CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, the relationship between man and woman has undergone a tremendous change due to social, political and economic reasons. The present study assesses the status of man-woman relationship in the fast changing society. Though the kaleidoscope of 'Man-woman relationship' is very large, in this work the man-woman relationship has been taken in a limited sense of the husband-wife relationship. This relationship, with all its niceties and complexities has become an interesting topic of investigation.

The title 'Man-Woman Relationship in Indian Novels in English' provides a rich store of excellent contributions by novelists on the subject. Man-woman relationship has always been playing a major role in the society and like a tree giving out branches; it gives rise to various other relationships. Hence it becomes an important challenge to contemplate on the man-woman relationship, which is intertwined with the changing role of the woman from a simple and traditional one in the past, to the complex, bold and assertive one in the modern times.
Virginia Woolf, a renowned writer, has described the condition of women as that of mere subjugation in her novel, "A Room of One's Own."

She pervades poetry from cover to cover, she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction, in fact she was the slave of anybody whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips. In real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband.\(^1\)

It is not surprising to see a woman's presence everywhere in one's life. Her reference is made felt in poetry, fiction, epic, drama and in many others. Even one finds her contributing to enrich literature with her beautiful and profound thoughts. Thus, the woman is both the subject of beauty and an object of beauty, that is, she herself creates beautiful things and beautiful things are created regarding her. However, she rarely gets the due credit that she deserves. She remains the personal property of her husband, with no identity, as well as no existence of her own. This is how the journey of a woman begins. Her presence is felt everywhere, but till recent times she was not found commanding respect from her husband. To analyse this bewildering position of woman, it is

necessary to traverse the long, precipitous road from the ancient times up to the present one.

The theme of man and woman relationship has been a focal point in most of the literary works. Creative writers have dealt with this subject extensively, depicting the traditional Indian woman who underwent the gradual metamorphosis to the bold stand taken by her at the present times. Hence, man-woman relationship is an interesting thrust area for researchers to delve deeply into the portrayal of human relations that have passed through various stages and phases from generation to generation.

Man is a social animal and therefore he has to keep a good rapport with the other members of the society in order to make his life meaningful and worthy. The making of a good society largely depends on the way human beings communicate and reciprocate to each other's existence and needs. A healthy relationship among all the members of the society makes it flourish. One cannot lead an isolated life, which would be too difficult and unbearable. Therefore human relationship is very important to keep day-to-day affairs fine-tuned and in proper shape. Hence, human relationship is said to be the manifestation of the social processes resulting from the interactions and strong bond of togetherness among the members of the society.
Congenial human relationship builds healthy society, which in turn gives rise to a good and meaningful literature. Thus literature becomes one of the important sources of learning and understanding society. Human life is also described in other branches of writings like Sociology, Anthropology, and History. In Sociology, life is institutionalised and in History it is a thing of the past. In literature life is recreated imaginatively, which is free and non-institutionalised. Hence literature interprets life freely. It tells us how an agricultural and colonial society has transformed into an industrial one, which has governed man-woman relationship either directly or indirectly all through the centuries.

The onslaught of modernism has resulted in the formation of nuclear families, globalisation of education, materialistic pursuits and commercial attitude of the people towards their existing problems. This has led to the decaying of the roots of the society. In order to stem this rot, a better perception, a clearer understanding and a positive attitude towards life have to be developed. Hence, efforts have been undertaken by the Constitution of India, which provides equality of status by giving social, economic and political justice to the people of India irrespective of their caste, creed or gender. These help to plot through the ramifications of relationships that build up the dense social fabric of the society. Literature also has a role to play. It should depict the past with complete fidelity. It should stand as an indicator to show the mistakes in the past so that healthy human relations could be built in future.
In the beginning of the Vedic period, the woman was as important as the man, because of the concept of *Ardhangini*, which meant that the woman was the complementary half of a whole human being. During this period the society was relatively good with no occasion for man to show his superiority over his woman partner. During the Vedic period, woman scholars like Lopamudra, Viswavara, Sikta, Nivavari and others and in the Upanishadic period Maitreyi and Gargi enlightened everyone around them with their knowledge. Even to this day, they are quoted and remembered as an embodiment of metaphysical knowledge. The man-woman relationship during this period was a healthy one as both the partners shared a cordial relationship with each other.

