CONCLUSION
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The process of modernisation powerfully transfers individual life ways. The move from the familiar and deeply personal life of a family form in an isolated village to the strange impersonality of a ‘job’ in a busy city crowded with unknown person is one such transformation. (1958 p 3)

The primary objective with which this sojourn of research was undertaken was to compare the fictional works of Achebe and Karanth within the realms of modernity, change and tradition as perceived by various thinkers. Such a comparision is justified as it enables the study of the writings as a reflection of the contemporary period and also the paradigm shift experienced in the societies due to global changes manifested. The most important paradigm shift is seen in the complex human experiences resulting from transformation in the life of an individual and society.

The novels of Achebe and Karanth are to be considered not just chronicles of their age but interpretations of the socio-cultural and political setup of the Nigerian and Indian life in the past, present and what they hold for posterity. Among the gamut of African writers, Achebe is considered ‘The Father of African literature’ and Karanth is considered ‘The doyen of Kannada literature’. Both hail from two diametrically and demographically opposite locales which were both erstwhile colonies of Britain. Both, through their writings have shattered the notion that India and Africa are ‘modernised’ only by the European contact. Time and again, they have proved that these cultures were very vibrant, dynamic and prone to changes, both exogenous and endogenous. Achebe proves that: ‘It is not that the African society was entirely static and fixed as Robert Wren contends, but it did have the potential for social change’. (1978, p 57)
The writings of Achebe and Karanth portray in a realistic and pragmatic way, the ups and downs of the individual character in their fiction as also the society in the backdrop of their social setups. They depict through their writings, the stages and phases of transformation which their societies underwent in all spheres of life. In doing so, they maintained an objective and detached view of life. In spite of the fact that both Achebe and Karanth have a deep concern and responsibility towards the people and the society they live in, they maintain an unbiased and balanced view of the progress their respective societies have made.

The Introduction has introduced us to the theme objective and scope of the thesis. The objective of the thesis was focused on the aspect and concept of 'Modernity' as reflected in the fiction of Achebe and Karanth. In justifying the selection of the topic, and also the writer, the similarities between the two countries and also the differences are highlighted. The fact that both India and Africa shared the one time common allegiance of the British is reason primary enough for the selection while there are ample secondary reasons. Both the societies are traditional, subsistence oriented, male chauvenistic, superstitious and agriculture based, at least in the beginning. In both the countries, education is vocational and informal but later on change during the course of the European occupation. Hence we find good number of reasons in selecting India and Africa.

Next, the rationale behind choosing Achebe and Karanth is discussed. There are similarities between Karanth and Achebe. Both the writers lived in two different parts of the universe yet sharing similar thoughts and sensibilities. Through their regional locale in their novels, they held a universal appeal. "The Novel that Karanth wrote after his 60's do not relate to a particular region only but they have an existence in the cosmos" says Vivek Rai. (2002, p 89).
In case of Africa, the exogenous pressures were too dominant and unpalpable in the beginning but conciliatory later. In Africa, it was usually the failures and the misfits who took to the new learning whereas in case of India, it was the superior brahminical community which got exposed to the new learning. The English language brings about a commonality in inducing the spirit of nationalism by creating a set of educated elite who realize their subservient status and assert themselves. This is how the spirit of nationalism is aroused among the educated public. An exception to this is Choma, an illiterate, uneducated who craves for an independent land of his own.

Achebe gives a trumpet call to his core writers to give a realistic and credible feature of the African continent during their contemporary period. He stands by his ideology that the writer's duty is not to bear the morning's headlines in typicality; but to explore the depths of the human condition.

*No Longer at Ease* portrays the change that the Ibo society has undergone. From a vehement 'No No' to English Education, the natives realize the importance of it and even crave for it, so much so that they even pool money to educate the brilliant Ibo students at overseas. Here, overseas educated Obi is in a way, a foil to Lachha of *Return to the Soil*. While Laccha squanders money on gambling, unethical and imprudent activities, Obi develops a very high and extravagant lifestyle, right from the beginning of his professional life and also develops an affair with Clara, an Osu. What Achebe interprets here is the unwanted side effects of English education which accords a superficial mobility upwards to the second generation of educated tribes.

Achebe again sends the message that not all of Obi's generation take to or concur with Obi. Joseph, who is also educated however does not approve of Obi marrying Clara, an Osu. Even Obi's father, himself, who is a catechist, however
‘modern and forward’ he may even detest idol worship as heathen etc., etc., does not approve of the alliance of Obi with Clara.

