white Sahibs and now there are the brown Sahibs. The banias are hoarding food-grains while the people are dying....
What Anand explains through Mahindra is that greed for money leads to the exploitation of the poor. But Mahindra is hopeful of a better future that is why he says "Only we must not be afraid and weak and cowardly. We must look up. We have to change the whole of our country, every part of it. And only courage will do that." (209) The reader does find that Gauri's courage cannot be questioned because her uncommon courage makes her a free and useful member of society. In the hospital, she forgets the world of tradition and becomes one with modernity, which enables her to have a renewed vision of life of the power of 'self.'

Anand's commitment to improve the plight of the woman through Dr. Mahindra is obvious when the latter talks to Adam Singh and Laxmi. "You must hang on to your turban! I don't mind so long as you can avoid being stupid and cruel and pause to consider the feelings of a girl like Gauri before casting her to the wolves." (211-2) Anand is reminding the Indian male of his wrong attitudes towards the Indian female. He appeals that the woman should be given a fair deal because to degrade her is to bring dishonour to oneself.

Further through Dr. Mahindra, Anand again protests against the new god of money which makes them to sell off their daughters even. He refers to a proverb prevalent in the hilly areas in this particular context:

Look at the sun in the morning and at the stars at night—and, in between, work, play and eat and sleep and love and do not fear God! Instead what do we do, we pile up gold upon gold; silver upon silver; tie as many oxen and cows and buffaloes to the halter as we can, and when we have no money, we sell our daughters. (207)
In brief, Dr. Mahindra’s views are as under:

1. He gives top priority to human dignity.

2. He strongly protests against giving too much importance to money, property and material.

3. He protests against fear, abjectness, ignorance, weakness and cowardice.

Gauri’s character is revealed in a new light after she is restored to Panchi. She is draped in a white Sari and has done up her hair in a fashionable way. Obviously, she has gone far ahead of the women of Chota Pipali and Pipali because of her contacts with the outside world. She becomes more conscious of her dignity and self-respect and is able to fight injustice more vigorously. Her mental growth adds to the development of her personality whereas there has been no such development in the case of Panchi.

She finds in him the same Panchi whom she had left before going to her mother’s house. He has the same narrow, conceited outlook. On Gauri’s return, even though Panchi feels happy, he does not welcome her warmly. Neither of them speaks.

Truly, Gauri to him is all flesh and no soul. He passionately and impatiently hugs Gauri and satisfies his sexual hunger when the latter begins to hand over a glass of milk to him.

Gauri is a changed woman now. In the words of Niven, after she returns from Dr. Mahindra’s hospital “her humility is fortified by an awareness of the world and some sense of its future which the other women in the community totally lack.” Panchi is surprised at her agility, smartness, and ‘machine-like activity’. She tries to bring about a change
in Panchi because of her sincere desire to convert him into a good human being. But he is caught up in the tight grip of his society. Hence he likes the same orthodox stupid style of functioning which appears to her incorrigible. Gauri is shocked at his fickle-minded behaviour because even now, he tries to make her submit to him whether right or wrong. He considers it to be his birth right and a privilege to command respect from her, ignoring the fact of mutual love and respect. Never caring for her merits, he is still much concerned with what other people of his locality rumour about her. Though he regrets his folly for having pushed her out of his house previously, his repentence is only temporary and superficial because he is so narrow-minded that he cannot tolerate Gauri's talking even with Rafique Chacha without purdha or unveiled. He is sadly mistaken in regarding Gauri's free spirit as her brazenness. Rejecting the purdha system she says: "I saw hundreds of men without covering my face when I worked in Dr. Mahindra's hospital. Now why should I cover my face before you?" (222) She further shows her freedom with Rafique Chacha in condemning the outmoded life of the village: "we are content to live like pigs." (222) Stressing the significance of education in life, she states that "education will make us masters of our own fate." (223) Rafique is pleased with her talk whereas Panchi is disturbed and therefore disapproves of what she says. Despite Panchi's tyranny, she is very
attentive to him as usual and serves him as best as she can. She makes the first move in everything, wakes up earlier and does the entire household work. She plays the role of a mother-figure when she makes him take his bath, wear his shirt and also when she cooks for him. She asks Panchi "Let me clean you up. I will have to teach you a little order.") But Panchi because of his ignorance, is unable to appreciate her concern for cleanliness and calls such ideas as the "new fangled notions". But she is not only concerned with Panchi's personal cleanliness but also with the hygiene of the whole village. Gauri in fact, expresses herself as the mother archetype when once she tells him that he has so far remained only a "big boy not at all grown up." (234) Here she becomes goddess Mahalakshmi. In the Western culture, the hetaira and the mother aspects are considered antithetical whereas in the context of the Indian culture, they are not regarded so.

