CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

An analytical study of the women’s resistance to the patriarchal discourse has brought to the front the vivid realities of the women’s movement in the Post-Independent India. The literature by women has been treated as a site of resistance where a woman can project her own views of the society and her place and prestige, she has been conferred. A woman is itself a very complex discourse so the analysis of women’s social conditioning, the realization of intentional subordination, the subsequent results of marginalization and exploitation are central issues to the study. Though the process of resistance commences with the individual efforts, the movement does not acquire momentum till the organized movement initiates. The above studied novels of Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Shobha De demonstrate the women’s state in the modern India, the lacerated consciousness due to the failure of constitutional ideals of equality, fraternity and brotherhood in case of man-woman in social sphere, and the constant efforts to improve their social status by conferring economical assistance. The novels also successfully attest the flux of resistance with its ensuing aftermath of psychic, social, and economical alienation from the power positions.

For the clarity of the movement of resistance, the novels have reviewed the lives of the women of first generation, the agents of patriarchal ideologies and the firm believer in the rational concept of ‘womanhood’, marriage, family and male-dominated social framework. The vignettes of Alleyooty Ammachi, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Velutha’s mother, Malatiben and Leelaben, draw a picture of the society where women are puppets in the hands of patriarchal power, never to
question and subvert. While Ammu and Maya, the representatives of the second generation, force of feminist ideologies who are on the exploration of identity and subjectivity have been crushed at the feet of patriarchy by either alienation from the real self or social, by ostracizing from society, both of the punishments are severe to exist the subject. Hence both of these women of transition are murdered on the account their power of resistance. The women of the third generation, Rahel, Mikki, and Alisha are the liberated women to the extent of exhibiting their real selves by neglecting social codes of moral conduct. The discourse of resistance has driven women into two kinds of types; the one who believes that within the traditional familial framework, the reform is possible while other presume that the subversion of the patriarchy is possible just through the ideological patterns through which women have been subordinated. Thus Alisha uses sex to dominate men.

The analysis of the novels leads to the common point of women’s suffering and their protest in various ways. The manner and ways of protest vary from woman to woman due their various social, cultural, religious and economical backgrounds hence the consequences of the protest vary from woman to woman. India is a country of diversity in culture and religion so the Lukhnow based Maya, her belonging to the elite strata and being a Hindu affects the analysis of her character; the same is applicable to Ammu, as she belongs to Kerala background, elite strata but more conventional, from Syrian Christian community, converted from Brahminism, therefore she too subjects to the analysis based on the Hindu principles; the third novel though belongs to Gujarati and Panjabi community, they are too subjected to the Hindu religious context. The common religious background has made it possible to study these novels in the same framework. At the same time the economic
status of these women has also affected their livelihood. In such condition the location of women’s self and their predicament must be assessed differently.

All of the women characters assessed in the research belong to the elite strata. The economic exuberance gives women the ample time and courage to anticipate about their self and the iniquitous the patriarchy has done to them; otherwise the women from the poor stratum don’t get time from day to day hectic schedules to ponder about themselves and their position in the society. The resistance in case of Maya, Ammu, Baby Kochamma, Rahel, Mikki and Alisha has been possible mainly due to their aristocratic background.

Maya is brought up in Lucknow, in an aristocratic family and after marriage she lives with her husband in Delhi. This is the north idyllic part of India where old values are dying slowly and new are beginning to take shape. Ammu lives in Ayemenem in Kerala. The education of both of the women is not specified in the novel. From Maya to Ammu, education was not the necessary condition of life for women. Their life was measured by the standard of their husband’s status in society. Rahel brought up in India and travelled to America, has affected her mode of life. Alisha and Mikki are the products of the metropolitan culture of Bombay city. The place where a protagonist lives affects the course of her life. Along with the religious, economical, and political status of a woman, the places they cohabit shapes their manner of resistance and the effect of the resistance on them.

Maya has been exposed by the novelist as a woman in the attic when the novel opens. She has been caught into the patriarchal enslavement not physically but psychologically. The novel is not a story
of an over-sensitive woman but a politically trapped woman trying to rescue herself from the trap. The result of the struggle is neurosis and her consequent death. So it is necessary to find out the trap that causes neurosis. The research has promptly taken efforts to search out the explanations and the consequences of the resistance.

The drama in which Maya has been placed is a universal metaphor for the women’s dilemma of freedom and enslavement. The astrologer’s prophesy denotes the inevitability of one of the partner’s leading a passive life eternally. The premature death of one of the partner has been metaphorically suggested the death of one of the individual and his/her subjectivity. The possibility of leading a happy life together is not the possible phenomenon in the novel’s context. The author has unconsciously put forth the riddle through the mouth of the astrologer.