Similarly in case of Return to the Soil, not all the peers of Lachha take to squandering of money. Seenappayya’s sons and the sons of Padumannur are a foil to Lachha. We find that the canvas of Achebe and Karanth, though within the regional purview, have a universal applicability. In this context, Victor Uchendu’s relevant remarks are worth quoting:

His writings remain the most important in the development of ‘new’ African writing in English, especially his Things Fall Apart has been translated and read worldwide, and it has become a point of reference for all subsequent novels of Africa. It registers not only the familiar experiences of colonial or ex-colonial society but also its production and acceptance in the post independent world” (1996, p 11)

One other noteworthy point is by B.R. Narayan when he says-

In the History of Indian literature, after Tagore and Sharth Chandra, we find only Premchand and Shivarama Karanth at the top. Karanth has a very high place, not only in Karnataka, but in the whole of India. He was not only a writer but also a social reformer, educationist, artist and a thinker. (2002, p 63)

Both Karanth and Achebe are open to social changes and acknowledge their impacts in an unbiased and an objective way. At least in the case of Achebe, in Things fall Apart Okonkwo is one character who is totally against change. And it is this rigidity and adamancy in him which brings about his downfall. Where as in case of Karanth, we find no character resisting change or ‘modernity’, be it Ithal, the people of Padumannur, even Sarasothi for that matter. In spite of her fixed radius of Kodi and
no education, she is not the meek, submissive old woman who is ready to take butts by anyone, leave alone her brother. The very vital feature of ‘Modernity – Freedom’ of voicing, finds expression in her and resents any type of humiliation, degrading or being ignored. The daring woman she is, she just walks away at the slightest humiliation meted to her, only to be recalled by Ithal himself. What is significant here is that the dexterity with which Karanth has woven the web of even his unexposed senior characters who assert themselves when called for.

Considered in the Habermasian concept of modernity, where individuality, subjective freedom, autonomy of thought and action are given prominence, Karanth’s novels display ‘modernity’ both through his characters and situations. His lady characters Sarasothi, Nagaveni and Mookajji display strong individuality, autonomy of thought and action. Though not formally educated, Sarasothi is strong, exhibits enormous valour in facing the challenges of life and lives to the ideals that she regards in high esteem, unshaken by troubles and undeterred by male chauvinism. Her brother, even Rama Ithal thinks twice to challenge or contradict her.

Sarasothi, Nagaveni and Mookajji all are autonomous in their thought, speech and action. They differ only in their mode of expression. While Sarasothi is boisterous and frank, Nagaveni hardened by the vagaries of life, expresses herself confidently but not curtly. Mookajji surpasses both Nagaveni and Sarasothi in expressing herself openly many times against the norms of the society. A good instance is the way she looks at festivities and ritualistic shows offered by Manjunatha to Hindugannamma deity. She considers it as a mere flaunting of man’s vanity. All the three, Sarasothi, Nagaveni and Mookajji have faith in themselves, faith in universal consciousness and ultimately faith in life itself. Through them Karanth declares that, “life is for living”.
Both the writers express the relevance of 'being rooted to the native soil'. In a way, they follow the Gandhian concept of rootedness. In the words of Ganesh U.H. “In Shivarama Karanth, the title of the novel Return to the Earth has a metaphorical significance; going back to ones' roots with the awareness of the world, is the solution, not only to Rama in the novel but also everyone caught in the conflict between tradition and modernity” (2012, p 270)^6. In case of Achebe, it is treated in a different way. The earlier pristine culture cracking down in the name of progress, the ensuing conflict and the disillusionment in the later novels under the catalyzing influence of western education and the resulting shallowness, all indirectly remind one of the significance of the pristine past. At the same time both the novelists also exhibit their ambivalence towards changing life. Though they are sceptic about modernity under several circumstances, yet, they are for marching forward from the present, negotiating through the past. They neither consider past as always pristine or present always progressive.

One very interesting attribute of both Karanth and Achebe is that they very strongly disbelieved that ‘Modernity came to India and Africa only with colonization’. What they hold out in various situations is that ‘Modernity’ was inbuilt both in Africa and India much earlier to the advent of English Education but of course at a lesser degree. For instance, in Things Fall Apart, Obierika, for example though slightly senior to Okonkwo, is not as adamant and as rigid as Okonkwo. He realizes that one needs to change with the changing times and is accommodative enough with or without willingness. Further, though he believes in the solidarity of the clan, yet in the killing of Ikemefuna, he cautions Okonkwo in advance saying, “that boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death” (1996 p 51)^7.

Thus though Obierika and Okonkwo are a part of the same clan upholding the
same principles yet they differ in their outlook. While Okonkwo is rigid and stubborn to stand by the principles of the clan as he is 'afraid of being called weak', (1996 p55) Obierika exhibits that bit of humanism whether the clan approves of it or not, but is not dare enough to voice it openly.

Independence or freedom is one of the key attributes of 'modernity'. We find it displayed at its best in Return to the Soil. Nagaveni values freedom, self esteem and self dependence to such an extent that she is not ready to forfeit her freedom under any adversities. When Rama is away in Bangalore, Nagaveni in spite of her brother's inviting her to stay with them prefers to stay all alone in Kodi rather than forego her freedom by staying with her brothers or even uncle who invites her often. Even in the case of Mookajji, the type of outspoken person she is, she does not hesitate to go against the social norms in trying to reunite Nagi and Ramanna. She values conjugal love and marital relationship more than the talks of the town, understands the natural human instincts and hence plays a major role in reuniting Nagi and Ramanna.

