CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

The British colonial rule in India spanned for almost two centuries. The literary work has a strong relation with the historical background. The British came to India, conquered and ruled for many years and gained a lot. The cause for this was that, the Industrial Revolution in England could only sustain with the help of the monetary benefits that the English made in the Indian Territories in the form of revenues that put the agriculture on the back burner. The farmers along with the silk traders saw a slump. Therefore, the weavers and artisans lost their jobs and to sustain themselves took up petty jobs in the Cotton Plantations. The Britishers who were embroiled with this state found that introduction of the English language in educational institutions would fetch them good. The turning point decision to introduce the language has also brought an imposed change in the lifestyle and culture. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the harbinger of the Indian Renaissance and Lord Macaulay the Member of Colonial Indian Parliament, recommended English language education in India, which brought lot of literary awareness.

As education plays a pivotal role in one’s life, women also realized its importance. The early nineteenth century had witnessed the women’s struggle for education. According to P.S. Balasubramanian, “By the beginning of the nineteenth century women in India were hardly educated” (Women’s Education 77). It was superstitiously believed among the Hindu families that a girl would become a widow if she was educated. Hence, women themselves “enforced the prohibition against female education” (Forebes Geraldine Education for Women 33). Apart from it, parents were subjected to social boycott, if they send their children to school. Western education was also equally a taboo where they opined that the girls would treat their husbands as slaves. Gradually when the British established Missionary schools spread in India, a reformist Swami Dayanand Saraswathi, the founder of Arya Samaj encouraged women education, which eventually picked up the momentum, which was later on supported by many. Only in the 4th and 5th decade of the Nineteenth Century women’s education arose. According
to Alladi Uma, “Education started on a large scale in the late Nineteenth Century, but at that time it was designed to develop in a woman those qualities that were seen as essential to making her a good house wife – reticence in speech subservience of manners, fortitude and consciousness.” (Uma Alladi, *Women and Her Family*... 8).

Women have the ability to narrate a natural story even when they don’t write or publish. In India, the marvelous Torulata (Toru Dutt) wrote both, a French and an English novel before she died at the age of 21 in 1877. Other women writers too have contributed to the Indian Fiction in English. The early women writings were Raj Lakshmi Debi’s *The Hindu Wife*, Mrs. Krupabai, Sathianadhan’s *Kamala*. Swarnakumari Debi was probably the first woman novelist in Bengali where she penned *Mrs. Ghoshal*. Cornelia Sorabji (Parsi Christian) authored a number of stories, some of which appeared in the *Machillan’s Magazine* and the nineteenth century and after, who revealed the nuances of feminity. Woman was easily caught in the web of intrigue and social taboos of all kinds and her subservience to man gave her very little freedom of action.

**Postcolonial Theory**

Violet Lunga defines it in her article *Postcolonial Theory*, “a complex field of study, encompassing an array of matters that include issues such as identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity” (193). As per the theories of the experts i.e Homi Bhaba, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said, according to Lunga, “These scholars have denounced Eurocentrism, promoted difference, and presented a postcolonial voice” (194). It was said by Lunga that ‘postcolonial’ applies to literature that was written by people who were once colonized and “focuses on the ways in which writers articulate and celebrate cultural identities and delve into questions of agency and resistance” (192). Homi Baba in his book *The Location of Culture* identifies that they are written “in the midst of everyday” producing unique literature.

Promod K.Nayar in his *Postcolonial Theory An Introduction* – writes that the Third world countries emerged from the colonial rule after a prolonged anti-colonial struggle. The writings succeeded the immediate aftermath of the strugglers and the creative writers thematised the problems of colonialism. It reflected the social, cultural
impact of the imperial rule in native non-western societies. To specify, they had the ways in which the native societies responded. Hence, the period after the independence had the first hand information on cultural-colonialism, native identity and anti colonial resistance. It is presumed that colonialism has affected the economic situation of a nation and also the most effectively affected continents were Asia and African that had a lasting impact. On the cultural realm, colonialism subverted the tradition and customs, established new norms of conduct, declining the native beliefs as superstitions where this process was accepted with the western medium of education. Then the colonized began to abandon his/ her culture in favor of the white man’s. This ushered in the cultural alienation as the subject of the novel considering it as a conceptual framework creating a space for the postcolonial literary writing: (Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart (1958))

After the Second World War the women novelists have begun enriching Indian fiction in English. Kamala Das, Kamala Markandeya, Nayantara Sahgal, Ruth Prawar Jhabhwala, Sashi Desh Pande, Shobha De, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy etc were some of them. Of these writers Kamala Markandeya, Ruth Prawar Jhabhvala are unquestionably the outstanding. Markandaya takes the reader to the heart of South India or Tamilnadu Village where life has apparently not changed for a thousand years.

Mrs. Ruth Prawar Jhabhvala writings were of feminine contemporary urban sensibility. Kamala Markandeya and Ruth Prawar Jhabhwala are the two major women novelists. The other novelists are Anita Desai who added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction and Jhabhvala’s work with the social background is rather more important than the characters who enact the various comedies, tragic comedies and farces.

Anita Desai’s forte is the exploration of sensibility. Since her preoccupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than the outer world of action, she has tried to forge a style, supple and suggestive enough to convey fever and fretfulness of the stream of consciousness of her principal characters.

A brief survey of Indian English novels and its prospect as an art in the world of literature, portrays an Indian writer who is born in the influences between the British Colonial and the native tradition of India. The very encounter of the West and the East
turned out to be progressive innovation in the creative field of fiction more prominently in the 20th century fiction. Writers like Mulk Raj, Chamanlal, Khushwant Singh, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan are compared to the West like Charles Dickens and Greene of England and Mark Twain of America. The British encounter with the Indian subcontinent originally carried with the stigma of colonial subjugation and exploitation. Under the threat of this subjugation and exploitation, the erstwhile heterogenous, inhabitants of India gradually learned the terms of resistance with the help of newly acquired idea of nationalism. The present Indo-Anglian works of fiction had their real birth in independent India. Though English was the Chief Medium of concourse of the educated Indians during the colonial days, the Indo-Anglian novel established itself as an important genre after the Independence of India. The Indian writers saw a meaning in writing in English – the language of the rulers and of the administration. This helped them to get readers from all over India, as well as other parts of the world. Secondly, the Indian could have a communion with the British. The Indian writers were imbibed with the spirit of nationalism during the 19th century and wanted to express their view points not only to Indians and Britishers, but also to the other non speakers as English was a natural medium of expression of thoughts and ideas though it was not their mother tongue. Thus, the Indo-Anglian fiction began to flourish during the colonial period.

Just as the essential predicament of the 19th century, Indo Anglian novelist was in search for identity of the Indian nation. The essential condition of the 20th century Indian novelists is rooted in socio-political ethos. The exposure of social evils like poverty, social inequalities and injustices, the range of partition, the emergence of the new India, and the political atmosphere in the post-Independence era are reflected in the major novels during recent years. Hence, many writers had this as a canvas and they dealt with these national experiences either directly as central theme or indirectly as backdrop.

The novel as a literary phenomenon is new to India. Other forms have respectable ancestries, but it is only during a period of little more than a century that the novel – the long sustained piece of prose fiction – has occurred and taken root in India. It has seen light only in the later half of the nineteenth century.
The role of literature contributes in shaping a nation as it is placed above the political atmosphere. Societies contribute culturally and materially where a major amount is by circulating the stories of how the world goes on with multiple changes and influences. There is also the role of media, religion, political parties, education and the literary material available in changing the medium and the society. Literary texts bring out the principles, which augmented and struggled for the submissive groups to exist and bring about a change. These literary texts connect the world globally irrespective of the geographical limitations by throwing challenges in regard to cultural affiliation, appropriate, while taking up even the most sensitive issues.

The colonial rule in India, which spanned for two centuries, resulted in Indian writing in English. Literature is always linked with the historical background of a nation. During the colonial rule, the British Empire felt there was a need for the introduction of English language in educational institutions, which resulted in a change in the Indian educational system, thereby influencing their life-style and culture.

This resulted in the contribution of many Indian writers in the field of literature where we can remember Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Manohar Malgonkar, Raja Rao etc as harbingers of this reformation. During the course of time, the language underwent a transition, which struggled to retain its Indian flavor when it came to its experience and expression. Though there were renowned writers like George Orwell, Jim Corbett, Rudyard Kipling, yet the Indian authors like Rabindranath Tagore, The first Asian won Nobel Prize for literature i.e Tagore for his *Gitanjali*. Sarojini Devi Naidu carved a niche for themselves in Indian writing in English. The accolades continued for many decades which witnessed the writings of Nirad C. Chaudhary, E.M. Foster, E.L. Bhasham etc. in seventies the elite class entered the arena of writing and had Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai.