Unfortunately, Panchi fails in understanding Gauri's immense love. That is why he looks at her development and change with a doubtful mind. He is even cruel to her because of his own frustrations and failures. He is selfish even in his love for Gauri. He does not decide to live separately on account of Gauri's troubles but he does so because of his quarrel with his uncle. Undeniably Panchi's treatment of Gauri shows the plight of the Indian woman particularly in the backward areas. But after a careful analysis of his narrow and superstitious circle in which he lives, it will not be wrong to conclude that he is what the society has made
of him, There is a ring of truth in what Saros Cowasjee states:

Panchi's eviction of his wife arises out of superstition, pride, vanity, and a hundred buzzing anxieties that stifle life in an Indian village. Torn between his love for Gauri and the pressure of his familiar milieu, Panchi fails to act bravely. But the author makes sure that when we chastise Panchi for cowardice, we do not forget Panchi's adversaries—the whole assemblage of evils fostered by antiquated customs and religious strictures. Thus in reality, Panchi is the product of his environment. Though his ambivalence annoys Gauri, he cannot be entirely blamed for this. In spite of her best efforts, he has not been transformed mainly because of the rigid decadent cultural values amidst which he has grown up. So Panchi is not expressing his own ideas but the ideas of his culture, which have become established in his psyche. Dr. Riemenschneider rightly points out: "Though Panchi subconsciously realises that to a great extent he is a product of society, he does not admit it his own weakness. He always puts the blame on fate or the injustice of the world." Anand is putting forth the social reality before the reader, Here he is not dealing with an isolated case but in general terms about the whole Indian society. If Panchi had come in contact with a man like Mahindra, he might have become a changed man. He is again carried away by the malicious talk of the mischief-mongers of the village.
doubting the chastity of Gauri. Hafique Chacha whose married life seems to be a foil to Panchi's married life, tries to dispel his baseless doubts. "You are a fool to be disturbing her. She is a Goddess... is Gauri! Woe to you if you do not worship her." (231) But Panchi's prejudice is evident when he expresses the common view of the Indian male about women in general. "The wisdom of women is in their ankles and they are untrustworthy, falling before every shimmer of shiny cloth and that no one can vouch for their chastity." (231) But Hafique rejects his view protesting against the male domination:

"Hain! This is strange talk for a young man whom I have myself known to wink his eyes at more than one woman in this village! ....I thought it is we Mohammadans who imposed the veil, and allowed four wives to every one man. But you, who are a twice born 'Hindu' seem to look at every woman as though she was always naked and meant for one purpose only. Shame on you!" (231)

The big-heartedness of the old man makes Panchi feel ashamed of his narrow outlook. There are still many husbands like Panchi who kick their wives during the day and embrace them at night. Gauri is nothing to Panchi except curves and desires. So she is oppressed like most of the Indian women, especially of the peasant class. Anand through Gauri, protests against the abject submission to man because he is surely aware of the tremendous hidden power of woman. He, therefore, realises that the manifold powers of the Indian female are being destroyed by the arrogance, selfishness and thick-headedness of the Indian male, particularly in
his relations with women. That is why he shows Gauri as a changed woman:

No longer was she quite the shy gentle cow that she had been. ... When she came as a bride to his home, but there was a power in her limbs of which the glow on her face was the clearest expression, a kind of bewitching light, the reflection of the aliveness of her being. She seemed alert and dignified, her movements full of strength. But her silence hurt him. (233)

Gauri's tremendous transformation from a gentle girl into a strong, powerful, fascinating and majestic figure emanating a sort of divine light which seems to be reverberated with life-consciousness, is a remarkable artistic achievement of Anand, the novelist. But Panchi is the same unchanged man because when once again Gauri tries to please him with her 'sportive and funny humour' with a view to getting him out of his usual depression, he reacts sharply saying: "While I am weeping tears by eights, you are laughing with your eyes." (233) Even then, Gauri trying to keep him in brave spirits, encourages him to be hopeful and manly. "There is no need to weep .... You punished me enough last night, and are now punishing yourself as you have always done." (233) But Panchi instead of listening to her, takes her reply as an 'effrontery'. In fact, he is unable to remove his doubt regarding Gauri's infidelity whenever he happens to hear the poisonous talk of the village people. Rafique Chacha asks him not to mistrust her and also lets him know the pettiness of these people.
There is a purdha on the hearts of the men of her village. And we impose it on women! Our Mullahs and your Brahmins are the hypocrites who lay down the law and the elders of the Panchayat of every brotherhood supports them. They are all fathers, squeezing out the lives of the young ones with their dictates. However many women they may take themselves, they want a woman to be reserved for the use of one man and one only. Allah Mian seems to be on their side, and our women seem, by habit to be on their side. Constipated folk, who have never had any pleasure and who are jealous of other people's happiness.... Do you think that with the behests of the elders in her ears, Gauri could ever have gone to a man other than you? .... If you believe this, you are crazy.... (231-32)

Rafique exposes the male domination over the female in the backward Indian village. He rightly condemns the religious hypocrisy of the priestly classes as well as the conditioning of the women-folk to their narrow-world.

But Anchii gets again perturbed with the evil talk of Gauri's immoral life which is merely a rumour spread by the village midwife, Rakhi. Reaching home, he calls Gauri only to spit out his anger on her. She gets little because she is preparing whey for him. He is in the habit of acting like a dictator in his house and as such, takes it as her disobedience which is far from truth because "She still seemed calm, full of dignity which he could not fathom and a strength such as he could not understand in a woman who, he felt ought to look guilty and ashamed." (242)

He mistakes her serenity as her pride and defiance calling her a 'bitch' and asking her to tell him the truth about the child in her belly. Gauri feels anguished and speaks to Hoor Mano who is present.
there in reply to Panchi's query "There is nothing to tell him. He turned me out and I have come back to him ... as pure as I went away." (243) But Panchi is not satisfied because he again shoutingly demands the proof of her purity. The reader feels that Panchi's act is irrational because her love for him is so chaste and profound that she is always found longing for him whether in the house of Seth Jai Ram Dass or in Dr. Mahindra's hospital. After the break-up of the hospital, when Dr. Mahindra asks her about what she would like to do, her answer is clear and straightforward which shows her true love for Panchi. "I want my husband and want to go back to him. I want to go back home." (191) Even now, she tries to convince him with joined hands that she has been true to him but he like a strict Police Inspector directs her to come to him. She does not move because he is treating her as a slave and is not showing the least respect for her dignity. He in a demoniac fury, "jumped up all of a sudden, from his bed and fell upon Gauri and struck her resounding blows with his open palm." (243) He kicks her and calls her 'a daughter of a whore.' She feels tortured and her patience is exhausted. As a result of this, she turns defiant. Anand knows fully well about the dormant power of woman. That is why he stresses the need for her emancipation through her own awakening. As an embodiment of Mahakali, she bravely battles her way out when she is daringly assertive and outspoken:
When I first came to this house, I worried so much about what the village would say. I had no tongue in my mouth. I only did the housework and lay down to sulk and weep on that little bed. I certainly could not think. Now how can you fly if you have no wings. (244)

