

Chapter-III

WOMEN AS CULTURAL AMBASSADORS IN RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA'S FICTION

Culture is nothing but a learned way of behavior. The word culture has a wide meaning, different people have defined it very differently. Generally when we think of culture one thinks of a refined, sophisticated, well behaved individual. Different countries have different culture, when we think of Indian context, the Sanskrit term for culture is 'Sanskriti.' Both Sanskrit and Samskara, meaning ritual performance, is a process of refinement. Man a social being attains refinement and becomes a cultured one by going through the 'samskaras'.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English defines, culture as "the customs and belief, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group" (Hornby 373). This definition clearly shows culture is nothing but a way of life of some particular region and one should follow all the norms and conditions of that region.

Today we are living in the twenty first century, because of the revolution in information and technology and effect of globalization world has become a global village and it has helped us to understand the cultures of different nations i.e. through the study of literature.

Women and culture are inter-related, if one wants to study the culture of any nation, one should study about woman of that country, and it is impossible to complete the study of culture without studying woman. Culture determines the nature and character of writing. Elaine Showalter remarks in this connection, "Indeed, a theory of culture incorporates ideas about women's body, language, and psyche but interprets them in relation to the social contexts in which they occur. The ways in which women

conceptualize their bodies and their sexual and reproductive functions are intricately linked to their cultural environments. The female psyche can be studied as a product or construction of cultural forces” (Kumar 14). Language tag is shaped by cultural ideas. Woman writers differ culturally, racially, nationally and historically. All these factors influence literature. Female cultural experience differs from the male cultural experience.

A close scrutiny of the term ‘Feminism’ - woman’s voice against injustice and inequality, tends to unfold the fact that feminism is the result of the culture or of the society shaped and governed by men to suit their needs and interests regardless of women’s basic needs and happiness. Feminism became conspicuous for the first time in the eighteenth century, its seeds are as old as human race. We may also see women’s voice in the religious roots also.

“Just because I am a woman, must I therefore believe that I must not tell you about the goodness of God?” asked the English woman Julian of Norwich in the early 15th century. She marveled that “he who was her maker chose to be born of the creature that is made.” Moreover she argued:

Our saviour is our true mother in whom we are eternally born and by whom we shall always be enclosed... we are redeemed by the motherhood of mercy and grace... to the nature of motherhood belong tender love, wisdom and knowledge, and it is good, for although the birth of our body is only low, humble and modest compared with the birth of our soul, yet it is he who does it in the beings by women it was done. (Walter-7)

So, like this Julian of Norwich rebels against the fathers of the Church, who have not allowed them to speak about religion and God. From this we may see how women suffered in the patriarchal society.

By late sixteenth century, increasing number of women were beginning to argue their case more consistently and more aggressively, though still within a religious framework. The reformation enabled more women to receive education. In 1589, Jane Anger took up challenging position by insisting that Eve was superior to Adam : a second, and hence an improved, model. Whereas Adam was fashioned from ‘dross and filthy clay,’ God made Eve from Adam’s flesh, that she might be purer than he, which doth evidently show how for women are more excellent than men. From woman sprang man’s salvation. A woman was the first that believed, a woman likewise was the first that repented of sin. Anger then descends crossly, and comically, to everyday domestic life. It is women, she reminds us, who make sure that men are fed, clothed, and cleaned: “Without our care they lie in their beds as dogs in litter, and go like lousy mackerel swimming in the heat of summer” (Walter 9). Like this they started to show their power against injustice and inequality of patriarchal system.

Religious heads tried to suppress women, they did not allow them to speak against religion and about church. Any woman wanting to defend her sex had to tackle powerfully negative scriptural images of women. Eve was directly responsible for the fall of the human race. Saint Paul was regularly invoked against any woman who spoke out, or asked awkward questions about the church’s attitude to women : “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it did not permit them to speak. If they want to learn anything let them ask their husbands at home : for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church.” (Walter 9).

Famous writer John Bunyan was totally opposed to this active participation by women, arguing that Satan, inevitably tempts the weaker Eve, rather than Adam : “Man was made the head in worship, and keeper of the garden of God,” he referred to women as “that simple and weak sex.” he argued that women are not the image and glory of god as men are. They are placed beneath. He disapproved of separate women’s meetings, which did nothing but encourage ‘unruliness’. In any public gathering, “Her part is to hold her tongue, to learn in silence.” (Walter 11).

Like this we may see men’s dominance over women in history. At every step men suppressed them, treated them as second rate gender. But gradually things have changed, woman started to ask the question, she started to fight against this evil practice. Simon de Beauvoir says, “one isn’t born a woman but rather becomes a woman : It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which is described as feminine” (Beauvoir 445). Like this everyone rebelled against patriarchal system.

Mary Wollstonecraft’s book *A Vindication of the Rights of a Women* is the first landmark which can be regarded as the manifesto of modern feminism. John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjections of Women* is a milestone of modern women’s path for emancipation, for self definition and self assertion. In the twentieth century Virginia Wolf can be regarded as the first avowed champion of feminism, *A Room of One’s Own* and her numerous essays are an open attack on orthodox society, which in her view, is the root cause of educational, economic and cultural backwardness. However, it was the *Second Sex* by the French woman writer Simon De Beauvoir, that brought about revolution and radical change in the western society, and thus it can be rightly regarded as the true foundation of the present day feminism. Kate Millet’s hard hitting

influential work *Sexual Politics* possess Freud's male prejudices and some novelists degrade and have presented women as object of sheer sexual gratification.

Western feminism has got lot of influence on Indian literature also. There are novels which deal with the subjects pertaining to the Indian scenes such as famines issues, joint family system, industrialization and superstition where woman is the victim of natural or man made cruelty, injustice and exploitation are seen in the novels of Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande. Ruth Praver Jhabvala deals with women as the central theme of her novels expressing her sensitive state of mind.

Jhabvala herself Polish-German by birth, when she was a child she migrated to England, she completed her education in London, that means she completed her adult life in England, and married an Indian and came to India in 1951. She spent twenty four years in this country and left India in 1975. Later she migrated to America and spent her remaining part of life there. She is having the first hand knowledge of all the traditions, customs and norms of all the four countries i.e. three continents and she has acknowledged this in her novels, and short stories and for this she has chosen woman as a protagonist. She concentrates more on women rather than men and there are no memorable male character in her works. Jhabvala has depicted the traditional life of the Indian women with all the taboos, inhibitions, oppressions, filth and squalor at large, and she also had depicted the predicament of the illusionary European women facing doom in Indian milieu and it has been articulated in her novels. Like this we may see woman as a cultural ambassador in most of her works.

To Whom She Will, is the first novel of Jhabvala, she was very much interested in the culture of our society for that she picks up woman

as her protagonist, through her she symbolically depicts Indian culture in her novels, and as a European she wrote mainly for Western readers and while writing about the Indians she kept in her mind Indian culture, but she stands outside the Indian society and acknowledges it as an outsider. In this novel she has depicted clash between tradition and modernism of Indian society.

Through the character of Amrita, Jhabvala has picturised the Indian culture to the outside world, and through the same character Jhabvala introduces the Western culture to Indian society. So, we may call Amrita a cultural ambassador; The whole story is about the marriage of Amrita. Amrita Chakravorty is a well educated Indian girl, who is the daughter of late Nirad Chakravorty, who was a freedom fighter and kind hearted person. He gave-up everything to the nation, went to prison and all these characters are inherited by Amrita. Radha her mother also followed her husband when he was alive, but after his death, she gave up all idealistic views and started leading materialistic life like her two sisters. Interesting fact is that, her marriage is a love marriage with Nirad. Her father Rai Bahadur didnot stop her in that matter and Radha lived separately with her daughter Amrita.

Amrita a 19 year old girl has a very sophisticated manner, she is well educated, very honest girl. When the novel opens she is working in New Delhi Radio Station as a part time announcer, she has adopted a very idealistic and modern way of life. She doesn't want to lead a rigid, old traditional way of life. She wants herself to get rid from all the clutches of society and at the same time she falls in love with Hari Sahni, a Punjabi poor boy, who is also working in the same station. Both are in love with each other. Here Jhabvala depicts how the Indian younger generation is enjoying freedom and she also depicts Amrita's Western way of life and

Hari's Indian tradition. Both are ashamed of their own class before each other. Hari was very much impressed by Amrita's ideas, her style, her behaviour, her Western attitude and her Western style of dressing, but on the contrary Amrita is attracted by Hari's simplicity which Hari tries to hide. For example, once in a restaurant, she told Hari that she liked him eating with his hands rather than with knife and fork.

Jhabvala concentrates much more on the place of woman in the family rather than men. In both the families woman was the head of the family, both their mothers are widows.