**Why reading novel is important.**

Novel reading helps everyone to systemize themselves culturally and emotionally. It improves everyone’s imagination and develop wisdom. We also get to acquire a deep moral – decision-making process. We comprehend others’ imagined lives other than our own. We get to know the complex moral situations, which might help us in our decision-making. They expose us to new challenges that one faces in their lives where we have our
own apprehensions in facing such challenges. This makes one face the problematic situations, as we need to grow our risk-taking capacity. We also can understand the different shades of human nature. Literature as such makes us aware of ourselves and our past. We explore new themes like love, war, desire, injustice so on so forth. Our horizon widens and there is a scope to achieve sophistication in our thinking. It makes us form our own opinion and principles of our own that make us more objective in our thinking.

Nayantara Sahgal’s first non-fictional work *Prison and chocolate cake* (1954) is an autobiography, which describes her personal associations and experiences. Her work shows the changing values of a society, which has acquired an exposure to the new freedom and power. She is credited for being the first Indian woman novelist who made politics, as the theme of her novels. *A situation in New Delhi* (1977) exposes the ill-treatment of women in the society where they were driven either to commit suicide or seek divorce to face such a predicament. The protagonist is considered to be the most vulnerable of all her women characters that she has ever portrayed. She remains as a victim in the transformed society of the modern era. The other female character Madhu was used as an object of lust by some boys who are hooligans without an iota of mortification. This makes one feel sad for the society to have produced such men. On parallel the incorrigible husband Usman Ali ends up in love with Devi, which disturbs Nadira his wife for her plight. Though we find some of the male characters to be narrow-minded and insensitive but the husbands of some of her women also suffer in marriage by being lonely, lacking communication in their lives. The novel stands a perfect example of stream of consciousness technique where the characters suffer continuously due to the situations that were happening in their lives.

*This time of morning* (1965) can be categorized as a political novel, which deals with politically important people or in the lobbies in parliament. This has a similarity in depicting the symbolical representation of the contemporary politicians. *Rich like Us* (1983) is a close reflection of the country’s scenario during the time of Emergency imposed by her cousin Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was a by bold attempt by the novelist to fearlessly present the impact on the lives of the people under such harassed circumstances. Her seventh novel *Plans for Departure* (1986) which has won the
Eurasian Regional Award in the Commonwealth Fiction prize, registers a milestone in her achievement as a woman novelist. The novel is iconic for skilful craftsmanship with subtle humor and for its clandestine plot appreciating her exceptional observation. The novel is a mixture of love and mystery set in the backdrop of a continent which was at the brink of war. *The Mistaken Identity* (1988) is close to the contemporary novel in its theme of identity, with an amalgamation of modern Western sense with strong historical and cultural traits of the Indian tradition.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award winning poet, short story writer and novelist who has catered to the literary tastes of people belonging to all age groups, from children to adults. Apart from that, her work has been translated into nearly twenty languages, including Dutch, Hebrew, Russian and Japanese. An Indian born writer, Divakaruni migrated to the United States in 1976. She continued her education in the field of English with a postgraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Divakaruni’s works have figured in over fifty literary anthologies, including Best American Short Stories, The O’Henry Prize stories and The Pushcart Prize Anthology. The *Mistress of Spices* (1997) found its place of honour in several Best Books lists, including the San Francisco Chronicle’s 100 Best Books of the 20th Century. Two of her novels, *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and *Sister of My Heart* (1999) have also been made into films. She has won many accolades and awards, she has been honoured by various organizations for her literary contributions.

- Light of India Award, Times of India, 2011.
- Cultural Jewel Award, Indian Culture Center, Houston, 2009.
- South Asian Literary Association Distinguished Author Award, 2007.
- Best books of 2002 List, Los Angeles Times, The Vince of Desire
- Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize, 1994 for poems from Leaving Yuba City
- Gerbode Foundation Award, California, 1992 for Leaving Yuba City
- Editor’s Choice Award, Cream City Review, 1990
- Barbara Deming Memorial Award, New York, 1989

(Source: [www.chitradivakaruni.com](http://www.chitradivakaruni.com))
At present, she is teaching Creative Writing at the University of Houston.

*Oleander girl* (2013) by Chitra Divakaruni is a novel portraying Karobi the protagonist as girl with grit and determination in search of her father in America. Her portrayal as a strong individual who was prepared to face the vicissitudes of life symbolizing the oleander flower, “which is intrinsically strong and tough despite its fragility: Because the oleander was beautiful –but also tough it knew to protect itself from its predators”. (*Oleander*.253)

Chitra Benerjee’s first collection of stories ‘*Arranged Marriage*’ Won an American Book Award, a PEN Josephine Milles Award, and a Bay Area Book Reviewers Award, had inspired her to a great extent. Just as how Ruth Prawar Jhabvala’s *Get ready for Battle* (1963) is a novel on the Kurukshetra War and its heroes which itself is a straight lift from the *Gitachapter II verse 38*, Chitra Banerjee’a inspiration lies in dwelling deep into mythology but narrates it from a female perspective. Her *Arranged Marriage* (1995) is a collection of short stories each reflecting the struggles of the Diaspora South Asian women to undergo cultural assimilation and form an identity of their own. The women in these stories emerge out of their private areas and enter the public domain, face a conflict of consciousness for home in an alien country along with the problems that arise out of it. It also shows the dichotomy between the public and the private spheres which result in conflicting self-perceptions and the influence of the surrounding environment in forming overall identity.

The novel *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) deals with the theme of unstable and conflicting identities in this transient world. She explores the genre of magic realism where the protagonist Tilo transforms to Maya identifying herself as the mistress of a secret power. She convincingly claims that it is the power of the spices that can transform one’s lives. She explores the magical power of the spices to revolutionize the life we live. Magic realism discloses the magic present in reality. It is set in the real world unlike fantasy but is imaginary and magical due to the creative genius of the author. This power of the author makes the reader believe that spices we use in our daily life possess magical powers to wane away our difficulties. She also projects the psychic powers of Tilo to
combine with the power of the spices confer her the ability to suggest a solution to people’s problems.

As suggested by Jung the artist “will resort to mythology in order to give his experience its most filling expression” (qtd 204). Chitra Banerjee’s skill lies in the portrayal of the myths and legends in a unique way that in which they blend with her narrative technique acquiring the desired intensity to reflect the grief of the Indian women.

The fiction of the postcolonial writers is a manifestation of different trends as compared to their predecessors. The novels of 1960’s had elevated the Indian fiction to a higher pedestal. The publications like Salmon Rushdie’s *The Midnight’s Children* in 1980 witnessed efflorescent emergence of new Indian fiction in English, heralding a new era of change in its tone, tenor and content. The new English fiction exhibits confidence in tackleing of new themes and experiments with new techniques and approaches to handle them. The novelists of this generation have proved their mettle by winning several major literary awards, prizes and distinctions in competition with the native speakers of English. Among the postcolonial writers, Nayantara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are very prominent. They have a discrete identity among their contemporaries. The writings of these writers play a unique role in the field of postcolonial literary and cultural production that sometimes uncritically celebrates the hybridity of postcolonial nations and migrations. Their novels have reverberated the forms of violence that nationality and globalization present in the home, in the domestic spaces and in private lives. They are cosmopolitan and significant among contemporary Indian writers. Their significance has its roots in their cosmopolitanism, for they, being writers, who explored the world and drew connections across the boundaries of modern nation state.

The lexical meaning of *Predicament* – According to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* the word “Predicament” means a difficulty unpleasant situation, especially one where it is difficult to know what to do (p.1185)

What is Predicament?
According to the article P.W.I.C.P: A critical study by Ravindra D. Hajare, “a predicament is basically a state of dilemma. It may refer to a condition when one cannot decide what to do. Both the sides are dangerous. On one side, there is a well and the other side a lake. One is engulfed between two danger zones. It is a state of quandary. No solutions provide a panacea. It may also refer to the physical and the psychological state of the human being when he is crushed spiritually and politically and cannot find a way to get out of it. It may be caused by numerous known and unknown factors recurring in human life. Predicaments of men are there but predicaments of women are manifold”.

