CONCLUSION

The present study has taken an extensive and intensive look into the journey of the protagonists of the four novels – *The Last Flicker, Night of the Half Moon, The Survivors* and *Parsa*. Where we have seen Jagseer’s helpless failure in keeping up his family honour, we have witnessed Moddan’s attempts to maintain his dignity. We have also experienced Bishna’s outright defiance of the state and its agencies and Parsa’s blatant abhorrence of dogmatism and societal taboo. This journey has surely progressed from hopeless and helpless resignation to self-assertion and self-identification.

In the expedition of analyzing this transition, the study has seen how the four protagonists have lived against the tide and have tried their best to assert themselves in varying degrees. In this process they have undoubtedly represented multitudes like themselves who grapple with the idea of identity and the self. In whatever way the four protagonists have attempted to maintain their stands, every such manifestation is exemplary and commendable. Their sagas are also manifestations of the writer’s own humanistic concern. Rana Nayar explains Gurdial Singh’s urge as:

Nothing appears to disturb Gurdial Singh so much as does the prospect of abject surrender that human beings often make to their situations or circumstances. Resistance appears to be a key word in his creative vocabulary and it is this *mantra* of resistance that he recites in one story after another. (119)

It is this agenda of resistance that surfaces in all the novels. Where Jagseer is seen countering the heartless onslaughts of Bhanta, Moddan fights against the callousness of his opponents. Bishna too is involved in his personal contestation of power and authority whereas Parsa challenges the established norms of society. In all such confrontations, it is the rare personal courage of all four heroes that
impresses the readers and establishes them as representatives of all such defiant ones.

In analyzing the four novels, certain similarities have been established in them. As a novel, Night of the Half Moon is quite similar to The Last Flicker. As Jagseer suffers a sorry fate, Moddan’s life also ends in absolute tragedy. Both suffer inevitably under the oppressive strategies of the more powerful ones. In both cases, land remains the central issue and cause of conflict. Jagseer’s claim on ‘his’ land and Moddan’s fight for ‘his’ fields is similar in concern. They together echo the rightful claim of many like them. In a way, both stand representative of the deprived lot though caste-differences do exist between them. Nevertheless, both are finally ruined more because of the capitalist callousness than their positions in society. Through both Jagseer’s and Moddan’s predicaments, the pertinent questions of self-respect and individual assertion have been voiced by Gurdial Singh.

In another sense too, the two novels echo similarity. Through the characters of Raunaki and Ruldu, both desolates, Jagseer and Moddan are given noble companionship by Gurdial Singh. As Raunaki lifts up Jagseer’s moods, so does Ruldu enlighten Moddan’s dampened spirits. Both are portrayed as replicas of each other.

In the women characters too, Gurdial Singh has portrayed both Bhani and Dani as silent lovers and the only hopes of Jagseer and Moddan respectively. The two become even more significant at the end of the two novels when both epitomize hope for all the deserted and forsaken ones. Bhani’s symbolic lighting of the diva and then her departure in the shadow becoming one with the spirit of the dead Jagseer, is comparable to Dan Kaur’s symbolic return near the Keekar tree as seen by Ruldu. Also, the silences of the two in their respective novels, hint at Gurdial Singh’s purposeful art in negating women to non-expressiveness yet allowing their quiet lips to say numerous unsaid things through no use of words.
Yet again, in the characters of Bhanta and Ghanna, Gurdial Singh portrays them as representatives of the oppressive capitalism and its associated money mindedness. The two themselves are slaves of larger oppression at work in which survival of the fittest is the real game. The ultimate survival of the two by crushing the lives of many like Jagseer and Bhanta is symbolic of the callous victory of the newly established social order over the old feudal value system.

In the questionings about the role of fate and destiny in one’s life also, the two novel bear similarities. As Jagseer is shown to be a victim of cruel fate, Moddan too is portrayed as a sufferer of the unjust destiny. Their sad plights are voiced through the ravings about God and his ways by Jagseer’s mother Nandi and Moddan’s mother Har Kaur. In this similarity too, the two novels show resonance. Both the deprived mothers suffer an additional bane of having totally dispossessed sons. Nandi and Dan Kaur both live sorry lives to see their only hopes, their son’s, perish away. The two suffer more than they deserve only because of the cruel destinies they have.

In addition to all this, certain descriptions about the characters’ moods which are reflected in nature are also similar in the two novels. Jagseer’s disgust at seeing Bhanta’s crop flourish, is echoed through Moddan’s abhorrence of ‘their’ lush green fields. There are other similar descriptions of natural phenomena in The Last Flicker, which re-surface in Night of the Half Moon.

