CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION
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Introduction:
The proposed study has two significant dimensions. On one hand it is comparative and on the other it is interdisciplinary. Therefore, it includes novels in English, the novels translated into English, the novel in Marathi and the just and necessary element of Philosophy. The major focus is on the 'literary visions' and the 'spiritual quest' in the selected novels of the selected authors. All the great comparatists have emphasized the relevance and need of comparative studies across different literary traditions in the world. Max Muller says, "All higher knowledge is gained by comparison and rests on comparison" (Pathak, 1998: 25). Hence, the present study is an attempt towards a comparative study of the selected novelists from different literary traditions of different regions. Comparative literature leads us to a more comprehensive and adequate understanding of works and their authors. Mathew Arnold says, "No single event, no single literature, is adequately comprehended except in its relation to other events, to other literatures" (Dhawan, 1987: 10). So to broaden one's perspective by discovering certain dominant trends in two or more literatures and cultures a comparative study of different literary traditions in the world is necessary. The essential ingredients of literature being the same all over the World its expression in different languages is bound to have deep-seated similarities and affinities along with certain diversities and peculiarities. The present study is an attempt to focus attention on them with reference to the theme of spiritual quest. Van Tieghem says, "The object of comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literatures in their relations with one another." (Van Tieghem,
1931: 57). Accordingly, the object of the present study is essentially the study of selected novels (belonging to the diverse traditions of literatures and cultures) in their relations with one another with reference to the theme of spiritual quest.

The authors selected for the present study are Hermann Hesse from Germany, E.M. Forster from England, Pearl S. Buck from America (and also from China), Alan Paton from South Africa, Paulo Coelho from Brazil and, Anita Desai and Prakash Deshpande-Kejkar from India. The present study thus has a global context and a very vast canvas. It represents the major faiths of the world – namely Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Confucianism. These faiths form the spiritual background in the selected novels. Obviously enough, the selected novels present a variety of social and cultural ethos, however, in spite of some obvious differences these novels seem to have a point of convergence where they appear to meet and hold parallels to each other. It is this typical situation in terms of spiritual quest that is relevant and significant for all of us. It is really interesting to explore this area of convergence. Spiritual quest has been one of the most significant driving forces behind the human endeavour hitherto. Great scientists and the men of letters have been engaged in this search. The present study attempts to have a comprehensive review of such human efforts with the help of selected novelists and their representative texts though this attempt has its obvious limitations also.

**Spiritual Quest:**

The terms 'spirituality' and 'quest' if considered separately have different meanings. The term 'spirituality' necessarily belongs to different religions or faiths in the world. In the realm of religion the term indicates
philosophical implications and a certain amount of intuition inherent in
them. It is a matter of faith and speculations in the field of mystery of the
force that guides and controls the universe. The term spirituality
necessarily indicates the difference between the mundane, material world
and the spiritual world with which every human being is concerned. All
the faiths and religions in the world have thought over them and have
suggested the ways and means to transcend the material world and to enter
into the spiritual one. It is an endeavour to identify oneself with the
almighty spirit. There have been a number of treatises, epics and sacred
books like the Gita, the Koran, and the Bible, etc. that have dealt with this
issue. This is the proper field of religion, philosophy and mysticism and
occult experience also.

The present study does not deal exclusively with the considerations
mentioned above. The selected authors namely Hermann Hesse, E. M.
Forster, Pearl S. Buck, Alan Paton, Paulo Coelho, Anita Desai and Prakash
Deshpande have artistically expressed their individual perceptions of the
spirituality through their novels and the present study is concerned with
that area only. Therefore, it is the individual author’s perception of
spirituality necessarily acquired and expressed through his/her selected
novel that is the proper subject of the study. The seven selected authors
may have different perceptions in this regard.

The term ‘quest’ means an act of seeking something; a search or
pursuit of something. The major characters in the selected novels are in
search of the spirit. It is their quest that matters much. It is significant here
to note the difference between the sacred books and the religious
philosophy on one hand and the spiritual quest of the major characters of
the selected novels on the other. It would be interesting to see how the
novelists of different literary traditions and different religious faiths react and interpret the ultimate end of human life. The present study is an attempt in that direction.

**Some Necessary Definitions:**

i) **Spiritual:**

1) of the human spirit or soul; not of physical things: concerned about spiritual welfare.
2) of the Church or of religion, of or from God; divine.
3) (Idm) one’s spiritual home – place where one is, or thinks one could be happiest; country to which one feels more strongly attached than to one’s own country (Cowie, 1991).

In *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* the word ‘spiritual’ is defined as follows:

1) of relating to, or consisting of spirit, of the nature of spirit rather than material: incorporeal – contrasted with earthy.
2) of or relating to religious or sacred matters.
3) ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal.
4) of or relating to the moral feelings or states of the soul as distinguished from the external actions: reaching and affecting the spirit.
5) influenced or controlled by the divine spirit: having a nature in which a concern for the spirit of God predominates.
6) concerned with religious values: seeking earnestly to live in right relation to God.
7) of relating to, or coming from the intellectual and higher endowments of the mind: Intellectual, mental – contrasted with animal.

8) highly refined in thought or feeling.

9) spirited, clever, witty.

10) having to do with spirits, ghosts, or similar supernatural beings or with the world which they are held to people (Gove: 1959).

In *A supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* the word 'spiritual' is defined as follows:

**Spiritual** – spiritual home – (with no religious connotation), a place or milieu, other than one’s home, which seems especially congenial or in harmony with one’s nature, or to which one feels a sense of belonging or indebtedness (Burchfield: 1991).

Religion and spirituality are two different concepts, though they are closely related and intertwined. A person may experience spirituality without being a member of any specific religious affiliation. The real purpose of religion is to enhance spirituality or to lead to the spiritual experience through rituals and practice. Therefore, religion is a way to enter the great mystery, to become aware of the divineness of life.

Religion can become a barrier to spirituality when it insists on narrow judgemental dogma and entraps its followers who seek to establish a communion with the divine. Religion serves us better as a vehicle to develop and nourish our quest for spirituality. It is quite possible, however, to get attached with the vehicle (the religious practice) while loosing sight of the destination (spirituality).
ii) **Quest:**

1) an act of seeking something; search or pursuit,


In *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* the word ‘quest’ is defined as follows:

1) a) an official inquiry : INQUEST

b) A jury of inquest.

c) INVESTIGATION (a long spiritual – into the entire Spanish part)

2) the action or an act or instance of seeking (1) : EXPEDITION, PURSUIT, VENTURE (2) : a chivalrous enterprise in medieval romance. usu. involving an adventurous journey.

3) 1) to make a search: go in pursuit: go on a quest: SEEK, ASK

2) to search for: EXAMINE, PURSUE (Gove: 1959).