One is from upper middle class society, enjoying every bit of freedom and another one is from lower middle class society, which is depending on the earning of their son. In this situation the youngsters of the two families tried to come out from the tradition bound society but their elders didn't allow them, it is shown in the speech of Rai Bahadur, "But in your case, the margin, the discrepancy between the two families the young man's and your's is too wide. It is a gulf that I cannot find it in my conscience to allow you to bridge" (Jhabvala, *To Whom 7*).

Amrita grows mature as time passes and she gets herself prepared to rebel against her mother and grandfather because of her love for Hari. She planned to elope with Hari to England, when his grandfather planned to send him to England for higher education, but she lacked money, and this plan was also opposed by Radha. Here Jhabvala nicely portrays the Indian mothers' sentiment towards her daughter Radha, who objected that, if she went to England, How can she live without her? And how can she live without her mother? Who is going to take care of her? So she rejected the idea of her father. Her mother Radha and her aunts begin to search a socially acceptable suitor for her in India only. So in Indian culture parents show much more interest on their children from birth to

their marriage and even after that. Indian parents' mindset is that their children should obey their orders and they have very right to control them, they are very prejudiced about their life and parents have a misconception that, their children don't know anything about life and outside world. So, they should instruct them but they don't know that, it will be irritating to their children, and if it is a female child, they take special care of her, in every aspect of her life they interfere. And if children do not obey their orders they feel insulted, Radha scolds her daughter like this, Radha regrets the way her daughter is being nurtured, and feels her daughters expensive education was waste. She feels that instead of education Amrita would have been married of quickly after fifteen.

Amrita was very strict in her decision, she also bursts out and tells her mother scolding that, "Everybody is always telling us to be emancipated, to be like European women; but when we try to be they are shocked and say we are behaving badly" (Jhabvala, *To Whom* 49). So like this the Indian daughter expresses her sad feelings and contemporary situation. Jhabvala was very much interested in Indian family life and about the relation between the family members, which is pride of India, because we the Indians are very sentimental one, we don't want to harm any one, Indian parents always think about their children, and the same happens in this novel. Though it may irritate the children, their only intention is to settle their childrens in a well manner, Jhabvala picturises the Indian parents who are traditionalist as well as modern one's. Nirad was a good educated and moralistic person, who has a good name and fame but Hari Sahni does not posses these qualities. Parents only concern is future of their children, Jhabvala has depicted all these aspects in her novel.

Jhabvala stayed in Delhi for a long time. She has depicted the Indian women's culture and tradition ironically, as a woman it was easy for her to understand the Indian women's feminine sensibility. Indian woman is always in dilemma whether to go with modern or to stick to the tradition, this is clearly shown in Amrita's words. When she was going to meet Hari's sister Prema, she states :

She may think I am very spoilt and westernized and affected ; because my family has made me like that... I am afraid that your sister will despise that, and so she will not be able to like me. O Hari, often I worry about it, and then I am so grateful to you for not despising me for using knife and fork and speaking a lot in English and having been educated in a convent and at Lady Wilmot College. (Jhabvala, *To Whom* 24)

Here Jhabvala shows us how the blind following of Western education and Western way of life spoils the culture of Indian girl as Amrita agrees herself in the above para, and Amrita thinks that Prema is well cultured and she hates the Western attitude. Here Jhabvala shows us the inner conflicts of Amrita about the traditions and culture, through this Jhabvala teaches the younger generation not to follow any culture blindly, and she also wants to show us the conflict between the East and the West. Amrita was very much fearful about Prema's reaction, by irony of situation Prema is influenced by Western society. Basically Prema was from joint family, she knows the value of relations in the family better than Amrita, but after getting married to a rich man Suri, she got changed, living alone in a big house made her to change, by watching the television and by reading the magazines, her way of thinking changed. Jhabvala very keenly describes about the decoration of Indian house, we may see this in the description of Prema's house. One of the important thing about

Jhabala is that she writes the situation as if we are feeling this and sometimes she mocks the pseudo-modernism also:

A fan turned softly from the ceiling, not really necessary in that cool room but providing a sweet titillating breeze. An enormous Persian carpet covered the marble floor; it was patterned all over with tiny flowers in pink and green and blue, dainty and fresh and poignantly artificial. There was a a long low cabinet, with bronze grillwork twisting behind the glass front, and on it a tea-set, red and gold, fine as breath, curved shallow cups with long handles pointing upwards. (Jhabvala, *To Whom* 25)

Like this Prema arranged her house for a meeting with Amrita, but Amrita was shocked to see this because she expected simple and natural way of life. Prema did not want to show herself was a backward woman. Jhabvala here shows the second face of a woman. How a woman behaves with the upper class woman, and how she behaves with the same class woman Prema decorated her house for meeting with Amrita but, the same Prema did not make any arrangements for the meeting with the same class woman Sushila. Both eat sweets, hold hands and understand each other perfectly. Jhabvala narrates it beautifully.

Prema told her everything : about the complexities of a woman's life and deep silent suffering that was her lot; and men's selfishness and their brutality; about the aching heart in the midst of splendor; about the cost of the dinning-room furniture; about Suri, a lot about Suri and then, above all, about Prema. (Jhabvala, *To Whom* 90)

How Indian women share all their feelings with other woman is described beautifully by the novelist. One of the most important thing about Indian cultures is that, in Indian society everybody thinks that everyone is his family member, whoever they may be, either a neighbour

or a stranger. Indians consider them as their family member, they believe in 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam' philosophy. Jhabvala discusses sorrows, problems and silent sufferings of woman, and she also explores how the male dominated society rule woman and this is very much clear from the character of Suri. She condemned the Indian patriarchal society.

Hari is living in an orthodox family and he is the source for his family, if he goes to England with Amrita, who will look after his family? This question arises in his mind but he doesn't have guts to say this to Amrita and at the same time his family searched a girl for him and even his sister Prema also disapproves Amrita. So, he gradually shifted his attention to Sushila from Amrita and at last he married Sushila. Jhabhvala shows the real problems of life. He is ready to accept Amrita but when he faces the real problems, his family comes first to his mind because his family is not economically sound as Amritas's is. For Indians family plays a very important role, there is lot of sentiment between each family member no one can break this easily. Indians give more importance to relation than money.

It was not surprising to Amrita when she came to know about the engagement of Hari and Sushila, because she understands the problems of each other, she understands the economic problem of Hari and she also faces the class problem, so she also gradually shifted her love to Krishna, who is a lodger, of her house, though she doesn't like him in the beginning. Basically he is from high class family and a well educated person and working as a lecturer, and he was a foreign returned one, when he came back from foreign, he was very much feeling sad about the Indian culture, about beggars and the servants. He comments on everything he sees around but gradually his ideas change, after four years of stay in India, he adopted the Indian way of life and before coming to

India he always praised the English women, he had great appreciation for their speech and behaviour, they were more conscious of their sex and more confident in their dealing with men. His initial opinion about Amrita is prudish and silly. Though they lived under the same roof he ignored her but gradually when time passed, he showed much interest in her, we may see this in his behavior:

....the memory of the kind of women he had learnt to like was fading. Perhaps even he was beginning to find that, like many other ideas and memories he had brought with him, she was an anomaly in these surroundings : certainly whenever he saw an Indian or Eurasian woman behaving with the freedom of a European one, he experienced a feeling of distaste. But Amrita's shy, smile, her soft voice, her hands fluttering from out of her sari, these belonged; and what formerly he had characterized as prudery, he now thought of as a natural, a very fitting, reticence. (Jhabvala, *To Whom* 109-10)

Such was his personality, his behaviour has been changed when he left Amrita's house for some time, Amrita was feeling lonely. Amrita notices that it is not Hari and the fear of losing him that is occupying her thoughts, but Krishna and the letter that he has not written, like this she falls in love with him and ultimately she finds a husband, who understands her best and loves a lot. Besides Hari finds joy in his arranged marriage and Radha was pleased about the match that has been just arranged through mutual understanding. Hadyn Moore Williams rightly pointed about this, "In this way the tradition of arranged marriage is reconciled with romantic love" (Williams 14).

Jhabvala in her first novel *To Whom She Will* gives much importance to female characters, through these characters she reveals the Indian culture, and from these characters only she teaches some lessons,

which have affected the Indian culture, for example blind following of Western society and she also condemns the evil followings of our culture. Amrita, Radha and Prema are the main three woman characters and from each character Jhabvala picturises the tradition and norms of our society. As an outsider she writes as it is, to some extent she praises the character and in some cases she comments on them, critically evaluating the social norms. As a woman and ambassador of culture she did her best to portray the woman characters. Jhabvala treats the character Amrita as an Ambassador of an Indian culture. In the changing time Indian women have occupied central place. Their views on cultural aspects have drastically changed, Amrita is one such woman who tries to lead an independent life. Jhabvala makes her an Ambassador of changing Indian time and women.

