Introduction
Identity is a configuration arising out of constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identification, successful sublimations and consistent roles.

Erik Erikson

The term “Identity” has a long history-derived from the Latin root “idem” implying sameness and continuity, it was not until the 20th century that the term came into popular usage. The optimum development of an individual requires growth of autonomy, a sense of “me”, and a real sense of accomplishment in life. Being autonomous means being self-governing, determining one’s own destiny, and owning responsibility for one’s actions. Authentically it means experiencing self-reality by knowing, being and becoming credible, responsible persons. When an individual finds himself in the fullness of his capacity, having satisfied all his needs, and playing consistent roles in society, identity can be said to have been established. For Erikson Identity question has been the basic paradox of life and so will it ever be. Perhaps there is a manifestation of the original instinct throughout nature that each object is involved in an ongoing race to outshine, outsmart and outdo the other. In fact, the quest for identity had existed even when man was in the aboriginal state. It is as old as human nature. Ever since man became aware of his self he made strides towards attaining it. There has been an ongoing search for the unattainably attainable.

Philosophy has always been preoccupied with the theme of alienation and identity since the beginning. The root of the idea can be traced even in the work of Plotenius and in the theology of St. Augustine and Martin Luther, in the struggle to dissociate or alienate oneself from one’s own imperfections by identifying with a transcendental perfect being. Existentialists opine that due to identity crisis alienation begins. Hegel opines that alienation is an ontological fact rooted in the nature of man’s
existence. Soren Kierkgaard retains the existential emphasis of Hegel, and stresses the need of individual experience over objective knowledge. He holds that attainment of adequate sense of self in the world, dominated by purposelessness and despair, is the central problem. For Sartre, isolation is a natural state of human mind and cannot be remedied easily. He says, “Man is a vast emptiness which he carries with him as a snail carries its shell” (317). Albert Camus and other modern Existentialists agree with Sartre that alienation is inherent in the finite and isolated character of man’s existence as a stranger in the world.

The crisis of identity is faced not by all but by few, who are bestowed with heightened consciousness, or who wish to put up an existential struggle against all odds. They discard the world for some higher and transcendental reality. According to the theory of “Existentialism”, alienation is a mode of experience in which a person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself, or to be alienated means to be something less than one might ideally be if the circumstances in society were otherwise. In literature the growing awareness of the problems of personal identity results from the interaction or parallel development between literature and philosophy and literature and psychology. So, one sees an individual’s predicament in terms of alienation or exile, or estrangement from society and self and quest for the lost identity. Literature of the third world is no exception to this general tendency in modern writing in which “the theme of individual’s predicament in the form of rootlessness and crisis of identity mainly lying behind in desperate affirmation of traditional culture has been explicitly explored” (Asnani 8).

“Identity” is a term that is widely used and as a consequence can mean many different things to different people. Identity sometimes seems to refer to a sense of integration of the self, in which different aspects come together in a unified form. The
way in which people connect to other groups and social categories give birth to social identities. One’s identity as a man or woman is one of the most frequently mentioned identities when people are asked to describe themselves, and it is also one of the categories most often used by others to describe us. In social identity, gender is such a fundamental category that many meanings and implications are associated with gender. Many investigators believe that it is not useful to think of gender as a single social category. Many have argued for a concept of gendered identities, which recognizes the multiple social identities that may be influenced by one’s gender, as both occupations (e.g. nurse) and relationship (e.g. wife) often have gender implications. Similarly, a person’s identity as a woman may differ radically depending on whether she views herself as a feminist or as a traditional type of woman, so one can say that multiple identities are shaped by one’s gender and that social identities can intersect and overlap with one-another.

Identity is formed within culture. A survey of the literature suggests three overlapping but clearly distinguishable uses of the concept of identity within sociology: (a). Personal or Self-identity, (b). Social identity and (c). Collective identity. The first usage of identity emerges from the theory of the self as developed by interactionists William James in *Principles of Psychology* and George Mead in *Mind, Self and Society*. The theorists are of the view that the self allows for the possibility of an individual participating in the formation of her or his own identity. Such an approach to personal identity as relatively autonomous chimes well with view of some who adopt a postmodernist or late modernist perspective that contemporary Western society offers more options for self-presentation and identity than in the early modern period.

“Social identity” is ascribed by others to the individual whereas “personal identity” is self-defined. An individual may be socially identified according to
occupation, religion, ethnicity, or by other social categories. Social identity is close in meaning to social status and can involve an evaluation of an individual's personal characteristics within the context of a given social position. “collective identity” is a shared identity which is consciously sought by an individual. Collective identity involves both the action of self and others and to that extent has aspects of both personal and social identity. Usually collective identity is voluntary but also involves acceptance by the relevant group. Collective identities involve shared values, emotions, symbols and goals, they constitute communities. To a greater or lesser extent, cultural context influences each of the three above categories of identity. Personal identity is formed partly through the influence of cultural environment. What an individual “wants to be” reflects possibilities and limits within a culture. Social identity is, in the end, a cultural categorization whatever efforts the individual may have made to achieve a given position. Collective identity involves, by definition, a sharing of cultural meanings and purpose usually on a voluntary basis.

Discussion of identity takes two major forms- Psychodynamic and Sociological. Freud established the tradition of psychodynamics and stresses the inner core of a psychic structure as having a continuous though often conflicting identity. The capacity to develop an identity is considered to be innate and this is initially stimulated when the child assimilates aspects of external persons or objects, usually the beliefs and morals of the parent from the beginning and throughout life, identity reflects the interaction of the individual with the society. According to Freud, identity involves two main aspects-(1) one is a continuous sense of being the same person, of having a personal history (ii) secondly, having a viable relationship with others-crudely, a role or roles in society. The Freudian model does provide a dynamic conceptualization of the struggle of the individual to achieve purpose and affirmation in society and of how this process can run into difficulties.
Erik Erikson (the student of Freud) was one of the earliest psychologists to be explicitly interested in “identity”. The Eriksonian framework rests upon a distinction among the psychological sense of continuity, known as the “ego identity” sometimes identified simply as “the self”; the personal idiosyncrasies that separate one person from the next, known as the “personal identity” and the collection of social roles that a person might play, known as either the “social identity” or the “cultural identity”. Erikson’s work in the psychodynamic tradition, aimed to investigate the process of identity formation across a lifespan. Progressive strength in the ego identity, for example, can be charted in terms of a series of stages in which identity is formed in response to increasingly sophisticated challenges. The development of a strong ego identity, along with the proper integration into a stable society and culture lead to a stronger sense of identity in general. Accordingly a deficiency in either of these factors may increase the chance of an identity crisis or confusion. Here, one can mention must James Marcia whose the “Neo-Eriksonian” “identity status paradigm” emerged in later years. This suggests the twin concepts of “choice” and “commitment”. The central idea is that any individual’s sense of identity is determined in large part by the choices and commitments that he or she makes regarding certain personal and social traits. It follows that the core of the research in this paradigm investigates the degrees to which a person has made certain choices, and the degree to which he or she displays a commitment to those choices. A person may display either relative weakness or relative strength in terms of both choices and commitments. When assigned categories four possible permutations result:

a). Identity Diffusion, b). Identity Foreclosure, c). Identity Moratorium, and d). Identity Achievement. Diffusion is when a person lacks both a sense of having choices in life and interest in committing even to those un-chosen roles that he or she occupies. Foreclosure is when a person has not
chosen extensively in the past, but seems willing to commit to some relevant values, goals, or roles in the future. Moratorium is when a person displays a kind of flightiness, ready to make choices but unable to commit to them. Finally, achievement is when a person makes identity choices and commits to them (159-187).