The ending of the two novels is also similar in more than one way. Both protagonists die in the end after suffering many miseries physical emotional and psychological. For both, a woman pines in the end and the two love stories sadly resonate their desolate tragedies of the two women along with Jagseer and Moddan. Also, the two protagonists leave behind Raunaki and Ruldu who pine for them as true friends. Both the novels also have light as a symbol in them, one in the flicker of the lamp and the other in the light of the moon.
In both the novels irony has also been an underlying factor. Jagseer’s right on ‘his’ own half-acre of land and ‘his’ sheesham tree and Moddan’s claim on ‘his’ fields are both overlaid with irony. The former is forced to forego all claims on the land while the latter never manages to enjoy whatever he gets after the division between the three brothers. It is through Jagseer that Nandi wants to claim her seer in this world or jag but loses her life and Jagseer too dies in the end. Similarly, Dan Kaur always believes that Moddan would make her happy, but he is the one who gives her deepest agony in the end.

As far as the other two novels, *The Survivors* and *Parsa* are concerned, the two echo similarities in their abject contestation of authority by both Bishna and Parsa respectively. The two also emerge stronger and more assertive than Jagseer and Moddan. Bishna outrightly rejects the state and law and he strongly believes that rights can only be claimed by force and not by request. According to Dr. T.R. Vinod, “the negation of law is his sublime gesture” (Tarsem and Sushil 67).

Despite all his manhood and bravery, though Bishna suffers a tragic end, he succeeds in proving his mettle by showing his revolt. He represents the conflict between an individual claim and the all powerful state. In this regard Dr. Manjinder Singh writes: “Bishna is an ideal hero of Gurdial Singh. His idealism lies in the negation of state and the so called human relationships”. (64)

Bishna is a true humanist. On one hand he is gentle and loving but on the other, all his gestures show his grit and determination without any possibility of dialogue or compromise. It is this dichotomy in his character that leads to his ultimate tragedy. As explained by Dr. Manjinder Singh: “This rare type of self-respect makes him rigid, obdurate in the eyes of society” (65).

However, what matters in the end is that his very presence and existence is a barrier for the exploiters. His constant clash with society and authority does mellow him with time but never does he give in. His revolt continues till the end of his life and he keeps on challenging the state and power all by himself. The harder
he tries to settle in life, the more he is pulled down by the state and society, but it is his never give-up attitude that wins our admiration and respect.

Out of the four protagonists, Parsa emerges as a more nature and sublime character. He is a rare synthesis of a torch-bearer of new paths and an upholder of finer old values. He lives a life of esteem according to his own terms and conditions and that is what matters in his battle against a threateningly, overpowering society. He does not live a life of nothingness and helplessness. Both he and Basanta challenge the established norms of society and emerge victorious, one through martyrdom and one through his continued resistance. Though they face enormous hardships, yet they are able to assert themselves. However, never do the two forget their duty and responsibility. They stand as examples of undaunted courage in the face of all odds. They are also representatives of all those who dare to differ, and wish to establish their individualities.

What is great about this novel, is the indomitable spirit of Parsa which may not have consummated in societal redemption but at a personal level, Parsa does stand liberated by choice and will. He lives his life on his own terms and conditions. Through an individual saga of survival of Parsa, the novel attempts to lay the foundations of many such feats of personal victories which will lead to societal changes. Parsa’s concern for personal honour and dignity is representative of many such tales of self-preservation, self assertion and representation.

An eye-opening and significant aspect of this novel is Parsa’s relationship with the three women in his life Beero, Muktioro and Savitri. Parsa’s treatment and relationship with the three may appear similar but his attitude and behaviour towards each is different. Beero, his life-partner while alive, becomes his soulmate after death. He never breaks his promise to her and looks after the children with utmost devotion. He showers both paternal and maternal affections on them to fill the void created by Beero’s departure. His relation with Mukhtiaro though sexual in nature, never crosses the boundaries of sacredness. This association does not stoop to the level of an illicit-affair. With Savitri, Parsa wishes to share his
domestic space for the sake of his new born son from Mukhtiar. Society may consider this immoral and illegal but for Parsa his relationship is beyond just physical or need-based.

Though we see a slightly greater presence of women characters in *Parsa*, in this novel too like the other three, women characters are not actively involved in the plot. Their existence in the four novels seems to be overshadowed by male protagonists but, they do make their mark even in this under-representation. Where Bhani has a significant position in Jagseer’s life, Daani too has a credible role in Moddan’s life. For Bishna, Daya Kaur remains a source of strength throughout the novel and he feels her presence even after death. In Parsa’s life too, women occupy a respectable role and he values them a lot.

This shows the writer’s own reverence for womanhood though his novels are male-dominant in nature. The writer’s purpose behind this is his single intention to voice out the concerns of the class / caste male sufferers who suffer endlessly under the tyranny of an unjust society and an unequal economic set-up. Through all his protagonists, Gurdial Singh has been successful in ‘Representing the Unrepresented’.
WORK CITED LIST