The age old collective experience of women about marriage has posited threat to the continuation of marriage system. The insecurity, loss of individuality and creativity in marriage drives women to the state of alienation where they could just wait for an eternal passing of time. It means for living a creative life, women use to choose the lonely life instead of married one. But economic dependency and social compulsion burden them to marry which aborts the efforts of creativity.

Maya, a creative being realizes the futility of her life after marriage as she discovers the absurdity of marriage and the appreciation of her poetic mind in Gautama’s context. Her marriage with Gautama is a compromise to live a secure life scarifying her real-self just for material gains under the guise of parental security and love which she strives to secure. Maya’s marriage in the conventional sense is tangibly secure but emotionally and sexually disruptive. When her character is judged from
the subjective point of view, the inevitability of her happiness cannot be detached from the male characters as she is created as a dependent being by the male members in her life i.e. her father and husband. All her dilemma to acknowledge her real self and the realization of her inability to cope with the social self proceeds due to the treatment she is meted out by the male characters in the novel. Albino Astrologer works as the patriarch who determines her future; her father shapes her psychic life and Gautama endeavour to undone her wish of survival. The third threat makes her almost manic which haunts her till death.

The credit of construction of the ‘self’ goes to the social structures, superstructures and notional systems. If the value system and social structure collide with the process of development of self, the self grows healthy. The rupture in the process creates abnormal personality traits which causes considerable damage to the concerned person. The relationships, love principle and cultural notions construct the self and consequently are responsible for the destruction of it.

‘Woman’ as a discourse can be understood with her familial relationships and the position she acquires through these connections. The lack of these associations generates the sense of loss of power. Hence the father, brother, husband and son creates the sense of empowerment among women which is the source of enslavement at the same time patriarchal fake empowerment. The compulsion of father precipitates the patriarchal social structure and the obligations on women to accord with these relationships like marriage and the constraint of begetting children. The absence of any these requirements makes women feels incompetent to survive in the social framework. Hence women comply with the social obligations.
In case of Maya the motivation of her neurosis much owes to patriarchal social set up than to her sensitivity. Her father the first patriarch to vandalize her life owes the first culpability. The woman brought up in the patriarchal environment is much habituated to thraldom to keep herself individual. Thus he creates the psychic imbalances in her to make her incapable to cope with the social expectations and realities, the first patriarch who commences her destruction.

The analysis of woman’s destruction lies in the social intimidation of marriage and begetting children which makes women’s lives more wretched. Being a mother is less an emotional need rather than social compulsion so the woman who is physically incapable to beget is looked down in the society. When it becomes the emotional need of a woman then the social as well as emotional forces destruct her psychic balance. Maya’s neurosis is an outcome of many of the outward forces than her innate over-sensitive nature.

The major reason for Maya’s dissolute mental state is the consciousness of her ‘self’, her desire to grow out of social stereotypes, and to assert her subjectivity. The social and political discourses do not exhibit her to assert her real ‘self’. She is the character who reveals the prime hallmarks of the resistance. The power and presence of the resistance in the character cannot be overlooked. The presence of the self and treatment of the patriarchy of it as the non-existent being, shatters all the hopes of asserting it.

Thus in the process of assertion of ‘self’ itself, the ‘self’ gets destructed. The novel does not demonstrate any hopes for the future rejuvenation but the ultimate destiny of the choice to choose between the ‘self’ and Gautama. Gautama’s murder is not act of unconscious mistake
committed by Maya but this is an unconscious wish of the character to do away with the male, ‘ugly’ and rational to the women’s feminine poetic beauty.

The last but not the least the novel has been conceived from a woman’s conscious point of view. The story has been told taking the subjective ‘I’ as the focal point. Her furtive cry for the release of the patriarchal clutches is the very centre of the novel. The narrative is *écriture feminine*, the woman’s discourse of writing. When it is judged from the man’s point of view the character’s source of neurosis is found in her Electra complex but if it is judged from the feminist point of view the explanations for the destruction of the self lay in the constructedness of individuality on the patriarchal super-structure.

The analysis of *The God of Small Things* leads to the degree of consciousness to the atrocities women are meted out, the circumstances in which they are kept and the difference of causes and consequences of resistance from Baby Kochamma to Rahel. Each and every woman in the novel differently acts to resist the discourse and the form of resistance of every character too deviates as per the intensity of sensitivity towards exploitation and hold of power structure over the mindsets of the people.

