INTRODUCTION

The post Independence Indian English literary scenario has been dominated by women writers. With the emergence of modern India, modern Indian woman has been emerged as a forceful body of intelligence, creativity, sensitivity to gender inequality, consciousness of individuality and subjectivity. This modern woman has been posing threat to the conventional Indian socio-cultural, political and economical patriarchy in India.

Modern Indian women authors writing in English have been continuously contributing to the feminist movement not only in India but also to the whole world. They have faithfully explored patriarchal power politics, feminine sensibilities, gender illiteracy, intellectual, emotional, physical exploitation and diversion of society towards set patterns for so called social stability and tranquillity. They have explored not only these various issues but also re-created ‘utopia’ where a society without these fissures would cohabit.

Women’s literature is a discourse of resistance. Indian women have gone through the various stages of social, economical, political and cultural metamorphosis. The periods before Indian renaissance can be described as the dark ages for women. The Indian renaissance has brought with itself the spirit of rejuvenation. The lives of Indians have been changed after the Indo-Western encounter; particularly women experienced a tremendous transformation in their lives. A woman in ‘pardah’ has been pulled to the polls to decide the administrators of the nation. The suffrage has given women the sense of empowerment, individuality and equality with men.
The literature by women authors in India is a site where the transfiguring of Indian woman from a ‘caged bird’ to a modern woman can be reviewed. India is a land of varied cultures and religions. These cultures and religions shape the lives of women according to their ideologies. Though having discovered the subservient position of women, the revolution of gender equality is not an easy task. The Indian women writers have poured out the process of transmutation and resistance of women through the delineation of various women characters. Through feminist literature the present project aims at analysing the nature of patriarchy in concerned cultures and the intensity of women’s resistance to it in the selected novels of Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, and Shobha De. The process has not only transformed the established ideologies but also affected the lives of women who dare to oppose it; the nature, intensity and effect of resistance vary from woman to woman. The study attempts to exhibit the transformation of women through the novels of Anita Desai’s *Cry, the Peacock*, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* and Shobha De’s *Sisters*.

1.1 Feminism: A Discourse of Resistance:-

The term ‘feminism’ has its origin in the Latin word ‘femina’ meaning woman. This is a socio-political movement which advocates the equal rights for women as men. The term has been popularized through women’s suffrage movement and crystallization of feminist discourses. The roots of feminism are in History but its seeds are sprouted out in the mid-twentieth century. From 1960s, it is referred as the ‘woman’s movement’. It is aimed at dismantling all forms of patriarchal domination. Feminist is a political position, supports the ideology of feminism which aims at criticizing men’s privilege and women’s subordination. Feminist literary criticism ardently exposes the patriarchal
discursive practices, cultural mind-sets and pervasive inequality among men and women. This has been started as a part of international women’s liberation movement.

Before 1960, many feminists have diagnosed the problem of women’s inequality in society. Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Women* analyses the reasons for the subordination of women and she has proposed the solutions for raising the position of women to a dignified state in the society. Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* aptly portrays the prevalent inequality in Western social life where women’s education was debunked and their intelligence was looked down or neglected. Simon de Beauvoir’s place in feminist theory is unique due to her contribution in theorizing women’s marginal existence in the social frame work on the basis of biological differences. In *The Second Sex*, she has exposed the biased attitude of D. H. Lawrence about women in his novels and theorized the biological, ideological and cultural reasons of women’s subordination. Besides these women feminists, there are also male contributors who enthusiastically exposed the secondary position of women in society and claimed their place in feminist writing. Among them, John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Woman* (1869) and Friedrich Engels’ *The Origin of the Family* (1884) occupy significant place.

The first book of particular significance in feminist writing is Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) which has contributed to the emergence of the women’s liberation movement. With an advent of Second World War, in 1939, women began to manifest their will to shape American political life. Many women worked and proved efficient male counter-force on war fronts and astounded those who doubted their proficiencies. Having proved on warfronts the debate over women’s place
in society continuously haunted American civilian life. Though being accepted women’s competency in all kinds of works, men tend to throw women to domesticity. The feminine mystique was created in media for making the housewives and mothers, the ideal role models for all women. This mystique has reduced the identity of women to sexual and social passivity. Friedan has attempted to demystify this false mystique in order to renew women’s fight for equal rights.

With the publication of Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics* (1969), the first modern principles of feminist criticism have been initiated by introducing the most fundamental term, ‘patriarchy’. According to Millet, ‘politics’ means the operations of power relations in society. She argues that Western institutions have manipulated power to establish the dominance of men and subordination of women in the Western culture.

Though the feminist criticism has been started from 1960s as a direct product of the ‘women’s movement’, till 1970s it has been developed into broadly two sections, Anglo-American and French feminism because of their debates and arguments “over the role of theory, the nature of language and the value of psychoanalysis in it.” The Anglo-American version of feminist criticism includes both American and English feminists. The American feminists are more sceptical about the role of theory. They consider the traditional critical approach of liberal humanism, analysing the representation of women’s lives and experiences and try to establish the tradition of women novelists. The major critics of this tradition are Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Patricia Stubbs and Rachel Brownstein.

The modern principles of feminist criticism are embarked by Kate Millet and Mary Ellman, and feminist criticism has generated much
public debate over women’s rights. Feminist criticism has not only contributed to the internalization of women’s movement but also altered the assumptions of literary study.

Since the 1970s feminist criticism has been engaged itself in the extensive discussions about representations of women in literary traditions and the discovery of the impressive tradition of female writing. Ellen Moer, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar started to challenge the logocentric tradition of writing. Patricia Meyer Spacks’s *The Female Imagination* (1975) deals with English and American novels of the past three hundred years; Ellen Moer’s *Literary Women* (1976) discusses the history women’s writing; Elain Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) describes the female tradition in English novel from Brontes onward and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) studies the major female writers of the nineteenth century.

Elain Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own* constitutes the major critical studies of women writers from the viewpoint of female tradition. In her analysis of historical development of women’s writing, she presents three stages of development; feminine, feminist and female. The first phase extends from 1840 to 1889, in which the subculture imitates the norms of dominant tradition; the second phase extends from 1890 to 1920s, the period in which the subculture protests against the dominant standards and values and the third phase extends from 1920s to 1960s, which is a period of self discovery and aims at search for identity.

Nine years later, Dale Spender’s *Mother’s of the Novel: 100 Good Writers before Jane Austen* (1986) appeared on the scene to reclaiming the lost tradition of women novelists. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar theorized in their *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) the biased
patriarchal conception of women writers in the nineteenth century is “to be human is to be male”. In the nineteenth century the artistic creativity was perceived as basically male quality. Men fashion their creativity in the image of Divine Creator. The divine creation is an ideal model, hence the creation of male writers. Therefore women writers copied and identified themselves with masculine cosmic author. So they produced the images, events, figures and scenes to confirm the male standards of images of femaleness in their own writing.

The Anglo-American feminist critics are categorized under their common disbelief in using recent critical theories but the views of English feminists vary from American feminists because of their ‘socialist’ orientation. English feminists are distinctly aligned to cultural materialism or Marxism. So, along with the interest of the use of non-historical data and non-literary material, it tends to exhibit the strong political and theoretical interest.

French feminism is overtly theoretical and heavily draws upon poststructuralist and psychoanalysts, especially Lacan, Foucault and Derrida. These critics are interested in the philosophical issues like language, representation and psychology more than literary texts. The French feminists acknowledged the potential of structuralism and post structuralism’s principles to deconstruct the patriarchal social order. The feminist critic from this category is Helen Cixous, who has challenged the dichotomy of binary opposition of man/woman in the value system. Cixous has subverted the logocentric logic behind the underlying paradigms of male/female opposition in culture and literature. This logocentric and phallocentric opposition damages social stability. However the dismantling of this repressive male/female opposition will produce a society which will be based on value system where the
subculture will be privileged. In her 1974 essay *The Laugh of Medusa* suggests that laughter, sex and writing may have liberating effects. She proposes a form of writing, “ecriture feminine”\(^3\), which has the power to escape the restrictions of phallocentric system. Another literary critic and psychoanalysts, Julia Kristeva draws attention to the two forms of language “symbolic” and “semiotic”. The “symbolic” aspect suggests “the orderly realm of strict distinctions and laid-down structures through which language works”\(^4\) and “semiotic” is “inherently submissive politically”\(^5\). It fatally threatens the symbolic patriarchal conventions.

Using deconstructive techniques of Derrida, the feminists who cherished deconstruction have challenged the transcendental claim, universality and self authenticity of logocentric knowledge. Lacan’s usage of ‘phallus’ symbolizing power established the all repressive nature of power structure. All of the binary oppositions are culturally constructed and accepted over the centuries as universal and privileged value system or meta-narratives. Feminist literary criticism has played a crucial role in challenging logocentric tradition and the supremacy of the privileged concepts and values in patriarchal systems.

As far as psychoanalysis’ relationship with feminism is concerned, it has played a significant role in shaping and reshaping the feminist movement. Being criticized by Simon de Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* and condemned in Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics*, it has been constantly on the peak of feminist critique. Freud’s theories and concepts are widely condemned by these early feminists by calling it source patriarchal ideologies. It is only after Juliet Mitchell’s *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* in 1974; Freud is restored on the grounds that his analysis advances to the invention of “gender” and its distinction from “sex”. “Gender” is culturally constructed while sex is a matter of biology. The notions of
“penis envy” and “castration” should not be concerned with actual physical male organ or absence of it but it is an emblem of social power and the term “castration” suggests women’s lack of it. Another critic Jane Gallop in her book *Feminism and psychoanalysis* (1982) continues the rehabilitation of psychoanalysis but she directs attention to Lacan’s more implicit term ‘phallus’ which is the physical biological object but a symbol of power. In Lacanian notion of power men as well as women are equally disadvantaged.

The advancement of psychoanalysis none the less proved the culturally constructed nature of ‘self’ and identity. The difference between sex and gender is crucial to the feminist study.

The first wave of feminism is a political movement of women’s rights; the second is a scathing attack on patriarchy and oppression; the third wave is a critique of the second wave feminism and challenges the essential viewpoint of ‘sisterhood’ of traditional feminism. The third wave feminists insisted on differences with regard to race, class or sexuality. So Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak raises an issue of the differences of experiences, sensibilities and understanding, in context of the First World Women and Third World Women. That is why it’s important who the addresser is and the manners of her speech at the same time the addressee and “on behalf of whom she is speaking.”6 A similar argument has been cited by the Black feminists. An African American critic Barbara Smith argued that black women writers were ignored by academic feminism. Audre Lorde opines that “white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, class, and sexual preference, class, and age.”7 He denies the ‘homogeneity’ or ‘sisterhood’ among women of different race, class and sexuality. Therefore African-American women, Chicana women and Lesbian
women began to assert their identity as a different entity tried to form separate feminist literary traditions. The fourth wave of feminism is referred ‘post-feminism’, emphasises on “individual woman’s inner freedom and reawakening, on resolving the issues and problems raised by feminism and on resolving the issues and problems raised by feminism and on understanding the relationship of interdependence between man and woman.”

This phase is of transition towards gender bias free society.

1.2 Indian Woman Novelists: Refracting Feminine Sensibilities:

The legacy of Indian women novelists in English begins with Toru Dutt, her novels- Bianca and Le Journal de Mademoiselle d’Arvers are novelist’s own projections of experiences of life. Though the portraits of Bianca and Marguerite are French and Spanish respectively, but “the delineation is entirely Indian full of love and affection, sincerity and purity, which characterize the core of an ideal Indian woman.”

Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi Cristian, as 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 Twilight (1908) which penetrate “the silken curtain of the “purdah” and reveal the nuances of femininity.” She satirizes the hypocrisy of male dominated framework which seeks to veil melancholy, sadness, and despair behind “purdah”. Though the picture behind “purdah” is realistic and miserable yet the women characters cherish the Victorian womanhood.

After the Second World War the history of Indian women novelists got a new track, a new vision. Though the quality of the fiction has been enriched, the delineation of women in stereotyping images continues. Kamala Markandaya in her Nector in a Seive (1954) projects a character of Rukmini who can stand up at her husband’s infidelity, Nathan and
remains faithful to him till death. Her own daughter Ira adopts a way of prostitution because of her failure in marriage due to her barrenness. Later she has been expelled from the respectable stratum of the society.

In *Handful of Rice* (1996), the patriarchal structure of the family, the place of woman in it, the importance of a male child and predicaments of the parents without a son are aptly demonstrated. Appu’s torn future without an heir compels him to hand over his job to Ravi, his son-in-law. Though he has two daughters, they are not supposed to be his carriers. Nalini performs her wifely duties instead of Ravi’s harshness. Ravi rapes Jayamma, his mother-in-law, maltreats Nalini and resents Thangam’s presence in the family; all this shows the subordinate position of women.

Mrs. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala lodges in her novels the urban feminine sensibilities. She probes “the mind, the sensibility, and the agitated heart of the lonely or trapped woman.”

Jhabvala’s vision about the location of women in Indian society is aptly communicated in *Esmond in India* through the character of Ram Nath, who tells his sister Uma:

So like animals, like cows... Beat them, starve them, maltreat them how you like, they will sit and look with animal eyes and never raise a hand to defend themselves, saying “do with me what you will, you are my husband, my God, it is my duty to submit to my God.”

The characters like Nimmi in *The Nature of Passion* are satirized for their pretensions of modernism and independence. Nimmi is a modern girl who fights for the cause of women’s emancipation and keeps bob-cut hair is treated as an aberration and as a new development towards changing ideals of Indian womanhood.
Women’s struggle for individual freedom is the central concern of Nayantara Sahgal. Though deeply rooted into the Indian culture, her women characters fight for asserting their individuality. The female protagonist of *Storm in Chandigarh*, Saroj enjoys premarital sex. Women’s body and sexuality is subjected to the dictation of patriarchy. She represents typical Indian womanhood which is in the possessive spirit of her husband. Inder, her husband treats her indecently. He is haunted by the memory of his wife’s affairs with another man but he himself is involved in clandestine affair with Mara. Though aware of the failure of their relationship, Saroj accepts her lots.

Sahgal in her autographical, *A Day in Shadow* (1971), concerns with the emotional effects of divorce on a woman. Unable to combat with Som’s sexual aggressiveness, Simrit divorces from him. A wife unable to provide sexual satisfaction is useless. This is a material attitude towards women who are considered as the objects of gratification. Getting divorce she has to recover from the emotional shock and strivs to build a new life for herself and her children. Raj, a rising Member of Parliament, accompanies her in recovering the suffocating servility. He proposes marriage and establishes the relationship based upon friendship, understanding and communion. Thus this is a traditional novel in which a suffocating woman recognizes her servility and gets herself free from the enslavement. The utility of the oppressive power institutions like marriage are questioned and the need for the transformation in these structures is proposed through such examples.

Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) focuses on a Muslim girl, Leila who falls in love with Ameer, and marries him without her parent’s consent. Being educated and nurtured by the reformist revolutionist, she revolts against the conventions and the domineering
patriarch, Baba Jan, a dying grandfather. Unfortunately Ameer dies and Leila is being captured in an endless war of life. This novel presents the sting of transformation in Muslim community, where educated women can fight against the patriarchal norms and succeeds to conquer it.

Anita Desai sets up new trends in Indian English Novels. Instead of dealing with social, cultural, political and economical scenario of Indian ethos, Anita Desai dives deep into the human psyche, particularly Indian woman’s mind. A new woman has taken birth properly in her debut novel *Cry the Peacock*, who is torn apart between subjective earnings, social imposition, social segregation, Gautama’s rationality and astrological prediction. Her other novels *Voices in the City*, *Fasting Feasting*, *Fire on the mountain* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, also bring forth the existential dilemmas.

Vimla Raina is famous for her bestselling novel, *Ambapali* (1962), a historical novel that presents the history of Vaishali in 600 B.C. The novel revolves around the legendary, beautiful and honoured *Nagarvadhu* of Vaishali whose heart and body is conquered by AjatShatru by false pretences. Instead of being a prostitute, Lord Buddha paved her way to enlightenment. The Brahminical view that women cannot attain *Moksha*, proves false. The hegemony of patriarchal assumption regarding women’s spirituality is shattered by challenging male chauvinism.

*An Autumn Leaf* (1976) is a story of Charisma, an educated woman, always craves for women’s emancipation. She hates the male dominated social norms and system of marriage which is a legal institution where women’s subordinate position is taken for granted. Rejecting her parent’s proposal, she elopes with Amit leaving her parental home behind. She lives with Amit without marriage and as soon
as she realizes that her freedom is in danger, she abandons Amit for Rohit. Charisma is a modern woman who tries to undone the patriarchal norms by behaving a complete rebel.

*Spring Returns* presents the life of a young girl, Tara, who asserts her ‘self’ instead of her stepmother’s oppression. She is an educated woman who has taken the training of nursing for her liberty. When her mother tries to marry her with her nephew, Dalip who is insane and mentally disordered due to a heart break, she runs away from the home and marries Mr. Keeny.

Vimala Raina’s heroines are modern who are not only conscious of the injustice done to them but also never fails to assert themselves in this male-dominated patriarchal social system.

Rama Mehta has to her credit the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award (1979) winning novel *Inside the Haveli* (1977). Geeta, the protagonist of the novel, an educated urban girl, slowly succumbs to the suffering life of Haveli. Though educated, Geeta’s husband never expresses his anguish against the norms of Haveli. The life of women inside Haveli is all limited to their veil, and revolves around men. Many of the times the urban culture clashes with the rural civilization and fails to prove the utility of modern values amidst medieval patriarchal environment. It is worthy to note that a rebellious woman, who stands against patriarchal norms and strives for revolutionary changes, finally occupies the position of a patriarch himself.

Shahi Deshpande’s novels reveal the unique feminine sensibility of modern woman. In her *That Long Silence*, Jaya moulds herself into an ideal figure of Indian wife, ‘Suhasini’, a submissive and sacrificing human being. Though bold and fearless, she converts herself into an
incompetent and dependent woman. In the course of action she understands the futility of all her silence she has kept to please her husband. A woman burdened under traditions never dares to break the marriage but hurt conscious never allows her to reconcile to the injustices.

A Matter of Time (1999) is an exploration of woman’s inner life. It presents the four generations of women representing their respective social tendencies towards them. The women of three of the generations suffer at the hands of patriarchal ideologies because they can not bare son to their husbands. Manorama, Kalyani’s mother always blame her for not being a son. Kaylani herself is secluded from Shripati’s life for losing her son, an heir to the family. Sumi, unlike her mother, suffers from marital incongruity but does not accept her fate passively. She becomes the constructive agent in her daughters’ lives. Aru sympathizes with her mother’s and grandmother’s tragedy and understands the role of patriarchy in making their lives wretched. Hence out of frustration Aru the representative of the fourth generation decides not to get married.

Shashi Deshpande’s The Binding Wine perfectly demonstrates the predicament of women in marriage where she is forced to sexual assaults. Meera, mother-in-law of Urmila, though dead, is the protagonist of the novel. Through her poems and diaries, she tries to unveil the agonies of her life, the repulsion to the sexual act and hatred for her husband. She dies at the age of twenty-two while giving birth to her son. Thus the so called sacred institution is a very site where the mute injustices are done to women.

Geeta Hariharan’s Thousands Faces of Night intensifies the exploitation of women within marriage. The abuse, ill-treatment and
oppression have been taken for granted. Mayamma is a victim to domineering mother-in-law and animal like husband. She marries at the age of twelve and suffers from brutish, unwanted sex. After two years of her marriage when she does not bear child, her mother-in-law asks her to cut her breasts open and demands her by saying, “fill the silver cup with the blood from your breast and bathe the ligam”\textsuperscript{13} this is the way through which it can be proved that violence is prevalent in marriage. The sexual assaults by her husband and atrocities by her mother-in-law, she accepts with silence.

Mahashweta Devi’s \textit{Mother of 1084} is a multifaceted play which enacts the realization of Sujata’s self as she discovers the cause of Brati’s death. Immersed into the life of a loving mother, wife and household chores, she is highly conscious of the insensitive and inhuman lives around her. She is a soul who cherishes the rebel but also expresses her anger on the negligence of injustices and oppression.

Namita Gokhale’s \textit{Paro: Dreams of Passion} is a novel presents the emerging modern feminine sensibilities, believes in emancipation that can be sought through sexual freedom. Paro, the protagonist of the novel throws all conventional inhibitions. In her own marriage party, she takes wine and behaves in a carefree manner. This shows her masculine way of behaviour. Fatigued to live with her husband, she establishes illicit relationship with Bucky. She revolts against the feminine norms of being chaste and faithful wife. In the eyes of Priya, the narrator; she is “the freewoman, symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality.”\textsuperscript{14} Paro is threat to the prototype image of a woman, an emblem of sacrifice, virtue and chastity. Namita Gokhale seems to question the very concept of femininity.
Manju Kapoor’s *Difficult Daughters* (1998) which has won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1999, voices the problematic of three generations women. Virmati, the daughter of Kasturi and Lala Diwan Chand, becomes the difficult daughter by resisting her mother’s prototype. The narration revolves round Virmati, who never finds satisfaction in woman’s traditional role of childbearing and performing household chores. Instead she pursues higher studies and involves sexually in Harish, a foreign educated English professor. By marrying him, she completely throws the patriarchal ideologies which are symbolized by her mother. The decision of marriage completely outlaws her from the social system but she succeeds to centralize the periphery. Even her daughter Ida, who in the beginning denies like being her mother, at last declares to be like her mother. This is a triumph of the instinct which has the power to assert itself.

Jai Nimbakar’s *Temporary Answer*, Vineeta’s protest of Hindu tradition which prohibits the second marriage or sexual life of a widow. After losing her husband and becoming a widow, she involves in her profession of doctor where she becomes intimate with the writer – professor Abhijit and indulges in sexual relationship. This is one of the ‘difficult’ behaviours, incongruous to the traditional Hindu philosophy. She finally decides to marry him, who can support her in achieving wholeness in life.

Raji Narsimha portrays more rebellious women in her *Forever Free* (1979). The protagonist of the novel, Shree tries to search for a meaningful life. Her mother believes in the education as a gateway to freedom. But when her husband and in-laws suspects her she drifts from man to man in search of love and stability. Her education does not save
her from despair. Finally returns to her mother who is as free as she is. Thus they are forever free from the bondage of marriage and convention.

In her other novel *The Sky Changes* (1992) she brings forth the life of a sensitive Krishna and her ill-fated marriage with Jagat who is an insensitive husband. She tries to get rid off of him but her mother poses as a traditional patriarchal figure and pressurizes her to remain with her husband. She tries to find satisfaction by involving many lovers which consequently brings her doomed fate and suffering.

Kamala Das’s whole life is a series of rebellion throwing aside and questioning the conventional patriarchal norms. Her autobiography *My Story* reveals her quest for freedom and her rebellious nature.

Her *The Alphabet of Lust* (1980) is a story of Mansi who is a victim of marital disharmony. Being a government official her husband does not bestow ample time for her. She feels cheated and craves for freedom and identity. Finally because of her political contacts, she becomes a renowned poetess, wins several prizes and becomes a Home Minister. Thus by asserting ‘self’, she mounts the Everest of power, glory and success.

