CHAPTER -II
Trends in the Writings of Indian Women Novelist

Indian writing in English is now gaining ground by leaps and bounds. In the realm of fiction it has heralded a new era and has earned many laurels both at home and abroad. Now the tree of Indian English writing has started producing fruits of Indian sentiments, deep philosophical thoughts and rich heritage. The land of India is rich enough to feel and nourish this new plant. The only need for this plant is to spread its roots in the deep earth and to tip the mineral and water.

"The day for moving mountains is coming you don’t think so?

It’s coming for a while the mountain steeps but in other times.

Mountains all moved in fore, if you don’t believe that

Oh man, this at least believe

All sleeping women,

With awaken now and move". (Yasino Akiko 1878-1924) (1)

The above prophetic citation conveys the rise of awakened, emancipated women which is still rising and growing to the full stature.
Indian English fiction depicts, with equal passion the emancipation of the weaker sex, that women are no longer the quintessential traditional women of Vedic lineage.

The touch of liberty, equality and fraternity kindled by French Revolution, J.S Mill championed the cause of women in its classic book 'The Subjection of Women' in which he claimed equality for women for the first time.

From 20th century many reform acts had been passed for the reformation of women. Article 2 of Universal declaration of Human rights in 1948 conferred all rights and freedom without any declaration of birth, race, color, sex, language, religion and political reed. Article 15 says that there should not be determination on the basis of sex. Recent legislation for marriage succession, adoption, dowry etc is enacted for the welfare of the women.

The post modernist writers do not propagate total acceptance as the predecessors have done. This all has resulted in the gradual awareness of the new woman that has been mirrored by the Indian novelists. The credit phase goes to writers like TorruDutt, KapuraBaiShantinathanam, Shevanta Bai Nikambe and Cornelia Sorabji who made the phenomenon more
significant by making the novel itself an instrument of social regeneration.

The theme of post independence novels is exploration of women identity of self awareness, her approach to society at large and her efforts to come to terms with the social and familiar intercultural relationships.

The dilemma and struggle of the western woman to adjust herself in the Indian ethos and Indian women strenuous efforts to adapt and attain herself to western modes and values, after further revolution and reexamination of their traditional roles, leaves these women mentally and physically exhausted. This determination to overcome the Sisyphean labors, their efforts to resolve the dichotomy between their aspirations and their actual lot, the conflict between the roles of mother wife on the one hand and career oriented and their doubts and inner anguishes have been faithfully portrayed by Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal and others. Simon De Beauvoir rightly observes “The women of today are in a fair why to dethrone the myth of feminists that are beginning to affect their independence in concrete ways but they do not succeed in living completely the life of human being” (2)
Feminine protest is protest to show awakening sensuousness, their inflicts confrontations and protests against everything which hinders this process of self emancipation. The awakened woman earnestly desires to avert individuality as a human being.

She awakens with a new sensibility and sensitivity which is essentially Indian, in spite of being shackled by traditions, outdated, family and marriage laws of divorce, adoption, dowry, rape, inheritance and sexual exploitation. She is intensely eager to assert a new morality. The awakened woman is capable of devoting and demanding socio-political freedom. The Indian woman has lifted up to take a hard look at society's injustices towards her.

Indian women has carried the burden of the family. She has slaved for her husband, for her children and for her family. Through the centuries woman in Hindu tradition is depicted as a silent sufferer. She has given a secondary status both in the family and society. From time immemorial attempts were made to redefine her identity in relation to man as wife, mother, daughter, sister, but tradition trains a woman to think herself as an inferior being. In spite of the fact that women constitute at least one half a human races, woman is made to believe that this secondary position is not imposed feminine characteristics but rather by strong
environment forces of social tradition and education which have been under the control of men.

Indian Women take pride in suffering and live with the idea of subjugation entrusted to them for years in inculcation about the necessity to accept the rules assigned to them by patriarchy that runs all through their blood.

In a male dominated society woman is supposed to be an ideal wife, a mother, and an excellent homemaker with multifarious roles in family. As wife and mother service, sacrifice, submissiveness and tolerance are required attributes. The serves of adjustment she makes and yet she is not an equal to man. This is the predicament of women all over the world. At every stage of her life, woman is dependent for her status and survival upon man, her father, her husband, her son. The status and position of women is degraded and deteriorated with the passage of time.

Now Women in India have started questioning the age old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of men. In history and legends, they are praised high and men have idealized and are made a divinity in religious scriptures. But on the real earth they have been the object of constant humiliation and persecution by an entirely indifferent well patriarchal society. But in present scenario women have shown their
mettle in every field and in some respects, far better than men. Women's writing has come of an age, overcoming its difference as pointed out by Simon de Beauvoir and defying the prediction of the exaltation of the strong by Wiber B. Cross and it has tearing to communicate vociferously its critique of life. Issues of gender construction and its impact on the psyche of the girl child, traditional interpretations of motherhood, exploitation within and outside the family, influence of gender stereotyping on career with frankness were not found earlier. The vital presence of such themes in the contemporary literary scene highlights the fact that a woman's journey to autonomous selfhood meanders through various obstacles.

The commonality of issues they have raised in their writings underscores the existence of universal feminine wage to self-actualize by transcending the gender related constraints. Within the contest of this larger awareness, these novelists have taken up various problems pertaining to the identity of women and have analysed them against different cultural milieu. Their works evince a maturity in the treatment of themes, plot construction and delineation of characters.

They have shown their worth in the field of literature and are showing it even today without any hurdle. They are being conferred not only national but international awards. Today the works of Kamala
Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Santha Rama Rau, Nayantara Sehgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Gita Mehra, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Bharti Mukheerjee, Mahashweta Devi, Manju Kapur and imprint which is suffused with such a powerful and beautiful color which can't be erased and darkened. Indian women novelist in English and her vernaculars by their best dealt, with apart from many other things the pathetic plights of forsaken women who are fatal to suffer from birth to death. Now the question is why is it that Indian women novelists portray mostly the miserable life of an average Indian Woman? Why is it that a woman has to suffer abuse, tyranny and injustice without crime or reason in this male dominated social framework. The Bible says: Lord formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

This great event is the very onset of the creation contains the germ of disparity between man and woman. Man boasts and brags, dominates over woman, only because woman has come out from man, she is one of the ribs of man.

In Hindu religion the social structure of woman is not certain, sometimes upgraded and sometimes degraded. In Vedas too, most of the hymns are related to her. Atharva Veda says: The birth of a girl grant elsewhere, here grant a son. In the Koran a woman is described as a 'fitna' one who tempts man and brings trouble. Purda or Burka is strictly observed in
Muslim religion, though it can also be seen in most of the conservative Hindu families. In Hindu, purdah is losing its ground speedily but in comparison with the Hindu, Muslim women are still seen in their burkas. Thus the tug of war between the sexes finds its expression in the myths and legends stories and history. As a matter of fact, a woman forms the pivot and nucleus of family. It is she who has to give birth to children and to rear up the coming generation. The home is inconceivable without women, hence man and women are complimentary to each other. If a man is a flower, the woman is its fragrance.