Though Aleyooty Ammachi and Mammachi are the portraits of the first generation, they are nonetheless the agents of it to perpetuate its ideologies. In the real sense of the word Baby Kochamma is the first woman who withstands her father’s patriarchal authority by accepting the Catholic faith. She chooses her own account the person to whom she has to love though the right of marriage is denied to her. This is an era of revolution since women have been denied the right even to brood beyond marriage and breaking the tradition Baby Kochamma embraces
spinsterhood instead of accepting the destined life determined by her father. Mammachi and her own mother are the more conventional figure compared to her image.

For the rebellion she pays the price. The religious institution denies her the right to marry hence is deprived of the natural right to enjoy sexual pleasure. Here the religion works as the patriarchal force to control the sexual life of women through religious ideologies. The suppression of the sexual impulses largely influences Baby Kochamma’s psychological life. The transformation of her mindset into a patriarch is the victory of the patriarchal power structure. The consequences of her transformation lead to her towards sinister nature and hatred for Ammu’s sexual involvement in Velutha. Later she herself works as an active agent of the patriarchy to destruct the women’s resistance.

*The God of Small Things* is the story of Ammu’s resistance which directly emerges from the unequal treatment meted out to women from their early childhood. The treatment Ammu and Maya gets is totally different form each other. Maya’s psychic growth is controlled by the over pampering of her father while Pappachi completely disowns Ammu form fatherly affection. Maya becomes psychologically handicapped and Ammu materially. So the struggle of these characters is meant to be different and form of the struggle too subject to deviate.

Ammu drives into marriage due to sheer need. Marriage is the most disastrous obstacle in the healthy construction of women’s lives. The desire of escape from fatherly servitude precipitates women to the husbandly drudgery. Maya’s marriage with Gautama, though a compromise to please her father, it has been initiated to fulfil the instinct
of love but Ammu’s life is an incessant struggle to secure her life from the ill-treatment of either her father or husband.

Maya’s marriage proves sexually sterile while Ammu’s morally. Baba’s treatment of Ammu clearly shows the women’s degraded position in marriage. Ammu’s disavowal of stereotypical role of a submissive and docile wife expels her to socially degraded position of a divorcee. In Indian society women have less choice. So like Maya and Baby Kochamma, she too suffers from sexual deprivation. But the scene shifts from Maya, Baby Kochamma to Ammu as she resolves her own misfortune by selecting Velutha as her lover. The act of sexual indulgence confers her right to be satisfied; the form of resistance in case of Ammu is sexual enjoyment.

This can be termed as a one step ahead for the women’s liberation. She makes a conscious choice to state her subjectivity through her sexuality. She is more confident and definite than Maya to assert herself. The process of resistance in case of Maya has been enacted through the psychological conflict while the definite shape to the movement has been bestowed by Ammu’s sexual involvement in the paravan. Conscious efforts are more important than the psychological complexes to make one’s existent visible, also the struggle cannot be carried on without conscious endeavours. Ammu is far more ahead to Maya to re-instate women’s needs and existence.

The consequences of the illicit sexual involvement for women are more appalling than any other stray. The loss of sanity and the consequent death is the result of Maya’s struggle to find out the ‘self’. For Ammu it is more awful than Maya as the penalty is death-in-life. She is subjected to the social deprivation, religious denouncement, political
exploitation and negation of personal relationships. The woman who tries to set her own rules and behaves according to it is always condemned by the society. Maya does not cross the boundaries of the actions so she is to some degree is saved from the social deprivation while Ammu crosses all of the boundaries of sexual, religion, and caste subsequently has been declared as unfit to live in the society specially with her children as she is the worst illustration of the way of survival.