Psychologists have been studying identity processes at the intrapsychic level that resemble what sociologists have noted at the macro-societal level. The primary link between these two disciplinary approaches appears to be that the individualization process can be operationalized in terms of agency in identity formation. The relationship between agency and identity formation has been recognized by identity status researchers for some time, but primarily in terminology referring to the intrapsychic level; hence, in some respects, identity status researchers anticipated individualization theory. This link was empirically investigated in three studies of ethnically diverse samples. It was concluded, with a high degree of replication, that the identity status representing identity confusion (Diffusion) and identity synthesis (Achievement) appear to represent forms of default and developmental individualization, respectively.

This comparison of similar elements between psychological and sociological perspectives may yield a richer understanding of identity formation processes, and help to pave the way for future interdisciplinary research. In their attempts to understand human identity, psychologists and sociologists have taken predictably different approaches, from principally intrapsychic and macro-social viewpoints, respectively (Gecas and Burke 41-67).

According to Marcia, “the identity status paradigm is the best-known approach to the study of identity formation in psychology, dating back over 30 years” (vol.38). Its central concepts of identity statuses are derived from a typology based on the dimensions
“exploration” and “commitment”, respectively. Exploration means the conscious deliberation of alternative goals, roles and values, and commitment means the formation of consolidations of theses deliberations as probable courses of future action.

Four identity statuses constitute this typology. The statuses were originally theorized to vary hierarchically in terms of levels of maturity of self-regulation and complexity of social functioning. Identity Diffusion is generally considered the least mature and least complex status, reflecting apathy and lack of concern about directing one’s present and future life. Individuals who remain diffused beyond early or middle adolescence are prone to drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, and academic failure (Jones and Hartmann, vol. 11; Jones 216-233; White, vol. 18).

For Marcia, “Identity Foreclosure is thought to be a somewhat more mature status than Identity Diffusion in that some form of commitment is embraced. However, foreclosed individuals tend to show low developmental complexity associated with a conformist and obedient orientation, as evidenced by such tendencies as closed-mindedness and rigidity” (159-187). “Identity Moratorium” is often considered a more functionally complex status than either Diffusion or Foreclosure, because the individual is purportedly taking proactive steps in autonomously considering identity alternatives. However, the maturity implied in the Moratorium status may be hampered by higher levels of anxiety and uncertainty associated with what is ostensibly a temporary period of psychosocial transition toward a resolution of the identity stage. Resolution of the identity stage, in turn, is represented by the fourth identity status, Identity Achievement. “Identity Achievement is generally considered the most mature and functionally complex status, and it has been empirically associated with, among other things, balanced thinking” (Boyes and Chandler, vol. 21), “mature interpersonal relationships” (Orlofsky et al. vol. 27 and Dyk and Adams, vol. 19), “and give-and-take relationships with
parents” (Jackson et al., vol. 5). Criticisms of the identity status approach include its narrowness and lack of attention to broader social-contextual factors affecting “identity development” (van Hoof, vol. 1). Its referents, exploration and commitment, are primarily intrapsychic processes and, theoretically speaking, are not necessarily connected to the social circumstances in which the identity is formed. What has been called for in the social psychological literature is the “integration of more contextually oriented elements into the psychological study of identity, to bring neo-Eriksonian identity theory closer to the multidimensionality and scope that Erikson envisioned” (Co’te’ and Levine, vol. 12 and Schwartz, vol. 1).

Accomplishing this requires an examination of the sociological literature on identity and of the inherent parallels between psychological and sociological conceptions of identity. Acknowledging and capitalizing on these parallels may provide a vehicle for formulating a more comprehensive, integrative perspective on identity. It is with this goal in mind that we now move to an account of the sociological view of identity development. In Sociology, a general concern of identity is based on a person’s reaction to social mores. This concern has been given new life with recent work regarding the ascendance of the process of individualization associated with contemporary late modern society (sometimes referred to post modernity). Beck in his book, *Risk society: towards a new modernity* (1992) views individualization as a function of cultural destructuring processes. As a society undergoes reorganization, people are increasingly left to their own devices in making major life decisions, including finding communities with which to establish integrative bonds on their own. Individualization can thus be defined as “the tendency towards increasingly flexible self-awareness as the individual must make decisions and choose identities from among an increasingly complex range of options” (Wallace 13). Accordingly, an emerging normative course of maturation in late modern
societies involves people developing themselves as self-determining “individuals”, increasingly without secure community bonds.

Before proceeding, it is important to clearly differentiate the sociological concept of individualization from the psychological concept of individuation. Psychological formulations of C.G. Jung states that self is the phenomenon of life and the process of cognition of one’s total personality, the self, is in Jungian terms is called the “process of individuation”. It is an organizing, determining and complementing entity, an urge towards union of opposites in the psyche of a man which ultimately promises the meaningful, creative orientation of man’s potentials. In Jungian frame of the “self”- ego, shadow, anima/animus and archetypal persona play very important roles. “Ego”, being a centre of consciousness has all conscious contents related to it. The psychic energy from the unconscious comes in direct clash with the consciousness and the ego remains split off from the self if persona empowers the ego. “Shadow” is one’s inferior self, the repressed, the subliminal side of personality, be it dark or bright. It can also be the positive side of personality which remains suppressed due to one’s identification with negative qualities. Ego synthesizes the gap or the tension between the persona and the shadow. “Anima” reflects the image of the feminine part that a man carries with him and “Animus” reflects the image of the masculine part that a woman carries with her. Archetypes are models of people, behaviours or personalities.

According to Levinson, “Individuation refers to the mental “separation-individuation process” that begins in early infancy when the boundary is established “between the ‘me’ and the ‘not-me’” (32). Usage of this term involves the processes by which offspring struggle to develop an emotional distance from their parents while gaining a sense of self in their own right, but it does not require absolute autonomy from those parents, nor does it require parents to withdraw support from their children. Blos’s
concept of the "second individuation process of adolescence" (vol, 49) takes this notion into the realm of identity formation, but he is still referring to a largely psychological struggle with parental interjects, rather than a social challenge with cultural imperatives. In contrast, "individualization" refers to the social processes by which people attempt to compensate for a lack of collective support from their community and culture, which may or may not implicate their parents.

The term "individualization" thus refers to the extent to which people are left by their culture to their own devices in terms of meeting their own survival needs, determining the directions their lives will take, and making myriad choices along the way, whereas individuation refers to the basic process of developing a sense of self. Accordingly, a certain amount of individuation is necessary for the person to individualize, but individuating does not lead to individualization if cultural conditions are not conducive to it.