In case of Choma's Drum the aspiration of Choma to own a piece of land can be taken as an aspiration for upward mobility and to aspire is not a crime. Aspiration is not the monopoly of any forward or educated class only. Choma who is neither educated nor literate displays qualities of 'modernity' in two ways. Firstly by aspiring for a piece of land and upward mobility in turn, and secondly expressing that openly in front of Sankappayya the landlord, though septic of his request being considered. Contrastingly, though Belli belongs to the next generation, reconciles to her limitations and learns to live well within the limits. She often cautions her father not to follow a mirage.

Karanth is very well aware of the fact that English Education alone cannot be considered as the prime and indispensable indicator of 'modernity'. At times we find
that mere English Education does not change the attitude and outlook of a person. The best example for this is Obi’s father in *No Longer at Ease*. Though a Christian catechist who shuns idol worship and tribal customs as heathen and doesn’t allow his children to listen to folk stories branding them rubbish, still is not able to get over his religion deep within. He is not ready to accept ‘an Osu’ for a daughter- in-law. He may be a Christian preacher but deep within he is not able to cast aside the roots of his Ibo religion and accept Clara, the Osu. Hence we can conclude that both Achebe and Karanth do not totally concur with the view that English Education only can bring about ‘modernity’. At the most, it can be viewed as a catalytic agent for ‘modernity’. What matters is the attitudinal change that a person or a society can take irrespective of the agent which catalyses the same.

Both Karanth and Achebe through their writings try to compromise and negotiate with the past and the present. They neither glorify their respective heritages nor condemn their present. They do not believe that the ‘past is always pristine and present always progressive’. The Kannada critic T.P. Ashok sums up this particular aspect of Karanth very well when he says, “Karanth’s *Return to the Soil* is an illustration of a via media between tradition and westernisation. It explores a new third category which is an admixture of the two.” (1993 p 31)

Even Achebe heralds the same, in an indirect way. Okonkwo who was totally for tradition, rigid and conservative, meets a tragic end, whereas Obierika who is ready and willing to change with changing times, survives. This is an indication enough that one needs to proceed further in the trodden path, progressing in all the new directions. Or else, sooner or later, one will perish.

The first chapter of this dissertation titled *Past Pristine and Present Progressive* analyses the meaning, definitions and interpretations of the concept of
'Modernity'. It gives a glimpse of the various shades and layers of meanings and interpretations given to 'modernity' and relates that with the fiction of Achebe and Karanth. We also find out that *Surface Modernity* or *Westoxication* as it is called is often mistaken to be Modernity. This chapter aims at dispersing the myth. The fact that modernity apart from technological advances etc has some thing to do more with attitude, outlook and approach rather than outfits and external changes is very well brought out. Modernity manifests itself through various agents, indicators like education, advancement in science and technology, changes in religious customs, practices, social life, celebrations, changes in political and judicial strategies and the like. It is only through these indicators that modernity makes its presence felt.

The second chapter titled *Education and Enlightenment* discusses in detail the meaning of education with the various connotations and denotations attached. Education is being considered as one of the prime indicators of modernity. The novels in study under this chapter are Achebe’s four novels *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer At Ease*, *Arrow of God* and *A Man of the People*. These four novels are set against Karanth’s *Return to the Soil*.

Achebe shows very clearly that the Ibo society, though pristine, is never totally closed to change. He had realized that any live culture is never static and is in a constant state of flux. To recall, Wole Soyinka’s words “In a society caught in the process of change, not even Gods are “immune”. They too partake off the precariousness of the community’. (1976, p95)\(^1\).

"Old order changeth yielding place to new", says the poet Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King* (en.wikipedia.org)\(^1\). In this process of transformation, the old order undergoes three types of changes: Some to be resisted, a few to be welcomed and the others seen with ambivalent attitude. Achebe is prudent enough to realize that any
new change is not to be out rightly rejected, as they may provide some relief to the existing rigid code of conduct, very inhuman, difficult and disgusting to follow. For example, the killing of Ikemefuna, the exile of Okonkwo for shattering the Week of Peace or even the dominance of the society created Ulu. In case of Ikemefuna, Nwoye who had known that Ikemefuna had been killed, starts thinking tangentially. “Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed, and some thing seemed to give way inside him like the snapping of a tightened bow” (1976, p 55). Similarly, in the case of twins being thrown away in earthenware pots,

Nwoye had heard that twins were put in earthenware pots and thrown away in the forest, but he had never come across them. A vague chill had descended on him and his head had seemed to swell, like a solitary walker at night passes an evil spirit on the way, then some thing had given way inside him. (1976,p56). In the third case, the unintentional exploding of Okonkwo’s gun during Ezeudu’s funeral results in the exile of Okonkwo. Okonkwo’s house is set on fire, its red walls demolished, animals killed and his barn destroyed. In short, Okonkwo’s household is reduced to ashes. This act of the clan is justified as “a cleansing act which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a clans man”.(1976, p 113).

Oberieka is one person in the clan who thinks about things. After the cleansing process is complete and the will of the Goddess appeased, he sits down in his Obi and mourns his friend’s calamity thus:

Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently?