The combination of these two terms namely ‘spiritual’ and ‘quest’ is very significant in the present context. Obviously it means a search for the supreme spirit that is the cause of the entire universe. ‘Spiritual quest’ has been the most significant endeavour of mankind since the time unknown. Generally it is said that there are two basic ways of understanding or seeking the almighty spirit – one is the intuition and the other is the science. It is the first way of understanding the almighty spirit that is inherent in the literary works of significance. It is the imagination (here it means the imagination discussed by S.T. Coleridge) that prompts the great artists to perceive something regarding the almighty spirit manifested in the nature and in the mundane world. Obviously enough it is this individual
artist's attempt to move towards the realm of spirituality that gives his work of art relevance and significance. This artistic attempt (of the writer or the poet) is generally referred to as his vision of life. Therefore, the term vision is also very relevant and significant in the present context.

iii) Vision:

1) vision is the special sense concerned with reception and interpretation of LIGHT Stimuli reaching the EYE; the principal sense in man.

2) a) power of seeing; sight
b) ability to view a subject, problem etc. imaginatively; foresight and wisdom in planning.
c) dream or similar trance-like state, often associated with a religious experience.

In Webster Universal Dictionary the word ‘vision’ is defined as:

1. a) the sense by which light, colour, form are perceived by the eye; power, faculty of seeing, sight;

   b) the act of sight, actual seeing.

2. a) faculty of forming mental images, pictures of objects & conditions, esp. the power of seeing things in the mind as they really are; imagination, insight, intuition.

   b) specific mental picture evoked by the power of the prophetic imagination; a poet's dream.

3. a) something seen; a sight, a spectacle a view.

   b) something or believed to be seen under conditions which are abnormal; a sight prophetically revealed to the bodily eyes by supernatural means; an appearance; supposed to be more
substantial than a dream, of objects, scenes, or events which, though real, are not actually present in a material state to the eye of the beholder; an apparition, a phantasm (Wyld: 1970).

The novels selected here are not from one and the same language. Forster’s *A Passage to India*, Pearl Buck’s *Pavilion of Women*, Anita Desai’s *Journey to Ithaca*, Alan Paton’s *Cry, the Beloved Country* are originally written in English. But they represent quite different cultures. Moreover, Paulo’s *The Alchemist* and Hesse’s *Siddhartha* are translated into English, while Prakash Deshpande’s *Bardana* is in Marathi (not yet translated into English). Thus it is a study, which is basically bi-lingual. It also has philosophical connotations and therefore it is interdisciplinary on one hand and a comparative study on the other.

iv) **Interdisciplinary:**
1. involving different areas of knowledge or study.
2. of or covering more than one area of study (Wehmeier: 2005).

The relationship between literature and philosophy can not be denied. Basically philosophy is meant for better understanding of the human life, and literature also has the same end. Therefore, any significant literary work does have certain element of philosophy. This consideration is quite obvious in the context of the selected novels for the present study.

v) **Philosophy:**
1) search for knowledge and understanding of the nature and meaning of the universe and of human life: *moral philosophy*, i.e. study of the principles on which human behaviour is based; ethics.
2) any particular set or system of beliefs resulting from this search for knowledge.
3) set of beliefs or an outlook on life that is a guiding principle for behaviour.

The word 'philosophy' is defined in *Webster Universal Dictionary* as:

1) love of wisdom and knowledge; scientific investigation.
2) the theory of knowledge; study of the mind and its processes; metaphysics, as a branch of learning, the term includes an inquiry into and discrimination between, all the processes involved in perceiving, thinking, knowing.
3) Wisdom in the conduct of affairs; mental balance, calmness, equanimity in dealing with and envisaging the events and experiences of human life (Wyld: 1970).

All religious faiths are basically meant for the cultivation of psychological discipline that leads to spiritual experience and therefore, in the context of the present study the term faith becomes quite relevant and significant.

vi) **Faith:**

1. (in sb/sth) trust in sb’s ability or knowledge; trust that sb/sth will do what has been promised.
2. strong religious belief.
3. a particular religion
4. the intention to do sth right.
1) trust; strong belief; unquestioning confidence.

strong belief, without proof, in God or in an established religion (Wehmeier: 2005).
In *Webster Universal Dictionary* the word ‘faith’ is defined as:

1) trust, confidence, belief, reliance.
2) personal realization of truth of divine revelation.
3) honesty, sincerity.
4) promise, pledged word, undertaking (Wyld: 1970).

In *The Scribner Bantam English Dictionary* the word ‘faith’ is defined as:

1) belief, mental assent, conviction that a thing unproved by evidence is true;
2) trust, as in God or Someone’s purity of motive;
3) any organized system of belief, religious or political; creed.
4) promise or pledge, as to keep faith.
5) fidelity, honesty, as to good or bad faith.
6) assent to the fundamental doctrines of one’s religion and acceptance of its creeds (Williams, Edwin: 1977).

**Relevance and Significance of the Study:**

It is obvious that a complete realization of human potential can take place only if there is integrated growth of a person’s physical, mental or spiritual abilities. Physical development enables a man to perform his physical activities properly; mental growth gives him the ability to think clearly, and spiritual development ensures maturity in character and personality leading to right ‘Samskara’ and culture. A man’s ideals, values and behaviour are determined by his sense of spirituality. Without certain element of spirituality, neither personal relationships nor cultural growth is possible. By culture, we mean the way a community leads its life, which is essentially based on the philosophy of life, faith and values of that community. These elements, in turn, lead us to spirituality. Thus,
Spirituality is the most important factor in the formation and cultural development of a community. It is the element that creates an identity for the community.

Spiritualism, however, is connected with the relationship between man and God. Religion encompasses human relationships also. It is because of human relationships that there is cohesion and peace in the society. Different communities have laid down laws and standards of behaviour that there is peace and cohesion in society. The Jews have the Decalogue of Moses, the Muslims have the teaching of the Prophet Mohammad and the Hindus have the gospels of Gita. Sometime knowledge of proper social behaviour comes from observing Nature. People learn what is good and what is bad from their day-to-day work and experience. The parents and old people pass on their wisdom to the young and the inexperienced. Such knowledge becomes the foundation of spirituality, which in turn forms a philosophy of life, faith and the values of a community. Therefore, the culture of a society is an attempt to understand the almighty spirit. One will have to understand the common life – philosophy, faith and value of life if one wishes to understand spirituality.

The fragments of spiritual elements are seen in culture – dance and music, literature and painting, customs related to occasions of birth, marriage and death, the manner of hospitality, inter-personal relationships, and belief in the after-life. It is unfortunate that modern ethos is changing the people and they are fast becoming devoid of such experiences.