*A Doll for the Child Prostitute* (1977) depicts the lives of the two women Mira and Rukmini, one is prostitute and other is forced to the prostitution. Meera marries her client but forced to come back to her profession. But Rukmini, brutally abused by her parents, is sold to a brothel keeper. Middle aged inspector wants to keep her as his keep, but ironically she calls him by the name of father. Soon his carnal desire transforms into fatherly affection he promises to bring her a foreign doll. Finally, she marries the son of the brothel keeper and lives a respectable
life. Thus the novel enhances the subordinating consciousness of women and women’s position in the society.

Uma Vasudevan’s *Shreya of Sonagarh* (1993) is a fine portrait of women’s sexuality and their quest for it. Shreya, a middle class woman being unsatisfied sexually by her cool and neglectful husband, Brijesh, turns to Anand who can satisfy her till orgasm. But when Anand finds futility in the relationship, he advises her to remain faithful to her husband. Her relation with Anand helps her to realize her ‘self’ and turns to her husband by accepting the need of harmony in their relationship.

Kiran Desai, a daughter of renowned novelist Anita Desai, got the honour of prestigious Booker Prize for her *Inheritance of Loss*. The novel deals with the various aspects of Indian life including immigrant’s issues in the USA and India’s socio-political disturbances. Besides these aspects she has artistically delineated the women’s issues during the pre and post independent India.

The novel brilliantly portrays the torturous strategies of patriarchy through the characters; Sai, her mother Mrs. Mistry, her grandmother Nimmi, Lalita, Nomita and all the women who become the victim of the system. Being forsaken by the love of her parents, Sai indulges in Gyan. But Gyan’s betrayal makes her fully conscious of her defeated position. As she threatens Gyan and his sister, she transpires the guts of being who can defend herself. Her grandmother too lives the wretched life. Being illiterate, she brings dishonour to her husband’s reputation and in return she has been humiliated and sent back to Gujrat considering unsuitable. The writer is much critical about the atrocities women are meted out without any recognition of tyranny.
It should be noted that Indian women writers writing in English have depicted in their novels the all pervasive male dominance and women’s protest to it. As per the denominations of women’s writing of Elain Showalter, Indian women writers also have gone through the three phases of metamorphosis.

The first phase attempts to exhibit the prevailing women’s exploitation, double dealing and hypocrisy in society. These novelists realistically portrayed the emerging consciousness, individuality, aspirations and strength of the women’s character. They are clearly aware of the gender discrimination and injustices practiced against women. The women of this phase suffered due to the strong social inhibition and their economical incompatibility. The heroines of Kamala Markandaya voice their struggle against trapped situations. Her women include into the traditional zone of ‘Sita and Savitri’. They submit themselves gladly to the patriarchal hegemony due to the predominance of convention over consciousness.

The second phase gradually assumes violent and rebellious posture that cannot be silenced. The middle class is such a stratum of society which has been more suppressed as it cherishes, nurtures, and preserves the patriarchal culture which contains the seeds of women’s subordination. Being educated, these women are more conscious of their degradation and inhibition on confining themselves to the four walls of kitchen and home. The role of an obedient daughter, chaste and dutiful wife, loving mother and their aspirations towards self actualization compel them to review their generations’ enslavement. This consciousness has been voiced in Shashi Deshpande’s novels. She provides realistic access to female psyche and experiences of middle class women who are aware of their rights and urges.
The novels which can be included into the third phase are about the upper stratum, urban women. The protagonist of Shobha De, Namita Gokhale and Sehgal’s novels represent the problems of upper class women. These women are more liberated from the hypocrite moralistic inhibitions but they lack the spiritual authenticity. These types are treated as aberrations because only the free play of sexual pleasures and materialistic approach towards life does not confirm the authenticity in representing Indian sensibilities.

1.3 Locating the Writers in Indian English Literature:-

Women writers have occupied the significant place In Indian English literature. All of the women writers have contributed to the transforming ideologies which has the power to change the mindsets of the generations. Among all these writers the place of Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Shobha De is esteemed due to their unique contribution to the representation of transforming equations of social, political, economical and cultural lives of Indians in literature.

1.3.1 Anita Desai: Biography and fashioning philosophy

Anita Desai is born in Mussoorie, a hill station near Dehradun in northern India to a Bengali father and German mother on June 24, 1937. She has grown up surrounded by Western literature and music. Her father D. N. Muzumdar was a Bengali businessman and her mother Toni Nime was of German origin. She is educated in Delhi at Queen Mary’s Higher Secondary School and Miranda House, Delhi University, where she received in 1957 a B. A. in English literature. In the following year she married Ashwin Desai, a businessman; they have four children.

Anita Desai started to write at the age of seven and published her story at the age of nine. Though she spoke German as a child, she started
to write in English. German was her first language; Hindi was for the communication with neighbours and English was her “literary language...book language.” She contributed short stories to the children’s magazine and college magazine. To become a writer was her firm choice.

Anita Desai has to her credit twelve novels and two collections of short stories. The core of all these fictions is the alienated, devastated human being, fully illuminating the niches of human conscious from every aspect of life. She explores the existential dilemmas of human beings. The life of the writer and her writings has strong associations with each other. Being a daughter of Bengali father, and a German mother and her stay at various cities in India and abroad has given her the strength to observe the life objectively; it is the peculiarity of her work. The detached stance she adapts while narrating Indian milieu and sympathetic visualization of the characters and events has made her unique writer in Indian English literature. Being a product of an odd family, her personality has acquired essential qualities for a good writer. She states:

Everyone in India has close affiliations to state, home town, religion, caste—all the things missing from my life. That leaves one feeling free to invent whatever kind of home you want. I do have all the passions one’s supposed to have for one’s country, but I know I’m not part of Indian society—it perplexes and amazes me. I find myself reacting sharply, as my mother would have. I don’t think sentimental about India. The attitude of being alien to Indian culture has been developed into her due to her mother’s foreign origin and her father’s deep attachment to his
mother land. Being born in India, she strongly attached to its culture and heritage so she can keenly portray the Indian sensibilities.

Anita Desai’s novels reflect the hidden psychic realities of women. Gender is a forceful discourse in determining the course of life a human being has to lead and it also regulates the thinking pattern of them. The course of life of a woman is certainly different to that of a man. As a writer Desai has projected her own experiences of being a woman. At the age of twenty she married Ashwin Desai, a businessman and bore two sons and two daughters. Desai has to perform all her wifely and motherly duties. “It was a very domestic life,” she says, till her 50s. Hence she can successfully probe the fret and fevers of domestic life of women and their disabled spirits due to the continuous hammering of patriarchal blows on their creative selves and self-respect.

Anita Desai portrays in her novel the characters among them generally she delineates the neurotic, highly sensitive and alienated women. She not only explores the consciousness of the Indian women but also records the sub-conscious and unconscious turmoil, chaos and agonies. She forefronts the alienated lives of women who struggle to escape. Within the self-contained happy decorated borders of monotonous life, Indian woman is on ceaseless quest for a meaningful life. The continuous severe pressure of unconscious natural desires and destructing forceful social pressures create such abnormal personalities who not only reject the passive acceptance of traditional values but also rebel against the entire social system. The profundity of Anita Desai’s work lies in the fact that she brings to the front the psychological truths rather than social realities.
In her early novels, she has presented fractured social structures and lacerated psyche of women. Her later novels deal with the problems of immigration. Recently she has moved from India to more remote places like Mexico in *ZigZag Way* (2004) for the material of her novel. This has been due to her permanent separation from India. But it’s difficult to be separated from India because this is the land of inexhaustible experiences and philosophies.

She has lived most of her life in Calcutta, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pune; so she writes about contemporary Indian milieu and the characters and background of her novels smell the flavour of India. As a novelist she has made her debut in 1963 with *Cry, the Peacock*. She writes powerfully about social realities from psychological perspective. She is intensely keen about the psychic realities and emotional complexities. She has certainly extended and enlarged the thematic horizons of Indian English novels.

Her originality as a writer can be perceived through the honours and prizes she has been received. She has won the Winifred Holtby Prize of the Royal Society of Literature for the novel; *Fire on the Mountain* (1978), the Guardian Award for Children’s Literature for *Village by the Sea* (1984). She has also received the Padma Sri award from the Government of India and Taraknath Das Award for promotion of Indo-US relationship. She has won the Sahitya Academy Award and National Academy of Letters Award. Her three novels *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody*, and *Fasting, Feasting* have been nominated for the Booker Prize.

Her major works are as follows:

1. *Cry, the Peacock* (1963)
2. *Voices in the City* (1965)


4. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975)

5. *Fire on the Mountain* (1977)

6. *Games at Twilight and Other Stories* (1978)


**Cry, the Peacock** (1963)

*Cry, the Peacock* is a tragic story of Maya who is torn apart between subjective earnings and social imposition. She is the woman who is not only affected materially by the oppressive impact of patriarchy but also psychologically. Maya, the trapped figure in her father’s over pampering love which is symbolic of the patriarchal care, one of the means to enslave woman’s subjective growth. An Albino astrologer is
also a primitive patriarch figure who proposes a woman an age old condition of a choice between herself and complete submission to father-husband-son trio’s rule. The diversion ultimately drives the fate of the relationship to complete annihilation.

*Voices in the City (1965)*

Monisha in *Voices in the City* is the representative of Indian women who are intimated to live a mean life into the four walls of their husband’s houses. The novel voices the speechless agonies of existence in a hostile, male-dominated, oppressive and conservative Indian society. The four walls of threshold of the houses are not the buildings and shelter for human beings but they are the concrete patriarchal inhibitions to limit and control the women. The isolation, suffocation, indifference, barrenness, lack of privacy, understanding and communion exile women deep into the bottoms of existential dilemmas. Monisha suffers from unbearable tyranny, injustice, insult and abuse at her husband’s dwellings. Failure to adapt the life of a ‘caged bird’, Monisha commits suicide.

*Fasting Feasting (1999)*

*Fasting Feasting* is a strong criticism on male chauvinism, female apathy and reluctance. Uma’s father always behaves as a patriarch who controls women. A yearning for a boy hurts the ego of a girl and she understands her accidental birth. The sense of disgrace further enhances in failure of marriage. Uma is left only as an object of the family where she is no more than a slave. Even an aspiration for a career never ascribes strength to leave the home, so badly her wings are clipped. The same is the fate of Anamika, who is sacrificed at the altar of male chauvinism.

*Fire on the Mountain (1977)*
Through *Fire on the Mountain*, Anita Desai probes into the traumas of a housewife, Nanda Kaul. Like an ideal Indian wife, she conceded to the illicit relationship between Mr. Kaul and Miss Davidson. The novel picturizes the daily life of a wife who must perform her wifely and motherly duties forgetting her subjective needs. The marital incongruity and the segregation lead Nanda to secluded life. Raka, her granddaughter shares seclusion but by instinct. Her father’s harsh treatment of her mother makes her an introvert. The worst kind of example of patriarchal brutal assault on women can be seen through Illa Das, who is brutally raped and murdered by Preet Singh only because she tried to stop the disastrous child marriage of Preet Singh’s daughter.

**Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975)**

*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is a story of tragic inner realities of the protagonist Sita who is caught up into the existential dilemmas. Fed up with the callousness of urban life and her children, she runs away to a small island, Manori. Raman, her husband is kind and understanding but problem lies with her. Though for a while she tries to feel wholeness on the island, later turns to the realities of life after compromising. This is the novel in which the protagonist neither commits suicide nor emerges as an insane.

**Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971)**

Anita Desai extends her imaginary horizon from the theme of alienation to that of exile and immigration. The novels *Bye-Bye Blackbird* and *Baumgartner’s Bombay* deal with lacerated psyche of immigrants. In *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, the three characters, Adit, dev and Sarah have been portrayed in the light of gnawing immigrant sensibility. Adit, who initially tries to adapt himself to the new environs of English where he
tries to recreate his ‘self’. But the adaptation becomes difficult for him and the realization that he cannot become one with the alien culture, haunts him to decide to return to India, the place where he will feel himself in “natural condition... true circumstances.”\(^{18}\) Dev’s is a different state of mind. Though he initially views England from the standpoint of “conquered”, subdued and subjected, finally comprehend the same land “vistas of love, success and joy had opened”\(^{19}\) for him.

Sarah has caught in an identity crisis in her own land by marrying an Indian which displaces her from he own culture. Marrying Adit, she is caught in a dilemma of identifying with two roles—“Mrs.Sen” and “Sarah”.\(^{20}\) To confer meaning to one of her identities, she decides to follow Adit to India.

**Baumgartner’s Bombay (1987)**

*Baumgartner’s Bombay* is a journey of Hugo or Baumgartener, a German at the period of political, cultural and religious war at global level, causing him a nowhere man to nowhere go. He is a homeless and nationless man who is an alien to his native soil and an outsider to the foreign land. The cultural uprooting and geographical displacement destroys the sense of belongingness and identity.

**Games at Twilight and Other Stories (1978)**

Anita Desai’s short story collection *Games at Twilight* spells out the theme of temperamental differences in “Scholar and Gypsy”, between David and Pat, husband and wife. “Sale” is the study of the miserable plight of a talented artist, whose paintings never sell. “The Accompanist” is the micro study of devotion of Mr. Mishra, the tanpura player to master Ustad Rahim Khan, the famous musician. “Pigeons at Daybreak” communicates the tale of Mr. Amul Bose as a valetudinarian, an asthma
patient, who feigns to fall ill even at ease. “Games at Twilight” presents child psychology. Ravi though does childlike things but it has adult implications. “Surface Textures” studies the psychology of a man who suffers from low spirits of evasiveness and pusillanimity who is an escapist and a shirker of responsibility. Another short story named “Pineapple Cake” is the portrayal of the pessimistic mood of Victor on the one side and the ironic and worldly behaviour of Mrs. Fernandes, on the other. “Private Tuition” conveys an insight into teacher’s psychology of Mr. Bose who does some ridiculous acts in the presence of his pupils. “A Devoted Son” projects the attitudinal contrast between the father and his son, Dr. Rakesh, the son, thinks quite differently from his old aged father. “The Farewell Party” is the study of the sentimentality of the Ramans’.

Diamond Dust and Other Stories (2000)

Diamond Dust is a collection of nine short stories. The first story entitled “Royalty” picturizes the psyche of an artist, Raja, the protagonist, who finds deep nostalgic attachment to Indian things, though ordinary or drab. “Winterscape” is a subtle delineation of the east-west cultural encounter and values. The Indian culture believes in collective happiness while Western culture emphasizes the individual happiness. The title story “Diamond Dust” depicts the theme of unusually intimate relationship between man and animal, between Mr. Das, the protagonist and his pet dog called Diamond. The story “Underground” deals with the search of a hotel on a hot sandy beach by Jack Higgins and his wife Meg. “The Man Who Saw Himself Drowned” is a psychological delineation of an unnamed protagonist who watches his double’s death by drawing in the river. “The Artist’s Life” is a story of Miss Mable who could create beauty amidst ugliness. This is the paradox of an artist’s life.
“TepoztlanTommorrow” highlights “the generation gap between the old and the young, one’s nostalgic attachment to one’s native city and the progressive deterioration of the city.”21 “Five Hours to Shimala or Faisal” successfully communicates the humorous story of an adamant Sardarji and the way he causes a great deal of tension to the travellers on the way to Simla. The last story highlights the problem of working women in India.

**The Zigzag Way (2004)**

*The Zigzag Way (2004)* is Anita Desai’s novel of 182 pages, no longer than a novella. Its journey of self-discovery leads to the past. An American Eric, a New England born graduate student in history at Harvard follows his scientist girl friend, Em, to Mexico, a place where his history and roots later on he discovers. When he listens to the lecture of Doa Vera, ostensible champion of Hulchol Indian, relates himself to his own mysterious past. Eric learns that his grandmother, Davey, arrived in Mexico with his Cornish miners after the collapse of Cornwall’s tin mining industry and exhausted their whole life till death.

The core of the novel lies in the story of Betty Jennings, Eric’s grandmother a Cornish woman who accompanies her husband to the Mexican mines but dies in childbirth amid those mountains. Through this novel, Anita Desai has uncovered a compelling chapter in Mexican country. Detached from India and associated with foreign lands, an objective writer like Anita Desai has gone through a turbulent history of a very remote place like Mexico.

Anita Desai’s fictions have drawn worldwide attention due to the sensitivity with which she exposes the dark recesses of unconsciousness. She stands in the world of fiction among Iris Murdock, Doris Lessings,
Margaret Atwood and Flora Nwapa. Undoubtedly she has influenced the generations of writers.

1.3.2. Arundhati Roy: A Novelist Extraordinary

Arundhati Roy has made her debut in the realm of literature in the year 1997 when she got the coveted Booker Prize for *The God of Small Things*. She is born on November 24, 1961 in Shilong where her father was employed as a tea-planter. Arundhati Roy’s childhood is tumultuous as her mother divorced her husband and returned to Ayemenen, a village, few kilometres from Kottyayam town in central Kerala with her children. Her mother, Mary Roy broke the tradition by marrying a Bengali and then divorcing him. She also made history by fighting the provisions of the Christian Succession Act and in this connection she went to the Supreme Court. The favourable ruling allowed Christian women an equal share with their male siblings in their father’s property.

Roy’s childhood was full of anxieties. The house in which they used to reside was dominated by patriarchal inhibitions and conservative outlook. *The God of Small Things* is an autobiographical novel and all of the events, places and characters of the novel have been picturized after Arundhati Roy’s life. Ammu has been carved after Mary Roy. Her mother’s struggle for self acknowledgement in a conventional patriarchal society has been beautifully drawn.

Arundhati Roy is a born talent. Though she spent most of her time in her grandmother’s pickle factory, at school she showed an extraordinary genius for studies. According to Mary Roy: “Arundhati is a born talker and a born writer. While she was studying at school it was a problem to find a teacher who could cope with her voracious appetite for
reading and writing...” Her brother opines that Arundhati was a very good student, an athlete and an orator.

At the age of eighteen she left to Delhi for further education. She admitted to Delhi school of Architecture. Life in Delhi for Arundhati was challenging as it was requested by her family never to return to Kerala. She survived by selling empty beer bottles in Delhi and cakes in Goa. She returned to Delhi by selling a golden ring, given by her friend. She spent the life in utter penury while studying in Delhi School of Architecture; she had never been given a hostel. She managed to rent a shack in a refugee colony to herself and her boyfriend. She says that the short sightedness gave her courage to survive in utter anarchy.

After getting the degree of Architecture, Arundhati worked as Research Assistant at the National Institute of Urban affairs. Being devoted herself to the study; she won the scholarship to Florence to study the Restoration of Monuments and Historical Urban Centres.

Her life took ‘U’ turn when Pradeep Krishen, a film director, spotted her riding a bicycle down the wrong side of the road. He offered her a small role in the film *Massey Saab*, screened at the Venice Film Festival and she played the role of the “tribal bimbo”\(^\text{23}\). The relationship between Roy and Krishen later on developed into the auspicious marriage. During her short stay at Italy, she used to write letters to Predeep which brought her the realization that she could be a writer.

**Beginning of Career as a Writer:**

Arundhati Roy started her career as a writer by writing screenplays. She wrote the commentary for Ashish Chandola’s documentary film *How the Rhinoceros Returned*. Further she wrote screenplays which proved her talent in writing. She has to her credit besides screenplays, a fiction and
non-fiction. Her only fiction brought her fame as well as in mess of criticism. She wrote for the subordinate and marginal. The non-fiction is voiced for the down trodden and neglected. She is a realistic writer and writes passionately to expose the exploitation of the poor people from every sphere of life. A brief review of her literature paints Roy in the brilliant colours of revolutionary writer.

1.3.3. A Brief Review of her work:

Fiction:


Non-Fiction


Documentary

1. *How the Rhinoceros Returned*

Screen Plays

1. *The Banyan Tree*

2. *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*

3. *Electric Moon*

The letters to Pradeep Krishen poured in Roy the confidence to become a committed writer. Though her career as a writer started from writing screenplays, she reached the height of winning Booker Prize for literature. Her gradual development as a writer can be telescoped through the survey of her literature which shaped her life.
Screenplays:

Roy wrote screenplays for *The Banyan Tree*, a television serial; consisting of 26 episodes and dealt with a story set in Uttar Pradesh in the years between 1921 and 1952. It uncovered the last tumultuous years of the British Raj. Unfortunately the project was abandoned as all the costumes and property was stolen. This was a very traumatic experience for Roy.

Roy wrote a script for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*, based on her experiences of University of Delhi. Bhasker Ghose, the director general of Doordarshan offered her to finance Roy’s screenplay. This Screenplay got a warm critical response. Moreover, Ghosh was transferred and the production of the film stopped.

After the screenplay *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*, *Electrc Moon* Followed. Though some critics praised it, it was deemed as an artistic failure.

*The God of Small Things* (1997)

*The God of Small Things* brought into limelight a new genius in Indian English Literature. The book is largely autobiographical. Before six years of its publication Roy got the idea of the novel. She observed:

The real reason was also that I had just got a computer and I liked the idea of writing on it. So I just started putting down what was going on in my head. It was a very thing. It wouldn’t show what I had written to anybody. It would just stay in my computer. It was all just coming out of me like smoke I suppose and I kept putting it down.²⁴
Roy was never been confident about the popularity of the book. She thought of visiting Indian publishers but fortunately she visited Pankaj Mishra, an Editor with Harper Collins in India; he sent the book abroad and along with Harper Collins, John Sadler and David Godwin showed immense interest in the publication of the book. Finally David Godwin came to India to take signature of Roy.

*The God of Small Things* is an epoch making book. It registered tremendous sale all over the world breaking the fastest selling record of Roddy Doyle’s *Paddy Clarke Ha HaHa*. The novel has been translated into the forty languages.

*The End of Imagination*

After the successful achievement of *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy wrote a short but a revolutionary book, *The End of Imagination* which shows the author’s strong opinion about nuclearization in India and abroad; her mild satire on the arrogance and dominance of politics and above all, the drawbacks of nuclear arms and ammunition which are gaining ground all over the globe.

Roy presents her attitude towards nuclear weapons, war, devastation, peace, harmony in the world. According to her, war transports death, horror and devastation, so she is against war and killing. Being a great champion of global peace and harmony; she voices the need for fighting against the prevailing devastation.

Roy also condemns the nuclear explosion tested at the Pokhran site on 11\(^{th}\) May 1998 by BJP members. She criticizes the festivities and celebration done by the party after the test. As per her opinion the people living around the nuclear war were never been taken into consideration. The government seemed hypocrite and it did not consider the welfare of
its people. Roy believes in universal brotherhood. She cites the opinion that modern wars are artificial in nature which breeds on misinformation and rumours. If the barriers of misinformation are broken down, the hostility will turn into mutual understanding. The peace and harmony should be the aim of nations.