But although he thought for a long time, he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He also remembered his wife’s
twin children whom he had thrown away. What crimes had they done?
(1976, p 114)\textsuperscript{15}.

Thus, Achebe through Obierika and Nwoye raises pertinent questions regarding the traditional religious structure of the tribe. He silently disapproves of the customs as inhuman, irrational and senseless, but is not dare enough to express it openly or prevent it.

Achebe sketches Obierika and Nwoye as two different types of resistors. While Obierika questions and disapproves of certain customs inwardly, finding no answer, he partakes in the destruction of Okonkwo’s house though he nourishes no hatred in his heart against Okonkwo. In case of Nwoye, he never expresses his opposition openly nor does he resist but silently walks out of the clan. Obierika stays very well in the clan but is not dare enough to openly refute the charges against Okonkwo. Nwoye knows no middle path. Silently he just jumps on to the other shore.

In case of the Ulu in \textit{Arrow Of God}, Ezeulu himself sends his son to the new learning. The tribesmen keep asking “if the Chief Priest of Ulu could send his son among people who kill and eat the sacred and commit other evils, what did he expect other men and women to do?” (1976,p 48)\textsuperscript{16}. Hence, the very people who had selected the Ulu start questioning him and disapprove his act and desert him.

In all these instances, we find that it very clearly indicates dissatisfaction developing within the community and how the people are either enduring them without the courage to voice, rebel and protest or just waiting for an alternative chance to burst open or explodes. On the other hand, there are a few others like Nwoye and Amadi – the pregnant lady who was dying to find an alternative to save her twins, who silently walk out and join the new culture.
Achebe, in all these cases, endorses and upholds that the time was ripe enough for the internal disintegration of the community and all that needed was just a triggering agent. It was not that only due to external pressure the native society disintegrated. The native society inherently had some basic flaws which cracked allowing for disruptions. At the same time, Achebe also acknowledges that the external induced changes are also inevitable and undetestable. Moses Unachakwu, one of the first converts expresses this in a solemn way:

I speak as your elder brother. I have travelled in Olu and I have travelled in Igbo and I can tell you that there is no escape from the white man. He has come, when suffering knocks at your door and you say there is no seat left for him, he tells you not to worry because he has brought his own stool. The White man is like that (1996, p 49).

Achebe also reconciles to the fact that 'survival of the fittest' is the order of the day and not 'live and let live policy'. This is clearly evident in the way, he expresses it through Moses, wherein he says:

The White man, the new religion, the soldiers, the new road – they are all part of the same thing. The White man has a gun, matchets, and a bow and carries fire in his mouth. He does not fight with one weapon alone. (1996, p50)

Both Achebe and Karanth are very contextual and have responded to the burning issues of the day with concern and commitment. Be it the Satyagraha Movement or the Biafran cause they have involved themselves personally and also through their writings. Both for a time did also plunge into active politics. We can recall the words of Neil Mc Ewan:
When one turns to the African scene, he sees that the attainment of independence by many countries in the last two decades and the resultant change in the socio-political atmosphere had a considerable influence on the fictional theme. (1983, p13)\textsuperscript{19}.

Achebe himself has also declared emphatically on the role of an artist in the politics of a nation. At times of political crises, he sees the 'place of a writer right in the thick of it, if possible at the head of it'. (1972, p6)\textsuperscript{20}.

*A Man of the People* presents a first generation educated class which is condemned, criticized and commented upon. It is a post independent novel depicting an independent Nigeria with filthy politics, soaring prices, degrading moral values, corruption, public looting and loss of morality. It is in contrast with *No Longer at Ease* wherein university education is looked at with honor and pride. But in *A Man of the People*, the not so educated politicians are antagonistic towards the educated Gentoos and try to curb them at the slightest instance.

It is a two fold failure that we notice here. The natives in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* assume that English Education would accord an upward mobility to them which meant 'Progress' and 'Modern' in turn, but what actually happen is that the native educated intellectuals who had earlier never tasted prestige and money, the moment they taste it, grow power intoxicated and behave in an irresponsible, ravenous and corrupt way.

On the other hand, the Europeans who were on a 'civilising mission' also feel that the local educated are devoid of any sort of moral values and scruples. In *No Longer at Ease*, when Obi is being tried, the judge categorically says: 'There is not a single Nigerian who is prepared to forego a little privilege in the interest of the
country – from your Minister down to your most junior clerk. And you tell me you want to govern yourselves (1972, p 4).21

Thus the European mission also fails, education imparted to produce well, worthy individuals becomes a mirage and the educated natives become useless, selfish, avaricious set of people who hardly have neither nationalistic feelings nor can accept authority or guidance at least. Mr. Green is correct in asking: ‘Education for what? To get as much as they can, for themselves and their family. Not the least, bit interested in the millions of their country men who die every day from hunger and disease’. (1972 p 65).22

The above view very clearly sums up the failure of the end product of education turning out selfish, greedy and callous, dry intellectuals without sap and spirit of betterment in them.