In the West, the loss of faith has led to a predominance of materialism in human affairs. This trend is spreading fast. The advanced
civilizations are looking towards something that will give peace. In such a
situation spiritual considerations are not only relevant, but also necessary.

Human mind aspires for the liberation. The state of liberation is
called ‘Nirvana’ in Buddhism. The Buddhist philosopher says that
‘Nirvana’ is the highest life of purity, perfection and bliss. We aspire for
permanent happiness, security and bliss. Human mind is such that it runs
after the agencies which offer tangible solution with gratification.

G. Galloway opines, “Religion is a spiritual process and the secret of
its nature and growth cannot be found in the outward world, but in the
human soul itself.” (Deshpande, 1978 : 82). Thus the quest for knowing
the God, reality or truth is also the outcome of the imperfect, insufficient
and contingent nature of human conditions.

The ultimate driving force behind this universe has been a matter of
puzzle, ambiguity, complexity and mystery for mankind. Right from the
days of Vedas people have witnessed a power that has manifested itself in
nature. It is in the form of moving stars and planets and in the form of five
elements – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Sky. It is manifested in the
blooming flower and sweeping storms alike. Both the sides good and evil
have been inherent in that unknown force. On one hand the scientists in
this world have been making constant efforts to understand the exact nature
of this universal force – the ultimate reality, and on the other the poets and
saints have been making efforts to understand the ultimate reality by way
of intuition and by the effort of trying to establish communion with the
almighty spirit.
As already pointed out though the selected novels have different cultural, social and religious traditions, they come to a point of convergence. These novels represent the basic faiths and religious traditions of the world and therefore, they form a global canvas on which they try to paint their endeavour to know the ultimate spirit. Therefore, they become at once relevant and significant in the context of the spiritual quest. Obviously enough, each novel is an attempt to represent its author’s point of view with reference to the spiritual quest. The seven selected authors of the seven selected novels form a very significant and relevant background, which has a great potentiality in the context of the present study. The major characters in the selected novels significantly seem to undertake a journey that is prompted by their spiritual quest. Therefore, not only the major characters but the setting and the imagery used in the selected novels become significant in the present context. The study of these seven novels is a significant critical study in itself on one hand and on the other it is a kind of investigation of the ways and means the selected authors have used to depict the spiritual quest in their works. It is really interesting to have a review and a critical analysis of the efforts made by these representative authors in the context of spiritual quest.

It seems that all the authors have one and the same goal with reference to the high sounding questions of human life and the universe. Their attempt is a part of the continuous process in which the great authors of the world have been seriously involved. Their endeavour represents the purpose of literature itself; therefore, in this context an attempt to define the spiritual quest of the selected authors in terms of their selected representative novels has its own relevance and significance.
b) Life and works of the selected authors:

i) Hermann Hesse:

Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), German poet and novelist, was born into a family of Pietist missionaries and religious publishers in the Black Forest town of Claw, in the German state of Wittenberg on July 2, 1877. Being religious minded his parents expected him to follow the family tradition in theology. In 1891 Hesse entered the Protestant seminary at Maulbronn but unfortunately he was expelled from the school. It was an unhappy experience for Hesse. After expulsion from the secular school, Hesse worked in several jobs. His first work Romantische Lieder and Eine Stunde Hinter Mittemacht was published in 1899. His novel Peter Camenzind, published in 1904, gained a great literary success. In the same year Hesse became a freelance writer. His novel Peter Comenzind reflected Hesse's disgust with the educational system. It was a notable year for Hesse, as many things happened in it. In the same year he married Maria Bernoulli, with whom he had three children. In 1911 he visited India. His visit to India interested him in the studies of Eastern religions and this resulted in the novel Siddhartha in 1922. The novel was about the early life of Gautama Buddha and his search for self-realisation. The culture of the ancient Hindus and the ancient Chinese had a great influence on Hesse's works. In 1912 Hesse took a permanent residence in Switzerland. Hesse explored the negative reply to the question of whether the artist should marry in his novel Rosshalde (1914). During these years his wife suffered from growing mental instability and his son was seriously ill. Hesse's next novel Demain published in 1919. It was a Faustian tale of a man torn between his orderly bourgeois existence and a chaotic world of sensuality.
Hesse moved to Montagnola, in Southern Switzerland, in 1919. In 1922 appeared *Siddhartha*, a classic work dealing with the meaning of life, set in the time of Buddha. Its English translation appeared in 1950 and it became a spiritual guide to the generation of American Beat poets. Hesse married Ruth Wenger in 1924, but this second marriage to Ruth (1924-27) proved unhappy. During these critical years he wrote *Der Steppenwolf* (1927). In 1931 Hesse married his third wife, Ninon Dolbin. He published his masterpiece *Das Glasperlenspiel* in 1943. Actually Hesse had sent the manuscript to Berlin for publication but the Nazis did not accept it and the work appeared for the first time in Zurich in 1943.

Hesse's other works include *In Sight of Chaos* (1923), a collection of essays, the novel *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930) and poems (1970). In his works he has depicted the duality of spirit and nature, body versus mind and the individual's search outside the restrictions of the society. Flesh and spirit are two conflicting components in all of Hesse's novels. Hesse was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946. After receiving the Nobel Prize Hesse wrote no major works. On August 9, 1962, at the age of eighty-five, he died of cerebral hemorrhage in his sleep.

ii) **E. M. Forster**

Edward Morgan Forster was born on a New Year's Day, the 1st January 1879 in London in an intellectual middle-class family. His father was an architect. His family had close connections with the persons of the Protestant faith, who believed that the essence of religion consists in the doctrine of salvation by faith and good works. At Forster's great grandfather's London house a great number of Protestants used to gather to discuss their religious and benevolent projects. After his father's death in 1880, his mother moved to Hertfordshire. Forster was educated at
Tonbridge School and then at King's college, Cambridge. In his first two novels *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and in *The Longest Journey* (1907) Tonbridge public school plays a large and dreadful part. In *The Longest Journey* Forster records his own unpleasant experiences at School. Forster took a classical degree in 1900 and then in 1901 he acquired the degree in History. In Cambridge he found his greatest happiness. It is here that he came under the influence of his classics tutor, Nathaniel Wed, who aroused in him the interest for the classics and for Greece. Goldworthy Lowes Dickinson was a Cambridge Don with whom Forster became very friendly and afterwards he wrote his biography. After graduating in 1901, there followed extensive travels to Italy, Greece and Germany and in 1912 to India. The 1900's were years also of concentrated literary activity, for before his first journey to India, Forster had published all his short stories and all but one of his novels: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905); *The Longest Journey* (1907); *A Room with a View* (1908); *Howards End* (1910). Cambridge and Italy were the two major liberating influences in his life, and both are clearly reflected in his writings.