With the passage of time, Indian society became larger and wider and a set of rules were required for its guidance. Social thinkers like Manu, formulated laws governing the role of man and woman in the society. These laws came to be known as the Hindu Code of Conduct or the Laws of Manu. He argued that a woman needs constant protection by man in all walks of her life. This stance further deteriorated the already existing tough conditions for women in the patriarchal family structure. Vedic studies were denied to the woman on the pretext that she was unclean. Other arguments put forward to enmesh woman were that she was a property of man and therefore had no individual liberty. She was an obstacle in the way of man in his spiritual journey. The patriarchal social norms helped to increase man's hypocrisy and his so called superiority
over woman. Man wanted his woman to be portrayed as a Goddess while treating her as his slave. Raising her to the status of Goddess 'Shakti' and in the same breath relegating her to the position of a slave, exposed the double standards employed by the man to keep the woman under his control. The stereotype role of Sita and Savitri served as a powerful cultural ideal for women. Thus Hindu religion has pushed woman down to the last rung of the social ladder. However, there was no dearth of hypocrisy to eulogise woman and in return expect too many things from her. As one Sanskrit scholar writes:

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\text{Karyeshu Mantri, Karaneshu Daasi,} \\
\text{Rupecha Laxmi, Kshamayaa Dharitrii.} \\
\text{Bhojyeshu Mata, Shayaneshe Rambha,} \\
\text{Shat Karma Yukta, Kula Dharma Patni.}^2
\]

The above lines can be translated as follows:

Like a slave in working, a minister in counselling, Goddess Lakshmi in looks, the Mother Earth in forbearance, one's mother in feeding, Rambha—the celestial damsel in bed—the six are the true characteristics of an ideal wife.

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Some poets and writers have praised women highly, whereas others have painted a shabby picture of them as being a mere weakling. They write that women and animals are only meant to be ‘beaten’. It is really agonising to imagine the extent of the cruel mind-set of the male.

It is yet more shocking to learn that woman bore the ill-treatment silently for centuries even without a streak of resentment. She never dared to complain but simply wept in silence in the remote corner of the house. Thus she became marginalised, oppressed, ostracised and a deprived lot. This was the routine way of life for most of the women.

Most civilisations in the world had adopted the patriarchal family system, wherein the man considered himself to be superior to the woman. As a consequence, the woman was confined to the four walls of the house and was always snubbed. Women accepted this kind of treatment in the beginning without any protest. Therefore, systems like the sati and prohibition of Vedic education were imposed upon them. Even in the major religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, the status of woman was not quite good in the earlier times. But due to the continual change in the attitude of man towards the woman, things started gradually improving. This paved the way for a better understanding, sense of devotion, mutual regard and submission to each other between the husband and the wife. Therefore, the main motive of this study was to make men and women realise that
compatibility, mutual faith and firm belief are the essence of man-woman relationship and that good relation between them needs to be maintained for the sake of the children as well as for old-age companionship. Any thing contrary to this might result in dissatisfaction, suffering and utter chaos in both their lives.

In the medieval times education was denied to women due to the wrong notion that education imparted to women would be the cause of destruction of the family. Then Muslim rulers came to India. They invaded this country on and off right from the Eighth century A. D. As they themselves were the patronisers of the patriarchal society, they did not help to improve the conditions of women in India. Moreover, it was an established practice among the Muslim kings to refrain from interference in the religious and social matters of the Indian people. Therefore, they did not venture to improve the conditions of women in this country. Their chief aim was expansion of their empires. Hence they did not bother to remove the social disparity between men and women. They themselves were the master of the most stringent laws against their women folk.