Obi in No Longer at Ease is neither able to totally adhere to his roots nor is he able to detach himself totally from it. Here is a product of the cross cultural conflict. What Achebe faced in his personal life in the cross roads of culture is being faced by Obi also. Whereas his friend Joseph who is not as educated as Obi, is better aware of communal, familial and social obligations, appraises cautions and even warns Obi of such norms. But Obi who has an immense conceit about himself retorts back saying:

It is scandalous that in the middle of the 20th century, a man could be barred from marrying a girl simply because her great grand father had been dedicated to serve a God, thereby setting himself apart and turning his descendants into a forbidden caste at the end of time quite unbelievable. (1960 p305).23

Still, Joseph doesn’t concur Obi’s idea of marrying an Osu. Even in such examples we find that in spite of proselytisation and preaching, it is not that simple to
get rid of one’s religion just as we change our clothes. Deep within one still clings to the roots. One can, change one’s food habits; lifestyle, dress and even religion for that matter but deep within still cling to the roots unable to drift from it.

A similar analogy is found in *Choma’s Drum* of Karanth. Choma in order to realize his aspiration, of owning a piece of land goes to the extent of getting converted to Christianity. So deciding he leaves home to meet the missionaries in the neighbouring village. On the way he comes across the shrine of the tribal deity *Panjurli* in the woods. *Panjurli* pricks the conscience of Choma that he is ready to desert his own deity for the sake of lands. Immediately, Choma retraces his steps back home and thereby back to his roots. But the difference between Obi and Choma is that while, though illiterate and unexposed to the outer world Choma is at least able to take a decision, putting an end to the long drawn conflict. Whereas in case of Obi, though educated and well placed still he is not steadfast in his decision. He is neither able to convince his parents, nor Joseph nor even able to absolve himself totally from his roots. This is the tragic dilemma of the educated Obi.

Obi is torn between his loyalty to his parents especially mother and his love for Clara. He is just not able to either choose between the two or forego anyone for the sake of the other. Neither is he able to assert himself and stick to his stand. Somehow that bit of conviction is lacking in Obi. He appears hollow within. Here lies his tragic conflict. This again is partly attributable to his traditional upbringing till childhood, later on to Christianity and still later to overseas education and back from it. Obi faces changes at four different levels and is not able to abide by any. Hence, this diabolism in him.

In both the anecdotes Achebe and Karanth think, act and write not just as champions of the new lifestyle or ‘Modernity’ but also as those who are pragmatic
and realize the difficulty in shunning one's religion, roots and thinking style. In such cases Achebe and Karanth express ambivalence towards 'Modernity'.

Achebe gradually like a historian and an anthropologist traces the development of English Education in Africa. In Things Fall Apart it is an emphatic 'NO' to English Education, but later with Arrow of God some natives headed by the Ulu voluntarily send their children to English Education. In A Man of the People the educated elite is the butt of social and European criticism while in No Longer at Ease the educated Nigerians occupy good posts in the administration and civil services yet lack modesty and morality and are covetous and corrupt. Hence Achebe pictures a gradual decline in moral standards and ethical values among the educated elite. Here the very idea of education bringing about enlightenment and betterment is falsified.

The same is endorsed by the President of the Umuofian Society in a different way:

Man may go to England become a lawyer or a doctor, but it does not change his blood. It is like a bird that flies off the earth and lands on an ant-hill. It is still on the ground. (1960 p305)²⁴.

Thus the tragic conflict which the third generation of the natives undergoes is very realistically depicted in the earlier novels of Achebe. In case of Karanth the third generation of the Indians is in a much better position. Rama of the third generation faces a lesser conflict. Rama moves out of Kodi for education in the beginning and later on in search of job. Unfortunately, he lands up in hotelary and that never interests him. His stay in Mysore is just another continuation of the same listless job and so he moves to Bombay for better prospects. To his dismay he is greeted by a huge 'No Vacancy' board everywhere. The problem of unemployment pinching the
nation also pinches him and a year's wait and search yields no results. Disappointed, disillusioned and also being pressurized by his mother, Rama shifts back to Kodi. Yet Rama or even Nagaveni have no regrets. What Karanth interprets or projects here is the adaptability or the need based thought and action of Rama which can partly be attributed to his education and partly to his intrinsic quality. The only difference is that Rama though disappointed due to unemployment, once back in Kodi, he doesn’t feel crest fallen but moves forward with resilience. He takes up a job at a nearby school for a meager income and also starts working on the farm trying innovative methods of farming. He never laments his status but enjoys his leisure with his mother either on the sea shore in the lap of nature or playing music.

In case of Obi and Choma there is a conflict: for Obi it is a conflict of neither total absolvance of tradition nor total complete acceptance of the modern; for Choma it is not a conflict but utter helplessness and despair which provokes him to go in search for the new religion. But his conscience alerts him and he goes by it and returns. Here it is a case of confirmed negation of the native religion for the fulfillment of Choma’s aspiration; whereas in the case of Rama it is back to roots out of ‘no alternatives’ and ‘more a necessity’. Rama’s homecoming is more a matter of realization of chance less ness than choice. The conflict in Rama is that of being educated yet unemployed, interested in nationalistic campaigns but not able to continue it for practical reasons. His conflicts are rather secondary and he himself also arrives at a solution—back to Kodi, back to nature and back to his roots.