Forster was in Alexandria working for the Red Cross during the First World War, and later, in 1922, published a delightful guide to the city – *Alexandria: A History and a Guide*. During these years he published two more books on history – *The Government of Egypt* (1920), and *Pharos and Pharillon* (1923). In 1921 he returned to India as private secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas senior, an experience which not only enabled him to complete *A passage to India*, published in 1924, but also provided the material for the autobiographical *The Hill of Devi* (1953). Forster later settled in Abinger, in Surrey, hence the title of his collection of articles and essays *Abinger Harvest* (1936), and has produced another similar collection called *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951). His other works include two
biographies – those of Marianne Thornton, his great aunt and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, a Cambridge Don. In 1927, Forster responded to an invitation to give the Lecturers at Cambridge, and this resulted in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), a critical work of great insight. Though, he has published no fiction since 1924, he has gradually achieved a worldwide reputation as one of the undisputed masters of the English novel in the 20th Century.

iii) **Pearl S. Buck:**

Pearl S. Buck was born on June 26, 1892 in Hillsboro, West Virginia. She spent her youth in China, in Chinkiang on the Yangtse River. Susan Pavloska says, “Pearl S. Buck is the most translated American author of the twentieth century (Hemingway is second) and the first American woman to win the Nobel Prize. Her fiction, along with her numerous essays and speeches, “created China” for the American public and had a significant influence on public policy” (Conn, 1996: 635). Her parents were missionaries. Absalom Sydenstricker, Buck’s father, was a scholarly man who spent years translating the Bible from Greek to Chinese. Her mother had traveled widely in her youth and had a fondness for literature. Pearl Buck learned to speak Chinese before she could speak English. She was brought up in China under the influence of Buddhism and Confucianism in the early years of her life. She spent the first forty years of her life in China where Chinese was almost her mother tongue. Buck’s life in China was not always pleasant. In her early age, she was being educated by her mother and by a Chinese tutor, who was a Confucian scholar. At the age of fifteen Buck was sent to a boarding school in Shanghai. Buck continued her education in the United States at Woman’s College in Virginia. There she studied Psychology. After graduating in
1914, she returned to China as a teacher for the Presbyterian Board of Missions. She also worked for the 'Door of Hope', a shelter for Chinese slave girls and prostitutes.

Buck married Dr. John Lossing Buck, an agricultural expert, devoted to his work. She worked as a teacher and interpreter for her husband and travelled through the countryside. During this period China took steps toward liberal reform. In the 1920's the Bucks moved to Nanking. At Nanking she taught English and American literature at the University. Her first daughter was mentally retarded, hence in 1924 Buck returned to the United States to seek medical care for her. Buck received her M.A. in literature from Cornell University in 1926. Pearl Buck went back to China in 1927. They were removed to Japan, during the Civil War, from where Buck never returned to China. In 1935 Buck divorced her first husband and married Richard Walsh, her publisher and the president of John Day Company. With Richard Walsh she moved to Pennsylvania. Buck and Walsh were active in humanitarian causes through the East and West Association. This Association was devoted to mutual understanding between the peoples of Asia and the United States and The Pearl Buck Foundation. She also worked for the rights of women and racial equality before the civil rights movement.

Pearl Buck’s first novel *East Wind: West Wind* (1930), received a great critical recognition. Earlier she had published autobiographical writings in magazines. Her next best novel *The Good Earth* appeared in 1931. The book gained a wide audience, and was made into a motion picture. In 1936 Buck became a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938. She was the third American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, following
Sinclair Lewis and Eugene O'Neill. During World War II Buck lectured and wrote on democracy and American attitudes towards Asia. She had much first-hand knowledge of the relationships between men and women from different cultures. Interracial love was one of the major themes in her books. She wrote about the love of Bettina, a farmer slave, and Tom, a Southerner who fought for the army of the North in *The Angry Wife* (1949). In *The Hidden Flower* (1952) she wrote about a Japanese girl falling in love with an American Soldier. Her *Pavilion of Women* appeared in 1946. *The Patriot* (1939) focused on the emotional development of a University student, whose realism is crushed by the brutalities of war. She raised millions of dollars for the adoption and fostering of American Children, often abandoned by their American fathers. Buck's own family included nine adopted children as well as her own biological daughters. She wrote a personal story of her own daughter, in *The Child Who Never Grew* (1950), whose mental development stopped at the age of four. Buck's famous novel *The Good Earth* was filmed in 1937. The book sold 1,800,000 copies in its first year. It was translated into more than thirty languages. In 1932 it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. It was a story of a man, from his beginnings, as an impoverished peasant to his eventual position as a prosperous landowner. The two sequels, *Sons* (1932), and *A House Divided* (1935) were followed the novel and the three novels were published in 1935 in one volume as *The House of Earth*.

After Walsh's death, Buck formed a relationship with Ted Harries, a dance instructor 40 years her junior, who took charge of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. During her career as an author, Buck published eighty works, including novels, plays, short story collections, poems, children's books, and biographies. She also wrote five novels under the name John Sedges.
In 1933 appeared *All Men Are Brothers*, which was a translation of Lo Guangzhog's *The Warter Margin*, and *Men of the Marshes*. *The Chinese Novel* (1939) was largely an explanation of her own writing style. *Command The Morning* (1959) was about the efforts of the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb and the ethics of dropping it on Japan. Buck died at the age of eighty in Danby, on March 6, 1973. At her death Buck was working on *The Red Earth*, a further sequel to *The Good Earth*, presenting the modern day descendants of that novel's characters.

iv) Alan Paton:

Alan Paton was born in Pietermarizburg in Natal in 1903. His father was James Paton, a Scot who had immigrated to South Africa in 1895. His mother was Eunice Warder James Paton, the daughter of English immigrants. His father was a deeply religious Christian and a strict authoritarian. His disciplinary practices led Alan Paton to despise and openly oppose all forms of authoritarianism. His father's influence was not exclusively negative; he also taught Alan to love books and nature, two passions which figure prominently in his work.

His most famous and most acclaimed work is *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948). By the time Paton had died in 1988, it had sold over 15 million copies. It has been made into two films, in 1951 and again in 1995.

Alan Paton was a political activist and a devout Christian. Until 1948, he worked as the principal of Diepkloof Reformatory, a place much like the reformatory where Absalom stays. The publication of *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948) was a life changing event for Paton. It was a great success. Many people were deeply moved by it, politically and spiritually and it
allowed him much more professional freedom. Paton resigned his principalship and decided to write full-time. Soon after, another momentous event took place. The Africaner Nationalists came to power. They brought with them the notorious policies of racial separateness. It was called in their language as 'apartheid'. Paton was a white man so he was hated and disdained by many people who thought that 'apartheid' was unfair, because he benefited from 'apartheid', even though he opposed it. In his autobiography, *Journey Continued* (1988), Paton gives an account of what made many South Africans to completely avoid the other races of their country. South Africa was colonized by Dutch and British merchants, and these were later joined by German, Dutch and French farmers called Boers or Afrikaners. This gave a birth to racial discrimination.