Mughals came to stay in India on a permanent basis. They were a civilised lot. Their treatment of women was quite appreciable. This had a positive impact on the Indian society. It is both astonishing and a matter of pride to note that every Mughal king had a woman adviser in his court.
A couple of such examples are Noorjahan to Jahangir and Mahim Ange to Akbar.

After the Mughals, the British came to India with the intention of trading and launched. The East India Company in 1600 A.D. By the beginning of the nineteenth century they had established their supremacy and succeeded in occupying vast Indian territories. The British introduced English education in India with a selfish motive of hiring the educated Indian youths for low paid jobs in their companies. Even some women got the privilege of receiving education in English.

The condition of women before 1947 was at its worst. Apart from a general low social status for women, the Indian society was infested with several other social evils that had spread their tentacles and was destroying the society. These included the purdah and the sati systems, the prohibition of widow remarriage and several others. Women accepted this appalling differential attitude meted out to them very meekly as marriage meant to them an unconditional servitude and perpetual subjugation to man. The male dominant society made women feel that they are incompetent, inadequate and worthless, making them suffer from an inferiority complex. This passive acceptance of subjugation made them an easy prey to many such sufferings.
The impact of education and of the western social order on Indian society had a wholesome effect. The English educated Indian youths, especially the Hindu elite class, were critical of their own religious orthodoxies like the caste system, the sati system and so on. Their education in English itself served as an ideological impetus behind many a social reform. Some enlightened social reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Dayanand Saraswati and others fought for the betterment of the society especially for the female folk. They realised the need to remove the weeds of orthodox prejudices and superstitions that had struck deep roots in the society. They believed that women should also enjoy equal rights and status in the society as men do. These reformers came forward and stressed on the need of female education. Women like Rassundari Devi also joined them in order to improve the status of women in general. The Indian women were given the opportunity of educating themselves. Education improved the status of women to a very great extent. Thus it was due to the efforts of these reformers that Indian society underwent subtle social transformation.

By this time the winds of political change started blowing across India. The educated youths realised the need of getting away from the tyranny of the British hold. A feeling of nationalism percolated among them. Political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu and others, fought for the independence of
the country. Women got encouraged to shed their inhibitions after the advent of Mahatma Gandhi in the political arena. Gandhiji’s clarion call to Indian women to come out of their houses and participate in the freedom struggle proved a great boon to them. Under his charismatic and encouraging influence, Indian women were able to expose their talents to the outside world. The Indian history is replete with the saga of women rulers who fought against the British, in order to protect their kingdoms. Women felt that they have to break the fortress of the four walls of their homes and come forward to play a part for their own upliftment. Enthused with the love for freedom and with Gandhiji as their leader, the Indian women participated in the freedom struggle. Here the prestige of Indian women gained a huge momentum.

The novels like “Kandan the Patriot”, “Kanthapura” and “Waiting for the Mahatma” depict the participation of women in the freedom struggle of India. In Bhabani Bhattacharya’s “So Many Hungers” Kajoli suffers very much but her hope and determination to get freedom is not diminished. The struggle for India’s freedom has actually galvanized the Indian society. That is why the period in Indian history is called the Gandhian Age or the Golden Age of Indian English Literature. Immediately after the Independence of the country, the partition of the country took place and it had its own impact on the status of women. Novels like “Train to Pakistan”, “A Bend in the Ganges” and “Azadi” give a harrowing experience of the partition of the country on the Indian people.
Hence with the enlightened social reformers, women in India could see a better future. Even the political leaders who brought freedom for the country gave a ray of hope for the women. Both the social reformers and political leaders were in favour of improving the social status of women. Subsequently, the laws enforced were in favour of women to better their conditions of existence. Hence armed with education and the weeding out of the social evils against the Indian women by social reformers, they could see a light at the end of the dark tunnel. Therefore the Independence of the country not only destroyed the shackles of slavery from the British hold but also led the Indian women from darkness to light.