Chitra Divakaruni in regard to predicament of a career woman, defines “Predicament of a career woman who had to bear the brunt of double responsibility, career opportunities and financial freedom on the one hand and home front and the ones to fulfill the expectations of traditional gender roles of wife, mother and daughter-in-law on the other”

Immigrants, expatriates, or diaspora enjoy a special position between the countries and cultures. On account of this, cultures exchange, establish or displace and individuals interiorise nostalgia or under amnesia. Hence, expatriates are identified in two societies and culture is redefined by them. This result in gaining popularity to the diaspora. In ancient Greece the term ‘dia’ meant ‘scattered’ referring to citizens who migrated to a conquered land, which slowly became popular with the English in the middle of 1950s along with long term expatriate in a significant number from other countries being to be the Diaspora. “The word was used specifically to indicate the experience of the Jews’ exile to Babylon after Nebu chadnezzar’s conquest over Jerusalem in 587 BC”. In the due course of time, it has been interpreted in various contexts, according to the way they eke out their lives. The Indian diaspora is considered to be the largest Asian diaspora. Remapping Diasporic sensibilities: A critical study of the novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni by Narasingaram Jayashree.

Though they represent different countries, cultures, regions, languages etc yet they are bound to India for its ethics and values. Contemporary culture evolved dissolving the borders or boundaries in the bargain, with an exchange of culture. Post modernism is thus often described as a style or genre, while post, said to refers to an epoch or period.” (Malpas 9) Both post modern and diasproic writing keep abreast with
the moving pace where Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* has a style of popular and esoteric reference and its fragmentary narrative structure that synchronizes with postmodern literature. Magic realism is an essential ingredient of post modernism. Divakaruni also falls under this category who seeks novel ways of expression.

The real beginnings were with the work of the great Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94). His first published effort *Rajmohan’s wife* was in English. Tagore was a very considerable novelist too. According to Dr. Sukumar Sen, “the actions and reactions arising out of the impact of the minds of individuals propel the plot, and not so much the external happenings.” Sarat Chandra Chatterjee: The novel is a means of expression for the writer, and it is ultimately born out of understanding and love. Of the Indo-Anglian novelists, only Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao have shown anything like stamina and stern consistency of purpose.

For all their nationalistic fervor, Bankim Chandra’s novels were but romances with a historical and mystical slant. Tagore was chiefly interested in the upper and middle classes, Sarat Chandra in the lower middle classes and Munshi Prem Chandra choose his themes from the peasantry and the humble folk of Uttar Pradesh.

Women novelists have developed their own style, which expresses feminine sensibility. Each one of them has her own way of looking at things and her own way of character portrayal. One point is common in them. They show a keen sense of awareness of social change. Kamala Markandeya has written *Nector in A Sieve* (1954) on the theme of hunger, *A Silence of Desire* (1960) on love and class conflict, *A handful of Rice* (1966) on love and poverty in poor segments of Calcutta society. *The Nowhere Man* on immigrant Asians, *Two Virgin’s* on conflict between parents and children and *The Golden Honey Comb* on the East-West dichotomy. Markandeya, a talented craftsman, harnesses her technique to communicate her tragic vision. She is a novelist of socialist and national concerns. Ruth P. Jhabvala, a German citizen married to an Indian architect, occupies a unique position in Indian novel. Anita Desai is more concerned in depicting the mental rather than the physical experiences of her characters, mental anguish rather than pangs of hunger. Nayanthara Sahgal evinces are insight for political situation and its impact on human existence, the rampant corruption and topsy turvydom of basic human values in a
state of political chaos shown in her novels. Deshpande has dealt with every issue concerned with the women’s movement for liberation. She emerges as a staunch exponent of women empowerment in her novels. Bharathi Mukherjee’s novels and short stories reveal her experience as an expatriate. They reflect the trauma of an uprooted identity. Shobha De a staunch exponent of women empowerment recognises the displacement and marginalization of women in India. She has feelings of empathy for the women who have forsaken domesticity and marriage to assert their identity. Chitra focuses on the immigrant women and their issues on alienation, identity etc.

Indian Women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian literature. The 21st century women novels consist of the latest burning issues that exist in the society since their novels encourage the women freedom to flirt. They describe the whole world of women with simply studding frankness. Their write-ups give a glimpse of the unexplored female psyche, which has no accessibility.

FEMINISM AND IN CONTEXT WITH INDIAN LITERATURE:

Feminism’ is said to be a movement, which was an outcome of general consciousness globally in the nineteenth century to empower women. The Feminist Movement is also known as Women’s Movement, Women’s Liberation or Women’s Lib, various inequality issues and women issues like domestic violence, equal pay, women’s suffrage, sexual harassment characterize the movement. It is a theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes and it focuss women’s rights and issues. The roots of feminism first originated in Iblo from France where the noble women gathered outside the royal court, further it advanced the concept by mobilizing the women to take part in the French Revolution in 1789 mainly to focus on politics and on human rights issues.

The publication of “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792) by Mary Wollstone craft advocated equal rights for women’s education. Feminist Movement impact was strongly felt in America when the Abolitionist Movement broke in 1830, which dealt with women’s rights focusing on social, civil and religions conditions of women. During that period a revolution took place by Feminists in Germany like
Marianne Weber who were fighting for the right of women in regard to their personal and marital relationships and simultaneously the Abolitionist Movement in other countries was to end African slave trade to set the slaves free, was gathering momentum. The first European law to abolish colonial slavery came in 1542 by the Spanish government, meanwhile English Quakers and evangelical religious groups condemned slavery as unchristian. Lucretia Mott, a Quaker was the first woman to speak on women’s rights issues through her publication (1851), Susan B. Anthony challenged the gender inequality, Nancy Cott spoke about the struggle for suffrage, Simon De Beauvoir opposed the image of “the woman in home”. Contemporary feminist movement that began in 1960s includes the concept of free love as an escape from the sexual double standard, divorce became easy and common, the happy housewife image is vanishing where women are seeking higher level of employment and fulfillment outside their home. Some of the issues that include today’s Feminism are division of domestic labour, the perpetuation of women stereotypes by the media, limits of the educated and qualified women from rising to their deserved place in the corporate rung and some other issues of social inequality.

Feminism, which is of three waves where the first wave began in the United Kingdom and the United States around 19th to 20th century. Issues were related to official inequalities. Prominent feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, Susan B Anthony, Lucy Stone, Olympia Brown and Helevi Pits were popular. Women stood up for their rights in their lives. The second wave (1960 and 1980) focused on Defacto inequalities, encouraging the is period, witnessed the publication of the feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan highlighting the unhappiness of women in 1950’s, others like Bella Abzug, Charlotte Bunch, Angela Davis etc. The third wave began in 1990 till date which rose as a response to the continued feeling of failure amongst women which includes Judith Butler, Martha Davis, Sandra Oh, Molly Yard to name a few. Feminist Theory is of four types like gender difference, which is shown especially in patriarchal societies, marginalization of women, largely viewed as objects, who were denied the opportunities of individual growth and self-realization, gender inequality which recognizes that women’s location, experiences and social situations which are unequal to that of men. Liberal feminism argues that women have the same mental capacity for moral reasoning. Marriage itself is an expression of gender inequality that has isolated women’s role to
household and child bearing, hence it has not brought any equality. Gender oppression, which not only theorizes gender differences but also issues of who are oppressed in sex, where women are sometimes subordinated, marginalized and even abused. This theory of Feminism has Psychoanalytic Feminism and Radical Feminism.

Psychoanalytic Feminism explains the power of relationship between men and women by recasting Freudian theories of the subconscious and unconscious, human emotions and childhood influences. Radical Feminism argues that the woman is a powerful force in herself but patriarchal society does not acknowledge this fact of identifying physical violence as the base of patriarchy. Structural oppression views that women’s oppression and inequality are a direct outcome of capitalism, patriarchy and racism. Liberal Feminism believes in equality of all human beings without any gender bias. Marxist Feminism focuses the theory of capitalism with specific focus on women’s rights in employment, as they view women’s rights as they play traditional roles taking care of children and men who are treated as bread winning beings. It also focuses on social institutions of private property and capitalism. Radical Feminism based on the belief that all social relations are based on male power, male dominance and male privileges aims to overthrow patriarchy by opposing male oppression of women and calls for a radical change in the social structure. Socialist Feminism shares the socialist vision of a humanist world made possible through a re-distribution of wealth to end the difference between have and have-nots. Post Modern Feminism urges to bring a positive change and an enhanced role of woman in their lives and in the society in which they live and function.

The present age women have realized that they are not helpless and dependent. The women of modern era think on different lines and that is what is depicted in the novels of the Indian women authors. They writers explore the feminine subjectivity and apply them that range from childhood to complete womanhood. Through their novels, they spread the message of what actually feminism is, that is very broad. These women writers say that Feminism means putting an end to all the sufferings of a woman in silence. Anita Desai has portrayed the complexities between man and woman relationship. She has tried to explore the psychological aspects of the led protagonists.
The women novelists try to create precision. In India, women writers are doing very well and their contribution is immense.

Ruth P. Jhabvala a prolific versatile writer has written about personal relationships and domestic life in her novels. She is a keen and minute observer of Indian scene and character. She exposes the foibles and eccentricities of her characters in a humorous and ironic manner. Endowed with a feeling for compassion she “humanizes even the most ironic situations or the most satirical portraits.”