In Rama, Karanth projects an adaptable and understanding youth, a blend of the old and the new, the educated yet unemployed, progressive yet persevering and down to earth person in harmony with the sea, the beach, the groves, the woods, music, art and nature in general. In this context the definition of Education given by
Karanth is befitting: “Anything which liberates us from adversities, ignorance, meanness, barbarism and pre conceived notions is Education” (1957, p 36).25

Rama like his mother knows how to make a living with or without a job. The realities and hardships of life has moulded him in such a way that he is dare enough to take life as it comes which according to Karanth is true education.

The impact of English education is very well summed up by another character Gopalaiah in the novel Bettada Jeeva when he says:

You see after the last world war, the prices of areca nut picked up and then all of a sudden our havyak brahmins caught the fever of English education. By the time my son was born, many children of our community had set out in the direction of Puttur and Mangalore for English education. I too caught the infection and like a fool sent my son Shamboo to school. (1984, p237-38)26

Unfortunately, this Shambuu turns out to be a variant of Lachha partially who alienates himself from his roots and responsibilities. Only difference is that while Lachha squanders the family possessions and properties and retains relationships only to the extent of extracting money and material, shunning all responsibilities, Shamboo at least doesn’t squander money but is indifferent to his family, makes infrequent home visits, greedy about earning money, has irregular habits and false sense of values. All these get him closer to Lachha. But he is better off in one aspect, in the sense he is married and committed to his new family which is lacking in Lachha. (1984, p 38)27 Thus we find that looked at in this perspective Karanth’s delineation of the third generation of characters in the backdrop of ‘Modernity’ is quite different from that of Achebe’s.
In *A Man of the People* the problems facing the new independent nation, prevailing greed for power, nepotism, corruption and the progressive deterioration of the masses is handled. The diabolic nature of Chief Nanga, his deceitful, hypocritic, selfish and ruthless nature is portrayed as *A Man of the People*. We find the well educated Odili is set against the not so educated Chief Mr. Nanga who despises and always blames the university educated youths. Nanga the native minister cultivates all immoral, unethical and lustful activities. Even during the time of election he spends huge sums of money to lure the public. The newly elected people’s person is unscrupulous, abusive, greedy and more than anything characterless. If in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* the natives encounter alien oppressors, administrators and admonishers, in *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, the natives are bossed over and exploited by their own lot. The post independent Nigeria also develops several social stratas, like the rich, the educated, the well educated, the elite, the illiterate, the women folk, illiterate women folk etc. Here Achebe gives sufficient hints that the African himself is responsible for his denigration, disintegration and degeneration:

He is very disappointed with the ongoing contemporary political situation in Africa like the civil wars, ethnic clashes, military rule and overseas sponsored terrorisms. Thus Achebe in both his later novels presents a kaleidoscopic view of the many elements at work in the newly independent Nigeria. (1969,p192)\(^\text{28}\).

Both the above novels, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* in a way can be compared to Karanth’s minor novels ‘*Aala Niraala* (1962) and *Ukkida Nore* (1970). In these two novels Karanth portrays the changes that overtook the Indian society in the post independent regime. The callous irresponsible and
unresponsive post independent native rulers, their lavish, unprecedented and
gruesome lifestyle, unhealthy habits and hypocritic higher ups, unbridled easy money
making and rampant corruption all are testimonies to the post independent socio
political scenario in India which is more or less identical to that of Nigeria. Karanth
expresses the nature of the avaricious politicians in a very poignant way through the
character Vasantha in Aala Nirala:

Once upon a time, our people feared to touch other’s wealth as if it
were poison. But now these leaders who are intoxicated with power
and prestige have forgotten themselves. Buildings are raised and
castles built to pamper the ego of man. All these are but indirect
looting of the people. (2003,p260-61)²⁹

This very clearly indicates that Karanth doesn’t have any high hopes of a free
better India. He considers it very unfortunate that the country has to suffer under its
own people. He is unhappy and condemns the public looters in the name of politicians
and beaurecrats.

Going through the array of writings of Achebe and Karanth one finds that they
are comparable in several respects yet differ intrinsically on certain major issues.
Ideologically they are similar as regards the society in which they live, their role as
writers – to inform, to instruct, to interpret and reform. They take a lead in identifying
the limitations of their societries, project them through their writings and suggest that
these loopholes later on widen gradually and prove detrimental to the solidarity of the
society. This reminds one of Yeats’ words:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

(www.pot.org/archive)\textsuperscript{30}.

The societies they champion, especially in the case of Africa, shrug and shrivel as much to the internal vexation as to the external pressures. In case of India the superstitions and dogmas, male dominance and female subjugation and subservience all find a vent even earlier to the English Education sway. But female education, absolving of caste distinctions, mobility both inland and overseas, the spirit of enquiry, induction of nationalistic spirit, awakening of the sense of human freedom all recorded in the writings of Karanth are more solicited than opposed.