The reason behind women’s deprivation from the social, economical and political advantages is the patriarchal Indian social structure which assumes the existence of man as ‘human’ not of the women. It also presumes that the communal welfare should be served first to the individual. The individual freedom is sacrificed on the pretext of social welfare. Indian women are more confined to this rule than a man therefore the social taboos are strong to any deviation from which causes the bitter disapproval of the society especially when the morality is synonymous with women’s mode of conduct. In this context women’s sexual deviation is the worst kind of offence. Ammu’s sexual indulgence outside marriage and caste poses threat to the social welfare so she should be punished duly to keep social stability. Why her behaviour is denounced most since her family is deprived of the social significance and honour. So the first blow of abuse comes from the familial relationships; she has been kicked out from the Ayemenem house and prohibited to see the children due to her harmful influence on them. Later the treatment of Inspector Matthew of Ammu clearly demonstrates the deprived state to which she is reduced to. So through the familial pressures women’s behaviour is first regulated and later social concerns bestow the shape of political necessity.
It is noteworthy that in the novel the political scenario of Kerala is Marxist. Though Marxism cherishes the agenda of class equality, the novel exhibits the truth of castes as the different classes as is the case with the position of women. The high-castes are the bourgeoisie and the low-castes are the proletariat. Marxism fails to see the high-castes women as the victim of patriarchal oppression. Women like Ammu are more or less Dalits. The Dalit movement is a political instrument for the privileged castes. So as the Dalits are non-countable for them in the same way the women are. Women are exploited for the political necessity. Furthermore there is not any women’s organization to voice the injustices women are subjected to. So the individual resistance should be taken as the reformation of women’s consciousness. Ammu’s resistance is not a personal affair but it takes the shape of political exploitation. What is significant to mention furthermore is that women are not considered as equal class to men. Though the Dalits fight for the rise of wages for men and women, they fail to demand the equal wages for men and women.

The authentic source of women’s subjugation is religion as it is the origin of various discourses on the earth. Most of the religious scriptures are the bases of human behaviour and their legal laws are fashioned after the philosophies of the scriptures. People are the staunch believer of the morality, based upon religious preaching therefore religion determines the place of a human being in the society. Viewed from the religious point of view it is sterner to the women. Religion is mostly responsible for the women’s degraded position and their confinement under necessity of morality; it gives importance to the suppression of the self by exiling carnal pleasures from the notion of an ideal human behaviour.

According to Christianity women is the source pain and death on the earth; she is the responsible for the Fall. So she has to suffer from the
indignation and strictly follows the moral laws. If she defies such laws, religion denounces her form the religion itself. Ammu is subjected to the same religious indignation for defying the moral codes of the religious philosophy. The carnal pleasure outside marriage with a man outside community is grieved and punished duly by negating her Christian right to bury in cemetery. It is an irony that the saviour of dignity of human being is the religion and the discourse is itself most inhuman philosophy which differentiates between a body of a woman and a man.

The most unbearable stroke Ammu sufferers from is her separation from her children. Society not only deprives women of the rights on their body, sexuality, individuality, subjectivity but also of their natural right to posses their children due to the sanctity of the moral codes. The theory of Beej-Kshetra-Nyaya still works in modern India. The most disastrous consequence of Ammu’s resistance is the emotional deprivation. Rahel and Estha both of them are unduly punished for their mother’s stray from the patriarchal discourse. Women’s behaviour is controlled through the emotional blackmailing. Society does not tolerate the children of such mother who punctures the social laws; the children who accompany a father that lives a thorough immoral life are never affected. So women’s wish for the resistance is sacrificed for the welfare of their children’s future.

Rahel can be both analysed as a daughter of an immoral woman according to the society and a modern woman who never looks behind for the corrections. A daughter is considered as the shadow of a mother hence she is the carrier of the values which are transported from her mother. If mother is corrupted then obviously, the daughter is too considered as the unfit member of the society. Rahel intentionally presents the innate tendency of rebellion like her mother.
Rahel pays for being a daughter of a divorce and socially outlawed woman. This social position affects her normal behaviour since she is deprived of the emotional security. She accepts the challenge to explore the world alone. Therefore her behaviour in the school and in her later adult life proves the possibilities and potential of femininity for digression.

She has already been expelled from the social context so her behaviour has been taken as an aberration. Her resistance is not taken seriously by the convention calling it diversion. But this should be noted that this is a mode of self assertion.

The form of resistance varies from Ammu to Rahel. Ammu lives in the comparatively conventional period whereas Rahel has enjoyed the liberated circumstances where she has explored the world herself. Rahel gets education and she is exposed to the modern world. The necessity to feed herself has made her independent. Though her decision of marriage echoes her mother’s story, she is more individual and liberated than her mother. The breakage in marriage does not shatter her social image, instead it can be said that it does not affect her at all.