Gauri is having a look at her previous life which was a closed one because of the lack of consciousness. Now she realises that lying down, weeping and feeling afraid of what others say, will not solve the problem rather aggravate it. Anand's belief that one is the controller of one's own destiny, finds an excellent expression in this novel. Niven's statement seems appropriate in order to clarify Anand's viewpoint in this context:

Anand allows the story of Sita to place his own subject in a universalizing context but he abandons it - or rather, transforms it - when he seeks to express a basic tenet of his own beliefs: that men and women do not repeat in every generation the passion of their forebears and that their salvation lies in their ability to cut loose from the past when its example threatens to become a snare. 22

Gauri is obviously a dynamic character because from a meek individual she ultimately emerges as an assertive and an awakened woman. She no longer remains a passive sufferer but takes her own fate in her hands rising above the traditional woman nullifying the Sita myth. Niven's evaluation correctly shows that Anand has given a universal touch to the story of Gauri with the mythical basis of Sita and has transformed it to suit his purpose of giving expression to his own views. Gauri realises her predicament and revolts to make herself free from it. Her protest is not so strong in the beginning
of the novel but it continues to evolve and assume larger dimensions through the evolution of her personality till it becomes quite strong. First her protest is visible when she does not accept the authority of Kesro at the time of her decision for separate living. This protest becomes stronger when in her fight with the demons like Amru, Jai Ram Dass and also Dr. Batra, she comes out defeating all of them.

But her protest is the strongest when she assumes the full power of Mahakali in dealing with Panchi. According to Gillian Packham, "Gauri's self-development centres on her learning that she can control her own fate. The situation becomes explosive when Panchi beats her out of his house.

In fact, Gauri's reply is a great challenge to Panchi:

'What if I am a curse upon you, I will go away .... I shall go and work in Dr. Mahindra's hospital and have my child there. And I will not come back again. She was defiant and her face knits together with a terrible strength, even though the tears were in her eyes. And if you strike me again, I will hit you back.' (243-44)

Gauri thus comes forward as Mahakali defying Panchi's ill-treatment and telling him plainly that her decision of leaving him for good is irrevocable. She has fully prepared herself to face the situation and to pay him back in the same coin if he assaults her again. She becomes a great revolutionary woman showing the road to freedom to all other women. Anand has tried to show through Gauri's struggle that there is little genuine freedom for woman unless she herself fights for it. In other words, Gauri acts as a
great Shakti in cutting Panchi to size, who is the symbol of orthodoxy and the male domination over the Indian female.

R.K. Narayan's Savitri is far behind Mulk Raj Anand's Gauri who leaves Panchi for ever whereas Savitri, the heroine of The Dark Room also leaves her husband, but not for good. She comes back to her husband only to be oppressed or tormented. Savitri is thus dwindling in her decision lacking the spirit of resolution and moral strength which has transformed Gauri into Mahakali. She proves herself as an avant-coureur for the millions of women. In her Amazonian rôle, she is perhaps without parallel. She has shown as a great deity in her fight with the tyranny of man. Anand succeeds in celebrating the power of the woman by raising her to full stature and by showing that the woman is not less than the man, rather she is much more than he. Gauri tells about Panchi to Rafique.

He is not foolish. He is a weak, spoiled creature! Spoiled by Kesro. He pretended to be a lion among the men of the village. But really, he is a coward! They are telling him that Rama turned out Sita because every one doubted her chastity during her stay with Ravana! ....I am not Sita! The earth will open up and swallow me. I shall just go out and be forgotten of him. 

(244)

She is forced to revolt against his audacity and dictatorship. So here she is clearly making a final break-up.