In late modern societies there can be tremendous benefits associated with the individualization process, but there can also be significant pitfalls and liabilities. The source of these pitfalls lies in the fact that this "freedom" requires a great deal from people, placing pressures on them that they may not be personally equipped to handle adequately. These pressures include the need to, "continually reflect on relationships with others; constantly plan ahead; make life-altering choices; take responsibility for personal failings and limitations; and overcome any structural obstacles affecting them, such as barriers related to social class, race, gender, and age" (Furlong and Cartmel). In other words, fully benefitting from this freedom requires high levels of psychosocial functioning and an astute self-discipline in dealing with one’s self and one’s society, often in the absence of collective support. In undertaking this increasingly compulsory individualization process with varying capacities and preparation, people approach the
life course in a range of ways. For example, at one extreme, people without the appropriate capacities and preparation can pursue a life course without exerting much mental effort by simply selecting a number of "default options" now available in the restructured consumer-corporate society and mass culture of late modernity. A common default option involves forming and enhancing one's personal identity by focusing on the latest youth culture fashions and trends to impress peers, while ignoring self-improvement in areas such as higher-order competency refinement, human capital skill accumulation, and credential acquisition. Co"te in his Arrested Adulthood: the Changing Nature of Maturity and Identity refers to this as "default individualization" because it involves a life course dictated by immediate circumstance and caprice, with little agentic assertion on the part of the person. Alternatively, people who are better prepared for the challenges of individualization can capitalize on the destructuring associated with late-modern society by pursuing opportunities that lead to self-improvement in a variety of intellectual, occupational, and psychosocial areas, and by selecting life courses based on extensive exploration of available alternatives. Co"te terms this "developmental individualization" because it involves an agentic life course of continual and deliberate growth.

Marcia states that a sociological approach to self and identity begins with the assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society. The self does influence society through the actions of individuals thereby creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. "And, reciprocally, society influences the self through its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect upon oneself as an object. The latter process of reflexivity constitutes the core of selfhood" (McCall & Simmons and Mead). Because the self emerges in and is reflective of society, the sociological approach to
understanding the self and its parts (identities) means that we must also understand the society in which the self is acting, and keep in mind that the self is always acting in a social context in which other selves exist (Stryker). The nature of the self and what individuals do depends to a large extent on the society within which they live. On the premise that self reflects society, this view leads to seeing self as undifferentiated, unorganized, unstable, and ephemeral. The hallmark of this process of selfhood is reflexivity. Humans have the ability to reflect back upon themselves, taking themselves as objects. They are able to regard and evaluate themselves, to take account of themselves and plan accordingly to bring about future states, to be self-aware or achieve consciousness with respect to their own existence. In this way, humans are a processual entity. They formulate and reflect, and this is ongoing. To be clear, the responses of the self as an object to itself come from the point of view of others to whom one interacts. By taking the role of the other and seeing ourselves for others’ perspectives, our responses come to be like others’ responses, and the meaning of the self becomes a shared meaning. It works to control meanings to sustain itself, but many of those meanings, including the meanings of the self, are shared and form the basis of interaction with others and ultimately social structure.

Because the self emerges in social interaction within the context of complex, organized, and differentiated society, it has been argued that the self must be complex, organized and differentiated as well, reflecting the dictum that the “self reflects society” (Stryker). This idea is rooted in James’ notion that there are as many different selves as there are different positions that one holds in society and thus different groups who respond to the self. This is where identity enters into the overall self. The overall self is organized into multiple parts (identities), each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure. One has an identity, an “internalized positional designation” (Stryker), for each of the different positions or role relationships the person holds in society.
As Stryker points out, there are multiple views of identity within sociology. Some have a cultural or collective view of identity in which the concept represents the ideas, belief, and practices of a group. This view lacks the ability to examine individual variability in behavior, motivation, and interaction. Another view, growing out of the works of Tajfel, Turner, Hogg, Oakes and Reicher accounts for individual role relationships and identity variability, motivation, and differentiation.

Psychoanalyst Heinz Lichtenstein in her work *The Dilemma of Human Identity* has also significantly influenced literary criticism chiefly through the partisanship of critic Norman Holland. Lichtenstein's more idiosyncratic theories on "human identity" have been less widely accepted by the analytic community, but they have had a significant impact on recent literary criticism. Lichtenstein believes that each child very early forms a "primary identity" in response to the expectations implicitly expressed by its first caretaker, usually the mother. This core identity sets the pattern according to which the person thereafter relates to other people and to the world. “Out of the infinite potentialities within the human infant, the specific stimulus emanating from the individual mother 're-leases' one and only one concrete way of being this organism, this instrument. The self is defined by the total potential range of all possible variations of the individual which are compatible with its primary identity, and a person may risk death rather than give up identity” (119). According to Lichtenstein, society depends on the stable identities of individuals. When the cultural storehouse of available roles fails to fit the identity themes of enough people, the mismatched persons may suffer identity crisis and the culture suffer catastrophic change. Thus, though everyone has an invariant, early formed identity, it is nonetheless potentially fragile; “loss of identity is a specifically human danger and maintenance of identity a specifically human necessity” (77). Lichtenstein's frequent use of the adjective "human" implies that identity is an existential and moral imperative as well as a psychologically descriptive category.
Another psychoanalytic Identity theorist Nancy Chodorow's in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender Explanation* shows that personality differences between the sexes has gained widespread acceptance. She seeks to move beyond descriptive generalizations about sexism, patriarchy, or male supremacy to analysis of how sexual asymmetry and inequality are constituted, re-produced, and changed. Such an analysis, she believes, must focus on "social structurally induced psychological processes" rather than on biology or intentional role training. Being social rather than biological, her analysis implies that personality differences between the sexes are historically variable. Because she does not formulate her explanation of these differences in terms of identity theories which ignore women, her insights may contribute usefully to a theory of female identity pertinent to the analysis of writing by women. Chodorow argues that a boy defines himself as a male negatively by differentiation from his first caretaker, the mother. He achieves autonomy as he outgrows the mother-child symbiosis, and his Oedipus complex seals his separation from the mother and his adoption of the role of the father. Thereafter, he perceives himself as active, independent, individual, and valued by his family and by society. Thus Chodorow's model of male personality corresponds roughly to Lichtenstein's and Holland's model of the person of either sex who has developed a primary identity.

According to Chodorow, girls' personalities take shape differently. First, a girl forms her gender identity positively, in becoming like the mother with whom she begins life in a symbiotic merger. Second, she must develop in such a way that she can pleasurably recreate the mother-infant symbiosis when she herself becomes a mother. As a result, women develop capacities for nurturance, dependence, and empathy more easily than men do and are less threatened by these qualities, whereas independence and autonomy are typically harder for women to attain. Throughout women's lives, the self is defined through social relationships; issues of fusion and merger of the self with others
are significant, and ego and body boundaries remain flexible. The male identity theorists assume that stability and constancy are desirable goals for human personality. Both Erikson and Lichtenstein occasionally describe identity as an "evolving configuration," but they see the process of identity formation as a developmental progress toward the achievement of a desired product, the autonomous individual, the paradigm for which is male. Erikson describes this progress through distinct stages that have a biological base. In contrast, Chodorow portrays female personality as relational and fluidly defined, starting with infancy and continuing throughout womanhood. Her argument is sociological and historical, not biological, and she does not see female personality formation as a predetermined progress. She believes women are socialized so that mothers can regress to earlier stages of development in the service of maternal nurturance. Thus her model of female personality formation is cyclical as well as progressive. To summarize, female identity is a process, and primary identity for women is more flexible and relational than for men. Female gender identity is more stable than male gender identity. Female infantile identifications are less predictable than male ones. Female social roles are more rigid and less varied than men.