With the beginning of the twentieth century the stranglehold of patriarchal society slowly started losing its grip on women due to the active participation of social reformists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule and others. Secondly, female education brought an upheaval in the attitude of woman towards domestic and social responsibilities. Men slowly changed their approach towards women and began to develop interest in their affairs. There was a sea change in the perception of man with regard to woman, who was earlier considered only as an agency of procreation. Gradually she rose in her status beyond being merely considered as the one who kept the family lineage on.
Many social evils that were in vogue due to the patriarchal society were dispelled. The restrictions enforced upon the women through the purdah system were set aside, giving them the opportunity to breathe afresh. These small measures, however, did not usher in big changes in the status of women, but a beginning was made to snap the chains that tied down women to the ground. Rising of feminism in post independent Indian struggle was not as assertive as we find it in the West. Feminism in India meant women’s cry for their political rights, pay parity in workplaces, the privilege of inheritance, right to divorce and revolt against superstitious beliefs imposed upon women. Most part of the energy of Indian women was spent on courting petty privileges from the society. They achieved some of their rights and for the remaining ones the fight is going on. One such rights for which the women are fighting since a long time is the reservation for women in assemblies and the Parliament.

However, the Women’s Liberation Movement in the West was not like that of the Indian women’s fight for equality. During the Second World War, women in the West took the place of men in the factories. After the war, the women had to go back to their homes. This short stint with money gave the western women the taste of money power.

Unmarried girls took job in factories which were advertised for such women. This prompted women to postpone their marriage. Those who got married did not wish to discontinue the job after marriage. They got
organised and demanded better child-care. The men also supported their women in their agitation to seek education, child care centres, maternity hospitals, etc. for the working class women.

The educated western women wanted alternatives from marriage and motherhood. They wanted to enjoy the freedom of sex without the fear of child birth. So they demanded sexual, legal and financial equality with men. Unfortunately the freedom of sex further exploited the western women. Nothing of the sort had happened with the Indian woman. Her demand was equal treatment, equal pay and reservation in politics.

While going through the historical background of the Indian woman, it was felt that more pages of history had to be read and understood to justify this complex relationship. A man perceived woman as intellectually inferior, thereby incapable of big scholarly endeavours. It is illogical and absurd to degrade women to such a position when it is known quite well that she can perform in any intellectual field equally well. Most of the time, among the toppers at the University Examinations, women are in majority.

Education became an important weapon in the hands of woman and she learnt to face the hardships of life with more confidence. She joined her husband in improving the economic conditions of the family by seeking employment. Thus women gained respect in the family.
Emancipation of the status of woman in the society changed her from a ‘submissive-and-willing-to-suffer’ to that of a ‘bold-and-ready-to-face-any-crisis’ with firmness sort of an individual. The joint family which gave way to a nuclear family also taught the woman to handle things alone without any physical or moral support from others. In this way her status improved and respect too were raised. No more she was considered a weaker sex but a partner equal in status.

The phenomenal change brought in the status of woman as has been noticed earlier, certainly brightened the image of woman and she came to be recognised as a complete individual. She is allowed to work gainfully and be economically independent. Men have finally realised that woman could shoulder more responsibilities and be an asset to the family in all the activities. They have begun to understand and have accepted that for the socio-economic progress the participation of women is extremely necessary. In order to raise her standard of living, she is now given a free hand to express herself. Thus women moved on and accepted challenge after challenge and accomplished them with grace.

Man-woman relationship begins to blossom with an understanding of each other’s responsibilities. Rearing children was earlier considered the responsibility of the mother only and she had to take maternity leave for the same. This attitude has taken a turn today. Even the father of the child is eligible for paternity leave in order to lend a helping hand to look
after the child. This changed environment has boosted husband's relation with his wife, giving her a sense of security that her husband has cordial feelings towards the family. The outcome of this is the creation of a strong bond between them and cementing their relationship which has helped them to live in tranquillity.