*The Greater Common Good:*

*The Greater Common Good* deals with the author’s rational and progressive attitude to the dam projects of the government; her sympathetic talks with the sufferers of the Narmada Valley Project; “her harsh and rugged satire on the faulty decision and adverse attitude of the political parties” and nostalgia for the natural scenes and sights of nature.

The book opens with the sarcastic irony on the resettlement of the sufferers of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The tribal people were habituated to live in the lap of nature, are being forced to live in an entirely new and uncongenial atmosphere devoid of their natural instincts and nostalgia. The government never looked after their re-settlement and rehabilitation. They live a life full of penury. They are meted out inhuman, brutal and callous treatment. According to Roy big dam projects summon more hazards than welfare of the people. She compares big dams to that of nuclear bombs. For her they are both the means of destruction.

Roy also speaks about the tyranny, injustice, insult and abuse done to the Dalits. They have to suffer at the hands of high caste people. Roy is a spokesperson for the mercilessly tortured Dalits.

Hence the life and the writings of Arundhati Roy are inseparable. *The God of Small Things* depicts Roy’s personal life although it is not her autobiography. Roy has depicted her own experiences realistically and
opinions with the tinge of satire. She is a writer of margins and shoulders the responsibility of exposing the corruptions in the society. According to her the writers and philosophers owe the accountability of exhibiting shifting values in the social scenario.

1.3.3. Shobha De: Making an Era

Shobha De is one of the most eminent and popular novelist of modern India. She is a best-selling author. She writes about the unequal power relations, especially between men and women. She threatens all of the social attitudes towards women by establishing a tradition which claims its authenticity by discovering the identity of a new woman.

Shobha De’s is a multidimensional personality. Her career from modelling to a film journalist and later on to a freelance writer is thrilling and interesting. The fiction and the women she writes about have certainly provided raw material for the study of transfiguring equations of patriarchal power politics. The impact of life experiences on the writer is undoubted. Thus a brief survey of Shobha De’s birth, parentage, early education, her family and work has to be taken.

Early Life and Career:

Shobha De was born in Maharashtra in 1948, in the conservative family of Govind Rajadhyaksha. Her mother, Mrs. Shakuntala was a housewife. She was the fourth girl child in the family, so unwelcome to her mother and grandmother. But her father welcomed her assuming her auspicious because just after her birth, her father was promoted to the post of an assistant solicitor to the government of India. De was educated at the Nursery School (New Delhi), Queen Mary’s High School and St. Xavier’s College, Bombay. She is graduated is psychology.
Super Model:

Shobha De turned to be a rebel as she was hardly seventeen, turned to modelling. Her father wanted her to be a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer but she wanted to be a young and carefree person with no traditional obligations. According to the trend of that time, modelling was a disreputable career. Being approached by Shashi Banker, she entered into the glamorous, thrilling, new, fake, unnatural and comical world of modelling.

Though Shobha became model, she never drowned into the profession. She cultivated a detached, satirical and humorous attitude to observe the events and the people she had involved in, including herself. Modelling profession introduced her to the strange people and events that would become the part of her fictions later on. The artificial and unreal world of modelling was full of evils like wine drinking, illicit relations, and corrupted moral values. She never respected the job but she endured it for money, feeling of independence and opportunities to travel. She was super conscious of economical independency of women which can only approve the freedom.

Modelling did not keep her interest for a long time. She had enough reasons for that as she opines that she never believed in the fantasy. The other reason is that a model has to be passionately in love with her to take profession seriously and she was not vain enough. Very soon being tired and bored in modelling business she entered into the copywriting.

Film Journalist, Columnist and Editor of Magazines:

A period of five years of modelling ended on the point of a new start for a bright career as a copywriter. In 1970, Ms. Shilpa Shah, De’s
senior at St. Xavier’s College, introduced her to Mr. Nari Hari, an owner of ad agency, Creative Unit. Though De had no experience of copy writing, she started the career which proved lasting. Mr. Hira’s question whether she could write proved revolutionary.

By entering into the editorship of Stardust, she proved herself a person having tremendous potential for writing. The Magazine became number one film magazine due to De’s policy to be self-isolate, a quality required for a journalist. She had contacts with almost all of the super stars but she did not favour any one and everybody became the target of criticism.

De quitted film journalism as she was not interested in it and switched on to Society, a journal to showcase the lives of impressive roaster of celebrities, socialites, sports people, designers, dancers and painters. Society took off enough covering of a lot of fascinating people—dancers, writers, painters and industrialist.

While working as an editor of Society, De was charged up with the idea of Celebrity, her own magazine. De was a challenging woman and believed in taking risks. But the decision brought her in dumps in all respects, economically, socially, politically and domestically. Her marriage was breaking up and she felt alienated and isolated. She was on the peril but survived because of her strong faith in herself. Finally she sold it.

De also wrote regular columns for Onlooker. She joined The Sunday Reviews (A Times of India publication). Fatima Zakeria, its editor asked her to write a fortnightly column for her prestigious paper. De wrote comprehensively from the standpoint of common people. She even wrote for Sunday Midday, since its inception. De now writes fortnightly
column for the *Sunday Times of India* under the title, *Politically Incorrect* and this column has also gained tremendous popularity.

Shobha De has transformed from a carefree writer to a more serious one. According to her, writing is a serious job. She writes mainly for the young people believing the world is desperately youth oriented. She pinpoints the fast changing trends, attitudes and social changes. Her writing reflects her keen observation of activities of human beings.

**Shobha De: A Feminist Writer:**

Shobha De is essentially a feminist writer. Her fictions and non-fictions concentrates on the issues related to both men and women. But a woman is always kept as the centre of exploration. She has been always criticized for being the writer for aristocratic women only, but if her fictions are viewed carefully, it’s evident that her works encompass all of the strata of society and exhibited the marginalization and displacement of women from all spheres of life.

Shobha De has intimate understanding of the psyche of the modern urban woman. She portrays a modern woman trying to establish her identity in a male dominated world. De confesses; “I did write with a great deal of empathy towards women. Without waving the feminist flag, I feel strongly about the woman’s situation.” The pronouncement is itself evident to place Shobha De among feminists. She hails to the new wave of feminism which believes into the liberation of women, shattering all patriarchal hegemony and raises a voice of protest against male dominance. The woman acquiring money power rules over the world. That’s why De insists on the economical independency of women.

Shobha De’s philosophy is articulated in her fiction and non-fiction. A brief survey of her works will prove the feminist agenda of the
writer. Her first novel *Socialite Evenings* projects the picture of a middle-class Karuna, who in the course of the novel emerges as a self-sufficient woman. The novel is fused with feminist traits as Karuna ventures to search her own identity and selfhood, negating the traditional notions of a submissive woman.

Asha Rani is a centre to *Starry Nights*. De probes into the life and psyche of a small town girl who journeys to the tinsel world of Bombay cinema. De unveils the male dominated society where women are sexually exploited and sex becomes the mean of acquiring power.

1.3.3.2. A Brief Survey of Shobha De’s Fiction and Non-Fiction:

Shobha has written about wide range of themes in her fiction and non-fiction. To analyse her individual work, it is obliged to survey her all works of art to understand her place in Indian English Literature. Her literature can be divided into fictions and non-fictions.

**Fiction:**


Non-Fiction


2. *Shooting from the Hips* (Collection of her articles on different topics) (1994)


6. Columns and Articles- Sunday, Midday, Weekly, Times of India, Onlooker

7. Written Script for television serial like Swabhiman and Kitty Party

8. Edited Magazines like Stardust, Society and started her own magazine Celebrity

9. *Speed Post*: Letter to my children about living, loving, caring and coping with the world.

10. *Spouse*

*Socialite Evenings (1989):*

Shobha De’s first novel *Socialite Evenings* presents the journey of a middle class girl Karuna to self realization. She is the daughter of a government officer coming from a village in Satara. Karuna proves herself unconventional by entering into the dubious world of fashion. Though her parents resent her initiation into the fishy world of fashion, she never subjugates herself to their wishes. Hence she becomes ‘difficult daughter’ to her parents. She cherishes the dream of independency.
Karuna marries a well educated businessman who is foreign returned. She lives with her traditional mother-in-law and such an ideal place, an ideal Indian married woman cherishes. As soon as she gets married, she finds her marriage in dumps and dares to involve in Krish, her husband’s friend. She has the courage to step out of unsuccessful marriage and openly declares her rights to be satisfied at any cost. Karuna represents the devastating attitude of modern women who can challenge the traditional notion of Ideal woman.

Breaking marriage with her husband and aborting the child, Karuna frees herself from the traditional shackles of responsibilities of a married woman and mother. Though her mother holds the view that “a woman cannot live alone....A woman needs a man’s protection”\(^2\), she declares her self-sufficiency. Thus the trend of a single womanhood has been set.

**Starry Nights (1989)**

Shobha De’s second novel *Starry Nights* is also heroine centred. The novel explores the sexploitation of Asha Rani. She is forced to the cruel world of blue films by her own mother, the very thing she scared to do. The first man who exploited her physically is Kishenbhai, a small time distributor. The initial menace of sexploitation turns afterwards to a habit. Asha Rani utilizes sex to subvert the very game men play with her. She asserts to Kishenbhai; “All of you are just the same, but wait, I will show you. I will do to men what they try to do to me. I will screw you all beat you at your own game.”\(^2\)

Many men come across in Asha Rani’s life but she involves emotionally in Akshay Arora, a super star of film industry in Bombay. But as her other exploiters exploited her, Akshay too uses her for his self-interest. Asha Rani tries to commit suicide when she is beaten by Akshay
Arora on a film mahurat. She undergoes a series of ordeals and finally marries Jamie Philips in New Zealand. Though Jey marries her, she has never been accepted by her in-laws. Later she suffers from the sense of belonging which drives her to India where she undergoes the blows from her kins one after the other.

The life of Asha Rani exposes the shattered human values in the glittering world of Bombay cinema.

_Sisters (1992)_

Like her other novels _Sisters_ concentrates on the relationship between two women who are step sisters. Instead of focusing on the Bombay cinema world, De has delineated the story of Mallika and Alisha, step sisters from Gujrati milieu, hailing from the rich and intriguing corporate world of business.

Mikki is portrayed after the traditional model of women. After her father’s death, she marries Binny Malhotra to save Hiralal industries. Binny manages to keep Mikki at home as he does not want her at office. Mikki overbears all the insolence of her husband including beating and humiliation. The side of the femininity reflected by the writer proves that though Mikki is an aristocrat, educated and self-reliant modern woman, the medieval virtues still persists in women of every stratum of society.

Alisha is with all her ego, never to subjugate attitude and exhibits the spirit of revenge. She is sex monger and keeps sexual relations with many men from different communities. Hence both of the sisters become ‘men eaters’ and wins every battle of life.

_Sisters_ is a novel in which the relationships, moral codes and social discourses are under scrutiny. It presents the complex picture of society
where the old values mix with the new one and transforms the social scenario.

**Strange Obsession (1992)**

*Strange Obsession* is based on the lesbian relationship between two young women, Amrita and Meenakshi. The story is woven around Meenakshi, a perverted character and Amrita is a normal girl. Shobha De Frankly exposes the lesbian relationship between them.

Minx (Meenakshi) becomes lesbian due her father’s over pampering nature. She is psychopath and suffers from Electra complex. She loves Amrita, a girl from a noble and educated family in Delhi who wants to make career in modelling. When she indulges in the lesbian relationship with Minx, it is a casual affair for her but Minx takes it seriously and tries to play ‘husband’ to Amrita. Though Amrita favours lesbian relationship, she identifies the futility of it. She asks Minx; “Will you be able to fill my womb with a child?”

This is an assertion of the futility of lesbian relationship.