The term ‘Feminism’ was derived from the Latin word ‘Femina’ meaning ‘Woman’ and was first used with regard to the issue of equality and Women’s Rights Movement. Feminism perceives that women suffer from social injustice because of their gender. As a middle-class, non-hierarchical and democratic movement, feminism had its first reverberations in the eighteenth century Britain during the Industrial Revolution when Mary Wollstonecraft, stimulated by the ideals of the French Revolution, liberty, equality and fraternity, wrote a pioneering work entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). In this book, she describes how they were incarcerated and how they were incapacitated by the androcentric culture.

Wollstonecraft’s revolutionary and reformative ideas were criticized as heretical not only by men but ironically by women too, for they were at variance with an environment which reckoned an ideal woman as a mannequin, and regarded man as superior – mentally, physically or morally. In fact, according to Barbara Welter, the ideal woman had four essential or ‘cardinal virtues’ – “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity” (*Barbara Welter, The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860, 152*). Wollstonecraft’s idea was focused and developed one hundred and sixty years later by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1953), Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), and Elizabeth Janeway in *Mart’s World, Woman’s Place* (1971). They argued in their books against feminity as traditionally constructed and they postulated that women must assert their independence from the state of ‘otherness’ accredited to them by male culture. When this happens, a woman becomes an autonomous, independent being who would be free, active and capable of making her own decisions. “The emancipated woman wants to be active, a taker and refuses the passivity of man who tries to impose
on her. The ‘modern’ woman accepts masculine values: she prides herself in thinking, taking action, working, creating on the same terms as men; instead of seeking to disparage them, she declares herself their equal” (Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex. P. 727).

Olive Banks in Faces of Feminism (1981) perceives that women’s urge for independence did not arise from a desire to emulate men, but perhaps from an aversion to masculine society. They dreamt of a “world without men, of the perfect friendship of women unalloyed by baser and coarser natures” (Faces of Feminism, p.97). This was because of the emphasis on the ideal of female superiority, the cult of domesticity, the woman’s biological nature seen as the ‘maternal mystique’, which calls for a woman to efface herself for the betterment of others. Despite the ideal of female superiority, the new ideology did not catch fire immediately. On the contrary, women were flummoxed and thus the concept of feminism placed women’s freedom in opposition to women’s duties and rights, and polarized women’s need for dependence and independence. However, by the second decade of this century, women did achieve legal emancipation with respect to equal rights in the matter of property, education and employment. In the twentieth century, the picture of feminism underwent a dramatic, drastic and unpredicted change. New attitudes towards morality, marriage, female sexuality and divorce were becoming a force to reckon with. As women were acquiring increasing mobility, education and employment for the image of the ‘new women’.

The Indian women’s movement has not fully emerged from its chrysalis of tradition due to various factors. The hierarchical, much mythicized Indian culture; has its basis in the Hindu religion, which expounds the caste system and operates at the level of social relationships and at that of ideas and values the ideology of Hinduism has polarized the sexes and established as it were the inferior status of women. A Hindu relict like Manu Smriti codified the different spheres of man and woman, has indubitably clipped the wings of the Indian woman by making her a dependent throughout her life, on father, husband and son.

However, “the women’s roles within the family as wives, daughters and mothers were re- emphasised and extended, to be in tune with the requirements of the family in a
changing society” (Vina Mazumdar, “The Social Reform Movement in India” – From Ranade to Nehru, Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity, ed. B.R. Nanda 63). In short, women were re-assigned to their traditional roles with reinforced pride and importance.

In the context of this surging global ferment of cultural, socio-political reassessment of the woman’s role, one would consider Nayantra Sahgal, an Indian writer, who has significant viewpoints to express on woman’s consciousness.

Immensely influenced by feminism, she questions the roles hitherto accorded to women and stresses the discrepancy between the reality of woman’s existence and the image to which she has to conform. As a writer, she used her own experiences as a spring-board in order to explain this discrepancy. In other words, she reflects the contemporary women’s predicaments in the society. Though Sahgal is concerned with the question, “What is it to be a woman?” her handling of the subject matter varies.

Much of her writings undoubtedly convey realistic impressions of Indian life, but there is also a purposefully selective representation of certain aspects of Indian society, which she wants to attack. Sahgal does not deal with the female experience per se because the society that she portrays is one where women have not experienced the conflicts nor have they faced the question of choices available for them in the so-called progressive Western society. Even where the conflicts have been felt, the women may not have chosen to ventilate the tension. In some cases, they may not even have been formulated.

**FEMINISM:**

Feminism refers to social, political, cultural and economic movements, that focus to safeguard women’s rights and concentrates to provide legal protection to women. Based on these theories, they aspire and advocate empowerment of women. The movement was influenced by the ideas maintained – asserted and precipitated by thinkers like Alice Jardine, Mary Wollstone Craft, Simone De Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Betty
Friedan, Virginia Woolf and others. According to Alice Jardine, “Feminism, she writes, is generally understood as a movement from the point of view of, by and for women.” (P.15) – Jardine Alice. Gynesis: Configurations of Women and Modernity. I thaca: V of Cornell, P., 1986. Suppression of women was the universal fate of women, branded as weaker sex denying justice socially, economically and politically. Feminism thus made women aware of their rights in the male dominated society. It was common fate of women all over the world but the intensity of it may vary from one place to another. Thus, Feminism brought denial or refusal to this subordination to men in all aspects. Mary Wollstone Craft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) created awareness of women’s struggle and equal rights that raised to voice for the equality between men and women. She emphasised on lack of education among women as the sole cause for their exploitation, where she pleaded for equal educational rights for men and women, representing the whole class of women. She believed that one’s awareness on value of education can make them understand their rights, duties and importance in the society. This movement was later propelled by Simonde Beauvoir, who through her notable work, The Second Sex (1749). It was first published in French and later translated into English, which shattered the myth of feminity. Her work portrays the sad plight of women who were made to be subordinates to men and somewhere found women only to be responsible for that. She dealt with various disciplines like Biology, Psychology and History that were applied on women to make them yield to male domination. She discussed boldly on issues like sexual initiation and sexual pleasure for women, which were not discussed earlier. Hence, we can assume that Beauvoir’s work as a book of revolution, which gathered momentum in the later years to come.

The book which ignited the movement was Betty Friedan’s The Feminist Mystique published in 1963. She conducted a prolonged study for fifteen years after her graduation and her study proved that a woman can achieve happiness only after marriage was false. She interacted with mothers and wives who were leading comfortable lives but yet were unhappy. They shared that they were fulfilling their duties for their families. It also projected the apprehensions of young girls to face their life and they said that marriage would be the best solution to evade this issue. But once they are married, they felt lost. Friedan opined that we can no longer ignore the voice within women which
says, “I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.” (Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. New York: w.w. Norton, 2001.8 print). Her work focused the misery of married woman and she urged for their freedom and equality with men.

Kate Millet’s Sexual Politics in 1969 targeted the roots of the political system of male domination. She finds it hard to see “the relationship between the sexes in a political light.” (P.23) Millet Kate. Sexual Politics, London: Rupert Hart Davis, 1971 (23, 25) Print. She, however defines the term “Politics” as referring to “Power structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.” (Millet 23). She says, “The situation between the sexes” is one of “dominance and subordination” which resulted in “interior colonization” that means “Women often cannot see that they are oppressed because they are fully acculturated to that oppression, and may even defend the interests of the men who are their masters.” (Millet-25). She highlighted in her work the existence of Patriarchy, which paved way for the wide gap between the two sexes, in regard to the power they enjoy. She vehemently argues, that the patriarchal society is the cause for women’s demeaning position.

Virginia Woolf’s critical treatise A Room of one’s own points out how woman has been handicapped by her inferior status in society. Her theory of feminism creates new values for society. Her argument was not to create animosity between man and woman but it was her doctrine to bring a balance between the two sexes, to create a new world. Her feminism was not limited to the advocacy of woman’s rights but to generate an awareness of feminine problems in all spheres. The denial of formal education has indirectly fuelled her feminist attitude.

According to M. Sujatha in her work Virginia Woolf’s Prelude to Feminism: A Room of one’s own (Print 1995: P.90) “As Virginia Woolf printed out in A Room of One’s Own illiteracy, lack of economic independence, private space and leisure time have been the reasons for women remaining in the background and men playing lead roles in literary arena. Since they had suffered from the violent masculine world, their writings in the beginning, reflected the impressions of anger, rebellion and sexual bias and thus they
were unsuccessful. Their passionate expressions are forged from life’s painful experiences.”