The essence of a healthy, human relationship or so to say man-woman relationship depends on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation. It is this human psychology that plays a role in maintaining good relation between man and woman. Today, woman is given her due rights and even her advice and suggestions are willingly accepted. She is invited to participate in the important decisions taken in the family. Many times even the husband refers to his wife as the ‘Home Maker’ or the ‘Home Minister’ with great pride. Employment has increased the economic status and respect of woman in the society.

The institution of marriage has undergone tremendous change. Many social legislation which act as a mechanism of social control, have been passed to protect women’s rights. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 makes the giver as well as the receiver of dowry punishable. These Acts, though passed in order to protect women’s rights and are no doubt in the law books, but they have their own loopholes too. In spite of the Dowry Prohibition Act, dowry is taken at the time of marriages in some form or the other. Demands keep on increasing, leading to harassment and a
number of dowry related deaths. In case of divorce, the custody of the child automatically goes to the father when the child is above five years of age. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 confers absolute rights over the property possessed by a Hindu woman. It also gives both the sons and daughters the right of inheritance from the property of an intestate Hindu. In spite of that, the father can exclude his daughters from a share of his property in his will if he intends to do so, though legally they too are the rightful heirs. Monogamy was introduced in the institution of marriage according to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955. Till then polygamy was the system of marriage that was in vogue. This Act also provides for judicial separation and divorce on valid grounds and thus the whole social fabric have been altered, due to these legislations.

Man-woman relationship especially that of the husband-wife, has to be maintained properly so that it does not get vitiated. As this relationship is prone to be affected by outside elements, one has to be very cautious. It is the adjustment and understanding between the two that helps in maintaining cordial relationship. As according to a well-known saying, “Marriages are made in Heaven and celebrated on Earth” and is expected to be a permanent bond between the husband and wife. Marriage lays restrictions on the married partners and the members of the society expect no transgression on their part. Contrary behaviour makes the relationship vitiated and relational crisis occur. There are various other reasons like infidelity, mistrust, jealousy, misunderstanding etc, which
mars the relationship. In recent times, many cases have resulted in lover-beloved relationship and in the event of married individuals, breaking the family ties with sufferings on both sides. Even such relationships do not vouch for fidelity between partners.

Again there are other instances of man-woman relationship that tend to be transitory which may or may not culminate in marriage. Examples of such relationships are platonic love, pre-marital friendship and extramarital affairs, which the society does not approve. In platonic relationship, it is just an affectionate binding between two persons of the opposite sex, who carry on their friendship without being attracted into physical intimacy. Occasionally, such cases may even end in marriages between such partners. In a similar way pre-marital relationship is friendship between a boy and girl, who get attracted towards each other without being married. In most of these instances, it is the infatuation or physical attraction that brings them closer, which may fizzle out with time.

However, the worst of all man-woman relationships is the extramarital relationship, which is a complete anti-social event. This relationship may be between a married man and an unmarried girl or the other way round. In Anita Desai's novel, "Fire on the Mountain", the Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University, Mr. Kaul has affairs with Miss David, the Mathematics Professor. The wife, Nanda knows about his infidelity, but
silently bears it. She is just a painted doll, a decorative piece in silk sarees, attending to guests all the time. Peace comes to her finally on the death of her husband. Such relationships are in a myriad of twists and turns and are said to be immoral and tend to break up a home. In Indian tradition such kind of relationships, which were not in vogue earlier are abundant in recent times, due to the influence of western life and also modern films where it is a recurrent theme.

Now-a-days young people think living together before marriage is 'fun' and believe in accepting each day as it comes. They fail to understand that this often results in hanging on for years in an unsuitable relationship and eventually when they break off it takes a very long time to find a new partner once again. Such relationship ends up in depression and if at all they find a partner finally they lose the chance of having their own children.