Both have given authentic first hand information of the socio political and cultural situations of their respective nations in their writings, not just recording something sitting in an ivory tower. They are at times participant narrators, as in the case of Odili in A Man of the People and the narrator Shivaramaiah in Bettada Jeeva, at times silent spectators and at times speak through their characters as in the case of Karanth’s Mookajji, Achebe’s Beatrice and sometimes Obierika and Ikem of Achebe. Hence they play the role of historians, sociologists, anthropologists and critiques of their respective societies, all in one.

Choma’s Drum and Headman of the Little Hill represent Karanth’s understanding of the tribal culture. Choma’s Drum deals with the impossible aspiration of an untouchable and the resulting opposition meted out to Choma while. Headman of the Little Hill deals with the unwritten social and moral code of conduct of the tribal culture. So rigid is the opposition in the that, let alone fulfillment of the aspiration, even the act of dreaming itself is viewed with bewilderment and shock. The concept that even the lower classes could dream is a matter undigestible to the Brahmins. Here it is the exploitation of the lower class by the land lord as well as the
plantation owners. Choma faces four types of problems, problem of poverty, caste, indignence of the land lord and exploitation by the plantation owner.

Compared in this way at least Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* or *Arrow of God* never reflect any of the above problems. Aspect of poverty, caste or exploitation doesn’t arise in the earlier novels. It is only with the later novels that exploitation begins. No issues of caste discrimination, untouchability or feudalistic exploitation. The only nearness to comparison is the separation followed in case of the OSU’s which Achebe reflects and the natives being considered as heathen by the Nigerian converts.

Both Achebe and Karanth depict two types of superiority complexes among the native Nigerians and Indians. In case of Nigerians firstly the converted natives consider themselves superior, contemporary and modern and the others inferior to them. In the second instance the educated especially the overseas educated native youth, behave more or less like native forward or sophisticated class. The next is the less educated snobbish politicians as Mr. Nanga, power thirst and hypocrite. The final class of overseas educated intellectual governing bodies is men like Sam who stoop to the intellectual abyss, very hard to come out of it. Then there is the other class of intelligentsia like Ikem, Christopher and Beatrice the middle liners who try to strike a balance between the Elewa like common people and blood thirsty Sam. Achebe finds a silver lining in this trio. He thinks, among the various classes of people who can question, suggest, counter and solve at least to some extent the burning problems of the day.

Apart from similarities Karanth and Achebe differ in their perception of ‘Modernity’. In case of Achebe’s nove, European advent plays a major role in disrupting the socio cultural norms of the pristine past, while it proves progressive in
secondary spheres. Whereas, in the case of India, the benefits take precedence over
the negatives. The new education system, opening of new working avenues like
vakili, civil services etc., industrielisation, urbanisation, sensitivity towards art and
music, free expression of woman, female education, improvement in agriculture in
terms of cultivation of cash crops like tobacco, coco etc., better road and rail transport
facilities, postal and telegraphic services, better sanitation, hospital and health care,
declining human mortality rate and the like are all great boons of 'Modernity'.

In some of Achebe’s novels road laying, health and hygiene are given
importance too. Another aspect of striking difference between the two writers is the
fact that Achebe took to writing mainly to set right the wrong done to Africa by
projecting her in the meanest terms in *Mister Johnson* of Joseph Cary and *Heart of
Darkness* of Joseph Conrad. As such his primary intention was to disperse the notion
of Africa as a primitive and Dark Continent. Hence he primarily acts as a laudator of
traditional Africa in the earlier novels and only later on takes to criticize and reform
the societal disillusion at the contemporary situation.

In case of Karanth, he took to writing with the primary aim of exposing his
societal myths and mysteries, pains and pleasures, predictions - predilections and also
the suspicions and superstitions of India. Here it was more of an authentic projection
or record of the actual status and no dispelling of the pre-figured image of India. To
that extent Karanth’s work is direct and straightforward. The next contentious point
of difference between the two writers is that while the major pre-occupation of
Achebe is the European advent in Africa and the subsequent impact it has had
thereon, in case of Karanth European contact is just a secondary offshoot to the main
stream. He views ‘Life as more important and valuable than anything else on earth.
His contention is that with or without European intervention, things would have
changed. Europeanisation, has only catalysed the process. He strongly believes in the fact that intrinsic quality of the individual determines his behavioural patterns in different circumstances and not just the external impelling. To substantiate, English Educated Lachha and Orata take to faulty activities and dig their own graves while Seenamayya's other sons, the son of Padamannur family and Nagaveni's brothers who are the peers of Lachha and Orata thrive under similar situations. Hence Karanth projects English Education or 'Modernity in turn not as detritus or ruinous. Conversely Karanth projects English Education as a unifying force which induces a spirit of nationalism in a multi-lingual country and helps the natives to resist against the Europeans under a single banner.

Moreover, Karanth draws his characters and situations from a much wider canvas and as such his depiction of events and incidents, understanding of the intricacies of the human mind, delineation of characters and contexts, their furies and frolics all assume a life like stature and is next to none in painting them. To Karanth life is more momentous, more majestic, more magnanimous and more meaningful than anything else. All other events, incidents and individuals just supplement the main course.