The Indian women writers of the twentieth century look up for the cause of the women who are in search of being assertive of their selfhood in a female dominated society. They are determined to renounce the conventional method of female expression, which was laid down by the Patriarchal codes of behaviour. They crossed the barriers of the image of being eternal sufferers and projected their protagonists more endured to fight any odds, to redefine and transform themselves.

Today in this twenty first century, Indian writings in English have carved a niche for themselves by being a benchmark, to address many global issues. The contribution of Indian women writers added a new dimension to Indian writing in English as their perceptions of their aspirations and expectations are written within the framework of Indian social and moral atmosphere. Women writers felt that there was every need to create an awareness in bringing out the social relevance, globally, politically, historically, psychologically, culturally, economically and these found articulation in their works. The Feminism discussed by the four feminists argued against femininity as traditionally constructed and they postulated that women must assert their independence from the state of “otherness” accredited to them by male culture and thus become independent. If men controlled women in the past, the twentieth century feminism made women slaves in continuance or over sexualized.

**Indian Women Writers:**

All the women writers, along with the Indian writers, with their creative abilities, highlighted to delineate the harrowing tale of woman’s deplorable plight under the male domination. Though, initially few male writers created some women characters in their fiction, they remained subdued and were mere puppets in the hands of their male characters lacking any significance. Though the writers like Manohar Malgonkar, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao created some women characters in their fiction, they failed to depict a powerful image in their novels. Their women characters were portrayed as
though confined to domestic work either sacrificing or suffering in the hands of the male characters. The characters were in close resemblance to Sita and Savitri images symbolizing the acceptance, submissiveness and subservience to their men. The credit for writing the first English Novel in India goes to Krupabai Sattianandan’s “Kamala: The Story of a Hindu wife (1894) which portrayed the protagonist initially to be docile and meek but later evolves to be an independent woman protesting for herself and others suffering like her.

The women writers spoke through their characters and were vociferous of their identity. Toru Dutt, the first Indian novelist wrote ‘Bianca’, which is of psychological significance. Shivanti Bai Niakme another woman novelist is a champion of feminism who through her work Ratna Bai fought against injustice and ill-treatment meted out to naïve, sober and sophisticated housewives. Rajlakshmi Debi’s The Hindu Wife or The Enchanted fruit (1876) protested against the social condition. Swarna Kumari Ghoshal an eminent feminist, the elder sister of Rabindranath Tagore contributed through her writings. Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954) fought for the deep mental agony of the married and unmarried woman, as she being a social reformer. Even her stories reflected the psychological torture inflicted on women.

In the nineteenth century, the women fiction was limited as they mostly dealt with the socio-cultural problems faced by women in the guise of patriarchy and tradition. The themes were also limited to the National Movement and later they drifted to the psychological themes. Their works appeared to be a plea against subjugation but could not create any impact or effect on the society. Only after the Second World War, the Indian writing by the women writers has gathered the momentum, especially with the writings of Kamala Das, Kamala Markandeya, Nayanthara Sahgal, Ruth Prawar Jabwala, Sashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and many others. They came up with a powerful voice that exposed the ugly face of the typical familial and social structure, exploiting a woman and compelling her to accept the domination of men. They proved no way inferior to men in focusing on the issues for their individual self. They depicted their characters with utmost sensitivity as their main focus remained on ‘Women’, her experience and point of view and highlighted on her
suffering and endurance. This resulted in acquiring an expression, which has been choked under the strong feet of men in the name of patriarchy. The works included those related to the condition of women, the Purdah system, education for women, widow remarriage, dowry and many other issues. According to Susie Tharu and K. Lalithain *Women Writing in English*, “These writers contested the structures that were shaping their world. They tactically redeployed dominant discourses held on to older strains and rechanged them with new meanings and even introduced new issues, new emphasis, new orientations.” (154).

Like the big three in men writers i.e. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao the big four of the First Generation Writers of the post Independent era are Kamala Markandeya, Nayanthara Sahgal, Ruth Prawat Jhabvala and Anita Desai. The twenty first century has been a landmark for setting a new trend for diasporic literature, to name a few Meena Alexander, Bharathi Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

In the late nineteenth century itself, the nuclear family emerged, breaking out from the joint family system resulting in the evolvement of woman’s individual self. As Chandani Lokuge says, “Satthianadhan provides Kamala with the opportunity of expressing her latent feminism when she transfers Kamala and Ganesh from Ganesh’s parents’ residence, to a house of their own in the city. By granting them this independence, Sattianadhan also enables them to transcend the traditions of the joint or extended family.” (11). The word “New Woman has originated in the wake of awakening women to make them realize their individuality by asserting their rights as a human being and find a place in the society without any gender discrimination”. Lokuge Chandani Introduction Kamala: *The Sotry of a Hindu Life by Satianadhan* 1894 (p. 1-16)

Earlier the themes of the novels were aimed at social and political evils like Sati, child marriage etc. The writers considered certain issues like race, which comprises of hereditary. Temperament of that moment was the spirit of the period, which was basically during the national development that was prevalent at that point of time and the milieu dealt with the environment which can also be physical, the surroundings, the social conditions, and the other aspects. Though there were Historical Novels, Social Novels, and Detective Novels, Psychological Novel was the most inspired genre that ignited the
minds of the women writers who could express their feelings and emotions in a natural way.

The liberators like Simon De Beauvoir, Kate Millet and others assert feminism and vociferation for gender equality. *The Second Sex* by Simon De Beauvoir is based on the emphasis that women should be treated as equals to men and also as basic human beings. Nayanthara Sahgal also exhibits her women characters as bold enough to face their counterparts. Her novels deal with women struggling against oppression and injustice mounted on them in the conservative culture.

Sahgal was born on May 10, 1927 to Ranjit Sitaram Pandit and Vijayalakshmi Pandit who lived in the aristocratic home of Motilal Nehru, along with Jawaharlal Nehru who was her maternal uncle and his daughter Indira Gandhi. Her father’s up bringing had inculcated the literary fervor, noble sentiments of patriotism and a strong will to fight against injustice and oppression. After her education in the US, she took up teaching assignment as ‘Writer-in-residence’ at the Southern Methodist University Dallas, Texas. She led a seminar on Creative Writing in which twenty-three American students participated. On completion of Research Scholarship from the Radcliff Institute of Harvard University, she was once again invited by Southern Methodist University to lead two more seminars. After her graduation, Sahgal lived with her mother in Russia who was the Ambassador to India. Her marriage with Gautam Sahgal seemed to pass on smoothly, but soon she began to express a sense of alienation. Her sensitive nature could not bear the chauvinistic and oppressive behaviour of Gautam, resulting in a cramped life. His obsessive nature with power and money thwarted her longings for tender emotions of love and regard. She felt strangulated in this restrained atmosphere, which was in contrast to her earlier free life. Her pretence of happy life, which was always on guard, was tiring her mentally and physically. Since then, she found writing would be a vent to all her emotional sufferings though it was not appreciated by her husband Gautam Sahgal. Her agony of being mangled is described in her novels later, as she admits in an article written in 1976, saying, “There were pieces of the going into the men and women, I created when I really began to write.” *(Femina 6)*. After her bold decision to divorce,
her husband she was in a relationship with Mangat Rai for a long time and later on married him.

Sahgal’s progressive thoughts made her believe, that to break away from the sacred marriage bond need not be treated by women as a moral offence if she finds the shackles too oppressive to the growth of her inner-self. Hence, it was easy for her to portray her characters with inalienable right of freedom for women in many of her novels like *Storm in Chandigarh*, *The Day in Shadow*, *Rich like us*, etc. In most of the novels and writings there are all political events and the position given, giving a clarion call to women to emerge as a ‘new woman’ – moving towards freedom. A close study of her novels, reveal that two dominant themes, political and social that are almost always intertwined with each other. Her relentless efforts to fight against the injustice meted out to women form the backdrop of her writings. Her novels deal with the political and social turbulences that the country has been facing since Independence. Her stories focus on women who were trapped in the concepts of liberty and conventional thoughts for stability and preservance of marriage which form the core of her novels. She urges women to believe in themselves by being aware of themselves without losing their identities and putting their foot down in the aspects of injustice in any form.

However, the new generation of Indian writers in English has dealt with a plethora of subject matters and themes and they are Sashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee, Divakaruni and others. The term ‘Diaspora’ and “Diasporic literature” are related to all literary works written by authors, who have settled outside their native country but are related to native culture and backgrounds. Hence, these diasporic writers remain attached to the homeland. There may be various reasons for their migration, which could be social, economical, political or educational. This displacement and dislocation often leads to a sense of rootlessness or identity crisis. Immigration is a global phenomenon and an important aspect of literature. The gust for identity, cultural conflicts, impact of industrialization and the consequent social and economic changes, the problems of the expatriates and immigrants and the relationships formed by the immigrants are some of the common themes that are dealt by these Indian women writers. They have presented the dilemma of modern women facing in recent
times. Their keen observations of the life of Indian women and their interest in study of their inner psyche have helped these novelists to portray their plight and exploitation concretely.