One comes across husbands who are not so good-looking, but have very good and beautiful wives and vice versa; but in spite of the diversity in their looks and traits they live happily. Basically, it is the relation that cements the bond between husband and wife, making them overlook the shortcomings of each other. This way man-woman relationship paves the path for a healthy and beautiful existence of society.
When Indian English literature started flourishing the themes of the novels by various writers like Saratchandra Chatterjee and others were borrowed from vernacular languages. As the impact of education was deeper, literature about man-woman relationship came into existence. Novels have left an indelible impression of the changes that have taken place in the society with the flux of time. Literature remains for posterity and thus helps to understand the prevailing conditions of the society of those times.

Indian writers have contributed vast reading materials thereby enriching the literature. They have visualised and acted as interpreters evaluating the prevalent social conditions as best as they could, benefitting both the native as well as foreign readers. The novel is considered as the epic of the modern age. It made its appearance in the late 19th century with "Rajmohan’s Wife" by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1864. Thus it paved the path for the novels on man-woman relationship in the years to come. An Indian novel is unique because of its social milieu, family ties, culture, and so on. The very Indianness of its environment gives an insight into the social fabric from ancient times to the modern period with inexorable vicissitude that occurs with the flow of time. Thus, English novels in India are one of the sources for the portrayal of man and woman relationship.
The early novelists mainly concentrated on historical themes and described the customs and religious traditions of India. In the beginning there were praises for the British for introducing English education as well as opening of avenues of various companies. Slowly political stance took its root and political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru and others aroused patriotic feelings amongst the Indians as they understood and realised the oppressive British rule which had become established in our country. Creative writers too voiced the injustice and exploitation of the Indian society by the British. Thus there was a total metamorphosis in their writings.

The British rule and their exploitation of the Indian masses helped in creating themes of colonial oppression in India and also added the influence and inspiration made by Gandhiji’s entry into the political field. Mulk Raj Anand’s “Coolie” is an example that shows how the colonial India suffered humiliation at the hands of the British rulers. A number of writers were inspired by Gandhiji’s charismatic power as the one who brought the submissive, docile women into the freedom struggle movement along with their male counterparts.

Several novels like “Kandan the Patriot” by K. S. Venkataramani, “Waiting for the Mahatma” by R. K. Narayan, “So Many Hungers” by Bhabani Bhattacharya, and “Kanthapura” by Raja Rao, depict the colonial oppression and the active participation of women in attaining freedom for
the country. The characters like Rajeshwari Bai, Bharati, Kajoli and Ratna in the novels become devoted freedom fighters. “Some Inner Fury” by Kamala Markandaya, portrays Mira's patriotic feelings for the country which makes her to sacrifice her love, Richard Marlowe, because he is an English man. Women, who till then were within the four walls of the house, broke their shackles and came out in the open proving that they were not less courageous than the men.

Immediately after the attainment of India's independence in 1947, there was utter chaos and commotion. The worst ever tragedy struck India in the form of partition of the country into India and Pakistan. This gave vent to the writers' experience and the painful division of the country became a theme for them to write about. Thus the novelists portrayed the gender relationship that got affected because of the partition and described the grim and pathetic picture of the tragedy of that time. “Train to Pakistan” by Khushwant Singh, “The Dark Dancer” by Balachandra Rajan, “A Bend in the Ganges” by Manohar Malgonkar, “Sunlight on a Broken Column” by Attia Hossain, “Azadi” by Chaman Nahal, are few novels that describe the worst happenings in the modern history of our country. Truth is stranger than fiction and all these accounts are unbelievable but true.

“Train to Pakistan” by Khushwant Singh portrays the effect on gender relationship. Here Juggat Singh sacrifices his life for saving his
beloved Nooran from being attacked in the train in which she is travelling to Pakistan. In "The Dark Dancer" by Balachandra Rajan, Krishnan’s wife, Kamala, had to give up her life while protecting a Muslim girl from rioters at the time of partition. In "A Bend in the Ganges", Debi-dayal is killed by the Muslim rioters who drags away his wife, Mumtaz. In "Azadi by Chaman Nahal, Arun has to leave Nur, a Muslim girl. The Muslims look at him menacingly as he is a Hindu. Later on in the refugee camp he comes across Chandni and falls in love with her. In the attack on the camp, the rioters take Chandni away. Thus, it is observed that Arun loses both Nur as well as Chandni in the aftermath of partition of the country. Hence the relationship between man and woman, as well as the gender relations gets affected due to the adverse impact of partition on their lives.