Nevertheless the lesbian relationship is condemned; it provides women a sense of being free from the burden of unwanted motherhood. Shobha De has successfully explored the area of lesbian relationship and deeply dives into the psyche of a psychopath.

**Sultry Days (1994)**

*Sultry Days* revolves round Deb and Nisha. Deb hails from slum area and Nisha from a well bred, respectable family. Nisha is herself the narrator of the story; she presents Deb in a poor and detestable ways but herself falls in love with him because of his mental and intellectual
qualities. According to her, he is practical man, not pompous and pretentious. Nisha herself takes initiatives into the marriage.

The first part of the novel has been dominated by Deb. Initially he clings to the moral values and principles, later on loses all the grace of his personality by compromising with Yashwantbhai, a politician and underworld don. His own deviation proves disastrous for him as Yashwantbhai kills him. After his death, Nisha finds cause to live a heroic life. Yashwantbhai commits atrocities on Pramila. Nisha fights against him and exposes into the public.

The novel brings forth the heroic character of Nisha. She travels from passivity to activity. Shobha De has gradually developed her skill in delineating the psychic life of urban women and more or less she has been diverted from “fucktion” to “fiction”.30

Non-Fiction

Shooting From the Hips (1994)

Shooting From the Hips is an excellent collection of essays and short stories. The book consists of fourteen titles like “Politics”, “Media”, “Profiles”, “Gender Issues”, “India and Her People”, “Festivals and Religion”, “On Being a Writer, a “Columnist and a Media Person”, “Of Books and Reviews”, “Miscellany”, “Phirang”, “Film Reviews”, and “Sushila’s Secret”. She has expressed her views on various issues and persons. In the section of “Politics” she has criticized P. V. Narsimha and Dr. Manmohan Singh. In “Media”, she has criticized the double standard in journalism. She has discussed gender issues, festivals and religion in India. She has also given some views on herself as a writer.
Small Betrayals (1995)

Small Betrayal is a collection of short stories which explores “the average experiences of betrayal in its infinite variety and reached the core of uncertainties and complexities of life that never dissolve and resolve completely”. The stories are the exploration of deeper conscious of human beings. The male and female point of view has been juxtaposed. “The Motorcycle,” “The Fair One,” “The Bar Ma,” and “The Fern Lady,” deal with male consciousness while “The Decision,” “Voices,” “The Trip,” “Lines,” “Dewali,” “Flowers,” and “Late Arrival” depict the obscure, unpredictable and often inexplicable impulses of women. “Repeat Performance” and “Bindi” project the reality through the disintegrating social forces that often give birth to maladjustments, distress and complexes in mortals.

In this collection of short stories, Shobha De has reviewed the institution of marriage as a complex one. It is established that the acknowledgement of self is a problematic experience for both men and women. Shobha De has succeeded in proving herself a ‘serious writer’ who dives deep into human conscious.

Surviving Men (1998):

Shobha De has dedicated this advisory manual to her husband Dilip De. It comprises four main parts, “The Question of Man” and “The Portable Man,” “The Inner Man,” and “Surviving Men” which further divide into articles related to men and women relationship.

Surviving Men is candid, controversial, witty and wise, philosophically adversary manual that deals with various issues on man-woman relationship. This is a guide to every woman who wants to
comprehend ‘Indian man’. It also plays the role of a medium which can intermediate between men and women to understand each other.

**Spouse: The Truth About Marriage:**

*Spouse* is a marriage manual consisting of five chapters carrying various titles and sub-titles related to the titles of Hindi cinema and Hindi film songs. In this book De explores the reasons behind unsuccessful marriages and suggested the ways to keep it successful. According to her:

...marriage is an adventure. It is about trust, companionship, affection and sharing. It is also about to cope with one’s partner’s mood and eccentricities. It is the delicate balancing act between parents, children, friends and a career, and sometimes—overpowering needs to get away from it all.³²

De reinvents the tradition and challenges old stereotypes, addressing all of the issues that are central to the most Indian marriages; the saas-bahu conundrum, the importance of romance, and how to recognize the warning signs in a hopeless relationship and run before it is too late. The book is sauvy and pragmatic as it is the ultimate relationship book for all those who want to make the adventure of marriage last a lifetime.

The title *Spouse* implies to both of the partners. The basic aim of the author is to bring out the various problems faced by a woman in her efforts to adjust herself with her life-partner to make to adjust herself with her life-partner to make their marriage a success.

**Speed Post: Caring Mother’s Letters to her Children (1999):**

Speed Post has been written after the tradition of letter writing. Shobha De has written letters to her six children, two sons and four
daughters-Randip, Radhika, Aditya, Avantika, Arundhati and Anandita. There are seventy five letters written by Shobha De to all her children.

The letters are based on the changing values and tradition of the twentieth century, concern transforming familial relationships, especially parents and children. Disciplines and the familiar bugbears of telephone calls, late nights, and internet chats, growing pains and adolescent anxieties about love, sex and friendship, religion and god, the eternal verities and the challenge of being a responsible parent. These letters touch the heart of readers everywhere, as they are rich, compassionate, loving, witty and wise. The letters are full of motherly wisdom. *Speed Post* focuses on a delicate and significant issue - the relationship between parents and children in general and a mother and children in particular.

**Selective Memory (1998)**

Shobha De turned to write an autobiography, *Selective Memory* at the age of fifty. There is a controversial issue that whether *Selective Memory* is a pure autobiography or not because the writer has concealed deliberately some of her life episodes. She writes; “To Lord Ganesh from whom there can be no secrets and my beloved family, from whom I’ve still kept a few.” Shobha De turned to write an autobiography, *Selective Memory* at the age of fifty. There is a controversial issue that whether *Selective Memory* is a pure autobiography or not because the writer has concealed deliberately some of her life episodes. She writes; “To Lord Ganesh from whom there can be no secrets and my beloved family, from whom I’ve still kept a few.” Shobha De turned to write an autobiography, *Selective Memory* at the age of fifty. There is a controversial issue that whether *Selective Memory* is a pure autobiography or not because the writer has concealed deliberately some of her life episodes. She writes; “To Lord Ganesh from whom there can be no secrets and my beloved family, from whom I’ve still kept a few.” Shobha De turned to write an autobiography, *Selective Memory* at the age of fifty. There is a controversial issue that whether *Selective Memory* is a pure autobiography or not because the writer has concealed deliberately some of her life episodes. She writes; “To Lord Ganesh from whom there can be no secrets and my beloved family, from whom I’ve still kept a few.” Shobha De turned to write an autobiography, *Selective Memory* at the age of fifty. There is a controversial issue that whether *Selective Memory* is a pure autobiography or not because the writer has concealed deliberately some of her life episodes. She writes; “To Lord Ganesh from whom there can be no secrets and my beloved family, from whom I’ve still kept a few.” Dispassionately she has re-enacted the past and revealed her life skilfully. She has not only portrayed it in brilliant colours but also in troubles, struggle, anger, grief and exhaustion. She has surveyed her life from her passion for modelling to a successful businesswoman and a writer. She has brilliantly created a galaxy of portraits including her father, mother, Nari Hira, Mahesh Bhatt, Sunil Gavaskar and Zeenat Aman. Though she does not refer her ex-husband, Sudhir, she has described Dilip De and their first introduction minutely and candidly.
Shobha De emerged as a public figure from modelling. The job of copy-writing gave her opportunity to explore her own talent as a journalist, editor and columnist; she further moved to fiction writing.

*Selective Memory* represents the image of a woman who never compromised with her self-respect and never subjugated to any authority. For her, power lies in ‘self-will’ and the lack of it indicates powerlessness. Shobha De believes in shaping her own life according to her own wishes.

*Uncertain Liaisons: Sex, Strife and togetherness in Urban India (1993)*

This work is a combined effort of Khushwant Singh and Shobha De. It deals with the sex customs in India, relationship between male and female and surveys on sexual behaviour of Indian along with modern city life.

II

It’s important to view the definitions of the terms related to the research. The following definitions of the terms clarify their meanings.

1.4. Defining Patriarchy:-

The meaning and definition of patriarchy can be given as follows:

1. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: “A society, system or country that is ruled or controlled by men”.  

2. Gerda Learner: “...institutionalization of male dominance over woman is society in general.”

3. Jasbir Jain: “Patriarchy, at the outset, stands for power and authority... to symbolise possession, control and belonging.”
4. Pamela Abbott: “Patriarchy is a trans-Historical, cross-cultural political system in which women are subordinated, exploited, and controlled by men.”

Patriarchy is a political institution whereby the authority of a male is established by subordinating women from the privileged state. The marginalization subjects women to the exploitation and subjugation which affects the development of them. Through patriarchy cultural mind sets are constructed to perpetuate the gender attributes. The masculine and feminine roles are propagated to confirm the authority of the patriarch.

The most dynamic study of patriarchy has been done by Kate Millet in her *Sexual Politics*. Her definition of patriarchy is all pervasive. She considers patriarchy as an institution whereby the techniques of control are perpetuated. Though she calls her work a pioneering effort, “notes towards a theory of patriarchy”, it proves that sex is a status category with political implications. Women are not only the victims of patriarchal inhibition, the elder male dominate the younger one, so the area of control widens by unfolding the instinct of dominance of human beings.

Kate Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* defines patriarchy as the basic form of dominance, male rule over female and elder male over younger. She has developed the theory of patriarchy whereby through sexual politics men establish their power and maintain control. Patriarchy is an omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation through socializing, perpetuated through ideological means, and maintained by institutional methods. She assigns women’s subordination
mainly to the sexual politics. She attempts to prove that sex is a status category with political implications.\textsuperscript{39}

She has covered most of the aspects of patriarchy through which patriarchy is maintained and perpetuated.

1.4.1 Ideological: Voluntary Consent for Domination-

The reason for perpetuating the patriarchal ideology lies in the voluntary consent of both of the sexes with regard to the temperament, status, and role they play, are all conditioned. The temperament is conditioned out of the masculine and feminine traits on which the superiority of men over women is confirmed. Sex roles assign women to domesticity and never give opportunity to achieve consented masculine aspirations. The attitudes of achievement and ambition has been dominating over attending infants and domestic services, therefore the temperament of significance confers higher status and encourages the role of mastery and dominance.

1.4.2. Biological: Gendering Sex:-

Kate Millet has tried to find out the mechanisms through which women are controlled. By questioning the authenticity of physical strength for acquiring power, she proves the social conditioning of gender. Sex is a matter of biology and gender is purely social construct. The norms of behaviours for male and female are contradictory, so the masculine and feminine cults have been formed on the basis of fictive faith in masculine and feminine temperaments.

The fertility cults which are evolved through the civilization have been formed on the basis of women’s subordination. The role of male in procreation was not acknowledged in the pre-patriarchal period. As soon
as male acknowledged their role in procreation, they displaced women’s function in it and attributed the power of life only to the phallus. Through the patriarchal religion by creating male God, male eliminated the supremacy of goddesses from the social structure.

1.4.3. Sociological: Pervasive Intimidation:

The chief institution of patriarchy is family. It connects and mediates between the larger social structure and individuals. This is the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of patriarchal society. This is the prime institution whereby the feminine and masculine roles have been prescribed and supervised for its confirmation.

The religious and stately supports grant the mastery of a male by approving the status of a male as the head of the family. The state apparatus nearly permits the ownership of a male over his wife or wives, children, slaves, land, goods, animate and inanimate property. Thus it tends to establish the ruler-subject relationship between a male and a female. Through this ideology, the passive attributes in females are encouraged through the examples and admonitions of parents primarily in the family.

Hence patriarchy gradually erases the status of female from the whole social structure. Because of its all pervasive nature, it should be noted that most of the cultures supports masculine authority in all areas of life. Women are confined to the domestic area alone because of their biological role they play in bringing up the children and social conditioning of them to the feminine roles.