**Narrative Techniques**

Divakaruni’s fascination for folktales, myths, legends and fairy tales of Bengal reflect in her novels where the protagonists are also etched with an ear to the stories narrated by her characters. The novel *Sister of my heart* has this autobiographical element reflecting in the protagonists where, Sudha and Anju crave for stories narrated by their windowed aunt Pishi showing the same enthusiasm as that of the writer. Sudha says “There is Pishi, our window aunt who threw herself first into her younger brother’s household when she lost her husband at the age of eighteen…. Most of all Pishi is our fount of information, the one who tells us the stories….” (Sister.4)

Adoption of a method to execute one’s ideas and thoughts can be called as a technique of writing. Though they differ from writer to writer, the parameters that include are writer’s language, dialogue, imagery, similes, symbolism, description, realism, imagination, humor and pathos. Nayanatara Sahgal’s work would present recognizable experiences where there will be an approximation to facts that were perceived by her. Her diction adheres to her principles of writing which reflect the ultimate purpose of her writing, where she conveys satisfyingly with clarity of thought. The Indo-Anglian writers had the dual purpose in enabling the works to be read by native speakers of English as well as the non-native speakers. The language used by Sahgal fulfills her experience and expression. The select novels convey her intensity of feelings and social idealism bringing freshness and spontaneity to her readers. The straight forwardness is perceived in her autobiographical works like *Prison and Chocolate Cake*, which would make it appear very true. One can understand how her past still becomes part of her. Her vocabulary and command on the language come to her effortlessly. Her style represents the idea that is in the mind of the writer. She claims that writing in English comes to her in a natural way. The image she portrays in her novels are more authentic. Her apt use of imageries would illuminate the situation, which is suggestive and appropriate. Another aspect of her technique of writing is her realism which displays her simplicity, directness
and also avoids pompous presentation. Her openness in expression, her views, make the readers agree with the issues discussed even from her point of view. Her awareness to the problems around, whether social or political, shows the author’s intellect. Her words and images are complexly arranged. The intermingling of themes is an encounter between the East and the West. The ‘clubs’ used for social gatherings in her novels are symbolic of Indian and English elite. The marriages too symbolize the togetherness of the Indian and English worlds. Juxtaposition of the era and the human qualities in her characters bring out the contrast and the conflict in her protagonists. Her skillful adaptation are violence in politics and interpersonal relations are craftily etched by brining positivity at the end. Parable is another device she uses with subtle humor to drive home a point. Her surrealistic style and the moderate use of similes and imagery establish her as a distinguished novelist in English.

Her subtle usage of humor brings in some amount of relief to the readers and we find some drifting of mood in the novel. Her verbal wit is the characteristic of her writings. On parallel to humor, certain element of pathos stirs the tender emotions of the readers. We feel bad for her sufferers. Her experience as a journalist makes her to be concise to the point. Her flash back technique gives an insight into the characters.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in Calcutta on 29th July, 1956. After her Bachelor’s degree from the Presidency College, University of Calcutta, she moved to America and completed her Masters Degree in English from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio in the year 1978, received Ph.D., in English from the University of California at Berkeley. She was teaching creative writing in Houston and her interests moved to issues involving women. Her work with the Afghan woman refugees and the troubled Indian women in America made her become the founder member of MAITRI in 1991, which influenced her writings. MAITRI helps South Asian women facing domestic violence, emotional abuse and cultural alienation. Chitra’s humble beginnings were from MAITRI, which encouraged her to write a collection of short stories Arranged Marriage, which has brought her acclaim and inspired her to begin her career as a writer. The Mistress of Spices, The Vine of Desire, The Sister of my heart, The Oleander girl’,
The Palace of Illusion’s etc., were some of her novels that brought her a lot of recognition to her creative work.

Chitra Banerjee being an expatriate she was longing for her roots and the past. To rejuvenate her nostalgic memories she adopted the story telling technique. Her stories were based on folktales, legends and myths. Being a diaspora, she portrays the mirror image of the India immigrant in the USA, which is in contrast with the culture adopted in an alien land. The narrative, explores the unselfishness required as an Indian woman and freedom offered in their adopted land. Her technique of alternative narrative, first and third person narrative, stream of consciousness, and letters by diary writing, myth and magic realism express the chaos and turmoil seen in Indian immigrants while adapting to the new civilization. Her successful image of magic realism connects the present and past affairs. She reveals the characteristics like visions, mythology, folktales, fables etc reflecting her Bengali culture and tradition. Her appropriate handling between fantasy and realism in the select novels is a mirror to it. Sister of my heart and Palace of illusions (2008) have numerous references too these elements. Her stylistic combination of first person and third person narrative connected by flash back technique provide an authentic force in the novels. This flash back appears during the retelling of memories and dream sequences. This gives a break in the narratives’ time flow. It invokes a kind of interest in the reader. Her stories focus on the life of the immigrant women. The articulation of the characters effectively stimulates a narrative. First person narrative style allows the readers to see the point of view of the thoughts, feelings and opinion of the author. Her judicious usage of satire, irony or humor feature her contribution to her ability in engaging her readers. The portrayal of the autobiographical elements depict her fascination and nostalgia for her roots and memories associated with Bengal and the Hindu mythology.

The authors Nayanatara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee chosen for the select study have portrayed predicament in their works. Their treatment of women is special than that of their contemporaries with colonial and postcolonial themes.

Both the novelists have depicted women who were exploited, and marginalized due to the male dominance. Their women have fought against the established order of
society, shattering their experiences of womanhood, woman’s subordinate status, class conflicts, social censorship, gender discrimination and the burning problem of female foeticide and financial issues were explored from a woman’s point of view.

**Review of Literature**

Nayantara Sahagal depicts postcolonial attitudes and vouches for a new feminine morality and a new humanism in her novels. Sahgal feels strongly about female exploitation and male sarcasm towards the issue of women’s identity crises. Women are represented with a new morality where they are not considered as mere toys or objects of lust and momentary pleasure but man’s equal and honoured partner. The characters reveal her feminist ideology. She felt her primary obligation is that of advocating the emancipation of women. She portrays the sensibility of woman that how a woman looks out at herself and her problems. The thesis focuses on Sahgal’s feminist approach as well as the political scenario of the country before and after independence, which finds a room in the research. Sahgal’s women represent different kinds of virtues.


“Sahgals women characters are based on their autobiographical experiences and they imagine other women’s condition like theirs.”

This paper studies that feminism as a part of humanism and the potential women should be recognized and they should express freely and fearlessly. Feminism should be welfare oriented and should focus on issues like female foeticide, female illiteracy, child marriage, dowry system, and all evils and violence against women.

Themes of feminism have been used by Sahgal and others. Chitra Banerjee used realism as main themes of her novels. Indian novels are recorded with some expectation by many Indian readers. The Indian Women novelists are capable of conveying the messages in an Indian way. Today’s novelists have burning issues related to women that have been existing in the society since long. They are frank enough to describe the whole
world of women. They explored the female psyche, which has no accessibility. Most of their novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife.

Almost every novel of Nayantara has a central woman character who gradually moves towards an awareness of her emotional needs. She advocates emancipation of women, exploitation of women even during modern times by the individuals and the society. She portrays how a woman looks at herself and her problems.

*Short Review of the Neurotic women characters in the novels of Indian English Women Writers* – Santosh Shete M.S. Bidwe College of Engineering, Latur (MS)

The women novelists, who have aimed the secret wishes of the vast majority of Indian women, are Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Komala Markandeya, Nayatara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Sashi Deshpande. These women writers have dealt with the neurotic phenomenon in the Indian context by creating extremely interesting characters. “Their Feminine sensibility and introspection have a human touch and psychological depth of their observation.”


As A.V. Krishna Rao says: “What forces Simrit to rebel against the conventional security of marriage is her yearning for a free communication of ideas with her husband.” – Rao, Krishna A.V. *Nayantara Sahgal: A Study of her fiction*. Madras: M. Sesha Chalam, 1976:58. The character’s rebelliousness and her willingness to change that helps her in realising her from moving away from the conventions. She rebels against the injustice that prevails on the basis of gender and class, making way for a new one where there is a possibility of equality and opportunity equally for all without any discrimination. Sahgal’s urge for equality is strongly felt in the portrayal of Simrit in *The Day in Shadow*.

As one wonders, Simrit’s behavior puzzles the reader for her passive behavior for she being educated who has her own cravings and dreams of respectable life, why does she allow her husband to humiliate her at ever instance, where we find Urvashi Barat, who refutes suggestions that Simrit encourages male – chauvinism agrees however; “Her
personality has been shaped by her feminine experience in a patriarchal society which as Karen Horney points out in feminine psychology prevents her from achieving self confidence, and inculcates in her a degree of dependence or love in relationships....” (Brat 1995:11)

Barat Urvashi. 1995 Feminsim in The Day in Shadow points of view. 2.2 (winter) New perspective on Indian Writing Nayantara Sahgal’s The Day in Shadow

K.K. Sharma appropriately says, “If feminism is based on the wrong attitude of hostility towards man, it will fizzle out, for the two genders are not only complementary and supplementary to each other but also absolutely indispensable for each other for full growth and fulfillment.” Women should live in harmony without any antipathy towards men as they too play supporting roles and reach out to the women folk. Such inter-sex scenario will make for harmonious social environment.

K.K. Sharma, “Feminism: Some observations” feminism and literature, p.201.


The plot structures are relatively simplistic if slightly soap opera driven, the alternative narrative of the sisters reveals the mystical bond between them the writer feels the prose had Alice Walker with a touch of M.M.Kaye. Divakarui scores high in making her women characters something more than cardboard cutouts.

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It has taken a post modern move where Chitra has to show the woman’s side of this epic struggle in her novel. Grand to the very end of her corporeal existence Panchali torments herself brooding on the harm that she has helped to inflict on her family and her family.

Feminism and Nayantara Shagal’s The Day in Shadow and Rich like Us: from the particular to the Ideological. By Pankaj K.Singh

a) The novel has good data enough to make a feminist novel, which should centrally concern itself with the issue of power, yet, in the absence of irony at any level it
remains a novel by a woman, about a woman, where contrary to woman’s cause the status quo is uncritically accepted as some inevitable law.
b) The sensitive and discriminating awareness about woman’s experience is absent in the novel.
c) The novel almost naturalizes the arbitrary power division between the genders.
d) The novel has naivety at the level of ideology, its “innocence” towards the issues of power in a patriarchal social-set-up, its disinclination to relate the heroine’s predicament to a social order which unjustly and arbitrarily marginalizes women and assigns the privileges of men—all these constitute “flaws from a feminist angle”.

Chitra Banerjee Divakarauni’s writings have given a voice to the feminine issues concerning their position and treatment in the society. She opines that the western women enjoy more freedom than those in India. Bonding between women is an important aspect she deals with and suggests it as an everlasting bond. She analysed magic realism and linked it with the modern period. Her usage of myth exemplify her work. An extensive variety of critical literature has been published on Divakaruni, to cite the other works of research done so far, in studies related to Divakaruni. The Dissertation Abstracts International (2006-2008) has a limited information of the research work done. Jibna Desai’s dissertation entitled Rooted Homelands, Routed Hostlands: (En) Gendered Mobility in the South Asian Diaspora brings out the issues faced by the immigrants in the adopted country.

“Negotiating the Modern: Orientation and “Indianness” in the Anglophone World” is an endeavour by Amit Ray who portrays the east west cultural conflict and the supremacy of the Indian culture in an immigrant land. Online sources and library records proved informative sources. Karen J. Kuo, Arizona State University, has dealt with “Lost Imaginaries: Images of Asia in America”. Alicia Maria Rivera, Western Washington University, has conducted a study on “Potent Fusions”: Disasporic Identities in Twentieth Century Fiction”. The research thesis prepared by Mahuya Ghosh, New School University, embarks upon the Effects of Acculturation on Young Adult South-Asian Indian. Husne Jahan’s essay, Colonial Woes in Postcolonial writing: Chitra Divakaruni’s Immigrant Narratives.
Sau-Ling C. Wong, University of California, does a thorough motif-study of variations on the State of Liberty found in two prose narratives of Divakaruni. She discusses issues relating on gender, class, citizenship and globalization. Felicity Hand’s essay, *The Old Rules Aren’t Always Right: An Analysis of Four Short Stories by Divakaruni* speculates on the feminist aspects in Divakaruni’s works and also discusses the immigrant laws in America. These works intensify the depth of this study.

Debjani Banerjee’s treatise, *Home and Us: Redefining Identity in the South Asian Diaspora through the Writings of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Meena Alexander*. Banerjee attempts a detailed study of Divakaruni’s novels and short stories from this standpoint.

*Sisters of the Heart: Female Bonding in the Fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni* by Urbashi Barat thoroughly explores the theme of feminine bonding. Michael Thorpe, in his article titled, *Kinds of Subjugation* deals with the setbacks endured by women in the Divakaruni’s *Leaving Yuba City*. These reading reinforce the themes concepts and point of views for the study.

Sahgal’s heroines were in the transition period, where the traditional values were losing their hold on the modern world as it started taking its shape or that was not comprehended fully. They were mustering courage to cross the Rubicon that was set by the traditional or the patriarchal society. The novels selected showed the shades of transition as they were confronted with the conflicts of identity, suppression, isolation, the familial relationships and other emotional situations. Their vulnerability was challenged with certain predicaments hence there were these inner conflicts. We notice some revolutionary changes that took place in their decisions to cross their boundaries with impurity as they felt there was no choice left for them other than those given, during those circumstances. Sahgal’s personal life and experiences stand as a testimony for her writings, hence we find the autobiographicalelements in certain situations created by her protagonists in her novels.

**Statement of Thesis**
As postcolonial writers, Nayantara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni who belong to India had seen the country, which was strong in its roots, in imbibing patriotism and nationalism in its citizens. Sahgal’s political background enabled her to be associated with the national spirit, as she was brought up in British India and was also aware of the struggles the country faced for its independence. Chitra’s family background and her attachment to Bengal made a mark on her life. Her association with her grandfather had a great impact on her, making an indelible imprint that inspired her to write on various themes, reflecting her motherland. They both are gifted with the liberal American education, that made them breathe two cultures and bear the testimony that, their postcolonial identities are true to the spirit of the nation they both belong to.

I set myself on the task of bringing an understanding of the writings of Nayantara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in a comprehensive manner in terms of the predicaments faced by their women. The characters respond to various phenomena of change at different circumstances. How do they adopt and adapt to these conflicts and challenges in their pursuit of their identity, freedom, responsibility of fulfillment, dilemmas, priorities in life and love within marriage or outside? Are they able to sail through selfhood, do they resist or yield to various personal, social and political issues? My study also examines how the novelists of two different times and backgrounds respond to various situations. Coincidently my writers happen to be present in the 21st century. Their portrayal of various problems and solutions can be read and understood by a woman of any time as they are deprived of freedom and are made victims of patriarchy. Their writings exhibit a kaleidoscopic view for the modern women showing how their status has changed from the past to the present, making them assertive and taught them not to yield and suffer.

**Research Methodology**

Research methodology is a significant part of research that gives the scope to complete it within stipulated time. It makes the researchers use their skills in collection, selection, analysis and presentation of data. Research work can be accomplished only with the proper usage of the skills like reading, listening, watching choosing, questioning, summerising, discussing, interacting with people and importantly to reflect upon
everyday life experiences. Since the select study is on literature recording the primary sources, critical books, journals, magazines, browsing the internet are the best sources to present them for my study. A good amount of deskwork has been done for this purpose.

The researcher aims at presenting a comparative study of the Indian novels by Nayantara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee. Divakaruni where select novels are taken for study. Each chapter has a detailed comparative study of a single novel of both where as the psychoanalysis Chapter VI has taken 5 novels for its comparative study. The psychological approach mainly focuses on the inner mind of the female characters in the chosen novels that were taken for study in this chapter. It helped the research focus on the inner mind and their psychological suffering. Some of the psychoanalytic theories are applied for example if we take Simrit, Saroj, Sudha, Draupadi where repression ego, anxiety etc are portrayed and how the ego makes them feel guilty is noticed, we also see how they lose themselves due to the trauma of their past. Because its experience is so unforeseen, and its impact so threatening and dangerous, hence the experience is temporarily ignored by a person’s consciousness. We also see the psychological sufferings due to certain incidents that happen in their past lives.

An extensive review on the existing literature on women’s predicaments by the native and diaspora have accomplished, yet giving scope for the scholars to explore further. Issues of feminism have been made as topics by many research studies. There are also comparative studies done by many literary scholars and researchers bringing out a new understanding and a different point of view. Though abundant research has resulted on diaspora writers, feminism and women writers, comparative literature, yet the need of comparison of writers of different periods have always been there that explored new dimensions, and perspectives not only from the writers point of view but also from the readers point of view. As a result, there may be similarities and dissimilarities between these two writers hence they are shown from different perspectives. The research methods applied here are to analyse and interpret the primary sources and use the biographical and historical materials to establish the political and cultural events, which influenced these authors.
Aims and Objectives:

- Identifying the problems and its causes emerged out of their situations living in different countries or sometimes in their own country.