After independence, armed with English education, the woman slowly gave up her inhibitions and wished to work shoulder to shoulder with her male counterpart. English education provided stimulus to her work and acted as an open window of learning to understand and follow the western developments. Hence, this exposure was like an elixir that heightened their intellectual capacities to give expression to their urge. The educated woman got jobs outside home and demanded equal rights and status. Then realisation dawned upon her that she was kept confined to the four walls of the house by the male-dominated society. Women became stronger in their approach to face men’s clever tact. They no more remained throttled by the unfair patriarchal norms and values. Many
female writers depicted woman characters with totally different attitude and severity of reactions, which even male writers could not do.

Many novels written after the attainment of independence, by women novelists like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, depict their women characters reacting in a very negative way. This affects their marriage as well as their family in a very adverse manner. In the novel, "The Day in Shadow" by Nayantara Sahgal, Simrit unable to bear her husband Som's way of life, walks out of her first marriage and marries Raj, a Christian political worker.

In a similar way, the women characters of Anita Desai suffer psychologically, due to disappointment in their marriages. Maya, the heroine in "Cry, the Peacock" suffers from loneliness and frustration due to her over busy husband. The inability of the latter to devote time to his young wife, along with the astrologer's prediction that one of them would die in the fourth year of their marriage, prompts her to push her husband Gautama, down the terrace. Monisha immolates herself in "Voices in the City" as Jiban her husband does not support her, when she is accused of stealing her husband's money and which she uses, thinking it as her right. Sita, in "Where shall we go this Summer?" goes to Manori Island to keep her child unborn by some kind of imagined miracle during her fifth pregnancy, thinking it to be an Island of magic. These women characters, though they belong to an urban background, develop perverted attitude
towards life and react accordingly. Anita Desai depicts the image of the suffering women, who preoccupied with their inner self, show their frustration in a male dominated society.

Shashi Deshpande’s novel, "The Dark Holds no Terrors", gives glimpse of marriage on the rocks. It depicts the decaying and unhappy conjugal life of Sarita (Saru) and Manohar (Manu). The growing popularity of Saru destroys her own marriage. She is a successful doctor, but her husband is unsuccessful in his career. This develops a kind of inferiority complex in him, resulting in sexual sadism. This mars their relationship and she tries to escape from the physical and psychological brutality. Manu’s failure in life hurts his ego. He cannot tolerate that his wife surpasses him professionally. The inferiority complex makes him to take revenge on his wife in the bed. The male-ego in him makes him to act in a strange manner just to show that he is physically stronger than her.

In the novel, "Inside the Haveli" by Rama Mehta, Geeta who is from an urban and sophisticated place like Bombay, finds the purdah system too stifling. However, she too flows with the trends of the ‘Haveli’ and tries to uphold its tradition when the responsibilities fall on her shoulders. In "Sunlight on a Broken Column", by Attia Hossain, Laila who marries her love Ameer, had to undergo a lot of hardships. This novel depicts the beginning of enlightenment towards having both broader and bolder views
that gradually lead to the loosening of the stranglehold of the conservative Muslim society on its members, especially the female ones.

Many novelists have used the East-West encounter as one of their themes. Most of the novelists who have depicted this theme have written their novels after the independence of the country. The novelists have expressed the cross-cultural links and amalgamation of religions of both the countries with a sense of dilemma. Very rarely there is a fusion of the East and the West, affirming the words of Kipling 'Never the twain shall meet'. In "Some Inner Fury", by Kamala Markandaya, Richard and Mira are separated from each other due to the political upheaval, which points out, that the love of one’s country is more important than one’s beloved. Even in another of her novel "Possession", Caroline tries to hold Valmiki in her possession but he returns to his country, India. The materialism does not hold him in its fold. Caroline is the exploiter who exploits him - but when this mistreatment stifles him he dispossesses her. "The Nowhere Man", by Kamala Markandaya is an exception where we find that Srinivas, representing the East and Mrs. Pickering depicting the West, pull on extremely well with each other.

In "The Serpent and the Rope", Raja Rao depicts the disintegration of two cultural levels wherein the marriage of a South Indian Brahmin, Ramaswamy and a French lady, Madeleine, fail utterly due to their incompatible temperaments. In Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s "Esmond in India"
*Esmond*, an English man, does not get on well with *Gulab*, his Indian wife. He detests her style of living and ill-treats her. He desires the company of *Betty*, an English woman, with whom he is more comfortable and wishes to go back to England with her. Thus, the novels discussed briefly above, show that man-woman relationship having different cultural background, rarely succeed. The initial attraction, which draws them closer, slowly fades with time substantiating the saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

The dictum that a husband and wife shall remain together ‘till death do part them’ is no more prevalent in the society. Many novelists have portrayed the problem of extramarital relationship in their novels like “Nectar in a Sieve”, and “Silence of Desire” by Kamala Markandaya, “Fire on the Mountain” by Anita Desai, “The Strange Case of Billy Biswas” by Arun Joshi, “The Dark Room” and “The Guide” by R. K. Narayan. In spite of *Nathan* having a joyful life in the company of *Rukmani*, he still carries on an affair with *Kunthi* and fathers her two children. In “Silence of Desire”, *Sarojini* does not have any affair with the *Swamiji*. Her relation with him is purely of faith and hope, which she thinks would help her get rid of the tumour in her uterus. But unfortunately her visits to the *Swamiji* arouse a feeling of jealousy in *Dandekar*, her husband, and he begins to tail her. “Fire on the Mountain” depicts the affair of *Mr. Kaul*, the Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University, with the Mathematics teacher, *Miss David*, but is not able to marry her due to her different religion. In “The Strange Case of Billy Biswas”, *Bimal (Billy)* who is interested in primitive
life suddenly leaves his house and wife to marry Bilasia – a tribal girl. In
“The Dark Room”, Narayan depicts the traditional woman Savitri, who leaves the house when she comes to know that her husband, Ramani is having an affair with Shanta Bai, his office colleague. The thought of her children brings her back to the house. She knows about the infidel ways of her husband, but dare not rebel against him just to maintain the domestic harmony. In most of the cases, women are the silent sufferers. “The Guide” tells how Rosie (Nalini) who does not get her husband Marco’s support for her dancing aptitude receives the same from Raju, the guide. Marco abandons his wife when he learns about their affair. Rosie too becomes economically independent.

In the similar way, there are novels depicting man-woman relationship, which tend to be complementary as well as contradictory. A glimpse of the novels shows that bond between man and woman has become very fragile. Education should become the means of holding relationships together with passions, understanding, adjustments, love and affection. On the contrary, it has given rise to prestige issue in asserting one’s individuality leading to tussle and adverse reaction in many man-woman relationships.

In this way, the purpose of researching the vast and baffling issue was not to propose any ready made remedy – and that is not the business of literature either – but to affirm once again that good literature
is a reflection of a healthy society. In the fast changing social order, due to downsizing of families, globalisation of education, tremendous job opportunities and crushing work-culture, materialism has taken over the moral side of life. Cultural values are falling apart creating a serious and adverse impact on human relations, more particularly man-woman relationship. If man-woman relationship gets deteriorated, the entire society will move towards barbarism. There will be no respect for human sentiments, for old age, for the future of their children, for culture and so on. In order to stem this cultural rot, people should inculcate respect for values. Nationalism and humanism should be our prime concerns. Too much materialism corrupts human values and as a result human relations are worsened. If human relations are strong the literature also becomes strong. Such literature leads kindly light to the entire humanity.