Jack Lyndsay's remarks precisely bring out the essence of the novel:

Gauri, with far more difficulties to surmount, breaks through. The blind circle is ended. The woman who is banished becomes the woman who herself rejects the narrow world of subjections and fears that enslave Panchi despite his better-self.
Gauri obviously chooses the path of salvation from the life of enslavement when she walks away with a renewed and strong will-power, though with a heavy heart:

Her face shone from the pressure of her stricken heart, transfigured from the gentle cow's acquiescent visage of the time when she had arrived Panchi's house, to that of a woman with a will of her own. (244)

From the above description, she really looks like Mahakali, a great Goddess of strength and power. Rafique and Moor Bano try to prevent her in vain. She knows well that the earth cannot give way. That is why "she wavered her head to forget Sita and thought of the road to the town." (245) It is in fact, her 'rhythm of love for the unborn baby' which makes her to go on. She turns defiant and runs counter to the image of the male superiority when Panchi pushes her out of his house.

The novel shows that the role of man in society in relation to woman is deplorable whereas woman's capacity is vast and multidimensional. So Anand's analysis of the sad plight of the woman in the Indian society is really thought-provoking. Gauri's last profile is the final unfolding of the development of her consciousness.

Though her life is full of sorrow, she is optimistic because if she had considered life empty or futile, she could not have acted like that. Finally rejecting the life of rigid conformity, she reveals the power of her individuality by embracing the value of freedom. Her declaration to go to Dr. Mahindra's hospital proves that she is positive about
the world in which she is going to live and serve mankind. Anand brings out the potential of a woman for the evolution of her kind through Gauri's revolt against the false values of life. The importance of Anand's 'New Myth' is established when Gauri reveals in her personal example what a woman can be or should be.

The novelist conveys that nothing can debar the woman from rising to her full growth if once she is determined to fight the fatal taboos under which she has been long forced to spend her days of life. Gauri has shown that women can also be economically independent. She nullifies the traditional notion that a woman is only to be confined within the four walls of the house when she goes out and chooses a wider circle to serve the suffering humanity. Anand has created a character whose entire life is a struggle for existential freedom. Finally, she, through her example, inspires the woman to struggle hard in order to occupy the place of honour which is in fact, long overdue to her.

Gauri's assertion throughout the novel and her final action to defy Panchi's brutality and haughtiness indicate the new values which the modern woman should follow if she wants to liberate herself from the life of slavery. Anand seems to emphasise that toleration of injustice is in itself a crime. As such, it should be fought with full
might if she is to emancipate herself from the various chains with which she is caught up. It is self-evident that new values are born only through the growth of human beings and it is their struggle which makes it possible. The way Gauri thinks and acts is not fundamental to her own personal emancipation but it serves as a light-house to the other women of India and to the world at large. The most significant aspect of her life is that she makes her own choice in selecting her goal of life showing that each individual must affirm his or her worth and importance. She also shows through her behaviour that life is meaningful and that is why she does not let it go waste despite many troubles and trials.

Peculiar to her character is her great moral strength which does not let her feel discouraged even in the most critical period of her life. She herself solves her problem when she decides as to where and how she should live with dignity and honour. She is a great existentialist heroine who responsibly chooses the way to freedom. She places a strong emphasis on the central human characteristic that is human dignity. That is why she becomes a great rebel against the constituted authority of man.

Anand is laying stress on the creation of new values through delineation of Gauri's character which culminates in beauty, goodness and truth. She leaves Panchi not for achieving any selfish motive but for living existentially.
Anand is particularly bringing out the virtue of courage to the forefront which is basic to the flowering of all other virtues. Gauri is not merely a bundle of several idealistic values or some fine qualities but she operates these values in her life. Her life is an example of challenge and power of self-actualization.

Gauri's determination and firm decision showing her power of taking initiative in a crisis, is in a way, a suggestion to the suffering Indian women to seek their salvation in resisting and revolting against every wrong if they want to save themselves from the butchery of the Indian male. Unlike the traditional Indian woman, she dares to raise her voice against all male demons who suppress and crush the woman forcing her to live like a slave. Though she is grief-stricken on account of her pitiable lot for which Panchi's barbarity is responsible, she is not defeated because she no longer continues to be dominated by her husband when her revolution of living a free life is translated into action in her final break with him. She shows her extraordinary strength in trampling over the orthodox skeletons or the various deadnesses of sterile life exhibiting a unique capacity for revolt against what is wrong and unjust.