As far as Form and Structure is concerned, Achebe choosing to write in English is by itself a matter of 'modernity'. Achebe accepted and reconciled to the fact that 'The process of Colonialism for all its ills, provided colonial people from varying linguistic backgrounds ' A language with which to talk to one another '. As his purpose is to reach out to a wider audience, he used "the one central language enjoying nation wide currency." (1975 p77-78)³¹.

As far as theme is concerned, the earlier novels of Achebe portray an indigenous life in a rural setting, while the later ones depict the effects of Colonial and
Pos colonial reality. Achebe’s tragic endings as in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* find semblance in the Greek tragedies and Shakespearean dramas.

In comparing Karanth and Achebe to their contemporaries, both are considered laudators to their younger generations. They have become titular deities to them. Achebe shares a common thematic presentation with his contemporary, Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Wole Soyinka. Ngugi’s *Secret Lives* is a typical example. If Achebe’s concern is Nigeria, Ngugi considers Kenya. The first part of the novel focuses largely on a pre-colonial Kenya, while the second part deals with how the new learning and new living that the Europeans brought with them influenced traditional ways of behavior and created vast new problems, while the third part surveys the post independent Kenya. *The Interpreters* of Soyinka contrasts the ‘new’ Africa and the ‘old’. In the words of Eldred Jones, “The primary society with which the novel is concerned is contemporary Nigeria in which, although the ancient traditional life still makes its appearance, the pre dominant impression is of a society in the grips of a turbulent modernity (1973, p 162-163.)

In case of Karanth, he began his literary career with two detective novels based on the model of Sexton Blake. Later on, influenced by the contemporary issues of nationalism, freedom movement and other related issue he took to Reformistic writings. He dealt with the burning issues of the day like widow problem, untouchability, problems of prostitution etc. The speciality of Karanth lies in ability to portray the phases of Indian society with objectivity in his social saga *Return to the Soil*. At one point he documents the cultural alienation resulting from English education as in the case of Lachha and Orata, while in the same novel, he also portrays the benefits of English education reaped by Rama, of the third generation. Rama is inspired by Sunderland’s work *India in Bondage* which rouses nationalistic
feelings in him resulting in his plunging into the Swadeshi Movement. This very clearly indicates the objective and ambivalent attitude of Karanth towards English education and its aftermath.

If *Return to the Soil* is a social saga of three generations, The *Woman of Basrur* is an unusual saga of four generations following the oldest profession of 'prostitution'. The novel has a unique narrative style, with the omniscient narrator narrating the events in the beginning, followed by Manjula of the second generation who takes over the narration in the form of a diary. The narration moves back and forth. Thematically also *The Woman of Basrur* is unique as it deals with 'four phases of sexuality', a theme not handled by many writers of those days. It is not mere cheap physical sex that Karanth handles, but more so the intricacies of human relationship therein.

Rajendra Chenni considers Karanth's technique of substituting the region with the nation as modern. It is here that he is more relevant. In Chenni's words, "Replacing the nation with the region is a radical act"(2002 p 75). The type of narration which was prevalent in the novels of the day was the *Anandamath* model romanticizing the past, being nostalgic of Indian fictional tradition. In the words of Satchidananda Mohanthy, "The Anandamath model was the grand narrative model current in those days. It included motifs like nation, nationality, reclaiming the past, glorifying the past, redescribing womanhood etc."(2002, p74). It goes to the credit of Karanth who makes a deliberate choice of constructing regions for the purpose of narration. Chenni, names this novel of the regional kind as the *Gandhian* model.(2002 p 75).

Karanth is considered on par with Kuvempu in descriptions of nature and also handling of contemporary issues. His *Choma's Drum* in which he handles the theme
of untouchability is often compared to Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchables* and Malayalam writer Tagadi Shivashnkar Pillai’s *Scavenger’s Son*. As for as troubles of tribals is concerned the Tamil writer Chinnappa Bharati also handles the same in his writings. As for as Achebe is concerned he and his contemporaries like Ngugi and others share the same concern for their culture.

Hence one can conclude that Achebe and Karanth in their writings have traced the various phases of changes in their respective societies leading to ‘Modernity’. Both exhibit ingenious skill in doing so. The novels of Achebe and Karanth are great creative works of art and have evoked a lot of interest among the readers worldwide. What is attempted in this thesis is just a microscopic effort in trying to evolve forms of modernity in the image of contemporary conception. The fiction of Achebe and Karanth are like mines – the more we dig, the more we get. Yet there are myriads of areas interesting yet unexplored. It is in this connection that such a comparative study enables a proper understanding of the colonized cultures of the yester years and the various factors which have brought about changes in them. The literary world is made richer in literary legacies and the next generations can definitely draw upon the previous ones to continue and pass it on to posterity.
END NOTES


8. Ibid., p 55.


11. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idylls_of_the_King

12. Ibid., p55.

13. Ibid., p56.
15. Ibid., p114.
17. Ibid., p 49.
18. Ibid., p50.
23. Ibid., 305.
24. Ibid., 305.
27. Ibid., p38.

34. Ibid., p74

35. Ibid., p75