1.4.4. Class: Stratifications Of Patriarchy:
The status of women in class system assumes complex connotations. The status is dependent upon the economic, social and educational circumstances of the class. From this perspective, women may acquire superior position to some men who belong to lower social status. But the reality that caste of virility triumphs over the social status of wealthy and educated women supersedes.

In case of lower a stratum, the male claims the authority because of his sex rank alone to the women of his class who claims the higher social status in the same class division. The middle and upper class male enjoy the same superior status and power.

Kate Millet is very keen about the woman-woman relationship. She opines that in the past there was antagonism between a whore and a matron and in the present, between a career woman and house wife. The first envies the other’s ‘security’ and social status and the other, first’s freedom, adventure and the contact with the great world. The male enjoys advantages in both of the worlds. Hence, whatever may be the class and status of women in society; women do not transcend the class stratifications in patriarchy.

1.4.5. Economic and Educational: Modern Mean of Oppression:-

One of the agencies of patriarchy is its economic control over females. In the modern economy the prestige of a person depends upon the money he/she earns. In most of the patriarchal societies women are engaged in the most strenuous tasks, but they are not conferred economic reward. For the economical support they depend upon the males, so they are subjected to the economic dependency and prestige.

In modern times education and economy are closely related. The old patriarchal order does not offer higher education for women.
Comparatively though they provide good deal of education for women but the kind and quality differs from sex to sex. Since women are socialized through feminine roles, the kind of education they receive leads them to the professions which are specially kept for women. The modern period cherishes the knowledge of science, technology, professions, business and engineering. The control of these faculties by male makes them politically powerful. Therefore in both of the branches of economy and knowledge, the prestige goes with male members of the society and women suffer from the secondary positions.

1.4.6. Force: Instrument of Intimidation-

Patriarchy implements its rule by the instrument of intimidation. In most of the patriarchies, force has been institutionalized. The sexual digression in case of a woman leads her to the death penalty but such forced socialization is not used for the male correspondent.

The physical and emotional ‘socialization’ of women make them vulnerable to the physical violence. Women do not defend themselves against it, while male are trained to assert and exert power over women.

Patriarchy also relies on the force of sexual violence which is attributed to the masculine role and victimization with the feminine. The feelings of hatred, contempt, abuse and aggression are an outcome of misogynist attitude towards women. The Western literature from ancient to the modern period has a large element of misogyny. The works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and others express both kinds of attitudes i.e. misogynist and idealization of women since the introduction of courtly love. When courtly love was transformed into romantic love, literary misogynist attitude was completely evaded. But in the eighteenth century it has been reduced to ridicule and satire. From the twentieth
century and onwards the reason behind misogynist lies in the resentment over the patriarchal reform.

**1.4.7. Anthropological: Myth and Religion:**

The anthropological, religious and the study of literary myths bring to the front the politically expedient character of patriarchal convictions. Anthropologists believe that the reason of women’s inferiority lies in her biology and believes in its essentiality.

Under patriarchy the image of a woman has been designed by males. As the primitive and civilized cultures both are fashioned after the needs of men; the image of women has been created to suit their needs. This has happened due to the fear of the ‘otherness’ of women.

Anthropological literature provides ample evidences for segregating women for biological reasons. From primitive to the modern civilization the feelings of women’s sexual functions are impure, still persists. The event of menstruation and childbirth are clandestine affairs which causes disastrous effect on women’s ego. Such attitudes cause discomfort in women and it is often psychosomatic rather than physiological, cultural rather than biological.

The period before the arrival of women is considered as the golden age in patriarchy. Patriarchy permits complete sexual segregation by permitting males to be relieved of woman’s company. There are evidences in anthropology of exclusively masculine organizations which are generally referred as men’s house institution. These houses in pre-literate society strengthen masculine communal experiences through dances, gossip, hospitality, recreation and religious ceremony. While women’s group, ancillary in character, imitative in male efforts and
methods on generally trivial or ephemeral plane and cannot operate without the help of male authority.

The myths provide scientific rationalisations for the sexual politics in the contemporary period. Some misogynist patriarchal social practices have been evolved into the myths and later on developed into the ethics. These myths and ethics provide ground for the vindication of women’s inferiority. Among them, into the Western civilization Pandora’s Box and the Biblical story of the Fall are prominent and highly influential. The myth of Pandora assigns the introduction of sexuality to woman which is the source of damnation of human race. The myth of the Fall justifies women’s subordination by ascribing the sin of temptation to Eve.

1.4.8. Psychological: Developing Subservience Attitude:-

The various aspects of patriarchy described above have devastating effects on the psychic life of women. Family and marriage play an important role in enforcing and interiorizing the patriarchal principles. The superior economic position of male affects women’s status into the society. In patriarchy a large quantity of guilt has been placed on women in case of sexuality. The tendency of society to treat women as sexual objects crushes the subjective realization in them. Above all the religion and custom have enormous influence upon the minds of the people and through these discourses women are deprived of superior status.

The most pernicious reasons of psychological effect of patriarchy lies in the personal contacts and the images gathered through the impressions and media, the discrimination in matters of treatment and behaviour, employment and education. The attitude of subservience develops in women the status of minority and a marginal existence.
Women as a status category are marginalized. This minority status of women damages their ego. The continuous reiteration of inferiority upon women turns into self hatred and self-rejection, both for herself and to her fellows. So much so women are internalised to the patriarchy. They not only avoid to rebel against it but also condemn the aberrations stridently. So “patriarchy’s greatest psychological weapon is simply its universality and longevity.”

According to Pamela Abbott the reproductive role women perform is the main basis on which women are exploited. Family is the root institution where women are subordinated and their labour is exploited by men legally. Patriarchy is a universal phenomenon.

Firestone, voicing the same argument opines that the role in reproduction played by men and women is the real basis of human society and the real cause of women’s subordination. “Women’s reproductive capacity makes women vulnerable to men control.”

Some feminists reject the biological determinist approach to women’s subordination. Christine Delphy takes a materialistic stance and speaks about the exploitation of women through domestic work in the family.

Dworkin and Rich point out the importance of role of sexuality in enslaving women. Dworkin emphasises the two historical forms of patriarchy, both based on sexuality, the first, “family mode”, in which women are kept and exploited for life while in the second, “brothel mode”, in which they lose their life support when their sexual and reproductive role is over. Rich opines that heterosexuality is a patriarchal institution where “compulsory heterosexuality makes female friendship difficult.” Thus the female bondage has been seen as threatening to
patriarchal control. Hence the heterosexuality is a mean to control women by force and fear.

Sylvia Walby in her analysis of patriarchy looks at different forms of gender inequality through history and across cultures in terms of classes and ethnic groups. She discusses the subordination of women in the household, which is accepted and supported by the labour market. She focuses on the close relationship between patriarchy and capitalism.

Walby in her book *Theorizing Patriarchy* lists six structures of patriarchy with reference to patriarchy:

The patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions.  

According to her patriarchy is not unchanging. She distinguishes between private patriarchy and public patriarchy. Men exploit women in the domestic sphere whereas capitalists exploit women at the labour market. So “the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism is one of tension and conflict.”

Kate Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* defines patriarchy as the basic form of dominance, male rule over female and elder male over younger. She develops the theory of patriarchy whereby through sexual politics men establish their power and maintain control. Patriarchy is an omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation through socializing, perpetuated through ideological means, and maintained by institutional methods. She assigns women’s subordination mainly to the sexual politics. She attempts to prove that sex is a status category with political implications.
To sum up patriarchy is an ideology, hegemony where the patriarchal ideologies are perpetuated, confirmed and maintained to dominate, subjugate, and subordinate women.

1.5. Patriarchy: From Indian Perspective:-

The modern Indian feminist movement is articulated in Indian freedom movement and social reformation movement. Though this feminist movement has been initiated by modern Indian philosophers, statesman and social reformers, the position of women in Indian socio-cultural life has been degraded and upgraded through centuries. It’s necessary to probe into the account of social, economical, political, cultural and spiritual discourses through which the marginalization and subordination of women has been strengthened and circulated through centuries till the modern age.

The source of conditioning of gender in India is in the Vedic Scriptures in which the basic rules for living life for men and women are prescribed. It is desired that a women must have “lajja” (modesty and shyness). This is the period in which pre-Vedic matrilineal social structure has been replaced by the patriarchal one.

It is only in the post-Vedic period because of the laws imposed by Manu in Manusmruti, the status of women is debilitated. This is the most influential and authoritative book in Hindu philosophy and culture because the lives of Hindus are governed by the ‘dharma’ prescribed by the book. A woman should always be under the control of men; in childhood, under her father’s control; in youth, under her husband’s and after her husband’s death, under her son’s. This is the period in which the patriarchal power system was established and conferring subordinating and subjugatory position, women are debarred from intellectual,
philosophical and spiritual pursuits. The Buddhist was the liberating period for women from household chores, patriarchal slavery and improved their status by attaining intellectual and spiritual enlightenment.

The masculine and feminine cults have been developed in Indian culture through the three models of man-woman relationship. They are:

1. The Brahma-Maya model
2. The Purusa-Prakriti model
3. The Siva-Shakti model

In *Advaita Vedanta*, the concept of Brahman refers to the pure consciousness which has no form but a source of creation, growth and destruction. The world is an expression of Brahman, personified now as a God. While Brahman symbolizes creativity and essence of God, Maya is ignorance and does not exist in the true sense of the word. Thus Maya has been given inferior attributes conferring her lower mode of existence.

The *Samkhya* philosophy gives improved model of man-woman relationship. Purusa has a distinctive quality of consciousness and Prakriti is devoid of it but she has the capacity to act. Hence both are distinctive in their attributes and have an independent existence. However Purusa has a superior kind of existence, so, a man, by nature, is supposed to be superior. But the *Siva-Shakti* model of *Kasmir Saivism* and *Sakta* philosophy propagates the ideal model of man-woman relationship. As Siva is all pervading, eternal and pure consciousness, Shakti is active, alive and energy of Siva to create, care and destroy the world. Though they seem to be independent and ideal Meena Kelkar opines that “*Kasmir Saivism* does provide any foundation for equality between man and woman” because “from the grammatical point of view, man becomes
either a quality or an activity. Thus there is one-sided dependence of woman on man.”

Thus these models are not only the philosophical broodings of Indian philosophers but are the real live role models for living life.

Besides these stereotypical man-woman role models, there are other stereotypical images of women in India. The famous ideals of womanhood are ‘Savitri’, ‘Sita’, and ‘Sati’; all these women pose as role models for women confirming ‘Stree-dharma’ of ‘Pativrata’ means being whole heartedly devoted to husband. Tryambakayajvan (1665-1750) in his *Streedharmapaddhati* mentions three kinds of women who can be called ‘Pativrata’:

1. The wife who dies before her husband
2. The wife who waits for her husband in sexual congress.
3. The wife who accompanies her husband onto the funeral pyre and immolates herself.

Thus these prescribed duties and obligations completely subdue women. The ideal of *Savitri* propagates the role of being a chaste wife; *Sati’s* not only being immolating ones physical being but also the right of one’s on her body and individual existence; and *Sita’s*, being a suffering and dutiful wife.

In the medieval period, women of Bhakti Movement exposed the strenuous life of women; among them are Mirabai, Muktabai, and Janabai etc. Muktabai is an outstanding illustration, who marched against the patriarchal denominations. She says:
Do you desire-self-realization? Then do not blindly follow others.

Search for the truth in your ownself. There lies wisdom.47

The women of the Bhakti Movement played an important role in changing the mindset of the people.