An identity crisis is a time in life when an individual begins to seriously quest for answers about the nature of their being and the search for an identity. This term was developed by psychologist Erik Erikson in his book *Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth*, in 1970. An identity crisis might occur at any time of life, especially in periods of great transition. If a person is unsure of his/her role in life it means he/she is facing identity crisis and this is one of the most important conflicts people face in development. Identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. Identity crisis is of two types- “Identity deficit” and “Identity conflict”. In an identity deficit the individual experiences a lack of guiding commitments but struggles to establish personal goals and values. During the conflict,
the person has several commitments which prescribe conflicting behavioral imperatives in some situations, such that at least one commitment may have to be betrayed. The identity deficit refers to the problem caused by an inadequately defined self. It is characterized by a lack of commitment to goals and values; the person lacks a basis for making consistent choices and decisions. An identity conflict arises when the person struggles to make such commitments. If the person is content to remain uncommitted, then the identity deficit is simply identity diffusion. Thus, identity conflict combines the lack of guiding commitments with the personal desire and struggle to make commitments. The identity conflict refers to the problem of severe difficulty in reconciling the demands that follow from diverse commitments, the situation makes it impossible to choose and act consistently with all the person's values and goals. The resolution of the identity crisis leads to "final self-definition, to irreversible role patterns, and thus to commitments for life" (111). The person with a successfully achieved sense of individual identity feels unique, whole, and coherent, although in pathological cases identity formation may fail and the person suffer from "identity diffusion." Identity as Erikson conceives is both formed and manifested through social relationships. Erikson's terms and concepts are respected by other analysts, and they are often invoked by writers as well.

Habermas in his book *Legitimation Crisis* (1975) discusses the causes of identity conflict and suggests that "identity conflict" tends to be caused by internal changes, whereas the "identity deficit" is brought about by situational changes. In the psychology of individuals, situational changes may often coincide with internal changes. Habermas is of the view that identity deficit may be a product of the normal course of development, whereas an identity conflict may tend to result from extraordinary development, especially in situational changes. The identity deficit comes about when the existing commitments come to be perceived as inadequate whereas the identity conflict is the
status of having a strong personal commitment to two distinct identity components that become incompatible. To resolve identity deficit, one needs to relinquish some options and possibilities, the essential features of this resolution process is adding new commitments to one’s inner-self. Resolving an identity conflict, on the other hand, calls for subtracting commitments.

The question of identity is also complex in females. When "career-marriage conflict" failed to be a discriminating issue focus was made on “sex and religion” issue and more tangential evidence for the importance of the sexual area in women's identity comes from studies by Poppen in The Development of Sex Differences in Moral Judgement For College Males and Females. He reported that more females than males had gone through a crisis period and made commitments in this area. If one talks about their personality traits and patterns of behavior one sees that Foreclosure women tend to score high on self-esteem and low on anxiety scales; women who are Moratoriums and Identity Diffusions score generally low in self-esteem and high in anxiety. Prager in The Relationship Between Identity Status, Self- Esteem, and Psychological Androgony in College Women noted higher self-esteem scores for Identity Achievement and Foreclosure women as compared with those who are Moratoriums and Identity Diffusions. In addition, Identity Achievements and Foreclosures also tended more toward “androgyny”, while Identity Diffusions were more "feminine". In a study investigating moral reasoning in women, Poppen found that Identity Achievement women showed more sophisticated levels of moral thought than did either Foreclosure or Identity Diffusion women. Marcia and Friedman noted unexpectedly high anxiety scores for Identity Achievement women. Orlofsky has done the most definitive study “to show the relationships among identity status, achievement and fear of success in women. In studying both college male and female” (211-219) and found that Identity Achievements of both sexes had the highest achievement scores and that the Identity Diffusions had the
lowest scores. Women, in general seemed more afraid of success than men. Moratorium women were the highest on this variable and Identity Achievement women were next highest. Men suffering from Identity Diffusion had a greater fear of success than men in the other identity status. The female pattern of high fear of success among Identity Achievements and Moratoriums and low fear among Foreclosures and Identity Diffusions was exactly reversed for men. Hence, while statuses in both sexes were similar in achievement, they differed dramatically on fear of success. Orlofsky's conclusions regarding these results were:

Thus the high Fear of Success scores obtained by Achievement and especially Moratorium women are understandable as reflecting the conflicts which these more ambitious achieving women probably experience as they pursue . . . less traditional, more achievement-oriented goals. Since Foreclosure and Diffusion women are less motivated for academic/vocational achievement, they experience less conflict between achievement strivings and traditional feminine role behaviors… (60)

In addition to the separate findings of the studies reported above, there has emerged a pattern of identity status groupings for women different from that of men, so, one can say that foreclosing an identity has seemed to have about the same positive effects for women. However, with women the stability of the identity status was emerging as the important issue. Identity Achievement and Foreclosure are both fairly stable statuses; both groups have an identity, even though one is achieved and the other foreclosed. Moratorium and Identity Diffusion are unstable statuses; neither one has a firm sense of identity, although Moratoriums are moving towards it (103).

This view of the adaptability of the foreclosure status for women finds some support in Dignan's research indicating that “girls who identify strongly with their
mothers are also high in ego identity” (476-483). Tangential evidence on this point is furnished by sex differences obtained in the Rothman’s study on psychosocial crisis variables relating to identity status. Female Foreclosures scored higher on industry than did male Foreclosures; female Identity Diffusions were higher on trust than were male Identity Diffusions. This finding, especially when viewed in the light of greater social support for male identity resolution suggests that men who do not resolve the identity issue are more developmentally handicapped than women who do not achieve an identity.

“Josselson constructed psychodynamic portraits of women in the various identity statuses based on extensive interview material covering biographical information, defensive structures, conflict areas, fantasy material, object relations, and so on” (vol. 2). She found Foreclosure women attempting to recreate their familial closeness in their current interpersonal relationships. The Identity Achievement women as contrasted with the Foreclosure women were more invested in the exercise of their abilities toward their own goals rather than in winning the love and approval of their parents. They appeared to trust their own capacities and chose men who would be cooperative companions rather than protective parents. They were more concerned with who they might be rather than by whom they might be loved. Josselson described Moratorium women as being caught in the guilty oedipal bind of rejecting the mother and attendant dependency, while identifying with the father and striving to fulfill his ambitions. She also found them to daydream a great deal and to have an excessive need to be "right". Their interpersonal relationships were intense and ambivalent. There was a quality of "wanting everything" about this status. However, for all of their conflicts and anxiety, the Moratoriums emerged as the most sensitive, insightful, and likeable of the groups. The Identity Diffusion women were characterized by fear (of ego dissolution upon commitment), fantasy (to bolster a self-esteem insupportable in reality), and flight (rather than
confrontation and mastery). Identity Diffusion women as had Identity Diffusion men described their parents as "not there". They seemed to sense little past to integrate, little future for which to plan: they were only what they felt in the present.