Instead of carrying the hypocritical moral precept of the conventional society, Rahel transmits her mother’s genes of rebellion. Ammu digresses the boundaries of caste and sex taboo, Rahel commits the incest. Rahel’s sexual union with Estha is the necessity for both of them to relieve themselves from the emotional crises they faced. The union transcends both of them to the territory beyond taboos where nature rules and not the nurture. Further it shows the inseparability of male from female. Incest is the law of nature and the incest Rahel and Estha has committed is natural to it.
Rahel’s resistance does not transmit a lot of pains to resume her life once again. The way towards the more carefree life has been enlightened for Rahel by her mother herself. Ammu already has made her way towards the rejuvenation. The stroke of resistance on women softened materially from Rahel to Ammu but the scars on the psychology remain since Rahel suffers from emotional alienation. Material exuberance has made their life tolerable but the psychological strokes have made their life gloomy and unhappy. An era must come when these remnants of psychological scars should have been eradicated. Then and then only women have the prospects of happy and healthy life.

Arundhati Roy could move beyond all of discourses where the natural human being has lost its natural identity. As a writer she is a ‘worst kind of transgressor’ presenting the worst kind of resistance based on the only rule of nature. The women writers are now the pronouncement of nature. They bring the civilization back to the primitivism to a fresh start; they are the only hopes to re-create the world based on equality. Feminine writing is the Utopia where the dream of a society without gender discrimination is cherished.

The study of the women’s resistance further leads to the most liberal feminist mode of Shobha De. Her novels are the battle grounds on which modern woman projects her real self to resist the various forms of patriarchy. Her women characters beat patriarchy at its own game by using sex as the tool of domination and the mean of release from enslavement. Shobha De’s women are strong enough to use this tool for the patriarchal subversion.

In her novel *Sisters*, she has projected the two modern aspect of womanhood. The one aspect of this womanhood clings to the old moral
values asserting the need of transformation while the other has gone astray in search of the self. Mikki represents the first aspect and Alisha, the other.

Under the guise of freedom, rights and equality, it should be searched out where women have gone. Shobha De’s ‘new woman’ is referred as an ‘aberration’ only on this pretext. All of the principle of life don’t get meaning without the moral principles hence the modern women has forgotten the real meaning of life in search of self under the title of inhibited sexual freedom.

Mikki, though exhibits heroic qualities of a new woman, the flaw of her character is her emotional and romantic temperament. She is conscious of her own abilities and do not presume herself as an inferior due to her being a woman. After getting charge of the Hiralal industries, Mikki behaves like a mature business tycoon. She protests the view of her employees who try to treat her like spoiled child; she becomes furious to know that Ramankaka doubts her efficiency as a business woman. She challenges the prejudices of the people that a woman can successfully run the business. Her acknowledgement of self and its assertion is more powerful than any other women studied in the dissertation.

Mikki represents the more human aspect of modern woman. She is the preserver of the moral principles of life; she prefers to marry than to live alone. As a business woman she proves herself successful. It’s only the economic necessity which compels her to take refuge to Binny. Marriage for her is not a thing to pass time but a conjugal tie. Her marriage with Binny is not a passing affair for her but an everlasting relationship.
Binny’s wile treatment of her and her sentimental love for him makes her a foolish character. She endures all of the bitterness for the morsel of love which makes her somewhat superficial. Though not for a long time she endures it, she succeeds in winning the battle; she takes over all of the business after Binny’s death. She courageously faces the deaths of her parents and her husband like a hero.

Alisha is a counterfoil to Mikki. As Mikki longs or the filial relationship Alisha believes in the freedom outside marriage. Her views about love, sex and marriage give glimpse in the modern attitude of women towards marriage and filial relationship. Alisha like her sister does not tolerate the injustice, discrimination and negligence. She is a woman who is conscious to the patriarchal enslavement believes in the inhibited freedom. For her freedom lies in the licentious sexual relationship as she always negate the thought of marriage. Her involvement in Navin is simply out of her desire to dominate Mikki and her philosophy is fashioned out of carnal pleasure.

Alisha’s sexual domination with her male partners clearly exhibits the patriarchal mentality where someone oppresses the other. All of her sexual encounters are the witness to the transformation of power from men to women. She compels Navin to have sexual relationship with her just for the vengeance satisfaction. When he leaves her for Mikki, she feels defeated due to her overambitious nature. The next man she exploits is Dr. Kurein. Though hailing from middle class background, he too proves weak to protect the morals. Feeling oppressed, he make up the damage by abusing Alisha sexually.

The novel is the culmination of women’s movement. The rights, equality, unity and sisterhood among them are the real goals of women’s
movement. The novel *Sisters* fulfills the objective. Mikki’s affection for Alisha allegorically presents the changing hearts of women. Alisha’s adherence to Mikki’s consideration leads the study of the novel from woman-woman antipathy to sympathy, the very goal of sisterhood, which will cause the organization of women that can fight against the outrage on women.