With the invasion of the British rule and after the East-West encounter, modern reformist movement along with Indian freedom movement, the very subdued section of the society comes to the front. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the inaugurator of the modern age, the morning star of the Indian Renaissance fought against the evils of Sati, infanticide, child-marriage, polygamy, ill-treatment, indifference towards widows, and ignorance towards female education.

The British abolished the practice of Satı in 1829, enforced the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856, raised the age of marriage for female to fourteen years by implementing the Civil Marriage Act in 1872, and imposed the Married Woman’s Act in 1874, which allowed women to earn money through their artistic and literary talents.

The intervention of British government and continuous blows of reformists affected the Brahmínical ideology of the contemporary period. The status of women in political, social and cultural spheres has been improved. In 1851, Jotirao Phuley and Savitribai Phuley established schools for women knowing the potential of education which consequently brought consciousness and self-respect among women. Crushing down the laws of Manu, Dr B. R. Ambedkar contested for the equality among men and women.
In the Gandhian period, along with men, women marched in demonstrations, faced lathi and bullets. The narrow domestic walls of their homes were broken down for a new sky. It was in this period, the common woman realized that kitchen and children are not their sole purpose. Crossing the boundaries of the domestic world, women entered into the social, economical, political, cultural and industrial spheres. The legacy of traditional attitude towards ‘self’, and the sudden revolutionary impulse changed the roles, attitudes and aspirations of women. These varied experiences over centuries make women potential storytellers, the poise of centuries filled their words rich with varied expressions, styles and themes. Woman, once marginalized in every sphere of life, represented the very essence of Indianism in their literature.

1.6. Discourse:-

‘Discourse’ is a term widely used in various disciplines like critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, psychology and many other fields. But it is often left undefined. In the course of time the meaning of the term has been changed so it’s important to know the history of the word and its changing implications through its definition.

discourse: 1. verbal communication; talk, conversation; 2. a formal treatment of a subject in speech or writing; 3. a unit of text used by linguists for analysis of linguistic phenomena that range over more than one sentence; 4. to discourse: the ability to reason (archaic); 5. to discourse on/upon: to speak or write about formally; 6. to hold a discussion; 7. to give forth (music) (archaic). (14\textsuperscript{th} century, from Medieval Latin. discurses: argument, from Latin a running to and fro discurrere)\textsuperscript{48}
**discourse**: 1. a conversation, especially of a formal nature; formal and orderly expression of ideas in speech or writing; also such expression in the form of a sermon, treaties, etc.; a piece or unit of connected speech or writing. (Middle English: *discours*, from Latin: act of running about)\(^{49}\)

Thus the meaning of the term corresponds to do conversation or to deliver a speech. The meaning of the term *discours* in French represents the same meaning. Thus a French/English dictionary gives us:

- **discours**: a) speech; **tousces beaux discours**: all this fine talk (pejorative); **suismoi faire de discours**: follow me and no arguing! **perdre son temps en discours**: to waste one’s time talking; b) discours direct/indirect: direct/indirect speech (linguistics); c) discours (philosophical treaties); **discourir**: faire an discourse; to discourse: to hold forth upon; to chat (pejorative).\(^{50}\)

From 1960s onward the meaning of the word began to diverge from its general meaning but some of its older implications remain intact with its usage. The range of meanings varies within the particular disciplines. Considering the term in linguistics, David Crystal defines “discourse” in contrast to the term “text”. He retains the meaning of discourse analysis to the spoken language but advances towards its focus on its structure. While the “text” remains aligned to the written expressions and its analysis focuses on the structure of written language. But “discourse” or “text” includes “all language units with a definable communicative function, whether spoken or written.”\(^{51}\)
Though Crystal discusses “discourse” and the “text” in broad inferences, Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short differentiate “discourse” from “text” in relation to their communicative function. They argue that:

Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, as an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose. Text is linguistic communication (either spoken or written) seen simply as a message coded in its auditory or visual medium.\(^{52}\)

Hawthorn has commented upon Michael Stubbs view on discourse and text. He has clearly distinguished the interactive characteristic of discourse while the non-interactive feature of text as the first implies transaction of ideas and the other “a message coded”.

Emile Benveniste refers discourse to the domain of communication. But he contrasts discourse with history. He includes all of the expressions of language; spoken or written; in the production of discourse where every utterance has an addressee and an addressee. Further he opines that the distinction between “historical narration and discourse does not at all coincide with that between written language and the spoken.”\(^{53}\) So he merges the spoken and the written into an entity where a discourse can be found in a historical narration which is only reserved for written language.

Roger Fowler contrasts discourse with ideology. According to him:

‘Discourse’ is speech or writing seen from the point of view of the beliefs, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs etc. constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of
experience—‘ideology’ in the neutral non-pejorative sense. Different modes of discourse encode different representations of experience; and the source of these representations is the communicative context within which the discourse is embedded.\textsuperscript{54}

Hence in many of the disciplines the meaning of the term is constrained to its communicative implications. They either define the term by contrasting it to other terms or retain it to its conservative meaning. However the meaning of the term is fluid and it should be pinned down.

The more applicable definition of the term can be given of Michel Foucault. He states:

\begin{quote}
Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as an individualized group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

In his definition he defines it “the general domain of statements” which accrues all the utterances or the texts which contain meaning and affects the real world. While the second definition discusses certain utterances which are regulated to form a particular structure and which has force in them. This definition is more particular to speak about patriarchy as a discourse. Certain written, spoken or behavioural utterances corroborate to form the rule of men over women because such utterances carry the force. The third definition focuses more on the rules and structures which are responsible for the foundation of a discourse.
To constrain the term in accordance with the present research work, Foucault seems more influential. Though the other structuralists and post-structuralists use this term to fashion their views, the project is concerned with Foucault’s definition of ‘discourse’.

1.7. Discourse: A Site of Resistance:-

Resistance is the key concept in feminism. The process of resistance paves way to the transformation. The theorists of the structuralists and post-structuralist era try to rediscover the structures behind the set-patterns which contain force to dominate the marginal ideologies and the all pervasive nature of power.

Foucault is one of the theorists who worked throughout his life on the analysis of effects of some institution on groups of people and the role of people in affirming or resisting those effects. He emphasised on the workings of power. His view of power is productive since he does not view power as an oppressive and constraining. People believe in power because they are made to believe that it is for their welfare, furthermore it produces discourse and through it knowledge is produced.

Though Foucault’s analysis of power, knowledge and discourse are at the heart of resistance theory, there are other philosophies in which the agency of resistance is discussed. Among them French Marxist philosopher’s ‘ideology’ and ‘hegemony’ are prominent.

All the post-structuralism philosophies contain the stimuli of resistance are derived from the dialogues with the term ‘ideology.’ The definition of the term as defined by Althusser is: “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” According to the definition of the term the subject is acted by the system and not by the subjective consciousness. Hence Louise

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Althusser’s term ‘ideology’ negates the notion of resistance. Though he does not give space for individual choice and consciousness, Marx himself reiterated the dissident nature of individual consciousness and literature from where the dominant ideologies can be challenged.

In contrast to him, Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramasci has modified the coercive nature of ideologies to the more liberal and advanced. He has invented the term ‘hegemony’ which allows the marginal group to resist the domination. The dominant group rules over the recessive not only through the force but also through the mass consent. The dominant group directs and decides the social life of the masses because of its prestige and position into the social life. Though the superstructure is deterministic, it holds the place for ‘dissent’ due to the extent it gives space for ‘consent’. Hence it produces counter-hegemonic actions which produce resistance.

Raymond Williams is more advanced and close to the modern discourse theory when he proclaims that hegemony is not homogeneous and omnipotent. He opines: “hegemony is not singular... its own internal structures are highly complex, and have continually to be renewed, recreated and defended... they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified.”57 Hence according to Williams hegemonic and counter-hegemonic tendencies always clash with each other for producing new tendencies and afterwards by mass ‘consent’ the new hegemonic tendencies take birth.

Though Michel Foucault is one of the theorists who often use the term ‘discourse’, there are other theorists who discuss it at length among them Marxist linguist Michel Pecheux’s work can be conjuncted to Foucault’s work. He cites the same argument about the discourses that
discourses are always “in dialogue, in relation to, or more often, in contrast or opposition to other group of utterances.” Thus discourses are always in conflict with each other and ideological struggle is at the heart of the discourse.

Michel Foucault’s stance about the possibility of resistance is difficult to state. Central to his theory of power and knowledge is discourse theory. Power is manifested in discursive structures and formation and the credibility of the discourses produce knowledge. The access to the truth is difficult to perceive as the facts are perceived only through the discursive structures. So the subjects are totally under the control of power of the discourse. Therefore the probability for the resistance seems remote in such case. However Foucault himself argues:

...discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable processes whereby discourse and be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.

The above pronouncement is very productive since it allows the space for resistance in discourses. If everything exits in the realm of discourse and there is nothing outside it, our sense of reality is constructed through it; the answer for the probability of dissent is possible only through the process of formation of discourses.
The analysis of the definition of discourse is important to acknowledge the conception of resistance. The term refers “to all statements, the rules whereby those statements are formed and the processes whereby those statements are circulated and the other statements are excluded.” The process of exclusion is the key to the formation of resistance. The excluded statements are always supervised to keep intact the dominant ones. So these statements are always kept into circulation, are negotiated. Consequently they form a dialogue with the dominant ideologies and challenge them. In this process the new discourses take birth.

The project has other four chapters.

Chapter I: - Destruction of Self

This chapter is an analysis of Anita Desai’s *Cry, the peacock*. This chapter deals with a highly sensitive, neurotic, distinct and unique character, Maya and the reasons of her social alienation and psychological degeneration. She is caught in between the patriarchal discursive forces and the natural unconscious yearnings. Maya’s unconscious is distinctly intact with her ‘self’ and its inability to accept the oppressive discursive forces completely throws her away from the domain of sanity. This is a story of resistance in which through fatherly affection and husbandly protection the ‘self’ of a woman is totally destructed.

Chapter III: - Assertion of Self

This chapter is an analysis of Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*. This chapter is a dynamic study of transfiguring of patriarchal oppression from mild protest to powerful rebel. Patriarchal discourse is manifested in all superstructures and the lives of all men and women are
regulated through it. The male characters in the novel exercise inhibiting power over women and the new generations of women have changed their attitude towards passive acceptance. Patriarchal power has been manifested through the dominance of the male power while the novel projects the transmutation of protest from Baby Kochamma to Rahel. The novel is mainly about Ammu and her unquenchable desire and tryst to liberate herself to attain the pleasure and life she deserves. Baby Kochamma’s protest is mild while Rahel crosses all of the boundaries of an ideal woman. The novel has been taken for the study to show the variety of experiences of protest and the effect of it over the power structure itself and the protesters.

Chapter IV: - Creation of Self

This chapter is a study of Shobha De’s *Sisters* which offers an overview of women of urban stratum. Shobha De offers a more liberated life for women without moralistic prescription. The women of Shobha De who are in search of identity have been led to the two sets of behaviours. The one set of behaviour leads women to sexual freedom, the discourse in which they use the tool of oppression against men. The other believes in compromise by accepting moral and spiritual aspects of life. The realization of self and development towards creating one’s identity is the mode of self actualization. Through the characters of Mikki and Alisha, De has highlighted the state of feminist consciousness in the contemporary era.

Chapter V is the conclusion.
REFERENCES


16) Ibid., p. 122.

17) Ibid., p. 123.


19) Ibid., p. 229.

20) Ibid., p. 35.


42) *loc. Cit.*

43) *loc. Cit.*

44) *loc. Cit.*


52) *loc. Cit.*


54) *loc. Cit.*