If identity is an internal, self-fashioned structure then what might be the effect on the woman's identity-formation process of being encouraged always to look outside of herself for evidence of her development as an acceptable person? At the very least, it must prolong the identity process while the expected social forms (engagement, marriage, childbearing) are fulfilled. Some empirical support for this view may be found in a study by Hodgson who reported that men were more advanced in intrapersonal identity issues, while women were further advanced in interpersonal areas as well as in the achievement of intimacy than men. Hodgson in *Sex Differences in Processes of Identity and Intimacy Development* concluded that while male identity focuses on individual competence and knowledge, female identity development seems to revolve around issues relating to others. It is desirable that if an identity status approach is to be taken, the areas around which crisis and commitment are to be determined should be those around which women are expected, initially, to form an identity: the establishment and maintenance of relationships. It does not mean by this that the "male" concerns of occupation and ideology are not available as identity-constellating issues for women. They are. But as society is currently structured, women who go this route, particularly if they do so to the exclusion of the interpersonal one, will pay a price in the lack of extensive social support- a factor contributing to the mixed results on self-esteem and anxiety scores for Identity Achievement women as determined by "male" criteria. Now, of course, there is a third possibility: the exceptional woman can do both. She can "make it" in "female" terms of relationships and in "male" terms of occupational commitment. However, every average female has to be evaluated in identity terms according to the most widely held social expectations. Speaking as society maintains different expectations
according to different genital configurations, one must evaluate identity development with respect to the individual's unique style of coming to terms with those expectations.

Female identity has for the most part been discreetly ignored, put aside by men, forcing women to adhere to the conventions of female innocence and virtue while the reasons for this restraint are legion the question of female identity issues from the paradigm of male/female binary opposition. Sex and gender roles which constitute the patriarchal structure of power and domain exterminate the female identity.

Women should be allowed to pursue their desired goals so that they can achieve their identity. The idea of feminine and masculine is artificially created by society and trying to fit these human beings into these ideas will probably lead to dissatisfaction and frustration. Women, like men, are creative beings and are more than just mothers and wives. They should be given such an environment which allows their proper growth and they find their right identities.

The origin of the term Feminism or women's movement can-not be traced to the writings of a single individual, writing at any particular period of time. Rather the movement seems to have grown out of the historical experience of resistance offered by women to the system of patriarchy in the society. The term Feminism taken from the Latin word "Femina" means woman having the essential qualities of a woman. This term refers to an intense awareness of identity as a woman and interest in feminine problems. Feminism is a social force meant to draw the attention of the society to women's sufferings due to the discrimination in a society that devalues them. In other words feminism is a doctrine of equal rights for women and an ideology of social transformation aiming to create a world for women. Consequently, feminist criticism is more a series of interconnected directions of work seeking to restructure the power relations between men and women than a single relational directional movement to
which all the feminists are committed. It seems to uncover the ideology of patriarchal society in literature and arts. It reads literary texts for their representation of women. For feminists, text is a battleground where power relations between men and women are played out.

"First Wave Feminism" is commonly used to refer to the nineteenth and early twentieth century European and North American mobilization to gain voting rights and professional opportunities. Other key concepts of this wave include education, employment, the marriage laws and the career issues of intelligent middle class women. One of the earlier manifestations of first-wave feminism in Europe, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) was written at the time of French Revolution and is still considered as a seminal text. She threw light on the plight of women. She strongly believed that neglect of girls' education is largely to blame for the condition of adult women. She demanded more financial independence for women and described the various pursuits woman might take on in society. Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) are also central texts of this time. Woolf showed her leanings towards female bisexuality and a unique woman’s voice and writing.

According to Marder, “Virginia Woolf’s feminism grew out of a desire for wholeness and harmony... Her protests were related, in the first place, to personal grievances, the condition of middle-class women like herself, but they ultimately took on more universal significance” (4). Beauvoir, on the other hand stressed on the notion of “othering” women as the second sex in patriarchal societies. She was totally against gender roles and enquires how females come to occupy a subordinate position in society. In *The Second Sex*, she rightly opines that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (301). She strongly attacked the patriarchal power structure and its androcentric
customs and conventions, art and culture, philosophy and religion which have always assigned women the second or rather slavish position to men. Due to their strong manifesto, the “First Wave Feminists” achieved the opening of higher education for women, married women’s property act of 1870 was established.

The term “Second Wave Feminism” refers mostly to the radical feminism of the women’s liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The main features of this wave include: raising consciousness about sexism and patriarchy, legalizing abortion and birth control, attaining equal rights in political and economic realms and gaining sexual liberation. Juliet Mitchell in *The Subjection of Women* (1970) discussed that women being mainly attached to the family and reproduction constitutes a class and economy of their own, which is based on the productivity of motherhood and their function as a reserve workforce. Marry Ellman’s *Thinking About Women* (1968) came out in America which deals with the derogatory stereotypes of women in literature written by men. The most significant book of this period is *Sexual Politics* (1969) by Kate Millett. Millett argues that women have their right on their bodies, They are sexually free, not burdened with marital obligations and motherhood responsibilities. Millett believes that sex underlies every political question and the language used in providing answers to all such questions show subjugation of women as persons. She opines that, “Unless women and men destroy the patriarchal system, they will remain imprisoned in the vast gray stockade of sexual reaction. There is no way out but to rebel and be broken, stigmatized, and cured” (267).

“Lesbian feminism”- an offshoot of the “Second Wave Feminism” is a cultural movement and critical perspective, most influential in the 1970s and early 1980s (primarily in North America and Western Europe), that questions the position of lesbians and women in society. It particularly refutes heteronormativity, the assumption that
everyone is "straight" and society should be structured to serve heterosexual needs. Some key thinkers and activists are Charlotte Bunch, Rita Mae Brown, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Marilyn Frye, Mary Daly, and Sheila Jeffreys.

Historically lesbianism has been closely associated with feminism, going back at least to the 1890s. "Lesbian feminism" is a related movement that came together in the early 1970s out of dissatisfaction with second-wave feminism and the gay liberation movement. Lesbian feminist texts work to denaturalize heterosexuality and, based on this denaturalization, to explore heterosexuality's "roots" in institutions such as patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism. Additionally, lesbian feminism advocates lesbianism as a rational result of alienation and dissatisfaction with these institutions.

It puts an emphasis on women's love for one another and demands Separatist organizations. It lays emphasis that lesbianism is about choice and resistance. Lesbians are of the view that the personal is political. This movement strongly rejects social hierarchy and is a critique of male-supremacy. Lesbian feminism offered a trenchant critique of patriarchy and the institutionalization of heterosexuality, and claimed that its political impact resided in resistance to male domination. Put into practice, lesbian feminism quickly evolved into a personal style that influenced everything from hairstyles, clothing, and even sexual behavior. Overall, its influence was enormous, though with mixed results.

In the social and political ferment of the late 1960s, lesbians emerged as one of many social groups seeking liberation from oppression. Those who joined gay liberation groups were often frustrated by sexist attitudes among the predominantly male membership. The mainstream feminist movement proved equally unwelcoming. Though many lesbians filled the ranks of feminist organizations, they were openly discouraged from becoming part of the public face of the feminist movement. In 1970 the issue came
to a head when Betty Friedan, the President of the National Organization of Women (NOW), characterized advocates for the inclusion of lesbian issues in NOW's platform as a "lavender menace". Gloria Steinem responded by arguing that feminism was a revolution, not a public relations movement; and in 1971, NOW members voted overwhelmingly to affirm the legitimacy of lesbian oppression as a concern of feminism. All these efforts were and are being made to help women relocate their identity, so that they can peacefully come to terms with life and find their due place in society.

Betty Friedan’s epoch making work *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) proved a major inspiration for all the “liberal feminists”. Liberal feminists hold the view that discontent among middle-class women in post-war western societies is due to their lack of social power and political influence. Friedan in her book called upon women to renew the struggle of the First Wave. On one hand, women from girlhood are being told that they would find fulfillment and happiness in traditional feminine roles, on the other hand, the reality is that these traditional roles smother their real identity, which made them all the more unhappy. Tradition is very strong in India and dictates many aspects of our lives- from the clothes that a woman can wear, to their mobility and so on. Alongside this traditional part of society, women are also influenced by the advancement of modern life. More and more young women have aspirations that do not fit with the feminine role of wife and mother. Does the impact of modernity bring with it its own brand of identity crisis for women? Our understanding of women’s responses to their social conditions arises from their voices: from stories, autobiographies, movies and so on. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (1979) tried to develop a theory of female literary response to male literary assertion.

During the 1980s, a new framework appeared namely “difference Second-Wave Feminism”, where focus was upon “identity politics”. This identity second wave
feminism was a result of growing criticism from Black, working-class and lesbian feminists. Further, this identity feminism inspired a new interest in Women's lives and voices known as "Gyno-criticism"- a method first used by Elaine Showalter in _A Literature of Their Own_ (1977). It studies feminist literature written by female writers as well as the history and development of the female literary tradition. It assumes that women have a distinct experience which requires separate analytical tools to understand, and it is preoccupied with understanding how women's literature both expresses and shapes this experience.

"Black feminism"- another offshoot of this wave, constituted organizations such as "Black Women Organized for Action" and the "National Black Feminist Organization" which worked to bring gender and race into national consciousness. These feminists dealt with the issues of poverty, health and welfare. By the 1980's French Feminists Helen Cixous, Julia Christeva and Luce Irigaray became a force. These writers turned to Lacan for the use of language. They were of the view that female experience is very different from that of men and requires a different style of articulation. Luce Irigaray also holds the view that women's sexual pleasures can-not be expressed by male language. Julia Kristeva has emphasized the need of such a special language to express the experiences of women, which are widely different than that of men and she characterizes such a feminine language as semiotic rather than symbolic. Helen Cixous has attempted to specify the traits of women's language or feminine style in sentence structure, figure of speech and imagery, which are intimately linked with female body. She has contributed a discussion on the consequences of what she calls 'death-dealing binary thought' which explains that feminine side is always presented as passive, negative and lifeless. Cixous locates death at work in this kind of thought as for one of these terms to acquire meaning, it must destroy the other. Cixous denounces this
equation of feminity with passivity and death. Cixous’s deconstruction of the binary opposition of the feminine/masculine remains a source of inspiration for all the feminists. Likewise Elaine Showalter in *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness* says that if the feminist approach is to be more effective it must be more structured to compete with the anti-feminist approach. The feminist critics also challenge the concept of canon under which all the texts are produced, published, represented and studied. They point to the omission of women writers in the established literary canon and seek to rectify this omission by bringing new and previously unrewarded writings of women to fore, and to create new canons, which focus attention on women studies.

Postcolonial feminist criticism includes an analysis of how women are represented in colonial and postcolonial literature, which challenges assumptions and stereotypes about women in both literature and society. Though both colonialism and patriarchy have been closely entwined historically, an end to formal empire has not meant an end to the oppression of women in the former colonies. Postcolonial feminists point out the ways in which women continue to be stereotyped and marginalized, ironically sometimes by postcolonial authors who might claim to be challenging a culture of oppression. Since the 1990s many writers are setting an agenda for feminist literary criticism, such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Chandra Mohanty, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Gayatri Spivak, etc., that includes differences. It rejects both prevailing and feminist approaches that assumed either singularity, commonality and universality among all people or among all women. These writers refuse the presumption that women share a common identity based on a shared experience of oppression. According to Humm, “Third World feminist criticism focuses on three major issues: on the politics of universalism; on cultural controls and misrepresentations; and on the homogeneity of the canon” (252). What Third World feminist criticism gives a new definition of “difference”, claiming
that postcolonial criticism should not simply re-present Third World women but set up contradictions and possibilities drawn from many disciplines. They challenge the West academy by exposing how the other is feminized and ethnicized by the West, denied a subjectivity and an imagination. They are concerned to engage with, but also deconstruct, difference by destabilizing assumptions about what is core (the norm) and what lies at the periphery (designated as other) in a postcolonial world marked by migration. Third World feminist criticism is necessarily "eclectic" because Third World writing so often responds to different social, regional, and national groups whose aesthetic interests are very diverse.

"Third Wave Feminism" in the late 1980s, and 1990s was powered by young middle-class women. This wave seeks to broaden the parameters of feminism. Third Wave Feminism provides a forum for illuminating the multifaceted experiences of young women. These feminists show that young women are celebrating their pluralities, embracing their personal and political contradictions and refusing to follow a feminist party line. Born with the privileges that first and second wave feminists fought for, third wave feminists generally see themselves as capable, strong and assertive social agents. Third Wave Feminists are motivated by the need to develop a feminist theory that honour contradictory experiences and deconstruct categorical thinking. Rebecca Walker and Amy Richards, two eminent Third Wave Feminists talk about the difficulty faced by younger feminists experience when forced to think in categories, or when forced to inhabit particular identities as women or feminists. Walker in her book, To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism has rightly stated that, "For many of us it seems that to be feminist in the way that we have seen or understood feminism is to conform to an identity and way of living that does not allow for individuality, complexity or less than perfect personal histories" (33). These feminists are of the view
that the current social and political climate is different than it was three decades ago and thus required different strategies. These feminists focus on the use of performance, mimicry and subversion as rhetorical strategies. Post-colonial Third Wave Feminism is concerned with creating alliances among black, diasporic and subaltern feminists.