Paton was strongly against political power struggles and against racial prejudice. His parents had raised him as a devout Christian. He believed that love and compassion were the only hope for South Africa. Paton was aware that white people were responsible for many of South Africa's problems. In his books Paton avoided the ideas about race. In order to promote brotherhood, Paton tried to show people as individuals trying to go beyond their races. His novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* is the best example of it. It focuses on one case of native crime and its effects on the individuals who knew both those men. *Cry, the Beloved Country* has been made into a movie, as well as a stage production, and even a musical. It is famous for its worth as a political treatise.

Paton's other books include *Too Late the Pharalope*, and a memoir of his life with first wife Dorrie, *For you Departed*. *Too Late the Pharalope* was a lyrical analysis of South Africa's problems similar in some ways to
his earlier novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. He also wrote many essays, poems and stories about South Africans. Racial prejudice, Christian compassion, and the possibility of renewal for a nearly destroyed but much loved land – these ideas haunted him all his life. Perhaps it can be said that his *Cry, the Beloved Country*, is the most complete expression of these ideas.

v) **Paulo Coelho:**

The Brazilian author Paulo Coelho was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). He is not only one of the most widely read, but also one of the most influential authors writing today. In 2001 he is awarded Germany's most prestigious award 'BAMBI Awards'. Before dedicating his life completely to literature, he worked as theatre director and actor, lyricist and journalist. His work has been translated in 61 languages, and edited in more than 150 countries. Paulo Coelho has entered the Guinness Book of Records as the author that signed more books in different editions.

In 1982 Coelho published his first book, *Hell Archives*, which failed to make any kind of impact. In 1985 he contributed to the *Practical Manual of Vampirism*, which lateron he considered 'of bad quality'. In 1986 he did the pilgrimage to Saint James of Compostella. He documented this experience in his book *The Pilgrimage* published in 1987. In the following year Coelho published *The Alchemist*. This is the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who dreams of travelling the world in search of a worldly treasure as fabulous as any ever found. With Paulo's visionary blend of spirituality, magical realism and folklore, *The Alchemist* is a story with the power to inspire nations and change people's
lives. His fascination with the spiritual quest dates back to his hippie days when he traveled the world learning about secret societies, oriental religions, etc. Other titles by Coelho include *Brida* (1990), *The Valkyries* (1992), *By the river Piedra I sat down and wept* (1994), *O Dom Supremo* (*The Gift*) 1991, *Maktub* (1994), *The fifth Mountain* (1996), *Love Letters from a Prophet* (1997), *Manual of the Warrior of Light* (1997), *Veronika Decides to Die* (1998), *The Devil and Miss Prym* (2000), *Eleven Minutes* (2003), *O Zahir* (2005), and *Be Like a Flowing River* (2006). His books written for children are *The Genie and the Roses* (2004); *Fathers, Sons and Grandsons* (2001) and the *Revived Paths* is an art book. *The Alchemist* is one of the most important literary phenomena of the 20th Century. It has been praised by different personalities ranging from the Nobel Prize Kenzaburo Oe to the singer Madona, who considers it one of her favourite books. It has equally inspired many projects—such as a musical in Japan, theatre plays in France, Belgium, USA, Turkey, Italy, and Switzerland. Although he discovered his love for writing while still at school, he had to overcome numerous obstacles before being able to commit himself to this passion. His parents wanted Paulo to be an engineer and tried to lead him away from the world of literature. At the age of seventeen his father admitted him in a psychiatric hospital for showing signs of rebellion and reluctance to follow the path they had planned for him. Over the following years, Paulo was admitted on three different occasions and underwent several sessions of electro convulsive therapy. His novel *Veronika Decides to Die* is based on this unhappy hospital experiences. The novel went on to have national repercussions in Brazil, aiding the approval of a law prohibiting arbitrary hospitalization. Swept up in the hippie movements of the sixties, Paulo traveled widely and became interested in the human search for spirituality. In these years he experimented also with journalism,
theatre and song writing. He was imprisoned under the Brazilian dictatorship for publishing a series of Comic Strips calling for more freedom. Shortly after his release he was kidnapped by paramilitaries and endured several days in a torture center. These experiences marked Paulo deeply and steered his life in a new direction. After a brief and unsuccessful marriage, in 1979 he was reunited with an old friend, Christina Oiticica, whom he later married and still lives with today.

His greatest talent has been identified as an ability to touch and unite so many different cultures through the power of language. He is one of the most influential authors of our time with an uncommonly extensive readership and a style that is direct without being superficial. Despite its initial failure, *The Alchemist* was returned to after the success of later works and it went on to sell more copies than any other novel in the history of Brazil. Since then, Paulo has won numerous prestigious awards. The World Economic Forum gave its most important prize to the author, the Crystal Award in 1999. In March 2000, the French government gave to the author its most prestigious title: "Chevalier de L'Ordre National Legion d'Honneur". In January 2001, he became member of the board in the Schwab Foundation for social Entrepreneurship. This foundation favours social projects. In March 1998, Paulo Coelho began writing a weekly Column for the Brazilian paper "O Globo". It achieved an enormous success. These articles are based on anecdotes and legends from various places and cultures. Through them Paulo shares with his readers some of the moments he has lived at some stage in his life. They have great success and appreciated by readers. Due to their versatility, they appeal to a large reading public in many different countries, regardless their cultural and religious background. Besides best-selling books, Paulo Coelho also wrote a work composed of 365 small but insightful messages designed to be
published in the form of daily messages for Internet portals. These messages present the summery of Paulo's experience and they are based on the stories collected from different parts, places and cultures of the world. Presently Paulo Coelho is a member of different organizations and reputed bodies.

Thus Paulo Coelho is one of the most widely read and one of the most influential authors writing today.

vi) Anita Desai:

Anita Desai was born on June 24, 1937 in India to a German mother and an Indian father. She grew up during World War II and could see the anxiety her German mother was experiencing about the situation and her family in Germany. After the war her mother never returned to Germany, nor she had any desire to return. Anita herself did not visit until she was an adult. She has taught at Mt. Holyoke and Smiths College. Presently, she is a member of the Advisory Board for English in New Delhi. She is married and has four children, including Kiran Desai. M. K. Naik says “Anita Desai, youngest of the major Indian women novelists, is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities” (Naik, 2004:241). Her Journey to Ithaca is the best example of it.