The Nature of Passion is the second novel of Jhabvala, in this novel she has focused all her attention on joint family system. Taking a single joint family, she elaborates the characters, Jhabvala clearly displays the role of a woman in Indian joint family and she also depicts how the patriarchal society dominated over female emancipation. This novel shows how the younger generation especially woman depend on older generation. Here in this novel Jhabvala discusses the problems and sufferings and also the traditional bound society. In the 1960's family played an important role in every sphere of life. In Indian culture family has its own importance, and in the contemporary situation no one can deny the family.

The novel *The Nature of Passion* opens with the birth of a female baby, Lalaji's eldest son Om's wife gave birth to female child in a nursing home and Lalaji is very happy to hear this news and he exclaimed that one more angel to their house has arrived and he ordered everyone to

visit the nursing home with sweets, but Om himself is not interested to visit, but Lalaji's wife takes leadership and visits and nursing home, here in this novel Jhabala wants to show us the reactions, after the birth of female baby, here is an evil-practice that if a girl is born, many hate it because Indians give much preference to a son. There is a misconception that son will take care of their parents in future, if a girl is born, it is sin, parents have to spend a lot for her marriage. So, Indians prefer son. That's what we may see in the reaction of Om, who is the father of that baby and here Jhabvala also shows how the family support a mother. If a woman is carrying, family takes special care of her, through this incident Jhabvala shows merits and demerit of Indian culture.

Nimmi, a younger daughter of Lalaji is the protagonist of the novel, who is trying to come out from the convention ridden and tradition bound society to an open, uninhibited society free from the shackles of social customs. This hot blooded girl is very bold and is studying English literature in a college, she was very much affected by Western culture, she is dreaming to lead western way of life and by her dressing pattern she showed herself as a modern woman. She got freedom to go to college and she is enjoying adulterous life because her so called modernistic father Lalaji gave her a freehand, though there is opposition in the house for her education. Irony of the situation is that women of her family only opposed her education, but Lalaji sends her to college, for that we may not call Lalaji as a good humorous person, he was a practical business person. He knows how to control all the family members.

Whereas his attitude towards women is conservative and degrading one. His attitude towards his wife is not of any emotional type but he needs her there to perform her duties of a wife. In other words, his wife is treated by Lalaji as merely another possession that he has acquired. He

believes that whether a household is rich or poor, the life of a woman is always the same. Women have a life apart in the courtyard and have to look after children and do cooking, his opinion about women is revealed in his speech only:

Women lived a life apart. They sat together in the inner courtyard and saw to the cooking and the children. This way's right, this was as it should be. A family was not a family, a home not a home, unless there is a women's quarter... Demure daughters-in-law, Stern mothers-in-law, widowed aunts, all pounding spices, shifting rice, scolding servants, washing babies... these constituted the necessary, if unconsidered background to a man's life. (Jhabvala, *Passion* 148-49)

Jhabvala throws light on how the Indian women were chained in the name of tradition and culture, women's exploitation is clearly revealed in this novel. Like Lalaji, who gave freedom to woman and gave them a separate room, he restricted them also, though he provides everything they wanted but he keeps them in between four walls only. He also opines that her duty is to maintain the household works, sifting rice, scolding servants, washing babies, this type of attitude he has towards woman, and the same is inherited by Om also, who was the true follower of his father, though he belongs to next generation his ideas have not changed, pointing to his six-year old child he says :

When she is seven, I will find a good husband and betroth her. Then she can come back to the house and learn from her mother and aunts to make chapattis and mango pickle. When she has learnt that well, and also how to manage servants and children, she can go to her husband's house and be credit to use there. (Jhabvala, *Passion* 16)

Like this he also inherited his fathers nature, from all this we come to know that, woman is a burden to the family and every parent tries to send her to husband's house as soon as possible, it is their primary duty. Though child marriage is an offence, in the contemporary situation it is still practiced, without changing the mindset of the people, no rule can change the society. One sad thing is that Indian parents spend more money for their childrens' marriage than on their education, and Jhabvala ironically has discussed this in her novel. Now the situation has changed. India is making progress in this direction.

Lalaji's youngest daughter Nimmi is exploited by her friend Rajen, who is from high class society. Nimmi wears fine fashionable clothes, she wants to show herself as a modern lady, she visits the clubs secretly and wishes to go abroad, dreams about luxurious life. Nimmi claims to be superior but her standards are superficial, and she also wants to avoid arranged marriage, that is what we see in her dialogue:

I will never say 'yes' if they come to me with a husband they have kindly found for me. On the contrary I will tell them : Thank you, I am grateful to you for your trouble, but if you do not mind I will find my own husband, this is a work I will do for myself.
(Jhabvala, *Passion* 154)

She also chooses a boyfriend, who is a Parsi, Pheroze Batliwala, she was very much curious about love than affection. She started roaming with him, and there was a true lover. When Pheroze kisses her in the moon-light at Kutub Minar, she thinks of every other thing except love. She kept her eyes wide open and thought, kissing and hugging is a western way of life which is not approved in India and even the elders don't like this in the west everything what women do is approved because there is a free society where is men and women mix without any

hesitation. The culture of the west does give a positive nod to this. For her love is just a curiosity, not serious and on one occasion she cuts her hair which creates a big problem in her house, everyone scolds her, she doesn't care about them. She defends herself as her sister-in-law Kanta does. This Victorian type girl wants to be a modern one and achieve something. She is ready to take all the aggressive steps.

When her love affair is reported by Shanta's mother that Nimmi had been seen going around with a Parsi boy in a night club, the parents of woman boil over, in her family Lalaji is at once summoned from the office alongwith Om. Disgrace has fallen on Lalaji's family because Nimmi is eighteen years old and no husband was found for her. Phuphiji, widowed sister of Lalaji cries vengefully, "a girl of that age has no right to enjoy herself! she should be managing a household and bringing children and looking after a husband; Lalaji responds with mild pity, 'It will come to her soon enough'" (Jhabvala, *Passion* 164). All the women requested Lalaji to take away the girl from college, their intention is to make her stay in women's quarter. We see the indifferent attitude of Lalaji and Om's towards women, but in this scene women of the family only suppressed the woman. The old traditional women Phuphiji and wife of Lalaji did not want to send Nimmi to college. They gave much importance to family reputation than to the feelings of Nimmi.

Jhabvala describes how all the family members were accustomed to old ways, they have a fear of danger of spreading news and her name being maligned. So the only thing to do is to find a husband quickly, at once, before the canter spreads. A husband is found. In this relation also Lalaji's business mind works, he found a husband for Nimmi from the rich Happy Hindustan family, which is also a business family, from this relation Lalaji will get twenty five lakhs business contract. So this is also

one of the reasons to fix the marriage. Nimmi agrees to it after few initial fanciful bursts of ideas like running away and becoming a teacher. Rishi Pal Singh rightly pointed, “there are two reasons for Nimmi’s submission to her family’s wish. The first is her disappointment with her lover Pheroze who sends her congratulations on her engagement. She is unable to comprehend this behaviour of her sweetheart lover that he should be willing to lose her together” (Singh 30). On this Nimmi takes a practical view of this frivolous romance. Moreover, it is worth observing in Nimmi that her claims for superiority and her own standards are superficial; she plans merely to be more fashionable and to marry someone better – looking. Like this Nimmi changed her mindset and agreed to marry Kuku, this proposal is made by her parents like this in this novel nothing strange happens like the earlier novel ‘all is well that ends well.’

Jhabvala shows that some of the girls have tried to rebel against their tradition but they have failed and invariably in the same novel we came to know that one lady succeeds in that i.e. Kanta, wife of Chandra, who is the second son of Lalaji.

Both Chandra and Kanta live a liberal life, going away from Lalaji’s house. Both are educated, come from different classes, yet they have good co-ordination and understanding. Though Chandra is a gazetted officer and earns handsome salary he is not independent in terms of money due to luxurious life, he is forced to come under influence of Lalaji. Lalaji supports him economically. Adding to this, his wife Kanta also leads a luxurious life. She throws parties, decorates house and sends her children to English Medium Schools to maintain her modern style of life. Both hate Lalaji for various reasons, yet they can’t come out of Lalaji’s control due to their dependency over him.

Both Nimmi and Kanta play an important role in the novel. Nimmi loved a person and married another one but Kanta married the person whom she loved because both are educated, both understand each other. Jhabvala shows the two faces of the Indian culture, here it is some people who are following blind traditions, practicing social evils and in the same nation there are people, who are leading a care free life and it shows that India is changing from old customs to the new tradition, for showing this Jhabvala depicts Delhi society as greedy and self-indulgent. According to Ralph J Crane :

It is perhaps a sad reflection on the India Jhabvala presents in this novel that behind the obvious vitality and appeal of her characters lie selfishness and corruption from businessmen to government officers, even to the would be artists in the coffee shops. (Crane 25)

As a foreigner Jhabvala presents India as a developing country but not as a developed one because this novel was written in 1956, in the contemporary situation India was like that, but now the things have changed. Jhabvala depicts the Indian culture as it is, food system, clothes, interior decoration of house, streets, coffee shops, cinema theatres, government offices, colleges, clubs etc., and she depicts women as the ambassadors of all these culture in this novel, either Nimmi or Amrita are the representatives. And remaining characters Shanta's mother, Lakshmi, Phuphiji, Lalaji's wife, Rani, Shanta and Usha are under the influence of Lalaji. Through the character of Lalaji Jhabvala forcefully underlines the subservient position of woman in Indian social set-up as :

A woman is a woman and her duties in life are very different from the duties of a man.... it is a woman's fate leave the house of her father and go to a husband's house, to bear his children, to look to the comfort's of his family. (Jhabvala, *Passion* 112)

In the same novel Jhabvala shows some optimistic views through the character of Kanta, who succeeded in her love, and enjoys the freedom. Jhabvala's keen observation and awareness of life in Indian society combined with her critical acumen results in the authentic portrayal of the day-to-day life of individuals in different predicaments. She is especially aware of the position of woman in Indian family.

In 1957 Jhabvala apart from her earlier subjects like joint families arranged marriages, conflict between children and parents, she focuses on the Westerners in India, in her famous novel *Esmond in India*. From this novel we may see her changed ideas from comic to satirical. In this novel she depicts the clash between two cultures and traditions. Esmond is the protagonist of the novel. Gulab and Shakuntala are the two most important women characters in the novel. Jhabvala throws light on merits and demerits of both the cultures i.e. India and England and she also takes up the theme of socio-political change in the post-independent India. Like her earlier novels, women's play a very important role in the novel and they are the representatives of the culture. Novel is set in Delhi, after ten years of Independence, life is adjusted to the realities of 'Swaraj'. Britishers were not the rulers but visitors, some did not go back to England among them Esmond is also one, he stayed in India and is working as a guide to the foreigners about Indian tradition, culture and customs and he also gives lectures and also attends the parties, thrown by the English ladies. Through this character Jhabvala depicts the Western materialistic culture and their impact on Indians.

Gulab and Shakuntala are the two female characters, from these characters, Jhabvala pictures two faces of Indian culture, one is his wife and another one later becomes his girlfriend. Irony is that Esmond loves both of them. At the very outset of the novel, we come to know that, he

falls in love with an Indian beauty Gulab and marries her. But Esmond and Gulab proved to be as incompatible with each other as their cultures. They have been married for five years, at early years it was good and fun but when the time passes, it was difficult for them to live under a same roof because of their different culture and tradition, and they have a son Ravi. Ravi becomes a matter of dispute between them. Esmond wants him to follow the western tradition, and to be fed on boiled English food, on the contrary, Gulab true to her tradition, she wants to give him spicy and oily Indian dis:

While Gulab liked to eat the hot, spicy food with her fingers sitting on the floor, he (Esmond) Sat at his smart little dinning table in his smart dining corner eating his cheese salad. Everthing on the table was colorful and modern... It was very different from Gulab's spicy meal eaten on the floor out of brass bowls. (Jhabvala, *Esmond* 32-33)

Like this both are living in a separate style under the same roof. Esmond is trying to dominate his ideas over Gulab and he also hates the smell of Indian food so much so that he prefers the smell of DDT. Through the character of Gulab, Jhabvala shows the Indian culture, traditions and customs. She was beautiful and well cultured one, she was very much the follower of her mother Uma, who sticts to tradition. Gulab loves Ravi, she cared him very much, she kissed him again and again, put lot of oil in his fair, combed him and dressed him in Indian style and she also slept with him only. But it was restricted by Esmond, he wants his son to sleep in a separate bed. Here we may see the cultural conflicts. In Indian culture parent love their children, they take special care of them in every aspect of their life. Children are the future for Indians. The bondage between children and parents plays an important role in Indian culture.

Gulab is an Indian beauty who stands for upholding the cultural values of India. She is literally a true cultural ambassador who knows how to behave with her husband and others in the Indian context. As she was brought up in India she married husband out of love not out of compulsion. In India women respect their head of the family along with the husband whom she thinks as her living God. As a true Indian wife she tolerates everything only for the sake of her son Ravi. She is an genuine example of a married Indian women, ready to sacrifice everything. After marriage her only solace is her husband. In India women do not think of any other man which is a common factor in the West. She whole heartedly gives everything to her husband.

In the mean time, he is attracted towards Shakuntala, who is the daughter of a rich man Har Dayal, who is a very important man in upper middle class society of Delhi. Shakuntala is a fashionable, romantic and modern girl, she is enjoying every bit of freedom, she is a liberated girl because in her house everything is provided to her, her father Har Dayal is very important person, who is full of modern ideas, he is educated abroad, all the businessman and politicians regularly visited his house. Though he did not participate in the freedom movement, he has not give up anything, he did not go to jail also. He is enjoying freedom more than anybody else. On contrary Ramnath friend of Har Dayal participated in freedom movement, went to jail and, he gave up everything during the freedom struggle, he is leading an idealistic life, no one cares about him.

Shakuntala seems as an oasis to Esmond in his dry life in India. She happened to meet him in a cocktail party. Jhabvala defines Shakuntala's craze for experiencing the life of freedom and romance. Shakuntala is much interested in Esmond. Their affair develops and only a few days later she wishes to relish the company of Esmond in

loneliness. Shakuntala thinks of divorce of Esmond and Gulab the perfect answer to her hope to marry her English lover. Fearlessly holding his hand in a crowded shopping street, Shakuntala still undeceived by reality, tells herself that she knows life to be wonderful, a hundred times even more wonderful than she had expected. She is utterly slavish with a desire to be enthralled by this man of her choice. She says to Esmond :

Esmond, I know you are married and also you have a child, but I tell you all this means nothing to me. Only I know you have come in my life and now it my duty to give everything I have to you, to adore you and to serve you and to be your slave. (Jhabvala, *Esmond* 148)

But all her romantic dreams are destined to be shattered because tradition still dominated in so-called modern household of her father. The six months of her glorious freedom she enjoyed since her graduation, are about to end in a traditional turn as she is to enter in a socially approved marriage bond with the Harvard- returned son of her father's friend. Like this so-called modern girl left Esmond. Jhabvala ironically shows how the modern girls are affected by Western culture; Even Gulab is affected the Western influence through Esmond. the dreams of Indian women are shattered as they don't find proper place.

One afternoon, in the absence of Esmond, a servant tried to molest Gulab, he puts his hand on her breasts, she revolted against this, she kicked him out of her house and decided to leave Esmond. She went back to her mother's house. Gulab almost instinctively accepts the code of conduct for Indian wives as it is stipulated in the holy books of Hindus. :

It was a husband's right... to do whatever he liked with his wife, he could treat her well or badly, pamper her or beat her - that was upto him, and it was not her place to complain. But in return there was

one thing, only one, that he owed her, and that was protection. It was his duty to see that she was safe in his house and that no stranger could cast insulting eyes on her. Esmond had failed in this duty; So now he was no more her husband. Now she his wife : since she considered herself defiled, she could not remain in his house any longer but had to return, as was the custom, to her own people. (Jhabval, *Esmond* 199-200)

Through this Jhabvala shows how the Indian culture is strong enough. Though the Indian wives are obedient to their husbands, they do not hesitate to revolt against them, if he failed in his duty. Now Esmond is alone, and he is planning to go back to England and get settled there only. Sad thing is that, he is not worrying about Gulab, he is only dreaming about England. Western men can marry twice or thrice but it is very hard for a woman to marry second time especially for Indian woman who may not get ready to marry second time because marriage is a holy thing in Indian culture. Gulab is ready to lead her remaining life with her son Ravi. Like this Gulab wins the heart of the reader.

Agarwal rightly pointed that, “Jhabvala’s understanding of Indian women is greater than her understanding of Indian men of all the Indo-Anglian and Anglo-Indian novelists. She alone has been able to depict their excessive possessiveness, bickering and domineering nature, their greed and soft headedness” (Agarwal 5). Uma, after the death of her husband, lives only to feed her daughter. There is not a moment in her life when she is not thinking of Gulab. She thinks Gulab should leave her husband and come back to her. Laxmi is all the time fretting about her son Narayan, and scolds her husband for squandering away all the family property, Madhuri keeps asking her husband about her son Raj, who is at Cambridge. These women are like tigresses guarding their children and

they are all tremendously possessive. These all women are the ambassadors of our culture. Though good or bad everybody cares their children.

Rishi Pal Singh rightly pointed about the novel, “Like Jhabvala’s previous two novels, this also depicts a mental and physical bondage of Indian women that is for more difficult for them to break in spite of all desires for freedom and excitements for self-realisation” (Singh 35). Gulab and Shakuntala have left mere conventions behind them in their expression of love yet, they appear to be more effectively bound by their upbringing, social restraints and innate Indian sensibility than by any formal rule of Purdah. Jhabvala was well aware of all this.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s next novel *The Householder* was published in 1960. For the first time Jhabvala throws light on the lower middle class society of India. The theme of the novel is not a serious one, it is typical domestic comedy. Jhabvala shows how the typical lower middle class persons struggle for existence. Here only two important woman characters are shown, one is Indu, wife of Prem and another is Prem’s mother. In this novel Jhabvala discusses about the child marriages and their effects, the clash between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and also the role of women in a mans life. Again the novel is set in Delhi, for the first time Jhabvala took man as the protagonist of the novel i.e. Prem. Jhabvala shows how these two women played an important role in his life.

The reckoning economical condition of Prem is dominant throughout the novel. His every activity of life is determined by his earning and expenditure. Being a Hindi lecturer, he earns little money, of which major portion is spent on house rent so he is. He comments about marriage as:

Here in our India... it is so that while we are still children and know nothing of what we want, they take us and tie us up with a wife and children.... When we are old enough to know what the world is and God is, then it is too late, for we have a burden on our back which we cannot shake off for the rest of our days. (Jhabvala, *Householder* 27)

Jhabvala comments on the evil practice of child marriage that is so harmful to our society. Prem wants to lead life like his father, who was the principal in the college of Ankhpur. He had been a strict disciplinarian, committed to orthodox way of life and had much hold on his family, he was a typical Indian father of contemporary times, everyone feared him, even his mother is very submissive to his father, everyone tried to keep him happy. Like this Prem wants to lead life like his papa but he failed because Prem and Indu are little more than children and he is not economically good. Prem applies ancient rules. He hates her for sleeping without serving him... “It was not right for a wife to go to sleep before she had served her husband, however late he might come. He considered for a moment whether to wake her up and tell her so. But he did not feel angry enough for that” (Jhabvala, *Householder* 46). Like this Prem wants Indu to follow him like his wish. Indu is a well cultured woman, who knows the faults and problems of Prem very well so she tried to help him in every step, and she doesn't order him to buy anything for her as a typical Indian wife does, she just followed him though she doesn't know much about outside world. She frequently goes to the parties and marriages with Prem. She bears everything i.e. Prem's dominance. As a typical wife she did everything to him and she also suggests, they need no servants, there is no enough work for them, but Prem rejects this idea because he thought that having servants is dignity

to his family, in this matter Indu was more down to earth than Prem. She is a mixture of weak as well as strong, she is obedient to him, she prepares the food before he came to the house though she is pregnant, it made Prem more worried, though it is a good news, he is worried about the expenditures. She is strong enough to show her disgust feelings, when she is ready to go to her fathers house, Prem said no, but when he went to college, she left the house leaving him alone i.e. without intimating him, like this she protests some of his ideas. Jhabvala shows how one woman feels if she left her husband for some time, because Indu was feeling guilty and when she was away from him, she was thinking more about him only. So she came back to him, this shows the love between husband and wife and when Prem's mother came to their house, she shows much respect to her as in Indian culture daughter-in-law should obey mother-in-law, in this way she abides the rules framed by Prem's mother and in the end Indu and Prem became more serious than they were earlier, both have a good understanding and are satisfied, like this Indus character thoroughly shows the culture and beliefs of Indian domestic life, as an Indian woman she silently suffered and wins the heart of the reader.

Another important female character in this novel is Prem's mother, who is an old traditioned woman, who always expects that Prem should be with her only. She always cursed the wife of Prem, in each and every step she condemned Indu, as per her she isn't a good pair to him. But still Indu respects her. It may irritate them but it was the concern about her son and his family. Though Jhabvala has portrayed the character of Prem's mother as a bad one, it is the custom of Indian tradition that elders of the family teach the youngsters by commenting, by pointing out their faults, mother-in-law guides her daughter-in-law, and when Prem could not bear this insult he tactfully removed his mother from his house to his

sisters house in Bangalore. Here Jhabvala portrays the clash between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, and through this she depicts the culture of Indian domestic society.

Prem ultimately realizes that it is better to be a good householder though it is not easy. He discovers the value of his wife Indu. Rishi Pal Singh states, “The novel moves towards a resolution that woman is the pivotal figure in a household provided man proves his manliness in managing resources, fulfilling sexual needs and catering to emotional desires without any intrusion or authoritarian hold on her” (Singh 39). Prem and Indu feel the need of mutual belonging for an integrated existence. However, on the surface *The Householder* confirms to a comic pattern since it is a story dealing with youthful vitality, idealism, fancies and frustrations of an Indian middle class couple.

1975 was the most important year in the life of Ruth Praver Jhabavala and also in the history of Indian literature. Because in the year she published the novel *Heat and Dust* and for this novel she got ‘Booker Prize’ and became famous worldwide, and second important thing is that, she left India. She shifts her house from New Delhi to New York, like this her journey in India for twenty five years gets completed. This novel became famous because of its style, technique and for its story. In this novel Jhabvala picturises the history that is of the fifty years story, and another one is from the contemporary situation, one more important thing is that there are two heroines in this novel and both are foreigners. Through these visitors Jhabvala built the story and she focuses more about India and Indian society.

In her earlier novels we may see two or three families, but in this novel taking two foreign women she elaborates the climate, customs and traditions of India, and through these characters only she also depicts the

western culture also. As Hemalata Singh rightly pointed, ‘Being a European and writing about India, Jhabvala was well familiar with the European as well as Indian trends of literature. Hence her mode of expression is a queer blending of two trends of literature. Besides her Indian readers, as a writer, she is deeply conscious of her western readers too and this awareness has profoundly affected her craft of fiction’ (Hemalata Singh 428). In the novel *Heat and Dust*, Jhabvala picturises the Indian society of Pre-Independence (1923) and also Post-Independence days (1973). So, in this novel we may see the influence of her experience with films. The technique used in writing the novel *Heat and Dust* has been given a cinematographic approach where extensive use of flashbacks has been utilized between i.e. the pendulum shifts between the periods of 1920’s and 1970’s, about this Meenakshi Mukherjee comments, “The two streams of the story are juxtaposed as if in an editing room of a film studio where the available material is cut, trimmed and shuffled to make a contrastive pattern.” (Mukherjee 131).

The novel is brilliantly interlocked in the form of the diary of the unnamed narrator, an English woman, she has come to India with a view to solve the enigma of the story of Olivia, her grandfather’s first wife. Jhabvala portrays the sad and touching story of these two women of two different generations, who come to India and become victims. The narrator’s grandfather Douglas Rivers was a British ICS officer in the Colonial India. Olivia comes to India in 1923 after marrying Douglas Rivers, Olivia is very young, honest and beautiful lady and also kind hearted. After marrying Douglas, she was kept in a house, because Douglas is very strict, honest and hard worker more importantly he is a British officer, who works only in the favour of his government, in his busy schedule, he doesn’t give much time to his young wife Olivia. She is

enjoying all the comforts which were provided to her, her house is cool and calm whereas outside it is very hot but she is feeling lonely in that house, she is fed up with her classical life style, she wants freedom, she wants to go outside. She wants to mingle with everyone but it was restricted because her husband is an ICS officer. Irony of the situation is that, Indians were fighting for freedom in the contemporary situation from the Britishers. But, whereas the British woman Olivia is also expecting freedom from her British ICS husband. Everyone appreciates Douglas because of his work. He earned lot of name and fame in colonial India but his wife's opinion is different from others, she says:

Douglas had finished his breakfast and now lit his morning pipe (he smoked a pipe almost constantly now). He puffed at it as slowly and stolidly as he had eaten. She had always loved him for these qualities - for his imperturbability, his English solidness and strength; his manliness. But now she suddenly thought : What manliness? He can't even me get pregnant, she cried 'must you smoke that dashed pipe? In this heat? (Jhabvala, *Heat* 116)

Olivia is trapped in the bungalow in hot summer afternoon behind closed down windows and she was fed of this life, at that time Nawab is introduced to her, though he is a strange to her, his style of speaking, his wit, his sense of humour influenced her and sometimes she also went to his palace. The Nawab is a man who appears as a promising oasis for Olivia to come out of stagnant boredom in British aristocracy. He and Olivia recognize in each other a kindred spirit and mutual need in order to explore some romantic possibility, which is needed to push of the drabness of the ordinary world. Olivia does not like the English community at Satipur and remains shut up all day, she develops an intimate friendship with Harry, who is male companion of Nawab and he

tells all about Nawab to Olivia that he is very strong person, very manly and strong. When he wants something, nothing must stand in his way. Never; ever. He is been the Nawab since he was fifteen (his father died suddenly of a stroke). So he always ruled, you see; always been the ruler.

Olivia is the true ambassador of two cultures. She knows the Western culture because she is born and brought up in that culture only and when she comes to India she was fascinated by the Indian culture, when the matter of Sati comes, she is in favour of Indian culture. Her attitude to the natives is radically different from the others in her community, it is partly a result of her innate goodness and partly a consequent of her ignorance of the people and customs of India. She develops a critical attitude towards her community and her husband, who is leading materialistic life, ignoring the feelings and customs of Indians. Olivia is different because she is capable of negotiating with the world alien to her. She is not prejudiced like the other British people by racial and political considerations, she has an optimistic views about human relationships. We may see this by her statement, "I don't know India. It's true I don't but, what's that got to do with it? People still can be friends... even if it is India" (103).

Though Sati system is an evil practice, Olivia supports the practice. She takes the most romantic view of the widow's self-sacrifice thinking it noble to go with the person she cares for most in the world. For this issue, She questioned the British Officers saying what right they have got, to meddle with the faith of the natives. She criticizes them for intervening with the religious customs and traditional practices.

It is a superb comment of Olivia, through this comment Jhabvala slaps the British rule and their over-dominating policy. This culture was practiced from ancient days. Though it was an evil practice, Olivia looked

it from the positive perspective that in the west no one has daring to follow her dead husband, she is amazed to see this and this practice shows that how much they loved their beloveds. She compares this to her husband and her opinion is that Britishers have no rights to interfere in Indian culture, they must respect the native culture, she saw the reasons behind the practice, she very much adored Indian culture. This shows that Jhabvala's characters are very much influenced by Indian culture.

Gradually Olivia turns to Nawab, who makes her happy with his presence, by making jokes, by taking her to outing, he makes her feel comfortable with him and he finds an opportunity to allure Olivia to Baba Firudas's fertility shrine, and it was a belief that if barren women go with a faith to get blessing for a son and heir she would get her wish fulfilled. In this place arousing the emotions of Olivia, Nawab seduced her. Olivia feels comfortable with him and this goes on and Douglas doesn't know about this, he is busy with his official works and in the mean time Olivia becomes pregnant, it shocked both Olivia and Nawab. The poor Olivia does not realize that she has become pregnant at a wrong time by a wrong man and in a wrong way, and Nawab advised her to abort the child. Jhabvala nicely portrayed the situation of Olivia, who is in the edge of the sword, she is totally in dilemma. Through this incident Jhabvala shows how the western women were seduced by rich Indian families. Finally Olivia agrees to abort for the fear that the baby might look like an Indian. We may see Jhabvala's creation of feelings and frustrations of the wife of British ICS officer.

Jhabvala not only depicts the merits of Indian culture, she also depicts blind traditions, which were so harmful to women. Sometimes women lost their life because of the worst and blind following of midwives. These midwives were experts in aborting the child, but their

performance while doing abortion is very cruel, and through the incident of Olivia's abortion, Jhabvala shows the exploitation and suffering of women physically as well as mentally.

As the abortion proceeds, the collective invasion of Olivia's body begins to take on the character of a gang-rape. Indeed Olivia experiences pain and bodily intrusion. She very curiously maintains eye-contact with the Begum who functions as a agent of the rape abortion:

The midwife with the twig came towards her, holding it. Olivia understood that it was to be introduced into herself. The two women opened Olivia's legs and one of them held on to her ankles while the other her to watch.... For a moment they gazed into each others eyes and then Olivia had to shut hers, as the pain down below was repeated. (Jhabvala, *Heat* 164)

It was very harassing and cruel one, giving birth is a holy thing in Indian culture but destroying is very cruel. One cannot tolerate all this. T. Muraleedharan states, "The low angled close-up of the begum presiding over the violent abortion performed on Olivia posits her as an incarnation of castrating energy - the power of destruction" (Muraleedharan 91).

Daglous Rivers left Olivia, he divorced her and being ruined she flees to the Nawab's palace from where she is probably made to leave for a secluded place in the Himalayas to live out a solitary life there as her penance. Through this Olivia's tragic life comes to an end, but Hyungji Park is of the opinion that she was morally dead in her abortion only ; "Olivia's abortion stands in for her rape - her symbolic and social death, her estrangement from the English community, the spark that causes great rifts in the British Vs. Indian worlds. By the end of the novel, just as Olivia has predicted, she does indeed die along with her baby, as she

undergoes a social /racial death following the death / abortion of her baby” (Park 41).

Apart from Olivia, narrator is the second most important character in the novel, who comes to India to reconstruct the life of her grandfather’s first wife Olivia, narrator comes to India in 1973, after fifty years of Olivia’s scandal, as Lourie Sucher said, “The story is again told from a woman’s point of view as it delineates the fatal consequences of the religious, erotic and the sentimental embrace of India by western women” (Sucher 102).

Young narrator is a woman, who belongs to modern age, good-educated, liberal-minded one, she comes from the England. We know that they are only visitors. This charming girl came to India to solve the enigma of Olivia’s scandal. Jhabvala by portraying the narrator, wants to show the post-Independence Indian life and how still foreigners come to India to seek spiritual enlightenment. The novelist shows how they became victimized in the Indian society, and through this novel, she mocks some superstitions, which are still practiced, and she also portrays the pride of Indian philosophy through the narrator.

The narrator comments, “India always changes people and I have been no exception” (05), with these emphatic words the narrator of Jhabvala’s most celebrated novel initiates the moving study of the theme which has been at the heart of all these novels of Indo-European phase.

The modern narrator also takes freedom of movement. In fact our narrator is everything that Olivia was not. If Olivia tried to create a little Europe in her house, the narrator tries to Indianize herself as much as possible, she is not prejudiced against the Indians. She has come to India to seek simpler and more natural way of life, she hates Olivia’s world of illusion. She mingles freely with natives, she tried to learn the native

language and dresses herself in Indian clothes and she also decided to have a child by Inder, instead of aborting like Olivia. Olivia stayed in India by necessity whereas the narrator chooses to because she is tired with western values, she likes Indians way of life, she is very down to earth character.

In the Post-Independence India, the mindset of people has got changed, they have adopted the modern ways of life, gradually things have changed, people are aware about the sick traditions and the result is that, the social evil *Suttee* custom has been abolished, but so many other superstitions are still practiced in modern India. Jhabvala gives the same old example which was practiced before independence i.e. Shrine of Baba Firudas, people think it is a miracle that there is a green grove and spring water near Baba Firudas's shrine, inspite of the area being a desert place. Muslim people believe that it is all due to Baba's holy life. And Hindus also worshipped him, they go there to be cured of childlessness on wedding day. Olivia went there with the Nawab and saw the people who 'tied bits of red thread, praying for fulfillment of their wishes. And though half a century has passed the narrator too goes there at the shrine and ties the thread with Inder Lal. The repeated incident is a proof that orthodoxy in the Indian society has not changed.

Jhabvala not only shows the darker side of India she also shows the sacred and holy Indian philosophy i.e. 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'. The whole world is one family concept, that was experienced by the Narrator. Jhabvala shows how the Indians live together and safeguard themselves from the loneliness and boredom, lying under the open sky is an example:

Lying like this under the open sky there is a feeling of being immersed in space-though not in empty space, for there are all these people sleeping all around me, the whole town and I am part

of it. How different from my often very lonely room in London with only my own walls to look at and my books to read. (Jhabvala, *Heat* 52)

Jhabvala shows both the darker and brighter side of India, using narrator as an instrument, and she also shows the Indian spirituality with the character Chid, who was suffering in dust, and the narrator takes him to her flat, and he is a Sadhu, means saint, he is always meditating and he is recovering from his illness, and he demands from her not only food but also physical union. The sexual ride by Chid makes her a thing of possible spiritual emanation from some power outside himself. The Narrator says :

But he has constant erection and goes to a tremendous size so that I am reminded of the Lord Shiva whose huge member is worshipped by devout Hindu women. At such time it seems to me that his sex is engendered by his spiritual practices, by all that chanting of mantras he does sitting beads in hand on the floor of my room. (Jhabvala, *Heat* 65)

Narrator is engaged with Inder Lal, who is the owner of her flat, and he gives company to her. It is surprising that the young narrator, seeking to reconstruct Olivia's life in India, should in an identical circumstances get pregnant inspite of all her self-restraints. Olivia aborted her child but narrator decides to have her child by an Indian father. David Rubin is of the opinion that :

Olivia aborted her half-Indian baby but remains faithful to his Indian father, whereas the narrator in a more enlightened age, or perhaps merely one more decadent, though she discards her Indian lover after unsuccessfully trying to abort her child, finds a rapture in the idea of having it. (Rubin 661)

Narrator came to India to solve the enigma of Olivia's scandal, she herself becomes a victim of same scandal and moves towards isolation in hills and herself seeks remedy in pilgrimage. Yasmine Goonaratne highlights the narrator's self-imposed isolation, "Her impulse to increased self-isolation in order to find spiritual fulfillment combines with her tendency to idealise Olivia's vision to suggest a growing psychological imbalance" (Gooneratne 226). The novel shows that the passage of time has not changed human passions, and emotions changed circumstances and customs might bring different attitudes, but the basic instincts and responses remain unchanged. Olivia and the narrator are set apart, separated by fifty years, but get caught in similar situations. Jhabvala has nicely portrayed these two women characters as cultural ambassadors.

After shifting from India to United States in 1975, Jhabvala wrote a novel in 1983 that is *In Search of Love and Beauty*, the title itself shows the theme of the novel. When she was in India she wrote mainly about the theme of home, marriage and family, and to some extent she also mocks the Indian society, but she has realized what she saw i. e. the atmosphere and material world of the West and she acknowledged that in her novels; which are set in US. As Rishi Pal Singh States:

Her focus was wide opened to the cosmopolitan dimension as she portray's the woman's point of view regarding the complex manifestation of feminine sensibilities in the Saga of human relations. Her women protagonists and even other women characters, inspite of all their freedom of life, suffer from obsessive and paradoxical compulsions of love and unscrupulous infatuations, which are strangely out of their control. (Singh 72)

Jhabvala depicts her themes with American society as backdrop.

Lousie and Regi are the two important female characters in this novel, using these two characters Jhabvala shows the materialistic world of the west. In this novel all the characters lead a luxurious life but still suffer from a sense of meaninglessness and boredom as agonizing as experiencing death-in-life. They are searching for love and beauty in the materialistic world. They have been enjoying all the comforts of modern world but still lack the aesthetic beauty contrarily in the East. Though they don't have all the the comforts of modern world, they are leading a peaceful and happy life. This is the difference Jhabvala wants to show us in this novel. Lousie and Regi are childhood friends in a suburb of Germany. They are also lesbians. Sex plays a very important role in this novel. Lousie and Regi are involved in Lesbian sex and also in hetro sex and in some extent she also depicts the gay sex also.

The novel focuses on Bruno and Lousie Sonnenblick, their daughter Marietta, her son Mark and adopted daughter Natasha. The lives of these three generations are traced through a rich variety of episodes, shifting intricately back and forth from 1930's to the present day. The grand mother, mother, son and daughter are linked by the incessant longing for inner fulfillment and they pursue their selfish quests by routes which are quite different from each other; but each of them is drawn towards Leo Kellerman, who is charismatic and commands attention wherever he presents himself. He is a magnetic personality, a guru and founder of the dubious academy of potential development. Each of the character in the novels drawn, either by love or hate to the charismatic guru who, in reality, is an American version of the Swamiji. Jhabvala here presents a dubious *guru* who is not Indian but a westerner. Leo is a Jew, an artist who has won over so many followers especially women by didn't of his fraudulent practice of synthesis psychiatry, "Everyone

always knew that Leo Kellermann had something, was some one special” (Jhabvala, *Love and Beauty* 1).

Lousie and Regi have sexual contact with Leo, interesting thing is that both have a sexual contact with him from their adult age to till their death at old age. Leo also tries to seduce Marietta, who is the daughter of Lousie. Marietta grows to hate her mother Lousie’s lover who has been trying to molest this innocent girl since her childhood. At the sixteenth birthday of Lousie, Leo cunningly seduces Marietta who still hates him but it is strange enough that she experiences blissful orgasm which hitherto had eluded her. She is psychologically perturbed but feels an internal urge to relish this intercourse with this powerful male. Marietta was fed-up of all this, she is in search of true love. She discovers this at a dance recital in New York. Where she meets an Indian Sarod player Ahmed. She is attracted towards him for his skill in music and has relationship with him when he meets her during one of his performances. Marietta follows him to India and through her response to India, Jhabvala shows an aspect of her own relationship with the country where she lived for twenty five years. Like this India officially enters this European - American world. Marietta continues to visit India every year for six years and she interacts with Ahmed’s family.

Ahmed is a disciplined musician hailing from India who experiences his moments of most intense joy when he is either making or listening to music, “While he plucked the most melting, alluring, ethereal sounds from his Sarod, he himself sat there completely impassive with a dead pan expression on his face” (26). His whole outlook on life and art can be understood in the following dialogue with Leo:

When Leo asked Ahmed about his music : “Is it of the senses or of the spirit?” Then Ahmed understood him less than ever. He had no

conception of any division between the two, and if he had thought about it, he would have said, surely the one is there to express the other? That was what his music was for—he knew this so deeply that he had absolutely no thought or words for it. (Jhabvala, *Love and Beauty* 88)

Through the characters of Ahmed and Leo Jhabvala clearly shows the culture of East and West, where Leo represents West who plays the role of sadist evident in the Anglican metaphor of woman as resisting fish in the method of scape goating. He proclaims, “All women are crazy, you have to look out for them” (Jhabvala, *Love and Beauty* 79). Ahmed in his poor condition seeks happiness in his music.

There is another Indian character in the novel Sujata. Though this is a minor character, a whole new world of prostitutes, of illicit relationships and illegitimate off-springs is opened up. Sujata is a singing and dancing woman whom Marietta meets with Ahmed and takes her as a friend. Sujata shares her secrets with Marietta and tells her that she is in love with her son’s friend Ravi:

It was shameful, and she was ashamed, knowing perfectly well that the time for all that was past; and in communicating all this to Marietta, Sujata did sometimes cover her face in shame.... if it was wrong, if it was shameful, then why was it there? And why was it so glorious. (Jhabvala, *Love and Beauty* 86)

The difference between cultures of India and America can be immediately felt here. Sujata is a prostitute; even then she fears God and feels shame for what she is doing. But on the contrary Leo crosses all such boundaries in having sex with the daughter (Marietta) of the woman he has been living with (Lousie) and will readily do it with the grand daughter (Natasha). Moreover he neither feels shame nor fears God for

doing that. Sujata dies in an accident with a motorcycle rickshaw with a driver who drove like a crazy man, symbolically overriding a crazy woman. Jhabvala also portrays the emergence of a gay rights activism in popular consciousness, which is both a result of the disillusionment with heterosexual romance and the sign of an important social reality in the life of late twentieth century Americans. Marietta's son Mark fights to take over the proprietorship of Kent who is a typical hermaphrodite male in physical appearance and female in temperament. Like this Jhabvala shows the characteristics of twentieth century American society without hesitation, without hiding anything Jhabvala boldly pictures the materialistic life of America.

About the novel Daisy says, "The title points out - 'Love' at its broader level is an attempt to search for meaning in terms of other human beings and 'Beauty' is a personal quest to discover the truth for oneself" (Daisy 148). The materialistic society of America does not cater to the spiritual needs of man and the consequences are felt in the restlessness of human beings whose physical needs are satisfied and the other needs ignored. The women are either treated as scape goats to be sacrificed or men return them with disgust and perplexity in place of love. The strange often bizarre confusion and self-destruction which behest most of the female characters in this novel spring from their self-hatred and internal fragmented psyche which is an underlying problem and malaise of the modern times.

Shards of Memory is the last novel of Ruth Praver Jhabvala which is considered to be her best novel, published in 1995. Like her earlier novels this one also concentrates on a single family and Jhabvala again returns to the theme of the Mysterious Guru. The novelist has beautifully woven a complex texture picturing the masquerades of four generations

all suffering from a malaise of emotional oridity, ethical wasteland and spiritual death searching for revival at the hands of some more powerful spiritual mentor. *Shards of Memory* is centred on the mystic guru ‘the Master’ and his interaction with four generations of an Indo-German-British family (living in New York) over a vast span of time.

There are three important female characters, which show the culture of the west. By studying these three characters, we come to know about the traditions, customs and beliefs of the West, because Jhabvala in her last novel tries to acknowledge the nature of western society. Elsa Koef is a wealthy American who has married an Indian poet, the Parsi Hormusji Bilimoria called Kavi and she gives birth to a daughter named Baby but Elasa finds no anchoring power in her married life. With a desire to come out of this abyss of boredom and self hatred, she discards her family bonds and moves from New York to Hampstead to dedicate herself to the dissemination of a mysteriously enchanting master’s message. Moreover she cannot bear to be apart from Cynthia, her lesbian lover and that their duty is to live together and work on the masters behalf. Her daughter Baby who is only three months old, is dispatched to New York with her discarded poet husband ‘Kavi’ to live with Elsa’s mother Dorothy Kopf. Here Jhabvala clearly pictures how the western mother neglects her child for the sake of her personal feelings and happiness and for her lesbian sex, and she also depicts how this ignorance affects the life of her daughters. It shows that in western culture they don’t give much importance to sentiments, feelings and emotions. They only focus on to fulfill the materialistic needs. Baby expresses their dilemma of inner fragmentation in her words:

I suppose I could be considered a sort of pioneer for the following generations when it became a very common to have two sets of

couples as parents ; although I think it would still be uncommon to have the father and grandmother as one couple and another the mother and her woman friend. (Jhabvala, *Memory* 27)

The second generation Baby marries Greame, who served in India in a colonial situation. Baby has got quite an amazing reason for liking the master. She had met him a few months before her grandson Henry's birth and she liked him because he appeared in a very healthy straight forward way like a man making no excuses about being attracted to a woman "She always felt relaxed with that sort of person. They spoke about spices and she explained how she knew about them, thereby also explaining that she was partly India, which he liked" (Jhabvala, *Memory* 76), and her marriage with Greame also failed, Baby is giving her account of personal life to no one else but to her own grandson Henry - the son of Reneta by Carl.

The third generation of the family to be influenced by the master is Reneta and her partner Carl. Reneta only began to believe in the master's power when he told her about her pregnancy about which she herself never knew.

"Give me your hand" he said; She did so and let him feel her pulse with expert fingers. But she felt sure that he had diagnosed her secret; that is her dedication to Carl's cause; and in a way he said, 'You are pregnant'. (Jhabvala, *Memory* 60)

The irony is that she has no sense of guilt at all because she is well aware that her mother Baby's own life has been full with so many lovers. So, she decides to give the birth to baby and had a son Henry. Without getting married with Carl, she gave a birth to a child, it is not strange in the western culture. Reneta and Carl both are shown to be so absurd right from the start that no one can guess their next move. They are shown to

be bohemian sort of people having inner, non-physical passion which was the key to their very rare sex life. They only come to know that their son Henry has been appointed as his heir, otherwise they had nothing to do with the master or his philosophies. Here Jhabvala depicts the complex human nature when such absent minded fellows, who seem to care for nothing in the world, their only intention is to persuade Henry, use his money and become the main reviewers of the movement. It shows how money is more important than relation in the West.

The fourth generation to be haunted is Henry himself who never met the master. Co-incidentally, he was born on the same day and at the same time the master had died. This and his physical resemblance to the master led the initial followers Elsa and Cynthia to project him as the Master's successor. The second part of the novel is entitled 'Legacy' in the second part Henry receives an important envelope from their solicitor which he reads but could not divulge its content to anyone. Jhabvala narrates Henry's dismay about his own illegitimacy as :

For there was one line that gave him pause, one word rather and that was where they referred to Henry not only as the successor of the master but as his son and successor. No doubt they meant it in a spiritual sense but for Henry it was a reminder of his own strange and hitherto unexplained appearance. (Jhabvala, *Memory* 114)

To solve this enigma of his own parentage Henry directly asks Reneta about her relationship with Master. Reneta confessed all the incidents to him and while investigating he came to know that his great, grandmother and also his mother had sexual contact with master. He asks his mother Reneta why she had not got a wedding certificate at least for her son's social acceptance, Reneta speaks in an agony of meaninglessness of the family bonds, "And marriages never do work out

in our family - look at Kavi and Elsa and Baby and Graeme what disasters” (170). So, Henry is unable to ascertain his own heritage.

Elsa, Baby and Raneta are the three female characters, who are the ambassadors of western culture. Jhabvala wrote this novel in 1995. After experiencing western culture for twenty years in America, by studying all the characteristics of society, Jhabvala depicts these three characters. Sex and money are the two important factors leading in western society. Elsa left her husband and child and went away with her lesbian friend and came in contact with master, but it adversely affected her child Baby, she also follows the same way, which her mother had gone and it is continued by Raneta also, she even doesn't marry her boyfriend and gives birth to a child. Jhabvala clearly picturises how the western society is ruined by so called modern culture.

Apart from writing novel Jhabvala has written short stories also, she defines short story as “One Cry from the heart - Just one - Only that has to come out right and true” (Agarwal quest 91) (33). Among many collection of Short Stories of Jhabvala *How I Became a Holy Mother* shows the feminine sensibility. It contains nine of her stories, among these the story “Great man's houses” exposes the feelings of Indian house wife who suffers from loneliness in a big house and she also mocks the patriarchal society, which doesn't care for the feelings of woman.

The story opens at a point when Hamida's past life in her father's house beckons to her in the form of niece's wedding. Memories of her girlhood; of the swing in the courtyard and the many dark little rooms crammed with relatives makes her freshly aware of the sterility of her life in her husband's grand house stuffed with possessions but bereft of human contact. One of her desire is to participate in the wedding against her husband's will. Khan Sahib's vast bulk lying inexorably on the bed

becomes a symbol of male authority to which the woman has to submit, according to Indian tradition. The battle therefore, is lost even before it began. Hamida cannot go but she cannot admit her humiliation either, for the freedom enjoyed by her sister Roxana is her constant cross. She has to pretend that the decision has been her own. This double pressure exerted over her sensibilities through many years of her married life is gradually taking its toll. On one past occasion, her only child was taken away from her and put in a boarding school, in a rebellious fit broke all the bottles on her husband's dressing-table. But it had availed her nothing. So, she does not throw things anymore.

The supreme irony of Hamida's life is that though her husband has not a clue to her sufferings, he can sing of them with deep feeling:

He wasn't Khan Sahib, he was a love-sick woman and he suffered, suffered as only a woman can. How did he know all that-how could he look so deep into a woman's feelings - a man like him with so many appetites? What thing he could make her feel, that fat selfish husband of hers. He sang : 'I sink in the ocean of sorrow. Have pity! have pity! Drow.(Jhabvala, *Mother* 250

Hamida is the one example of this patriarchal society, who suffers silently in the clutches of her husband as a modern idealistic singer, he is unable to understand the feelings of his wife, here Jhabvala mocks the modern society.

Desecration is another story in the same collection, which shows feelings and frustrations of a woman Sofia. She marries a Raja Sahib who is thirty years older than her, being a very rich man he provides all the things to her. Both live in an isolated house. Raja Sahib is having grave doubt on her and never lets her get out of his sight. He has a habit of writing plays and he reads them out to her. But living with Raja Sahib in

a big house was not an easy task. So she occasionally suffers from nervous frustrations. Then comes Bhaktawar Singh, the superintendent of police. They meet first at party and then at desolate place and fall for each other. Boredom and loneliness makes Sofia desolate. So she starts visiting police quarters. Bhaktwar uses her and insults her as he likes and there is nothing Sofia can do to stop her degradation.

Her husband provides her everything but not the sexual pleasure she needs. The suppression of sexual desires leads to a violent explosion and she finds herself in the power of sex-maniac. It is perhaps the most powerful story in this final collection, and centres upon the reaction of a sensitive and passionate young woman to a triple invasion : of her body and mind by her brutal and violent lover; of her heart by love that is like a disease which would get worse and pass through many stages before it was finished with her, and her privacy by the gossips in the township neighbouring the mansion in which she lives with her cultivated, elderly husband. At the end of the story, when Sofia is nearing the point at which she can endure her emotional turmoil no longer ends it in suicide. Jhabvala has nicely portrayed the sad and touching story of Sofia, who becomes a victim of society.

According to Ashish and Swarnita Sharma Jhabvala's women characters fall into four categories. First there are women, passive or submissive, who accept with unquestioning resignation dictates of the society. They adjust to the texture of personal life, no matter what it may be. They are self sacrificing and modest like Indu in *Householder*. Second there are women who are aggressive and assertive. They are dissatisfied and rebellious. They yearn for fulfillment, often identified with love, and they encounter social conventions as an impediment. They attempt to control and change them for example Olivia and the Narrator

in *Heat and Dust*. Some women are both submissive as well as idealistic, for example Indu in *Householder*. Finally, there is a category of women who are aggressive but at the same time idealistic.

Jhabvala's novels from beginning to the end constitute an exploration of the feminine sensibilities and the feminine quest for the identity and self-actualisation as individual human beings free from any dependency syndrome. But in the phases of literary career it is observed that this quest for love, beauty, bliss and identity has been thwarted because woman is unable to come out of the shadow of man inspite of equality in materialistic sense. The protagonists in all setting are portrayed as frail, wily, seductive and enigmatically submissive to masculine powers which lead them to self-hatred, inner fragmentation and even sometimes to death. Indian women are sufferers of confinement and cruel suppression; the expatriate European women in India are the victims of romantic passions or spiritual idealism leading to their dooms; and most strikingly the modern women of West are possessed with mysterious urge to be controlled by some charismatic masculine power as they are suffering from emotional vacuum, abnormal sexuality, psychic disorder and loss of faith in life.

Whether it is the East or West women provide us the best models of culture. Their habits, dress pattern etc., uphold the society they represent. Women are embodiments of all human values. Gulab, Olivia and other women characters are the role models of their respective cultures. No one wants to give up his / her culture that is why we say that what is the best known and thought in the world is culture. When we analyse the novels and short stories of Jhabvala we get a true picture of the cultural representatives.

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