Feminist criticism in India has two strands. The first, concerned with the formulation and exploration of a female tradition in which authors explore women's invisible experiences and find new forms and styles appropriate to that exploration. Secondly, it uses the tools of literary criticism to examine gendered subalterns in texts. In literary criticism, subaltern describes a cultural identity silenced by colonialism which critics are concerned to 'liberate.' So, Indian feminist criticism is radically committed to an affirm Women's Movement in India in the form of three waves. Briefly, the first began with the mass mobilization of women during the national movement. During a decade after independence, women engaged less in political activity. The second wave, from the late sixties onwards, saw a resurgence of political activity by women due to the fact that growing unemployment and rising prices led to mass uprisings. There was a growth of middle-class women's organizations in urban areas as well as organizations of working women fighting for their right to independent livelihood and basic resources like credit, training and access to technology. According to these authors, this second wave saw mass participation of women in popular upsurges against the government, and power structures in general, but the third wave, which emerged in the late seventies, had a specific feminist focus. Mohanty argues:

That Western criticism, both non-feminist and feminist, artificially constructs two entities: the colonizer and the colonized. Its political implications would be that it allows the colonized only a language permitted, or indeed constructed, by the colonizer. She attacks the
principles at work in Western feminist criticism about the Third World, being the first one the assumption that Third World women are an identical group regardless of place or ethnicity, and the uncritical use of particular methodologies involved in the first assumption. The third principle is the politics, which both these frames of analysis create. This involves the self-representation of Western women in literature or other disciplines as modern women with some degree of control over their bodies and sexualities and Western feminists 're-presentation' of women in the Third World as domestic or uneducated victims. (333-359)

With the publication of Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1974, issues related to women were being raised in a range of forums, and women's groups had emerged all over the country. The feminist journal Manushi started in 1979, providing an important voice for the emerging movement. The rape laws were changed, and issues related to family violence, the law, the household, health care, education, curricula, the media, and women's working conditions were set up. Gender was intrinsic to these rearticulations of social life in which women writers played an important part. According to Tharu and Niranjana:

The main task for the feminist theory during the 1970s and 1980s was to establish 'gender' as a category that had been rendered invisible in universalisms of various kinds. They demanded changes that would make the law more sensitive to the cultural and economic contexts of women's lives (through eve-teasing campaigns, dowry deaths investigations, demonstration of inequalities in women's access to health care systems, etc.) In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, a new set of political questions appeared, such as engagement with issues of caste and religious
affiliation/community and with new problems emerging from the liberalization of the economy. They relate gender analysis with class analysis, stating that the humanist subject and the social worlds legitimized bourgeois and patriarchal interests. (232-260)

Today, Feminism examines the experience of women from all races, classes and cultures and it is a response to the fact that women have been left out of the world that has been created only for and by men. As a result of such pronouncements feminism developed into a full-fledged international movement and began to assert its claims in all the fields of life and that of the entire appropriate foray.

As far as the Indo-English fiction is concerned, “Identity Crisis” has always enjoyed a defining significance in the thematic framework of the Indo-Anglican novels. The novels of Mulk Raj Anand, R. K Narayan and Raja Rao redesigned the techno-thematic fabric of Indian-English fiction and laid the foundation of the new Indian-English fiction. The post-colonial age, represented by these three novelists, was chiefly a quest for identity along different dimension of socio-political and economic order of India. The novels of Mulk Raj Anand explored the thick congested fabric of Indian life and structured his fiction with unquestionable authority. The problems related to identity play a vital role in the cast of the narrative of Anand. His novels like *The Untouchables* and *The Coolie* explore the hidden dimensions of human psyche along with socio-economic and cultural dimensions. One sees in his novels, the identity crisis at a sociocultural level.

R. K. Narayan explores the idea of the identity crisis along various dimensions. Almost all his novels are based on the idea of identity crisis and the consequent efforts to locate them. His novels like *Swami and Friends, The Dark Room, The Guide* etc. are structured on the same idea explored along different dimensions in his *The Guide*, one
sees both the major characters—Raju and Rosie—spent their life locating their identity, and, the search, remains an effort in vain. His novel, *The Vendor of Sweets* is the most poignant representation of the identity crises that owes its genesis to the conflicting values of the East and the West.

The spirit of the eighties was spearheaded by Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*. Both these novels are knit around the idea of identity crisis which owes its birth and life to the direct collision between history and individual. His other novels also represent the identity crisis. The success of his novels firmly establishes the prominence of identity crisis in the thematic setup of the Indian English fiction. Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* is another master stroke published in the same decade which explores the identity of the protagonist against the backdrop of the Indian culture and heritage.

The thematic concerns of the early women writers led to the emergence of the Indian woman in the fast changing social milieu. Rocky Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream* presented topsy world in which men were kept behind purdahs. Swarna Kumari Ghosal, elder sister of Ravinder Nath Tagore, was a novelist, and poet, who is considered as a torchbearer in the tradition of women’s writing in Bengal. She was the first writer to show up the strength of women’s writing and raised women’s creations to a position of respect. Cornelia Sorabji, with a spirit of adventure and missionary zeal, fought for the cause of women, especially widows and women in purdahs. Women in most of the early novels are essentially Indian in sensibility, love and resignation.

The post-independence India witnessed a spurt of fiction writing by women writers of greater quality and depth. Venu Chitale, the early post-independence novelist portrayed in her novel, *In Transit*, the emotional trauma of a traditional middle class Brahmin widow weighed down by the age-old traditions and customs. Zeenuth
Futehally’s *Zohra* provided reeling glimpses into the Muslim life, culture and manners. Kamla Markandeya is undoubtedly the most outstanding among the second generation women novelists. Her women protagonists are the repertoire of transitional Indian society. She presents a cross section of the Indian society wherein her women characters go in quest for autonomy. Ruth Prawer Jhabwala finds life in India to be an overwhelming burden to European women. She portrayed the predicament of the modern urban who face the challenges of the contrasting cultures between the traditional Indian way of life and the western modernism. Santha Ram Rao sketches her women characters as the ones who go in search of fulfillment and an attempt is also made to probe into the feminine psychology. Nayantra Sahgal delineates with keen perception and sensibility the problems and sufferings of women in marriage. She seeks to “interpret the rigid concept of virtue and chastity through her women characters who have a kind of untouched innocence and integrity” (Jasbir Jain 67) She is champion of individual freedom with a penchant for the feminist cause.

The newly evolved and liberated women in the contemporary society really bloom and blossom in Raji Narsimha’s novels. All the women characters portrayed in her novels are liberated, educated and able to live individually, without the dependence on man. Anita Desai differs from other women novelists through her method of the psychological exploration of her women protagonists who are essentially lonely and sensitive. She portrays the growth of women from self-alienation to self-identification. Anita Desai has added to Indian English fiction an existentialistic dimension and has curved a special niche for herself in the world of Indo-English fiction. Shashi Deshpande takes up for study the contemporary middle class women. She describes the pathetic life styles of Indian women and tries to understand and suggest measure for amelioration. She portrays modern, educated and career-oriented middle class women who are sensitive to the changing time and situations conscious of the predicament of a woman in
a male-dominated society, especially when she is not economically independent, the
author presents her women as eager to become economically and ideologically
independent. Bharathi Mukherjee, an Indian-American immigrant writer, liberates her
women protagonists for a "new world order". Her protagonists are victimized by racism,
sexism, and other form of social oppression. Bharathi Mukherjee is concerned with
characters that strain and struggle for the articulation of their repressed and stunted voice.
Jai Nimbkar's novels deal with the middle class married woman's identity crisis in the
contemporary male-dominated Indian society. Her protagonists in general suffer due to
the existing inequality between the sexes. Arundhati Roy deconstructs stereotypical
constructs about women and we get the message that women can play an equal part with
men, only if they gain a distinct voice of their own learn to transcend the traditional
barriers of their silence. In literature women are often portrayed as secondary characters
to the greater men who carried to storyline along, while these females simply offered a
supporting role in the midst of the action. Arundhati Roy has earned a distinct space for
her particular attention towards the plight of women and social injustice.

Fiction by women writers constitutes a major segment in Indian English
literature. The struggle to establish one's identity and to assert one's individuality has led
the women to wage a desperate fight against the existing social order of the day. It is
therefore, imperative for women to determine their new role and to redefine its
parameters. The portrayal of women in literature helps them to do so as it provides them
with role models drawn from the sufferings of the women characters, harassed under the
chauvinistic male domination. Their thematic concerns and ideological preoccupations
paved way to establish the synchronous and diachronic developments and continuity in the
construction of the subjectivity of the women. The similarities and dissimilarities in the
writer's perceptions of the selfhood of women, given their different socio-cultural milieu,
suggest a continuum of different possible responses. No doubt, Indian women writers are
being acknowledged today, but they are considered second to male writers. That is why, one can see the mental agony of the frustrated housewife that are depicted in the majority of these novels. But to break this typecast, the novels under study are by contemporary Indian woman author: Githa Hariharan. Through the study of these novels analysis of the intersections of gender, caste, time, and history by creating new possibilities, redefining female subjectivity in the critical juncture of caste and gender in order to find their own voice, and solving the dilemmas of identity faced by the protagonists of these novels.

Githa Hariharan enjoys a crucial place in the history of Indian English Fiction by being one of the most prolific woman writers of India. She was born in 1954, in Coimbatore, India, to a Tamil Brahmin family from Palghat, South India. Her father was a journalist with a leading Indian newspaper- The Times of India and her mother devoted all her energies and attention to bringing up her three children. Githa had a happy childhood, being allowed to grow up in the intoxicating company of books, feeding on the early diet of Victorian classics and moving on to discover the delights of the Japanese novels. This ravenous intake of the written word proved to be a period of unconscious preparations for the vocation she was to choose ultimately. She received a liberal education in leading public institutions in Mumbai, Manila, and United States. She is Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in English Literature and Psychology, from Mumbai University in 1974. Then, she did MA in Communication from Graduate School of Corporate and Political Communication, Fairfield University in 1977, and, subsequently worked briefly as a television scriptwriter in New York. Thereafter, from 1979, she worked as an editor of social sciences for Orient Longman, a large publishing house, for ten years in Mumbai, Chennai, and New Delhi, and then followed it up with a stint as a freelancer. Finally realizing her vocation she took the major decision of abandoning this profession to become a full time writer. Hariharan is fiercely protective of her privacy but is nonetheless “socially concerned, politically engaged.” After an uprising of
communal riots, she came together with a small group of women writers to set up the movement for secularism. Under this aegis, she has written stories the contributors believed could make a difference. As part of her ongoing passionate commitment to social and political engagement, she has made it a point to address the issue of women’s struggles in the face of global fundamentalism. In 1995, she challenged the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act as discriminatory against women and won the right to have the children named after her (instead of carrying the father’s name) and the Supreme Court agreed that the mother was also a “natural guardian” of the child. The works of Githa Hariharan include novels, short stories, articles and columns. Her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* appeared in 1992 and was awarded commonwealth writer’s prize in 1993, then appeared *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994) followed by *When Dreams Travel* (1999) and it was quickly followed by *In Times of Seize* (2003). Her latest publication *Fugitive Histories* appeared in (2009). She has also some short stories to her account namely *The Art of Dying* (1993) which is a collection of twenty short stories composed of somber tales of depression and eccentricity. The theme is the hegemonic male dominance in Indian society that does not allow women creative freedom. *The Winning Team* (2004) is a collection of ten short stories which makes children laugh as well sad and make them think about the times we live in. *A Southern Harvest* (1993) is a collection of short stories from south India translated first time into English from the four major languages of South India: Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Telegu, and *Sorry Best friend!* (2004) co-edited by her with Shama Futehally focuses on the theme of communal harmony. Her fiction has been translated in to a number of languages including French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Greek, Urdu and Vietnamese. She writes a regular column for the major Indian newspaper “The Telegraph”. She has been visiting Professor or Writer- in- Residence in several universities, including Dartmouth College and George Washington in the US, the
University of Canterbury at Kent in the UK, and Jamia Millia Islamia in India, where she is, at present, Scholar-in-Residence.

In this thesis the focus would primarily be on the dilemmas of identity faced by the protagonists of the novels. Chapter – 1 discusses the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*. It focuses on the quest for realization in women characters in the novel. This novel is about the elemental things of life: about love and death, about women and men, story and myth, passion and loneliness and clashes of groups and of continents. Three main women characters Devi, Sita and Mayamma, represent different generations and their names are symbolic of three goddesses. These three characters are victims of loneliness and emptiness a search for self-discovery, their places in society. This novel shows how marriage becomes an instrument of female exploitation and subjugation leading to trivialities, lack of communication, loneliness and hollowness.

Chapter- 2 discusses the novel *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, which is about the relationship between a teacher and his pupil and their journey towards self-discovery. The protagonist in this novel is Vasu Master, a recently retired teacher who due to his passion for teaching faces the biggest challenge of his life in teaching or healing Mani—the most complicated and intractable boy. Many ghosts in Vasu Master’s life come alive at the stage when he travels to his childhood and past to collect stories to enlighten the child in order to understand the present. Actually, at this stage he realizes the power of these stories and finds them useful for his own self-discovery. This novel is concerned with well-being on all levels: that of the soul, the mind and the body. The novel is interspersed with many stories through which Vasu Master and his pupil grow and learn to come to terms with the world around them and their places in it.

Chapter – 3 *When Dreams Travel* focuses on two of the issues that are perennially relevant to humans: gender politics and abuse of power. It is Hariharan’s
recasting of the famous One Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights). The story is based on the cruelty and hypocrisy of a male king- Shaharyar. Githa Hariharan resurrects Shahzad—the wife of Shaharyar and gives her a voice in her novel who in the original text, was suppressed by patriarchy and her sister Dunyazad who throughout the legend was silent and ignored becomes the heroine of the novel and her aspirations and experiences are the focal points of the novel. Hariharan interrogates the patriarchal assumptions of the original tale and shows that how the women crave to find their identities.

Chapter-4 In Times of Siege shows how politics creates dilemmas of identity. This is a novel about academic life and deal with academic controversy in which Githa Hariharan has portrayed a man-Shiv Murthy at the centre but he transcends gender and his complex male figure is as much a victim of society, faces identity crisis and is plunged In Time of Seize when denounced by the Itihaas Suraksha Manch as unpatriotic and anti- Hindu after writing a controversial lesson on a Kannada poet. As Shiv struggles to make sense of the raging political turmoil, he also attempts to come to terms with his personal crisis, his incomplete past, his fears and his obsession with a woman who will give him strength he seeks. Shiv despite a long record of lost opportunities to discover himself, has found his way to the brink and once he identifies himself, he throws away all safe crutches, and he can truly walk in the present.

Chapter – 5 Fugitive Histories is a novel by Githa Hariharan which tells us the life’s biggest irony that we have no role in choosing our names and yet all our life, we have to mind it. Based on the importance of name, the novel discusses social, religious and cultural identity. This book is all about search for identity. There are three main protagonists-Mala, Sara and Yasmin and all are facing identity crisis and are craving for true freedom throughout their life.