Anand seems to tell that nobility or gentleness of the Indian woman has been misunderstood as her weakness, hence her exploitation. He implies that the time has come when she should come forward manifesting her full power to free
herself from the male hegemony. She has to wage an incessant war to liberate herself from the various chains with which the male dominated society has fastened her. Though Gauri’s life is a series of endless troubles, the spark of her life is not extinguished; rather it burns brightly to burn away all the rubbish making her a great power. Despite the barbaric domination of the Indian male, she is hopeful and shows a way of a new life to the crushed Indian female.

Anand suggests solutions to the problems which are always positive and equipped with a sense of his ‘New Myth’. Gauri in the form of the Modern Sita need not disappear from the earth but she has to free herself from the cruelty of her husband Panchi, and finally make her life happy by becoming a useful member of society by virtue of her service to the sick and the poor.

Anand’s attempt to establish new values of life through the portrayal of Gauri in the context of society is really creditable. The novelist denounces obsolete social values by making the oppressed individual the protagonist of the novel. He seems to protest against those traditional insignificant conventions and superstitions that obstruct the natural growth of the individuals and the society as a whole. Her example renders active help in the development of the individual providing enlightenment particularly to the women-folk. He is rightly creating resentment against the existing conditions of life with his simultaneous
sincere efforts to change and improve the sorry state of affairs especially in respect of women. The novelist has powerfully shown that the useless effete values which cannot keep pace with the vicissitudes of time should be rejected altogether. He rather champions the cause of establishing human values in his own country and the world over as well. Anand seems to have a deep knowledge of feminine psychology. That is why the reader unfailingly listens to Anand's appeal to help the emancipation of the Indian female. What Premila Paul says about Gauri cannot be questioned: "It is not incorrect to say that Gauri has almost become an archetype of the ideal Indian woman in Indian writing in English."25
NOTES AND REFERENCES

All the quotations from GACLVI refer to the edition of Orient Paperbacks, 1976 and the page numbers are given in parentheses.


9. Macho is a term which is used for the Mexican man in particular. It is also used for the Latin man. Macho wants to show off his over-masculinity, even though actually he is weak.


11. Ibid., p. 111.


14. Tonf Wolff postulates four archetypes of the feminine psyche which are complementary to each other in pairs.
(1) The Mother (2) The Hetaira (3) The Amazon (4) The Medial Woman. The Mother is the collective and the Hetaira is the individual form of personal functioning. The Mother is the static and the Hetaira is the dynamic aspect of Yin manifestation. To the Mother, her husband and children matter in so far as they are units of the nuclear family, but to the Hetaira, her personal relationship or individual growth supercedes familial or social concerns. Although all the four forms are 'inherent' to each woman, she realises the one most consistent with her nature. Gradually, a second form begins to assert itself. It has to be integrated with the first form. In case there is no integration, the first form is exaggerated and turns negative. In Panchi, there is an Oedipal contamination—a contamination between the Mother and the Hetaira. He cannot relate to Gauri with the modalities of the son as well as the lover. To put it in terms of an Indian schema, he cannot cultivate both Vatsalya as well as Madhur Bhavas in his relationship with Gauri. Vatsalya Bhava is parent-child love, whereas Madhur Bhava is the love between two lovers. As Gauri begins to display her Hetaira aspects, Panchi recoils against her and rejects her. He is, to quote Anand, "plunged into confusion, doubt and panic." In his case, it becomes a self-defeating, neurotic and contaminated mixture of parent-child and lover-beloved love instead of the Tantric alchemical compound which would have raised him to a heroic consciousness. He lives at the level of animal consciousness without redemption. He is a Sisyphus without self-knowledge. That is why Gauri calls him in the end, "a weak, spoiled creature...a coward." His repentance remains temporary and superficial.

17. Ibid., p.112.