Anita Desai’s chief concern is the individual’s quest for meaning and value, freedom and truth that provide spiritual nourishment to the estranged self in a seemingly chaotic and meaningless world. Desai adds a new dimension to the genre of Indian fiction in English by probing the unquestionable existencialist concerns of her protagonists. Hence A. K. Bachchan says, “Anita Desai occupies a distinct and distinctive place in the realm of contemporary Indian English fiction” (Bachchan, 2004:38). Anita
Desai tries to focus on the predicament of women in the society. Each novel of Anita Desai is a search of the self for a heightened female awareness. The major themes in *Cry, the Peacock* (1980) are marital disharmony, loss of identity, escapism and a sense of the meaninglessness of life. It was what Anita Desai had attempted in her novels as she once said "Writing is to me the process of discovering the truth – the truth that is, nine-tenth of the iceberg that lies submerged beneath the one-tenth visible portion we call Reality. Writing is my way of plunging to the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover, to underline and convey the true significance of things" (Desai, 1972: 348).

Anita Desai’s *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971) depicts the love-hate relationship of the expatriates with England. It also depicts circular journey of a soul searching for a perfect life. In *Cry, the Peacock*, Desai explores the turbulent emotional world of the neurotic protagonist, Maya. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), Anita Desai presents an intense identity crisis of the central character Sita, a sensitive woman in her early forties. Her next novel *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) is exclusively devoted to the study of old age and the trauma that accompanies physical disorders and sickness. *Clear Light of Day* (1980) breaks new ground in the sense that it dwells on an existentialist theme of time in relation to eternity. In *Village By the Sea* (1983) Desai captures the existential predicament of the ruralities undergoing the pangs of a society in transition, through the life of a young village boy, Hari. In *In Custody* (1984) Desai’s concentration is on the internal consciousness of the individual. The novel depicts a world beyond the individual. This novel has a male protagonist who comes from a lower middle-class family and who seeks to reach out into a wider world in the hope of self-fulfillment. Her *Voices in the City*

“Anita Desai is undoubtedly one of the most powerful Indian novelists in English” says Pathak (Pathak, 1991 : 11). The exploration of human psyche, the problem of human relationships, the protagonists quest for identity, the racial problems, the question of feminism are her main concerns as evident in all her novels from Cry, the Peacock to Fasting, Feasting.

vii) Prakash Deshpande-Kejkar:

Prakash Deshpande is born in Solapur in 1940 and brought up in Kej, a small village in Beed District in Marathwada. Marathwada, frequently mentioned as an economically backward region, was under the Nizam rule; consequently, it represents a bi-lingual and bi-cultural scene. His life and work represents this significant plurality. He had his primary education in Kej and his secondary education in Ambajogai. Ambajogai is a great seat of learning and it has a great literary tradition. The first Marathi poet Mukundraj lived here in the 13th Century. His Viveksindhu is regarded as the first saint poetry. The famous pandit poet ‘Dasopant’ held from this place. He belongs to the 17th Century. The author has this cultural
and literary inheritance. He completed his graduation from S.S.V.P.’s College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Dhule in 1965. He is B.A. English with Honours. Dhule is a place where the great modern Marathi Saint Vinoba Bhave was put in jail, where he delivered his lectures (Pravachanas) on the 18 chapters (Adhyaya) of Gita, and very significantly, the writer was famous Marathi novelist and freedom fighter. The novels of the present writer are deeply influenced by the life and teachings of Vinobha Bhave. His fourth novel ‘अंधलेखार’ (This Side) ‘पैरलेखार’ (That Side) is dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi and Vinobha Bhave. He did post-graduation from Marathwada University, Aurangabad in 1971. He did M.A. English, secured first class and stood IInd in the University. Aurangabad is a significant place because it has bi-lingual culture and rich bi-lingual literary tradition. The novelist and the authors reflect this bi-culturalism. In the Middle Ages Aurangabad was a place where the considerable number of Sufi Saints and poets lived in the vicinity. But a few Marathi poets in the 17th and 18th Century lived in the city. There was a meaningful dialogue between the Marathi saints and Sufi saints in Aurangabad. Aurangabad has a considerable Christian popularity too. This triangular culture – Hindu, Muslim and Christian is significantly reflected in Prakash Deshpande-Kejkar’s novels.

He did his Ph.D. on ‘T.S. Eliot’s prose writing : A Critical Study’ and was awarded the degree in 1982. The modernist view in his novels seems to be influenced by Eliot’s poetry and criticism.

He started his academic career in 1971 and joined S. B. College of Arts and commerce as lecturer in English. Here once again we have a typical combination of an academician and a creative writer. In his last two
novels दोनों ग्रंथ (This Side) 2007, पैल्टीर (That Side) 2008, which are partly autobiographical his college experience is creatively used. In 1983 he joined the Department of English, Shivaji University, Kolhapur as a lecturer. He became a Reader in 1988 and Professor in 1998. In 2000, he retired and settled down in his native town Aurangabad.

At Shivaji University he taught British Literature, American Literature and Comparative Literature. This comparative vision is also an important dimension of his novelistic vision.

Prakash Deshpande-Kejkar is noted novelist and critic in Marathi. His first novel एकाची गोष्ट (Ekachi Gost) was published in 1991. Its second edition came out in 2007. His second novel धलाज (Dhalaj) was published in 2006. बारदाना (Bardana) published in 2004, is his third novel. It was very well welcomed all over Maharashtra as a consequence it received six prizes – 1) अंकुर साहित्य पुस्तकार, अकोला, 2) शिवाजी सांवत कारंबरी पुस्तकार, आजगर, 3) रोहमारे ग्रामीण साहित्य पुस्तकार, कोपरांव, 4) आण्णाबाव ताटे पुस्तकार, महाराष्ट्र, 5) शासन मुंबई, 6) भी. राजनाथ पुस्तकार, औरंगाबाद, 6) नरहर कुर्लंदकर पुस्तकार, मयांजवाडा, औरंगाबाद. In July 2008 he is awarded the 'Marathawada Sahitya Parishad Award' for his book Marathi Saints’ Poetry:A Perspective. The book discusses relevance of poetry in today’s world.

c) Selection of the Novels:

The study needs to have the global context otherwise it would be inadequate and incomplete. The field is entirely vast, since it includes all literary and philosophical efforts from the major epics of the world like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bible, Koran and Buddha to the present day.
inquiries. Therefore, just limitations are necessary. Hence the selection is imperative.

The selection criteria are as follows:

The first criterion used for the selection of the representative novels is the global coverage including the great novels about the East and the West. Secondly, the major faiths, which operate in the realm of spiritual quest, need to be represented in the selection. Thirdly, the authors and the novels need to have certain recognition and standard accepted by the readers, scholars and the critics. The works to be selected must have direct bearing on the theme of 'Spiritual Quest'. The representative novels should provide just and adequate scope for comparison. In order to limit the scope of the present enquiry and to have a cross cultural view the novels published after the First World War are selected here. This has the additional advantage of having the recent thought on the chosen theme. The study is also arranged with the chronology of the publications of the novels, which indicates the period from the early 20th century to the opening of the 21st. The selection of the novels is made in the context of the above considerations.

Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), German poet and novelist, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946. Written in a simple style, his novel Siddhartha is considered a classic work dealing with the meaning of life. E. M. Forster is a rare combination of creative writer, novelist and humanist. His A Passage to India, published in 1924, is a novel of epic dimensions. About A Passage to India Peter Burra has rightly observed, “The three structures, Mosque, Caves, Temple, are outward shapes of a man’s spiritual adventures” (Bradbury, 1979: 27). Pearl S. Buck, one of
the most popular American authors of her day, humanitarian, crusader for women’s rights, editor of Asia Magazine, noted for her novels of life in China, was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1938. Her Pavilion of Women (1946) seem to be a unique novel. It defines Pearl Buck’s humanism and reveals her vision of life as a literary artist. Alan Paton was a political activist and a devout Christian and these two concerns are constantly in the background and sometimes in the foreground of his most famous novel, Cry, the Beloved Country (1948). Anita Desai, who occupies a distinct and distinctive place in the realm of contemporary Indian English fiction, is undoubtedly “One of the most powerful Indian novelist in English” (Pathak, 1991: 11). Her Journey to Ithaca (1996) is a novel of persistent journey tracing the root of spiritual origin. Paulo Coelho’s The Alchemist, having the Brazilian setting, is also a novel that indicates the author’s spiritual quest. Prakash Deshpande’s Marathi novel Bardana (2004) is a story of a sincere pious Brahmin farmer who is a victim of the post-independence social change and ethos. Right from the beginning, he experiences intuitively the glimpses of spiritual power. Though the novel Bardana has not yet been translated into English, it has received six prizes and awards.

The above discussion makes it clear that the authors and the novels selected for study have certain recognition and standard accepted by the readers, scholars and critics. The works selected have direct bearing on the theme of ‘Spiritual Quest’.

A word regarding translations is necessary in this context. There are two novels translated into English, four novels originally written in English and one novel is in Marathi (not yet translated into English). One cannot understand the original languages in which all the works of arts are
written. Therefore, the researcher has to depend on the translations. In the discussion of 'World Literature', we cannot help depending on translations. It is obvious that a translation generally doesn't have the original aesthetic pleasure and the connotations of the intended meaning. However, any discussion of the 'World Literature' is necessarily and imperatively based on translations.

Hesse comes from Germany, Forster comes from Britain, Buck comes from America (and even represents China), Alan Paton comes from South Africa, Anita Desai comes from India, Paulo comes from Brazil, and Prakash Deshpande from India (Maharashtra). Thus the selection of the novels represents the global canvas. The novels also represent the major religious faiths in the world namely – Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The writers selected here enjoy the world recognition, except Bardana as it is not yet translated into English. It is hoped that all these considerations make the selection of the novels relevant and significant.

d) Objectives:

The proposed study is comparative as well as it is interdisciplinary. Therefore, it includes novels in English, the novel translated into English, the novel in Marathi and the just and necessary element of philosophy. The major thrust of the study is to know the 'Spiritual Quest' in the novels of the selected authors. In order to limit the scope of the study one representative novel by each novelist is selected. There are certain reasons behind the choice. First of all, there is the element of 'spirituality' in each of the selected novels and secondly, it would be interesting to see, how the novelists of different literary traditions and faiths react and interpret human life in the context of spiritual quest.
The present study proposes to make a comparative study of seven selected novelists from different religious, cultural and social ethos. What is of interest to us, however, is that despite the different religious, cultural and social backgrounds of the authors, and despite the diverse settings of their novels, both in terms of period and in terms of ethos, there runs a common thread through their works that serves to bind them together. This common thread is the theme of spiritual quest. The present study, therefore, attempts a comprehensive comparative investigation of the theme of ‘spiritual quest’ in the selected novels.

The spiritual quest, being the central focus of all the selected novels, is the primary subject of the study. Each author has depicted his perception of the spiritual quest in terms of certain symbols and images like the mountain peak or the river, etc. Therefore, the present study attempts a critical analysis of the symbols and images used in each of the selected novels. This is necessary in order to have a comparative perspective in terms of the spiritual quest. In order to achieve this objective each author’s individual perception with reference to spiritual quest needs to be defined. Therefore, an attempt is made to define the selected authors’ individual perceptions and visions in terms of spiritual quest and for this purpose the symbols and imagery used by each selected author needs to be studied critically.

Thus the primary objective of the present study is to analyse and define the authors’ visions in the spiritual realm. An attempt will also be made to compare these individual visions in order to arrive at some conclusions. The present study is an attempt to analyse, define and
compare the selected authors’ spiritual perceptions with the help of their representative texts.

Each selected author has tried to depict his vision in terms of the spiritual quest with the help of some symbols and imagery. Therefore, the objective of the present study is also to define and discuss the symbols and imagery used by the selected individual author in his selected novel. This will provide us the seven separate perspectives of the selected authors’ in terms of the spiritual quest.

Secondly, an attempt will be made to have a comparative perspective of the different perceptions of the selected authors. In other words the cross references and comparison will be made in order to have a necessary analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Against the background of this discussion certain observations in terms of the theme of spiritual quest can be made in the form of conclusion or epilogue.

e) Scope and Limitations of the Study:

The novelistic vision of a novelist cannot be defined only with the study of his single novel. The novelistic vision necessarily depends on the total consideration of at least his major novels. However, the scope of this study cannot be enlarged to accommodate all the major novels of the selected novelists for their scrutiny with reference to the chosen theme.

Therefore, the objective of this study itself is limited one. It aims at defining the novelistic visions of the novelists in terms of the theme of spiritual quest as reflected in their representative novels only. The carefully selected novels Siddhartha, A Passage to India, Pavilion of Women, Cry, the Beloved Country, Journey to Ithaca, The Alchemist and
Bardana are the representative novels of the respective authors. Siddhartha is an international bestseller; A Passage to India is considered as a modern classic. Pavilion of Women is Buck's noted work; Cry, the Beloved Country gave such a wide popularity to Paton that he left his Principalship and turned to the writing profession forever. Journey to Ithaca is rather a different work by Anita Desai than her earlier novels as it deals primarily with the theme of spiritual quest. The Alchemist has achieved the status of international bestseller and has been translated into 62 languages. The Marathi novel Bardana, too, is a popular and widely appreciated novel by Prakash Deshpande-Kejkar. It has received six different awards, including 'The Maharashtra Government Award'. Thus all the selected novels are essentially the representative novels of the selected authors.