- Causes and effects of their sufferings are to be discussed from feministic cultural and social point of view to reach to certain conclusions. It is to be done with an aim of acquainting the young generation with the problems that women face due to marriages and immigration.

- Thesis aims to assess the contribution of selected novelists to the feministic literature.

- The present research has an objective of evaluating the life, and problems of the women protagonists in the selected text and also aims at comparing and contrasting the problems faced by the immigrant women in one text with the problems faced by the women in other texts.

- Mythological text also contributes to the objective of predicament of women suffering from time immemorial due to the patriarchal domination.

- Observes and analyses the facts related to the problems of women observed in the selected texts and compare them with each other.

- Present research is an investigation on cultural and social aspects and the critical study throws light on Feminism.

Justification:

The number of cross-cultural marriages and immigrations are increasing day by day due to advancement in the technological field, which is globally connecting the world. But the suffering of women is a constant factor that remains the same but varies in its degree. Their suffering and endurance is more than men. The twenty-first century women, who are the young generation, must be familiarised with the problems and the possibilities that arise due to cross-cultural marriages and immigration especially the sensitive and emotional young women. The selected works reflect the problems of women in India and the immigrated women too. In this perspective, the comparative study helps to widen the understanding of the gravity of these issues studied for discussion. It also widens the horizon of literary endeavour. Bringing together the selected writers for comparison, may lead to estimate the universality of human behaviour and experience. Comparison gives the scope for permitting individuality into
generalization. The selected women writers have the Diaspora experience, hence have
different approaches to look at the women in India as well as in alien country. They bring
forth a collective feminine consciousness. The remarks brought forth in the study are
acceptable, authentic reliable and valid. Thus, a comparative study is helpful for the
purpose of familiarising the contemporary generation with the problems that are faced by
women whether in their home land or in a migrated land.

The Scope & Limitations:

- The present research has its own limitations too though diaspora speaks on a
  very large perspective, the research is based only on the selected works by the
two diaspora Indian women writers.
- Both the writers write essays, autobiographies, short stories, novels in English
  out of which few novels are selected for the study as they both belong to
different communities and different generations of Indian women writers who
have written at different times.
- The selected texts may be studied from political geographical, psychological,
mythological, economical, familial, cultural, racial, philosophical ,feministic,
historical, social points of view. Of these, only feministic, cultural,
psychological, familial, aspects are determined to study on the predicament of
women in cross-cultural encounters.

Selection Criteria:

A large amount of work was done by the scholars and have discovered that gave
scope for me to explore. My study analyzed the colonial and postcolonial situations in
the select novels. My focus will be on the origins of post colonialism which was a strong
trait in the pre-Independent period and it has crept even to the later years of
Independence. I will focus on the major themes like human relationships marriage,
partition, British influence on the educated etc., for this Sahgal’s novels selected for my
study would fulfil the necessary parameters.Chitra’s contribution to Indian immigrant
writing is the strong choice as a selection criterion. The feminine experiences lay the
ground for her to understand various issues and problems the immigrants face. Her ability
to discuss the sensitive aspects of these women gave her the strength to choose them as her themes. The harsh and humiliating experiences of the immigrant women gave her a scope to explore with authenticity. Various problems related to identity crisis, sensibility, marriage, nostalgia, cultural shock, women’s double consciousness, individualism, uprootedness, family are well portrayed in the select novel. Both the novelists deal with the personality assessment as traits of a person faced during different predicaments. Hence, the qualities of the characters chosen are compared by using psychoanalysis to study them as tool for the novelists.

**Background**

My interest in Nayantara Sahgal is because she is one of the major writers pre-independent period who witnessed historical events and made them as a major theme. Her writings reflected the political life of India since Independence. From its idealism to its present crises. As her family background clearly states her involvement in that situation because her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru and her parents were actively engaged in freedom movements of India. Gandhian Principles and ideologies formed the basis of her approach in both political and personal. She also witnessed various movements like Rowlatt Act (1919) Non-cooperation movement (1920), Dandi March (1930), Quit India (1942) so on and so forth led by Mahatma Gandhi. She portrays the political disputes and conflicts during the colonial period, deals with the theme of Indian National Movements. Her autobiographies are replete with her personal memories mixed up with the story of Indian struggle for freedom. Her fictional work. *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *This time of morning* (1968) deal with the themes of the Indian Freedom Movement. In *A Time to be happy*, the British influence is felt through the social structures, the British firms the contributions and loyalty. *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) has the story of the division of Punjab into the modern states of the Punjab and Haryana. *The Day in shadow* (1971) deals with post independence political situation where we see deterioration in the political and moral values like wise all her novels somehow depict the background of the period.

I will analyse some of her fictional work i.e. *Storm in Chandigarh*, *The Day in shadow* and  *A Time to be Happy* to show various aspects like the colonial and post
colonial culture, how it was seen with sixties and the conflicts of western and indigenous cultures. My focus will be on the major themes like human relationship, the social situation, the moral values, the family setup during 1958 to 1971 I also bring out the conflicts in the human psychology between people of with Gandhian Principles and people who are under the influence of western culture bringing out the cultural difference and a difference in the ideology of men and women who lived during those times.

Women characters deal with the themes of suffering, identity relationships, dominance, urge for companionship in her novels. My novels *Storm in Chandigarh, They Day.... A Time...* show various states of women in a patriarchal society. My focus will be on some women characters like Saroj, Simrit, Mara, Lakshmi, Gauri, Kusum, Devika who either yielded to the situation or raised to the occasion, or suffer in the hold of men and some even moved out of the difficult situations. They rise against dominant culture which impedes women’s progress and make them rebel to move out freely as independent women. I will explore the colonial consciousness that is acceptance of the superiority of western culture. Chitra Banerjee belongs to the post-modern group of Indian writers in English and the selected work throws light on her feminine immigrant experience. She belongs to second generation of Indian women writers along with Sahgal, Bharathi Mukherjee, Kiran Desai and others. Her brilliant dealing of the issues and immigrant feminine experiences are attraction of her works. The problems or struggles faced by the Indians who migrate to America deal with accommodation, adaption into the new culture create a great interest to the study. Though a lot of work has been done, they have not been fully explored. Hence, the study of the feminine experience projects a different point of view. My work analyses *Sister of my heart (1999), The Vine of desire (2002), Palace of illusions (2008) Oleander girl (2012)* when we analyse her fictional work. *Sister of my heart* shows child hood and marriage of two sisters and *The Vine of Desire*, the sequel places these sisters in difficult situations the sequel deals with their post marital lives. These two portray the strong bonding they developed in their childhood and how marriage becomes a wall between their relation transforming into women who learn many lessons from the unexpected turning points in their lives and make them rise like phoenix out of the ashes. Each author is capable of writing in their own perspectives. (Both had personal experiences directly or indirectly). Chitra through MAITRI an
organization, witnessed the issues faced by the migrants. The selected writers coinciding ideological views and concepts made me choose them for the study. *Palace of Illusions* and *Oleander Girl* have a different projection. *Palace of Illusion* makes woman realise her folly leading to a great turbulence who suffers for no fault of hers. She is a victim of patriarchal dominance who had to suffer silently and relegate it to destiny. This mythological story shows women subservient and inferior with no individuality or identity. *Oleander girl* has the story of a woman similar to that of a soap opera who goes in search of her roots. Her emotional turmoil, lack of support, struggles in an alien country, her journey in search of her roots, her resilience are well portrayed.

**Findings**

The literature of Nayantara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is feminist literature and they contribute explicitly and implicitly. They discuss the problems, its roots and the way how women are surrounded in various predicaments whether they live in India or be immigrants. The comparison of predicament of women by both the writers can claim that the problems are due to their psychological, social and cultural encounters and these are faced by people all over the world. The selected novels picture acutely the problems of women. Chitra’s women suffer more than the native women because they opted to live in a migrated country. Her women face the clash of cultures that provides a scenario of immigrant feminine sensibility for a better understanding of the female world as projected by her. Sahgal on the other hand shows educated women facing the conflicts in a married lives affecting them psychologically. Her women endure till one point where they are pushed to a breaking point which precipitates the situation. So both the writers portray the evolvement of women i.e., from pre-independent to the post independent time where ‘suffering’ remains as a commonality. The domestic and social backgrounds are evaluated for this purpose. Their characters are projected as women in trouble who move towards a feminist approach, ready to struggle and become strong. It helps the women of modern age to comprehend the struggles therefore establish themselves as stronger beings.