Thus Plato in his book ‘The Republic’ observes that “The only difference between men and women is one of physical function. One begets, the other bears children. Apart from that both can and both should follow the same range of occupation and perform the same functions. They should receive the same education to enable them to do so. In this way society will get the best value from both” (3)

This shows that woman in the ancient times is sometimes upgraded and at other times degraded. Thus starts now the depiction of women in Indian English fiction.

The history of Indian Women novelist in English begins with Torru Dutt who died at the early age of 21, lesser that John Keats of the romantic
school of poetry. Both her novels Binaca and Le -Journal de
Mademoiselle avers deal with the auto biographical projections of the
novelists, the experience, sweet and sour, the gathered in her very short
life. The agony and catharsis welling out sisterly love and bereavement in
these two novels are very beautifully projected. Though the characters are
Spanish and French, yet the delineation is entirely Indian, full of love and
affection sincerity and purity which characterizes the core of an ideal
Indian Women. Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi Christian is the other great
figure in the realm of novels. She is mainly famous for her three
important works, ‘Love and Life behind the Purdah’ (1901), ‘Sun Babies
in the child life of India’ (1904) and ‘Between the firelight’ (1908). She
reveals in her novels the various moods and gestures going under the
pariah the esotery, tragedy, comedy and many more things which are
unnoticed even by feminist philosopher. She seems to satirize the ring
and domineering in a male dominated social framework. To her women is
no longer object of pleasure but a reservoir of all healthy values of life.
Similarly, Purdah which plays a very important role in an average Indian
women’s life in both Muslim and Hindu, though more conservatively
observed in the Muslim than in the Hindus, the core of Attai Hussins
‘Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim House’ (1944) and
After the Second World War, the history of Indian women novelists got a new track, a new vision. The woman writers of the last twenty-five years has moved far beyond the initial nineteenth century. Furtive scrambling for the world as evidenced in the now well known histories of Rassundari Devi and Ranabai could be literally counted on the fingertips. Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sehgal, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala to the contemporary upsurge.

Kama Markandaya’s first novel ‘Nectar in sieve’ made her a lovable writer of great fiction in both theme of technique, matter and manner. The novel deals with a realistic picture of the Indian villagers, their customs and cultures, rites and traditions. The villagers or the downtrodden have to work night and day in their best to churn nectar from the ocean of their mother earth. But the wrong lies in that the chained out nectar is bound to be placed in the scribe.

Rukhmini, the narrator heroine has to face ups and downs, fret and fever of life, her husband’s infidelity, her daughter’s sacrificial going to the child Kuti, the dejection from the Kiths and Kins, so on and so forth. Her other novel ‘Some Inner Furry’ is a tragedy engineered by politics. ‘A Silence of Desire’, the third novel by Kamla Markandaya unfolds the layers of spiritual reality and mystic vision of India. It is a story of Dandekar, a government servant, who gets tortures and sufferance.
because of his wife, Suajini whose attitude is just the opposite of her husband. Through these two characters the novelist presents an age long confrontation between mind and soul, believe intellect and emotion.

'The Coffer Dams', (1969) is a fine blending of art and truth, feelings and form. It is a story of the British engineers who construct a river-dam in independent India. It portrays a very fine picture of the Indo-British encounter resulting in several detains and disappointments. 'The Nowhere Man', deals with the mane of the anti-immigrant wave of the sixties which engulfs the life of Srinivas, an old Indian Widower. In this novel the image of disease is very suggestion. The disease leprosy suggests the protagonist sense of isolation and disintegration. The other novels which Marakandaya has to her credit are 'A Handful of Rice', 'Two Virgins', 'The Golden Honeycomb' 'Possessions'. Kamala Markandaya in 'Nectar in Sieve' presents the conflict of tradition versus modernity, the village versus the town, faith versus reasons, mysticism versus Science, Spiritualism versus materialism. Rukmini's indomitable faith drawing, 'Nectar in Sieve', justifies the title of the novel. Roshan and Mira in 'Some Inner Furry' symbolize the liberated women of modern India, who know and respect their preferences, strong willed, self confident and self-reliant individual identity.
An important area of concern in the novels of Kamla Markandaya is the East–West encounter. She has shown her acute historical consciousness by trading the tensions and points of contact between people belonging to two diverse races and two different attitudes of life from various perpetuities by bringing them together in different relationships and situations. The West is presented in her novels through a number of characters playing different rules representing different aspects of western culture, and reading in different ways to India, its culture and its people, they come in contact with.

Markandaya treats the tensions and conflicts arising out of the interaction between the East and West at the personal, social and cultural levels in her novels such as ‘Nectar in Sieve’. The novelists presents the confrontation and the element of hostility between the people of the East and West in the first part of her fictional career the later part of her fictional would evidently shows that the theme of reconciliation between two races gains definite ascenders. She is of the view that here should be compromise between eastern and western values.

‘In Nectar in Sieve’ the west is represented by Dr. Kennigtron an English medical memoir. Through the contact of Rukmini and her family with Dr. Kennigton the novelist brings out the opposite viewpoints of the East
and the West. Though the relations between Rukhmini and the English doctor seem to be quite friendly the mutual and the basic inability to perceive and comprehend the motivation and behavior of each other remains a common problem. In ‘The Coffer Dams’, the novelist treats a new fact of Indo-British encounter by delineating the conflict between technological power and forces of nature symbolized by tumultuous South Indian river. The confrontation is shown in the form of hostility between the progressive-minded British technicians and the hilly tribesmen of Indian who consider the river of God. In her novel ‘Pleasure City’, she depicts a happier co-operation in which sensitivities and attitudes are freely exchanged and fused together. The confrontation between the two has been objectively viewed on individual group and political cultural, and artistic level. She seems to advocate a compromise between the diverse values of the East and West in her novels. Mild submissiveness, domesticated unprotesting and self-sacrificing woman was an essential adornment of the patriarchal social set up all over the world. In the Indian social milieu, in the lower stratum of society women is accustomed to the frequent or accessorial beating by their drunkard husband. Kamla Markandaya’s woman like Rukhmini and Ira of ‘Nectar in Sieve’ and ‘A Handful of Rice’, are completely docile and passive.
They accept their lot unquestioningly. Rukhmini's story is intended to convey effectively the message of hope for the future of humanity.

Kamala Markandaya's women characters Nalini, Mira and PrAMILA are different reasons of the same image of woman, endured with an immense capacity of suffer. The contemporary of Kamala Markandaya has also left an indelible imprint in the history of women novelists in English.

Kamala Markandaya achieved fame with her first novel 'Nectar in a Sieve' was published in 1954. It is a truly representative Indian novel representative because it gives us repetitive pictures of a society and also of selves that are representative. The society and the selves are also organically related so that the society and the conditions are reflected in sensitive selves in the shape of profound human feelings. This novel has been translated into 17 languages including Russian in 1958. This brought the world fame as it has authentic pictures hunger and deprivation and often die of starvation and of selves suffering in the society.

This story of hunger, starvation and death of poor people in Indian villages is told by Rukhmini who grows from a young child into a married girl of twelve, then a young wife and finally an old mother figure losing in this process of growth, many things but most painful of all
being the loss of her dearest husband suffering the extremity of pain and despair and yet retaining her fundamental, loving and lovable dignity and humanity. In Rukhmini, Kamla Markandaya, has given us one of the finest drawn portraits of a representative Indian self in Indian fiction in English. It is Rukhmani, who has lost her husband and five of her six sons, and who is now an old, lonely woman in her mud and thatched hut who begins her extremely painful life’s strong.

The repetitive human consciousness in Rukhmini wants to live a life of dignity enlivened by the joy of living. That was why even with a poor husband who possesses nothing but a few measures of rice, a few locks of lentils, a mud and thatched house on somebody else’s land and few earthen and wooden utensils Rukhmini began her married life on a happy note. But they are destroyed by the fear and hunger. Both have to struggle the struggle which is directly aiming to preserve life, a life of joy and dignity. Life and Joy are synonymous terms fact, Joy is contained in the very act of living. Life desired of joy is death or death in life. In ‘Nectar in a Sieve’, Kamla Markandaya uses two sets of images one set to symbolize the joy of living and one set to symbolize the forces that kill the joy and thereby damage life beyond repair. In the first category are mud walls, agriculture, green fields, the gardens of beans and bringers, the birds of beauty like Kingfishers and Flamingoes, living animals, etc.
and in the second category included image of tannery brick a cement building weeds and snakes darkness, corruption.

Rukhmini gave birth to five sons and daughter Ira. Ira had been a very beautiful and meek girl and she had been a great help to her mother in her household work and had nursed her younger brother. But the first calamity falls when Ira’s husband brings her back to her parent’s home tells them that he cannot keep her because she is barren. The son in law goes away leaving Ira with her parents but the second calamity comes when they can’t survive due to hunger. In this situation two of her sons leave for Sri Lanka as indentured labors never return home, one went to city as domestic servant who would never return home, one has killed and one died of starvation and her only beautiful daughter who symbolized purity and innocence has been driven to prostitution to save her baby brother from dying of starvation.

The poor couple drifts about in the heartless city of sometime. Then, with the help of Puli, a street boy suffering from leprosy, they start working as stone breakers at wary. They do this hard manual work in order to save enough so that they might return home. While time collapse on the road near a gutter. That very night he dies.
'Nectar in a Sieve' is a truly representative Indian novel, representative because it gives us representative pictures of society and also of selves that are representative. The society and the selves that are representative. The society and the selves are also organically related so that the society and the conditions are reflected in sensitive selves in the shape of profound human feelings.

The contemporary of Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala has also left an indelible imprint in the history of women novelists in English. She was born of Polish parents in Germany and got her education in England but married an Indian and lived in India more than twenty four years.

Her first novel 'To Whom She Will', presents a very beautiful picture of Indian society its rites and customs, taste and temperament and above all marriage and love with an element of illicit relationships. 'The Nature of Passion' deals with a modern young girl, Nimmi who wants to discard the age old customs and rites, myths and traditions. 'Esmond in India' and 'A Backward Place' rings the note of East–West encounter. 'Esmond in India' tells the story of Esmond Still Wood, an Englishman who marries Gulab, the beautiful Indian girl. But the marriage fails due to the different nature in both the characters Esmond in selfish and mean and Gulab is rough and unsophisticated in 'A Backward Place'. Judy an English girl
marries an Indian actor Bal. But this marriage also does not succeed because of their different mentality. ‘The Householder’ is a domestic comedy which shows perception of remold, the conflicts between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The one with domineering accusation and other with enmity. The novel ‘Heat and Dust’ won the prestigious Booker Award in 1973. It is a story of Olivia and her husband Doughlas came to India. Olivia falls in amorous spells of Nawab and consequently she manages to elope with him. This leads to the pregnancy and latter on abortion of Olivia. She is given a cottage in the hills near the Nawab’s house. She earns the title of the mistress of the Nawab. The other woman who has to suffer is the narrator herself. She develops her weakness for an Englishman who turned Hindu. She helps him night and day during his sickness. This sympathy turns into sensuality between them. The narrator becomes pregnant, but unlike Olivia, she doesn’t get herself aborted. She is a lady of strong hope and patience. So she joins an Ashram and there suffers quietly. Thus both the ladies become the silent sufferer destroyed by the heat. Thus the portrayal in India in ‘Heat and Dust’ is the seldom portrayal of the cultural heritage and spiritual significance of the country India.

The novels of R.P Jhabvala ring the note of two things urban middle clan Indian life tinged with domestic problems of an average joint Hindu
family and ironic studies of the confrontation between occidental and oriental attitudes.

Like Kamala Marakndaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala is a socialist realist and focuses her attention on India. Her art is satirical, her attention ironic and her dominant concerns are joint family, missed marriages, family conflicts and domestic fiction. She also shows the clash of cultural values and East-West Encounter.

She can also explore the themes of the expatriate in India and the missed marriage of Indians and Europeans. Her novels are conflict of racial integration. They are about human beings in love or in marriage who may sometimes belong to widely different religions. Her novels are product of her Indian experience, her major characters are Indian, her scene is Indian and her malice is Indian. Her world is upper class North India. The world she portrays is peopled by the sophisticated and the anguished where crowded with people who make a virtue in broad daylight. It is a world crowded with people who make virtue of decay, depravedly and violently emotional people who have no intellectual curiosity.

In her first novel ‘To Whom She Will’ (1955) she takes up twin themes of love and marriage. ‘The Nature of Passion’ (1956) deals with the tussle between the old and the young. It is a sympathetic investigation of family
life and Indian women. 'Esmond in India' reveals Indian family life. In her novel 'A Backward Place' (1956), describes the struggle and suffering of English girl Judy, married to an actor Bal. 'The Householder' is a sensitively presented social comedy of a lower middle class Hindi teacher reflecting not merely his monetary and familial problems but also his complexes, his sense of failure and frustration and his minor fulfillments. The themes of Pseudo modernism and false display of the women's craze for emancipation is repeated in 'Get Ready for Battle'.

The Booker Prize winner novel 'Heat and Dust' show the image of India as Europeans see it. Thus she can be called an expert analyst of domestic fiction.

Nayantara Sehgal is another distinguished woman novelist of contemporary scene. She is also known as successful political columnist for different newspapers. She has so far published five novels: 'A Time to be Happy' (1958), 'This June of Morning' (1968), 'Storm in Chandigarh' (1969), 'The Day in Shadow' (1971), and 'A Situation in New Delhi' (1977) her work has as a strong realistic base and reflects not only her personal values but also the changing values of a society exposed for the first time to both freedom and power. But her fiction is equally concerned with the problems of women in contemporary society and her personal experiences so has autobiographical basis. Her initiation
into the values of humanism, Love, Freedom, her unconventional love marriage, clash of ego and subsequent divorce all has gone in to her fiction. She therefore articulates her feminine sensibility and aspirations through her women characters. Her first novel ‘A Time to be Happy’ has the references to congress activities and the events of 1942. ‘This Time of Morning’, is a purely political novel which deals with what happens in the corridors of power in the drawing rooms of the political figure. In ‘Storm in Chandigarh’ the situation after the divisions of Punjab into two states of Punjab and Haryana is portrayed. ‘The Day in Shadow’ (1971) is richly inspired by the political movement of the society. Though the main theme of the novel is politics yet the problem of divorce and disintegration of the marriage is typical. Indian setting is also dealt in ‘A Situation in New Delhi’ (19770 points out the Naxalite movement and student’s unrest and above all the aftermath of Nehru’s death. Thus the background of recent Indian politics and her concern with the problems of women in contemporary society confer a unity of sorts in her novels.

Anita Desai, too is the novelist who deals with inner workings of the protagonist and brings into the hidden depths of human psyche, she deals with the mind and soul of a character, her inner workings are hidden and silent thoughts rather outer appearances. ‘Cry the Peacock’, is the tragic story of Maya who is haunted by the astrological prediction of the death
of either wife or husband. In ‘Voices in the City’, the tragedy is of Monisha and Jib. Monisha has to undergo so many unbearable tyranny and injustice, insult and abuse by her husband. ‘Bye Bye blackbird’, is a symbolic novel in which there is East–West encounter. ‘Where Shall We go this summer’ shows the tragic reality of Sita, who is stifled by the cruelty and callousness of urban life. Fed up with the burden of children, she runs away to a small island and persuades her husband to return. In ‘Fire on the Mountain’, Anita Desai presents the psychology of two different woman characters. Nanda an unsentimental old widow leading a segregated life like a recluse in a segregated hut and Ira a shy, gentle and lovely school girl by nature. In ‘The Clear light of Day’ Vanita prefers to live in a decaying house unsounded by a neglected garden containing a dark and mysterious well. Anita Desai has heralded a new era in the realm of psychological portrayal of the characters.

Anita Desai is now widely acknowledged as the grand name of Indian English Literature. One of the most remarkable features of Desai’s fiction that long before multiculturalism became a fashionable world; her fiction demonstrates the nature of India which represents a conglomerate culture. She is not a social realize and her nature is the exploration of the emotional ecology of her protagonist. But her portrayal of women characters and analysis of marriage, above form a psychological angle.
Anita Desai mirrors certain aspects of Indian society which only a women novelist could have presented.

‘Cry the Peacock’ (1963), came to be widely recognized as an exponent of the psychological novel in Indian Fiction. On the surface it is fictional portrayal of neurotic young woman who is on threshold of her marriage. But when examined closely, it turns out to be a psychological study of how a young and sensitive married woman is slowly destroyed by marriage. The Peacock is symbol of Maya’s life in death and death in life. ‘Voices in City’ (1965), her second novel, explores the existential theme of alienation from society. ‘Bye Bye Blackbird’ (1971) portrays the lives of India in immigrants in England and her uncanny ability to probe into minds and hearts of her characters both major and minor. It also abounds in vivid facture of racial prejudice. ‘Where Shall we go this Summer’, is psychological and sensitive study of a modern Indian Woman where loneliness boredom and agony arises out of existential constitutional and sociological factors. ‘Fire on the Mountain’ (1977), is a study of isolation brought about by slow personal reasons. Her novel ‘Clear Lights of the Day’ (1980), presents a totally different women character who is self sacrificing and has acceptance of family and the spirit of resistance in Indian women. Thus Anita Desai presents psychological, existential and spiritual aspects in her novels.
Shashi Deshpande has emerged as a strong new voice in the field of fiction by women writers. She started her career with the publication of a collection of short stories entitled ‘The Legacy’ (1978). In ‘The Dark Holds No Terror’ she has dealt with the difficult theme of the frustrations of a husband when he is married to a wife who is professionally more promising than he is. This gradually erodes their relationship as husband and wife. This is further aggravated by the fact of the wife’s traumatic childhood under a domineering and oppressive mother. The novel moves at two levels: the first has the narrative given in the first person by the wife, who is the central character and the second shifts the narrative into flashback and keeps on moving backwards and forwards in time.

She won the prize for the Best English Novel ‘Roots and Shadows’. It is written in the first person. The story revolves around Indu, a young girl from a joint family, who has rebelled against the family to marry a man of her own choice and also has the boldness to take up a job, which again went against the traditions of the family.

Shashi Despande’s novel presents before us a sensitive portrayal of Indian womanhood without ever seeming to be defensive about it. Her themes and motifs are based on the lives and problems of women only. Her work passionately concentrates on the predicament of women and men are
pushed towards the periphery. Her plots and sub-plots provide a pointer to the cationic status of women in the tradition bound, male dominated middle-class society of contemporary India in which they are struggling to overcome the construction dilemma of pre-fixed deflections and pre-set norms, and thus attempting to redefine their status.

In all her novels the women suffer the atrocities of men in silence and without protest as they were not aware of protest as an option to change their world. She has rejected the masculine dialect and the masculine perception of virtue relationship and content, and led bare before us the subversive role of tradition in perpetuating the need of discarding its legacies if women have to emerge as liberated and emancipated begins.

Shashi Despande has portrayed women who exhibit the results of this in doctrinaire in their psyche and behavior. Her approach is neither argumentatively vocal nor barely intellectual. She has endeavored to transmit the basic anxiety, loneliness and helplessness of their situation. She has also attacked the myths which the Indian men hold about women

The notions which her male characters express about the status of girls and women and their education, liberty, ritualizing, adjustments, marriage etc reveal the crudity and insensitivity of the traditional male ethos, which
stiffles and smothers the individuality of women in gradual and planned way.

Shashi Despande is a novelist who deals with middle class Indian women and Indian society. She excels in portraying the crises of the middle class Indian women. In all her novels she presents the real picture of Indian society and woman's position in it with no freedom or a separated status, political or otherwise. She has chosen the middle class educated young housewife as the protagonist of her novel 'That Long Silence'. The novel begins with Mohan and Jaya shifting their old house in Dadar. The flat belongs to Makarandmama, Jaya's maternal uncle.

Jaya and Mohan had stayed in the flat of Dadar, immediately after getting married when their financial condition was not good. The life in Dadar flat is not suited to Jaya, when she suffers physically and mentally. She analyzed her life and compare with her past life.

Jaya is flooded with the memories of the past, her earlier life, her marriage with Mohan, the frustration and disappointment in her seventeen year old married life, her personal failure, all these begin to haunt and torment her. Jaya becomes bored with the double standards existing in the Indian society. Her waiting for Mohan is getting on her nerves. Though she wants to say something against this system she can't speak anything because she doesn't like to destroy the peace of the house. Everybody of
the house had suggested Jaya to remain silent and submissive to her husband. Ramukaka warns “Remember Jaya, the happiness of your husband and home depends entirely on you” (4) Even when Mohan misbehaves with Jaya not directly but indirectly she keeps quite. Jaya never says a word against her husband.

As a wife, as a mother Jaya fulfills her role on a priority bases. But she cannot do proper justice to her talents. As anew writer she produced a good story and got prize for it, which was published in a magazine. But Mohan discouraged her because the story was about their personal life and feelings. Mohan’s response damaged her career as a writer. She knows how risky and painful a creative activity is to write so Jaya begins to write a column called Seeta for a newspaper and magazine. She wants to give up her traditional role of model wife.

Every act of Jaya is intended to please Mohan and she likes to everything according to the wishes of Mohan. She wants to love her husband and keep her husband in good humor. There is however no natural and harmonious relationship between the husband and the wife. She puts up with his behavior misconduct, cruelty and favoritism in silence. In Jaya’s life there is no sexual relationship with other man. She rejects body’s response to Kanet’s desire for her although she is well aware of his power and attraction of her body. Even when Kamat dies Jaya cannot
stay there to pay homage to her best friend, because of the fear of
reigning her married life.

Thus ‘That Long Silence’ concentrates on an important theme, i.e. on
gender differentiation, an valorizing of the male categories, along with the
silence and surrender to which a woman is subjected to in our society. In
the novel, there are doubts, fear, guilt, anger lack of understanding of
feelings, which intensify the crises of human values. The finalist finally
resolves the marital discord by bringing the wife and the husband come
together. This is to satisfy the typical middle class readers in the Indian
society, but the validity of her presentation of the crises affecting the life
of an Indian middle—class educated woman cannot be questioned.

Shobha De is a modern novelist who is famous for portraying the sexual
mania of the commercial world. She has the gift of exploring the
subdivide depths of women psychology. Her first work is ‘Socialite
Evening’, and other works are ‘Starry Nights’, ‘Sisters’, ‘Sultry Days’,
‘Strong Betrayal’, ‘Surveying Men’, and ‘Speed Post’. Most of the
novels of De analyze the various aspects of sex and in this turn appeals
to most of the readers of modern scientific and commercial world where
a large section of people are wildly hungry for power, wealth and sex.
She has openly discussed sex in most of her novels. A thorough study of
Shobha De’s novels show the novelists perceptive portrayal of the secret
depth of human psyche, her acute characterization her saucy racy and captivating style invokes vivid images and compels the reader to identify himself or herself with the characters and situations. She has tried her best to expose the moral and spiritual breakdown of modern society in which a helpless and forsaken woman longs for pleasure and wants to fly freely in the sky of freedom.

Shobha De’s ‘Socialite Evenings’, the first novel is about the journey of a prominent Bombay Socialite Kareena from an ordinary middle class girl to socialite in the course of the journey her quest to find out about herself faces the way to become a self sufficient woman. In course of her journey her quest to find out about herself paves the way to become a self-sufficient woman. A proper understanding of one’s self enables a person to set on her goals and directions properly according to his own interests which in turn give himself satisfaction. In Karuna’s life too this self knowledge has given her the capacity to take decision which she thinks would make her happy.

Karuna’s quest to find about herself springs from the discontentment with her own life which doesn’t come up to her expectations. With all her discontentment that engenders mental struggle and rebellious nature and with her reasoning when walks the ways unseasonable in the eyes of society and remains a different person throughout. Karun’s life is dangled
into three phases like before marriage, married life, and life after separation from her husband. One can see how Karuna has been a different girl, a different wife and a different woman with her own expectations of life and how the quest to know about herself which has started the end of the first phase is stopped abruptly with her marriage and has been under control in the second phase only to be spearing up in the third phase more powerfully making her disgustingly self-assured and revolting self-reliant.

Her first phase is marked by her discontentment with her middle class organs. The hatred of middle class pedantic life, inadequate facilities runs throughout her life and her fear to be one among this pedantic class is the guiding force behind her major decisions like marriage and taking up job of her choice. Like her sisters and other classmates of middle class background, she cannot placidly accept her middle class origin. She wishes to be one among the sophisticated people of her class. With the turbulent feelings hidden in her heart, behaving restlessly she becomes the most undisciplined girl both at school and home. Her continuation in the modeling profession and her friendship with Bunty (her boy friend) are only the reactions that springs out of rebellion but not out of interests she feels so vague over her decision to marry her boy friend. Unable to take decision she struggles and feels restless. Unfortunately she hardly
gets any time to know herself. The film maker whom she meets at a party in India intrudes with a marriage proposal.

Though she is disturbed by it, it helps her to rethink over her decision about her engagement with the boy friend Bunty. Now she decides to break her engagement with Bunty as marrying him is going back to inadequate middle class life that she dreads of she cannot takes decisions and in such a situation she is pushed into marriage to a man an acceptable male who wouldn’t take no for an answer. This marriage with all its bondage puts a temporary stop to her quest.

She realizes that she has done a wrong thing in taking the decision to marry when her marriage becomes a listless affair, a vogue habit and passionless mechanical encounter. She realizes that she has married a wrong man, for a wrong reason at a wrong time. Her discontentment springs mainly from a world of difference between her interests intellectual and emotional compatibility does not figure in the picture but Karuna’s marriage is “Full of laughter and conversation. One in which the two of us perfectly in time. Speaking the same language thinking the same thought enjoying the same thing”

This is possible only when compatibility if not in all but at least in a few realms exist between spouses. To match her husband she can’t become an
average Indian wife and she realizes that they belong to two different worlds. A mere impossibility of leading a happy life makes her disappointed and rebellious. But she cannot shake off her marriage as she has done with her freedom now. Inner helplessness not able to adjust out able to get out; she is afraid to think even about her problems, because thinking means taking decisions that she wants to avoid. So to avoid thinking and to suppress her anger and rebellion, she takes refuge in books and in her private worlds of fantasy reliving her college days and enjoying a liberated woman fantasy. At least she separates from her husband but now she is endowed with the privacy to final out herself. When she realizes that she doesn’t have anything to claim as her own, and no one to rely upon except herself she thinks that she has to take some decision about her life, once money has started flowing in she starts to analyze herself and in the process she finds out that is freedom to do what she likes gives her absolute joy.

She feels so satisfied looking after parents. She enjoys their company, care, love and concern. Unlike in the past, now she has privacy and freedom in her parent’s house. She cannot sacrifice this independence and happiness to anything which doesn’t give her happiness however reasonable is in the eyes of society. That’s why she down—rightly rejects her husband’s proposal to come back to him.
At the same time she cannot sacrifice this state of happiness something which is vague that was again to marry. She knows that trusting to decision is repeating that past mistakes. In spite of common interests which she have with Girish she cannot be happy with any man who deprives her of her present state of independence though it might look selfish act. Marriage to her is a sacrifice, Karuna now to sacrifice this independent peaceful single life of marriage which requires a lot of sacrifices. Being single in the society means inviting problems. Her mother has bought before her all the problems that any woman who wants to remain single without a man in this society. But at the same time she feels for the sake of society, she can’t make her life miserable.

Towards the end it seems Karuna as a person who has understood herself fully. Confidently comes out with a statement ‘single is good for me’, the result of her constant intensive search for herself. Karuna’s quest has ended here or not, remains a question. Towards the end one can see Karuna looking blankly into space, all alone in her room.

Man is a social animal. He is an emotional and intellectual being. It is in the nature of man or women to share their feelings. This quality in man always searches for a companion. Karuna is no exception. She needs a company but she is a burnt child. She cannot venture. Economically, mentally and physically she is liberated women yet as a human being she
might be craving for that of companion who won’t rob her off her freedom which she has gained. In this respect she represents the woman of twenty first century, which is torn between freedom and instinct the proper decision is yet to be taken the quest may not end here it might continue to take new decision.

‘Sisters’, is a story of an urban Indian woman confronted with a vicious world culture which is throwing on conspiracies and betrayals and spreading fast in the corrupt business of world of Bombay. ‘Sisters’ is a novel of suspense and conspiracy, crime and punishment. She also exposes urban women who take men as play things. The rest of the novel deals with poetic justice and suggestive ending. Thus she represents the woman of twenty first century, who is torn between freedom, an instinct of the proper decision is yet to be taken, the quest may not end here it might continue to take new decisions.

Mahashweta Devi the winner of the prestigious Dyanpith and Magassay awards for her novel ‘Mother of 1084’, comments that women shouldn’t be submissive and passive and should realize the inner strength of which they are known. The novel portrays the psychological and emotional axis of a mother whose son is lying dead in the police morgue.
Mahashweta Devi is one of the foremost literary personalities, a prolific writer committed to the cause of strong human values. She displays total severity unflinching commitment and deep seated serge to abolish the anomalies of exiting economic conditions. Her plays represent an expression of her deepest concern about retrograde of modern society that makes it a bulwark of exploitative mechanism in depicting the life like selections it is a bulwark of exploitative mechanism in depicting the life like selections in the contemporary society. She considers authentic documentation to be the best medium for protest against injustice and exploitation.

Set in urban Bengal, ‘Mother of 1084’ realistically portrays the climatic phase of the annihilation of leaders of the masses and its aftermath during 1970’s. It is a typical play of documentation in which she seeks the roots of the revolutionary fervor of the urban rebels in their discontentment with a system that upheld a corrupt and insensitive establishment both in the family and in the state. The play enacts a single day in the life of the principal character Sujata, the apathetical mother of corpse number 1084. Though she is sensitive wife and a loving mother she is a stranger in her own household where she is reduced to a mere cog.

Arundhati Roy, the winner of Booker award for Literature by her debut novel ‘The God of Small Things’ presents woman who considers
marriage as a journey’s end of her life. It is about the three generations of women with the emphasis on the protagonist mother. It presents the picture of Amritsar and Lahore between 1937 and 1947. It is a story of Virmati who is sandwiched between the duty towards her family and her illicit love for a married professor. In theme the book peeps into the life of Keralite society, their rites and customs, traditions and patriarchal domination a caste ridden mentality of some certain section of people whom Roy terms as ‘Laltain’ the child psychology, the naked exposure of the malpractices of Marasin and Police administration, the prosecution of untouchable the Mombatti etc.

Her second book ‘The end of Imagination’, deals with the author’s strong revolt against nuclear station in India and abroad, her mild satire on the arrogance and dominance of politics and above all the drawbacks of nuclear arms and ammunitions.

Arundahti Roy, the Booker prize winner novelist is known to all not only for her new and original style but also for her thought provoking attitude regarding social consciousness. Her book ‘The God of Small Things’ deals with many things the universal theme of social consciousness. E.g a confrontation between the ‘Laltain’ and ‘Mombatti’ i.e. clan antagonism and class exploitation, exposure of the tyranny and injustice, the untouchable suffer without any rhyme or reason. The women of the
society have to tolerate and above all the trails and translations the fret and fever, the deserted and the defenseless have to pass through in the police custody and in the caste ridden societal structure. Her other book ‘The End of imagination’, point out the authors apocalyptic vision of the nuclear station in India and abroad and her rage and anger against the government and the state authority to the sufferers of the big dam projects of our country. Arundhati Roy is of the opinion that the society can achieve its goal successfully only when there is no gap between the poor and the rich between the ‘Laltain’ and the ‘Mombatti’.

One of the themes which ring note of ‘The God of Small Things’, is the truthful portrayal of the plight of the women in society and their struggle or seeking the sense of identity in male dominated conservative framework. The narrator portrays a detail picture of the lady’s childhood to adolescence to the experience of marriage to sympathetic and affectionate mother to a rebel wife who challenges the age long hypocritical moral stand of a patriarchal family. ‘The God of Small Things’ presents confrontation between the God of Big things (Papapchi, Baby Kochanna, Mammachi, Chacko, Pillai and inspector Thomas Mathew) and the God of Small Things (Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, Estha, Sophia Mol). By the term ‘Laltain’ Roy means to suggest the big guns of society. Both Laltain and Mombatti gives us light and burn another lamp.
The Laltain is well fed and well protected. It can bravely face the blowing wind but on the other hand, the Mombatti has no glass, no protection, no support. It can easily be blown out by surge of wind. But the advantage of the Mombatti is that it can very soon light another lamp. Laltain on the other hand is somewhat stubborn to burn others light. ‘The God of Small Things’, shows a patriarchal domination of a caste ridden societal structure where men dominate over women, the possessed over the non-possessed, the powerful over the weak and the touchable over the untouchable.

Arundhati Roy’s recent work ‘The Greater Common Good’, deals with the pathetic plight of a large number of sufferers of the big dam projects of the state and the government. It also shows the harsh and rugged stain on the government and the political parties.

Hence it can be said that Arundhati Roy heralded a revolutionary attitude against the mal-treatment of the untouchable, the vulnerable and the down-trodden. Though these Mombattis have no glass, no protection, no support to face the surge of the fast wind, yet in comparison with ‘Laltain’ they are not rigid and stubborn but ever ready to burn another lamp. The Mombattis of Roy’s world which calls them ‘The God of Small Things’, are bound to suffer much insults and abuse hurdles and
obstacles, tyranny and injustice sometimes with cause and sometimes without any cause.

The social structure of the Indian women is full of many ups and downs. Life offers little choice for a forsaken woman like Ammu, the central character, who yearns for pleasure and happiness and all life far from the shackles or constrains.

As a little girl, Ammu had to face a lot of cares and anxieties, feet, fever of life. She had seen the cruelty of her father, Pappachi, who used to beat her and her mother, Mammachi with a brass vase. Once it so happened that her father tore apart of the shoes she had brought for herself. She was also deprived of the higher education because according to Pappachi college education is not at all useful for girl. This shows that Pappachi is man of Schizophrenia. He behaves like a decent man but demonstrates his male ego and bourgeois mentality when he tyrannizes his wife and child not content with having beaten his wife and daughter, he tore down curtains, kicked furniture and smashed a table lamp. Marriage for him is the male’s domination over a woman and women is nothing but flowers in the hands of man.

Ammu paid visit to one of her relatives in Calcutta where at some one’s wedding reception she met her future husband who was on vocation from
his job. He was an assistant manager of a tea estate in Assam. Ammu was in a hurry to marry him because she knew that in Ayemenem, people were quite dead against their wishes and so something was better than nothing.

But soon after marriage, Ammu discovered that she had jumped out of the frying pan into fire. The husband whom she loved so much provided to be an alcoholic. He even went to the extent of asking his wife to satisfy the sexual desire of Mr. Hollick, his boss, so that his job could be saved. This extreme humiliation created a sense of great hatred in the heart of Ammu for her husband. In a scuffle, she hit her husband with a heavy book and left the place with the twins Estha and Rahel. Ammu returned to Ayemenem with her pulled out checks and there too she found her parents cool and indifferent to her children.

There are differences in the house of Ammu made her parents. Chacko, her brother was sent to Britain to study. But Ammu on the other hand, was not allowed to study further. The reason is that she is a lady and so she has no right to go to college. Chacko failed in almost every other respect including his marriage with Margaret, an English girl who deserted him. It is a great agony that daughter estranged from the husband is tortured and tyrannized in the parent’s house. But on the other hand, an estranged son, Chacko, not only receives warm welcome but also remains
the rightful inheritor of the family’s wealth and fortune. When he flirts with low women he is encouraged by Pappachi in the name of man’s need and whereas the same behavior of Ammu is termed as illicit, untraditional and sinful, she is being stacked in a room and is beaten black and blue. Thus the novelist lashes out at the hypocritical moral code, of society which makes a great difference between men and women. As a matter of fact, both men and women are the two wheels of the same chariot or the two phases of the same coin.

Arundahti Roy, a great champion of the cause of the dalit and the deserted, points out those unnoticed shades of a social problem which generally escapes the eyes of social realist. The other dalit of the novel who bears the burn of social persecution is Velutha an untouchable. He is an expert mechanic and craftsman. He converts himself into Christian religion only to immune from the victimization of a catholic society. The twins are very fond of him and are highly impressed by his craftsman’s skilled hand. Ammu found him loving but their illicit love affair was against the attitude of both Marxism and Socialism. The police too are dead against their sexual relation. When Velutha was taken to the police custody he was severely beaten by the police to such an extent that he has to die in the custody. Thus we see that Velutha the untouchable, doesn’t sweep off his footprints by the establishment of the police, state and
tradition. On the other hand, a patriarchy punishes both the woman who has defiled generation of breeding and the Pawn who has challenged the tradition.

Hence Velutha, the God of Loss takes no cognizance of social conventions and restrictions and thus come in conflict with history and tradition without any chance of success. On the other hand, Ammu who antagonizes her family by marginalizing herself socially is maltreated by the governing body of her family. When her nocturnal rendezvous with Velutha is discovered and the drowning of Sophia Mol is wrongly associated with her illicit affairs, she is asked to leave the Ayemenem house. Estha is also sent back to her father where he develops a reticent nature. The remaining part of Ammu’s life is full of despondence tinged with fruitless day dreams. She died in the grim room of Bharat lodge in Aleppy where she had gone to search job. The author observes, “She died alone with a noisy calling fan for company and no Estha to live at back of her. She was thirty one. Not old, not young but a viable, disable age” (6)

Rahel Estha and Sophia Mol are the next Mombattis who develop a sense of taciturnity and isolation in a conservative frame work. In other words the brutality and perpetuation Ammu and Velutha underwent is also operative against Estha and Rahel. They are treated by the family as
outsiders. The second powerful trauma is felt by the innocent twins is the emotional blackmail webbed to betray the person Velutha they loved dearly and that too in the most pitiable condition.

Rahel is also subject to the same tyranny and injustice, abuse and insult as meted out to Estha. But the basic difference between the two is that Rahel is more aggressive and active than Estha. She is a girl of rebellion like her mother. The three notable reactions in her personality symbolize her silent protest against dogmatic and conservative outlook of the family.

Thus the children of the novel become the objects of sufferance and pity contempt and hatred neglected birth in home and outside they are just like ship without radar, aging without a leader. Their separation from the very kiths and kin and even from their parents causes an indelible scan on the innocent psyche. The other dominant aspect which Arundhati Roy wanted to express is a harsh cry on the man’s domination over woman. She seems to say that woman is not mere toy or an object of pleasure or a means of gratifying the men’s basic passions but he noble and the richest part of man’s life. It is to be noted that woman has been the subject of great mystery and controversy in our history and traditions, myths and legends she is allegedly charged with so many drawbacks mostly imaginary and all literary subcultures. First, a phase of imitation, second
one of protest and third a phase of self discovery, a turning inward, freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search of identity.

Patriarchal ideology in the nineteenth century thought of the writer as one who in the image of the Divine Creator feathers his work, the pen, they demonstrate, is invariably imagined as phallic. Women could not, therefore both write and remain feminine without transgressing the norms with the double burden. She has to confront these myths of creativity, but she also had to work past the ideal of the eternal feminine that was set up as inspiration and complement to the male. This ideal was a combination of angelic beauty and sweetness: passive, docile, and selfless. But the author's point out to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead.

In this chapter there will be elaboration of the aspects of women novelist. The chapter would first highlight the history of women novelist and then show the aspects of writings of Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Maheshewata Devi and Arundhati Roy. The chapter would show the feminist views of these female writers. The chapter would deal with Kamala Markandaya's ‘Necar in sieve’, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's themes of novels of ‘To Whom She Will’, ‘The Nature of Passion’, ‘Esmond in India’, ‘The Householder’ and ‘Heat and Dust’. It will also show Nayantara Sehgal’s aspect of writing in political fields. The chapter would show Anita Desai as a writer dealing with
human psych. The chapter would deal with Shashi Deshpande as a writer dealing with life of Indian womanhood. The modern novelist Shobha De who deals with the psyche of modern novelist has also been described. Mahasheeweta Devi the writer of 21st Century deals with human values in her writings in ‘Mother of 1084’. Last but not the least the chapter would deal with Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’.

This chapter is an attempt to grasp and interpret the writings of some of the contemporary women writers by focusing on their responses to questions pertaining to women’s identity. These novelists belong to different countries and races but the commonality of the issues they have raised in their writings underscores the existence of a universal feminine urge to self – actualize by transcending the gender related constrains. The chapter would concentrate on how these fictionists have tried to focus on the women’s journey to autonomous selfhood, meandering through various obstacles, without limiting itself any particular optical approach.

Not while many of Markandaya’s heroines, ‘Tara’ in Anita Desai’s ‘Clear Light of Day’ (1980) accepts her loss of identity, and is contend to play the role of a diplomats wife, so is also ‘Sita’ in ‘Where Shall We Go This Summer’, rebels against her depersonalization and annihilation. Sita has
everything, one may be contented with, like husband, children and money, why then is she saying no.

The reason of Sita saying ‘No’ is because she is sensitive and perceptive enough to recognize her own situation, her husband and children do not make any attempt to understand her. Sita, a woman at forties rebels. Like Sita, Shashi Deshpande’s ‘Saru’ of ‘The Dark Holds No Terrors’ learns to be away from the drudgery of her life.

In Indian situation forced marriage begin on an inauspicious note, with misunderstanding and jealous husband becomes the partner to live with three in Raji Warasemhan’s ‘Forever free’ (1979) divorces her husband, with whom her relationship has failed. She in her quest for having a satisfied life, goes in for extra marital relationships, but ultimately fails. Then she comes alone to her mother who is widow and divorcee.

‘Jyothi’ of Jay Nimbkar’s ‘A joint Venture’ (1988) is in her fifties and has been married for 30 long years with Ram. The whole period of her marital life has been compressed with remarkable brevity. The process of adapting imitation, protesting and at times living with contentment can be progressively found in Jyothi’s life. Jyothi unable to bear the attitude of Ram now learns to solve her own problem, the problem of being distinct from a man. She learns that she is no way inferior to her husband Ram.
She must not play the way Ram wants her to be. In other words, she must come to grips with herself. She must become herself finally her gains confidence inch by inch in her life, and reaches a phase of self-realization.

This new self realization and the strength makes Urmila's desire in Shashi Deshpande's, 'The Binding Vine' help a less fortunate woman, Kalpana, a rape victim and to get Mira's poems published, this is a positive development in the attitude of woman where in there is a change in their attitudes of thinking. Thinking globally and being able to understand one's pain and anguish is also a positive phase in the development of human kind. Sumi in Shashi Deshpande's work 'A Matter of Time' has grown up. Beyond everyone's expectations when her husband Gopal disserts her. She like the other women in the family does not blame her husband for being so irresponsible but on other hand allows him to lead the life he wanted to live.

Unlike any other in her place, Sumi does not seek any explanation from Gopal. Surprisingly his absence instead of making her an emotional wreck has brought out her real strength hidden in her. She now evolves herself form alter desolation and bitterness linked up with invisible chains of patriarchal pressure and other family responsibilities, even after been deserted she has reached a state of self sufficiency and self fulfillment.
Fiction by women writers constitutes a major segment in Indian English literature. Their struggle to establish their identity and to assert their own individuality have led the women to wage a disparate fight against the existing social order to the day right from the 1st generation women novelists to the contemporary ones. A woman of today desires her due and rightful places in the society and a partner who understands and respects her individuality and as one who understands her feelings and respects her individuality of the selfhood of woman given their different socio-cultural milieu; suggest a continuum of different possible responses.

In the process, all women's writings, or at least women's writings that merits serious literary attention, become feminist in the precise mode and to the precise extent that the authors themselves understand and experience feminism. Their reading gestures toward history. The subtitle itself indicates the focus as a specific period, the nineteenth century, and the text makes mention of earlier periods. But the past is a collection of intense, more or less univocal moments in which the authors identify the themes and concerns of contemporary. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that their equally monumental 'The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women', 1986. This is in many other ways a superb collection, places women from all over the world (who write in English) quite unself-consciously against the backdrop of Euro-American social history. As
the editors project it, the immediate contexts for women's writings are only the images of women in mainstream literature.

Women writers, they indicate, can now set aside their palimpsest plots and engage directly with their experience, as male writers whose full authority was never repressed, have always been able to do. Literary texts, the assumption is, express the author's experience and reveal the truth about his or her world, and as they do so, they provide us with access to the universal dimensions of human nature. As an aesthetic theory, expressive realism emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, more or less in conjunction with the realist novel. The notion is, however, reaffirmed and given new life today by feminist critics who counterpoise women's writing, which they choose to read as a transparent expression of women's authentic experience, to the stereotypes of mainstream literature, often spoken of as 'male' literature, which is regarded simply as distorting the reality of women's lives. It might be useful, as a starting point, to unpack the concept of reality as it emerges in the work of the critics we have discussed, whether it is in the idea of 'women's real experiences', which are transparently available in women's writing, especially in realist fiction and in lyric poetry, or in the related idea of a real or authentic female voice that can, if only we pay the right kind of attention, be heard in a woman writer's work. At one level
Women's Writings in India are a joyous retrieval of artifacts that signify women's achievement. At another, they represent a difficult and inventive moment in the theory and practice of feminist criticism. They have read established writers and are introducing several comparatively little-known ones. There will be surprises - even for, say, Telugu readers in their collection of Telugu literature. In English translation, what they have is a stupendous body of new work. Judged by conventional standards, many of the pieces collected are classics. Some have stood the test of time biased and hostile through that test might have been, others will not require unusually persuasive advocates to argue for their rehabilitation in the canons of Marathi, Kannada, or Urdu literature, or for that matter in an international canon of women's literature. Their collection might well provide an impetus for such a venture, but the refurbishment of canons was not the primary task they addressed. Had the recovery of literature, lost or damned in the conduit of male criticism, been their major interest, they might have translated different working norms for the translations. They may not have felt the need to attend, as they did, separately to each of the regional literature or work carefully through their archives and their histories. They would probably not have spent so much time dredging out information about the writers' lives, or
attempted to reconstruct the changing ideological configurations in which women wrote and were read.

Thus Women's role as sisters, friends, and mothers are increasingly being explored in defiance of the patriarchal means that dictates the shape that should be in future.

References:-