The other major novels of the selected novelists are not discussed here in detail with reference to the chosen theme. However, they have been considered justly within the body of the argument.

Obviously enough, the poetry, the plays, the short stories by the authors do not come within the purview of the study. At the same time issues like narrative technique, style, setting and other concerns are also out of the scope of the present study. A brief survey of the context in which the selected authors have written their works has been included in the introduction of the first chapter. However, the detailed discussion of the novelistic traditions of the selected authors has not been attempted.

Thus the scope of the present study is limited to the discussion of the theme of 'Spiritual Quest' with reference to the selected novels only.
f) Approach:

Such a comparative study has several benefits. It has in itself its own significance as a study in literature and literary criticism on one hand and on the other, it will provide us certain comparative literary perceptions of the selected authors’ in the context of spiritual quest.

The present study does not seek to point out one to one correspondence between the selected novels. One of the major drawbacks of the methodology of comparative studies is pointed out by Rene Wellek; he says: "An artificial demarcation of subject matter and methodology, a mechanistic concept of sources and influences and a motivation by cultural nationalism - however generous – these seems to me the symptoms of the long drawn out crisis of comparative literature" (Pathak, 1998: 26). Therefore, an attempt is made to avoid such considerations.

In order to provide a theoretical framework for the present study four basic literary categories are determined, namely 1) the plot construction, 2) the thematic concerns and the supremacy of the theme of spiritual quest, 3) the study of imagery and symbols and 4) the author’s perceptions in terms of spiritual quest. Each of the seven novels is to be studied with reference to the four selected categories for analysis, interpretation and critical evaluation. Thus, this theoretical framework will ensure a definite methodology and theoretical base for the present study.

In literature the symbols and imagery play a vital role. The artistic vision is too subtle and too complicated to be explained in the everyday language. Therefore, Jung remarks:

"It is necessary for a poet to resort to mythology in order to give his experiences, his most fitting expression. Here he never
works with the material received at second hand. The primordial experience is the source of his creativeness. It can’t be fathomed, and therefore requires mythological imagery to give it form. In itself it offers no words or images, for it is a vision seen as a glass, darkly” (Lodge, 1972: 183).

Jung further significantly remarks:

Since the particular expression can never exhaust the possibilities of the vision, but falls for short of it in richness of content the poet must have at his disposal a huge store of materials if he is to communicate even a few of his intimations. What is more, he must resort to an imagery that is difficult to handle and full of contradictions in order to express the weird paradoxicality of his vision (Ibid.: 183).

It is in the context of such considerations and in the context of the selected novels the third category in the frame of reference, namely, the study of imagery and symbols, becomes essential and significant.

Since the primary objective of the present study is to define each of the seven selected authors’ perception of spiritual quest and to have a comparative evaluation of them, the fourth category in the frame of reference, namely the selected authors’ perception in terms of spiritual quest is determined. The last two categories are obviously dependant on the first two – the plot construction and thematic considerations (supremacy of the theme of spiritual quest). Therefore, the theoretical framework, or the frame of reference mentioned above, necessary for the present study, has been carefully and logically determined.
Initially, the introductory chapter is divided into six small sections. First, some essential definitions of the key terms like ‘spiritual’, ‘quest’, ‘vision’, ‘interdisciplinary’, ‘philosophy’ and ‘faith’ are discussed. These definitions are essential to avoid any ambiguity in the argument. These definitions provide the argument with clarity, precision as well as comprehensiveness. Secondly, the lives and works of the selected authors are very briefly discussed in order to highlight the authors’ experiences and the influences that have shaped their visions. This brief discussion is also necessary to co-relate the authors with their selected works in terms of the significance of the present study. Thirdly, an attempt is made to clarify the reasons behind the selection of these novels. This is necessary in two ways – to limit the scope of the present study; and to clarify the central idea and the major focus of the study. Fourthly, the significance and the objectives of the study are clearly defined in order to set the goals of the study. Fifthly, the scope and the limitations of the study are clearly charted out. This enables us to clarify what exactly is attempted and what has not been attempted. The sense of what is not attempted is equally significant as the sense of what is within the purview of the study. Lastly, the approach (the specific method used) of the study is discussed. Here these six items of consideration along with the relevance and significance mentioned at the initial stage provide a comprehensive view of the present study, which is the primary objective of the first chapter, ‘Introduction’.

The Second and Third chapters deal exclusively with the discussion of the ‘Spiritual Quest’ in the selected novels. Chapter second deals with the first four novels arranged chronologically namely Siddhartha, A Passage to India, Pavilion of Women and Cry, The Beloved Country.
Chapter second is followed by third, which deals with the other three novels namely *The Alchemist, Journey to Ithaca* and *Bardana* according to the sequence. In these two chapters (Second and Third) an attempt is made to define the theme of ‘Spiritual Quest’ in terms of the predetermined frame of reference or theoretical framework mentioned earlier. In other words these two chapters analyse and interpret the seven selected novels in terms of ‘Spiritual Quest’.

As the present study is basically comparative and interdisciplinary, chapter number four attempts to have a comparative perspective of the ‘Spiritual Quest’ as depicted in the seven novels.

According to the conventions the brief discussion of the theory of comparative literature should have been in the first chapter ‘Introduction’ itself. However, for the sake of relevance and convenience it can be given at the end of chapter four namely ‘Comparative Perspective’. Here, only the relevant basic principles of the comparative study of literature are discussed very briefly. Obviously enough, such discussion is necessary in order to provide the present study a definite theoretical framework. On one hand, this discussion illuminates the approach (the methodology used for the study) and on the other it ensures the basic aspects of a comparative and interdisciplinary study. Another advantage of this discussion (the very brief theoretical framework of the comparative literature) is that it connects the significance, the objectives, the approach and the conclusions of the present study together. Therefore, chapter four is divided into two parts – a) a comparative perspective of all the selected authors in the context of spiritual quest, and b) some essential principles of comparative study of
literature. Here, the principles should be discussed in the context of their application to the present study. This is necessary to ensure the application of these principles in the process of analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the selected novels.

The novel *Bardana* under discussion is in Marathi therefore the original quotations to be used in the discussion need to be translated into English for the convenience of the non-Marathi readers. Hence, an attempt is made to translate these quotations or at least to render the gist of the quotations into English.

Against the background of such analysis and interpretation of seven selected novels an attempt is made to arrive at certain conclusions, which are recorded in Chapter number five. In a sense Chapter number five is an epilogue rather than a conclusion. The chapter attempts to have a perspective of all the seven authors that leads us to make a comprehensive statement on the theme of spiritual quest in the selected novels. Since the selected novels represent the literatures in the world, the study may lead us to the concept of World Literature.
REFERENCES:


