CHAPTER 2  
Existentialism, Feminism and Feminist Existentialism

The notion in existentialism is that, man spends his life changing his essence. There is not any objective form of truth, but the truth is formed by personal choice. Existentialism does not support the following concepts: first, wealth and honor make a good life; secondly, social values control an individual. Thirdly, acceptance of what happens to us, and never try to change it. Fourthly, science makes life better. What is important in existentialism is that, human being is free and his nature is made through his choice. (Akram Amiri Senejani, 2013).

Existentialism is a philosophy defining the human existence. Kierkegaard is the father of Existentialism, the philosophy focuses on individual existence and their freedom which means an individual is solely responsible for his or her life and the individuals are free to make choices of their own. Stuart Greenstreet (2016) in his research article *On Being an Existentialist* says that: “Existentialism’s most basic premise is that human beings have no pre-existing or set nature or character. We are not essentially anything, except that we are essentially free. We become *self-created* beings by virtue of our actions and our relations with other people”.

The philosophy originated in the nineteenth century and the philosophers like Soren Kierkegaard, Frederic Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sartre, and Simone De Beauvoir wrote a lot of fiction related to the themes of existentialism. Anja Steinbauer (2001) in her research article *Existentialism An introduction* states that: “Death, fear and horror become prominent themes, but these negative ‘moments’ are emphasised as contributing to a positive determination of humanity. This positive determination, however, is nothing but existence itself”. The existential themes include absurdity, alienation, anxiety, authenticity, and individuality. Sartre believes that man is thrown into a world where man first exists and then finds the essence which is the meaning of life. Kierkegaard explores the thought that man has existential anxiety that is the fear of existing in the world. According to Camus human beings are absurd in the universe. Some existentialists like Nietzsche claimed that god is dead; on the other hand
Kierkegaard was intensively religious. The ultimate factor for existentialists is the freedom of choice.

All philosophers in the existentialist camp shared the same mission: to make us recognise that human beings are free to choose, not only what to do when faced with moral choices, but what to value and how to live. They want these facts about human freedom to be not merely accepted, but absorbed by each person for him- or herself, so that when they have absorbed them their whole view of life will be different. (Stuart Greenstreet, 2016).

The themes of Existentialism appeared in early Buddhist and Christian writings. In the seventeenth century Blaise Pascal a theologian, mathematician and physician suggested that life would be meaningless without god, he saw the reason for the existence of god. The philosophy of Existentialism was critisised by different groups like Herbert Marcuse who pointed Sartre for projecting features such as anxiety and meaninglessness in his work Being and Nothingness. Roger Scrution has claimed that Sartre’s concept of bad faith denies the universal moral creed. Logical positivists like Ayer Rudolf criticized existentialists for being confused with the word nothing which is the denial of reality and therefore cannot be presumed to refer to something.

The philosophical idea of Existentialism states that the existence of men goes in advance with the nature of their lives. It further emphasises that every human being is tossed on the planet were frustration, suffering, contempt, ailments, melancholy and death are predominantly present. The philosophy also suggests that man is pushed into an absurd world where the motive for his life cannot be found. Modern existential writers used the term Modern existential writers used the term absurd to explain the state of ridiculousness in the present world. A world without any supreme values like justice and virtue does not give any prominence for being a human is referred to as absurd world.

Angst or anguish is one among the major concepts of existentialism, because it shapes an individual in the form of a complete being. “Sartre was the only one to accept the name ‘existentialist’ and employ all of its key concepts: ‘anguish’, ‘bad faith’, ‘facticity’, ‘commitment’, and ‘authenticity’.”(Stuart Greenstreet, 2016). The phase of anxiety drives oneself to achieve success through their inner struggle. It can be defined as a kind of common discomfort or anxiety and the universal state of human existence.
Angst is also the anticipation of the hollowness of the existence of men. For existential philosophers these existential fondness develop from the awareness of one’s segregation and hostility. Alienation is one of the most essential and a terrifying experience of individuals. Alienation is the greatest illness of humanity. When one estranges himself from the worldly life and falls into hostile world and he gets worried. This depression is distinguished as anxiety. For existentialists, nervousness, hopelessness, and fear have their origin from the consciousness of withdrawal from the material interest.

The major existential thinkers defined their concept in different ways; Soren Kierkegaard is renowned as the father of Existentialism and was born in Denmark in 1813. He believed that church congregations had no purpose, and Christendom was too political, and Christianity was becoming an empty religion. He stressed importance of the individual and is credited with creating the ideas of “subjectivity” and the “leap of faith”. He Wrote *The Concept of Irony From the Papers of One Still Living*, and *Fear and Trembling*. His other works was influenced by Luther, Kant, and Socrates. Frederic Nietzsche was born on 15th October, 1844 and got influenced by Dostoyevsky, Emerson, Goethe, Kant, Plato, Pascal, Darwin and Stendhal. He wrote *The Birth of Tragedy, Untimely Meditations, On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense, All Too Human*, and *Beyond Good and Evil*. He was associated with nihilism, the phrase God is dead, absolute denial of prevailing laws and practices. Nihilism gives way to serious form of cynicism and the refusal of authentic existence.

Jean Paul Sartre was born on 21st June 1905, who believed that ideas are the result of real-life situations and experiences. Influenced by Kant, Nietzsche, Marx, Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard and Flaubert he embraced communism and opposed the Vietnam War. He wrote *Being and Nothingness, Existentialism is a Humanism, The Flies, No Exit, The Roads to Freedom*, and *Les Mots*. Albert Camus born on 7th November 1913 was often associated with Existentialism, but he personally denied this label opposed the philosophy of nihilism and claimed that since he did not believe in God he was not an atheist. He was a human rights activist in the 1950s and strongly opposed capital punishment. He wrote *The Stranger, The Myth of Sisyphus, The Plague and The Fall* and won the Nobel Prize in 1957. He examined dualisms, such as happiness and
sadness, dark and light, and life and death in order to emphasize mortality influenced by Marx, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Kierkegaard, Herman Melville, Nietzsche, Sartre, Victor Hugo and George Orwell.

Absurdity is one of the common themes in existentialist works. The absurd condition of human exists due to the needs of human and the world does not offer him his wants easily. The absurd is the result of the confrontation between human desire and the uncooperative silence of the world. Man search for meaning in a meaningless world, and they have three ways of resolving the dilemma that is suicide or escaping existence, religious beliefs in a transcendent world and acceptance of the absurd. Simone de Beauvoir born on ninth January, 1908 associated with ideas of ambiguity, feminist ethics, existential feminism, the idea that “existence precedes essence,” and that a person is not born a woman, but becomes one. She believed that in society women have always been considered deviant and abnormal and women could make the same choices as men and rise above gender roles. She was active in France’s women’s liberation movement influenced by Descartes, Wollstonecraft, Kant, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and Sartre. Her works include She Came to Stay, The Blood of Others, All Men Are Mortal and The Ethics of Ambiguity.

Existentialists believe that man is what he makes of himself, without any interference from god or society. The ultimate determining factor of existentialism is that an individual’s self-determination and freedom of life is the central core of existence. Thus the individual has no recourse to any other determining factors like religion or any other outer force. He has to create his own meaning for his or her individual self since there are no meanings or rules which come before one’s existence. In this perspective existential thought has derived the reputation of pessimism. The idea of finding meaning in life appears to be absurd and ridiculous. Even the tenets related to existentialism such as loneliness, alienation, fear and angst appear as pessimism. Nevertheless the philosophy of existentialism does not attain a negative approach to life and reality, rather the philosophy makes one understand the capabilities of an intellectual and conscious being to bring about positive change in his life and world.
Writers like Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka and Fyodor Dostoevsky have a contribution to the philosophy of existentialism. Samuel Beckett’s characters in Waiting for Godot are absurd, signifying nothingness by involving them in a repeated action throughout. The characters suggest the senselessness and meaninglessness of life. Fyodor Dostoevsky, a 19th century Russian novelist in his novel, Crime and Punishment deal with the existential dilemma of the protagonist. Rodin Raskolnikov who kills a pawnbroker for her money and attempts to justify his actions by trusting that murder is justifiable in pursuit of a higher cause. He explores the existential anguish of Raskolnikov in the book which was translated into English in 1956 by Constance Garnett. Franz Kafka is considered to an influential existential writer of the twentieth century. His short story The Metamorphosis presents his existential traits in the character of Gregor Samsa and the character turns into a beetle. In the body of a beetle he attempts to search for his self-identity.

Existentialism in Indian English Fiction brought new consciousness with new awareness of thought and self-expression, which came into prominence around the middle of the twentieth century. The Post-colonial literature includes the colonial time and the time after colonization and it deconstructs the perceptions of old ideas and reactions of sovereignty and inferior status that were proficient during the time of colonialism. It also discusses the dispute of identity and ethnic belonging. The imperial powers came to alien states and ruined the aborigine tradition and culture. In addition, they repeatedly restored them with their tradition. Indian English novelists have successfully explored the existential struggle of characters in their novels by analysing the individuality of man and his rejection of traditional values through his search for identity. The philosophies and thoughts are prominently seen in the writings of existential writers. The shift of focus of Indian English novel to existential angst can be apparently noticed in the writings of R.K Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Nayantara Sehgal, Jumpha Lehari, Salman Rushdie and Kiran Desai and many other Indian writers and their contemporaries. The tradition initiated these novelists to concentrate on the existential suffering and agony of man in their writings.
Kamala Markandaya focuses on the existential characters conflicting with the cross-cultural and inter-racial existential angst in her novels. Her novels mirror the predicaments of identity crisis through the theme of loneliness and alienation. She presents bold characters, who want to be freed from inner anxiety. Being a novelist she extensively dealt with themes of loneliness and alienation along with the confrontation of East- West attitudes, the traditional, spiritual and modern values of Indian settings. Her novels portray strong woman characters existing in the realm of poverty, gender discrimination and degradation of womanhood. Markandaya portrays sensitive and strong women characters and their search for identity and the crisis in existence represents the struggle of women in general to establish and assert their identity in a male oriented traditional Indian society.

In the book *The Second Sex*, Simone De Beauvoir explores the themes like immanence, transcendence, production versus reproduction, nature versus nurture, the concept of eternal feminine and the other. Beauvoir identifies a powerful symbolism in her work that is the ‘Praying Mantis.’ Simon De Beauvoir makes an analysis of the situation of women. Existentialism is the perspective out of which De Beauvoir understands the situation of women’s oppression. Existentialism is a study of ontology. Hence along with Sartre Simone De Beauvoir started to experiment on existentialism by studying the philosophical notions of Soren Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism. In her novels *She Came to Stay* and *The Blood of Others* has examined the doctrines of existentialism. Her first analytical essay *Ethics of Ambiguity* was also an Existentialist exploration of the human affairs. But Beauvoir took up existentialism to discover the roots and causes for the suppression of women in her *The Second Sex*. Simone de Beauvoir was a celebrated existentialist and one of the postulate inventors of second-wave feminism and feminist existentialism. She conveys her thought that the power of a woman over a man is not illusion and a woman need not depend on men for her survival and further suggests that all women must exalt their inner power that is the power of warrior spirit.
The book *The Second Sex* is considered as a pillar of twentieth century feminist philosophy. In the book *Facts and Myths* the author De Beauvoir raises a question that why women are considered as subordinate in the society. In order to answer this question she investigates history, psychology and biology which reveal the main differences between man and women. Through these analyses it is clear that women are destined to be inferior. Beauvoir investigates the facts of history in order to trace out the male domination in the society. From the time immemorial that is from the times of nomadic hunters, the practice of the subjugation of women is prevailing. Over all it is the reflection of attitudes, injustices and preconception of people.

The Existential history is the subject of De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir discusses about the feminine body of women which is looked at differently by the society due to the changes occurring in their body at different stages of their lives like menstruation and maternity. These changes give pain and embarrassment to women and they face the odds of society which looks at them awkwardly. The gaze of men makes a girl to know her process of becoming an object of sex in the society. Beauvoir says that it depends on the mindset of women to handle the criticisms of the society in a positive way instead of accepting the increasing hostile and threatening reactions of the society. The patriarchal mother makes her daughter realise her body by frequently criticizing her physic and making her aware of her feminine stance. On the other hand, the men on the street comment on the girl looking at her charm and beauty. Hence it is not the biological state of women that makes them suppressive but the negative approach of the society.

While talking about the pre-adolescent boys and girls, Beauvoir conveys that both boys and girls have same pleasures and interests, but when one becomes a woman, the flesh and the feminine body of a woman makes them frightened of the society. A girl child is nurtured to be with consciousness through the changes occurring in her body during her growth from childhood to old age. Even if a woman forgets her feminine consciousness, the society reminds of her position. Beauvoir mentions both positive and negative aspects of women’s body. She believes that a woman feels good with the company of the nature, where there are no mothers to criticize or guide with certain rules or they do not find any men to gaze upon them. The ultimate sense of happiness is found
within women when they get solution through their natural instinct. The patriarchal society accords women’s menstruation, pregnancy and menopause as oppressive.

Beauvoir mentions that girls are kept unaware of the sexual education because of which intercourse is physically traumatic for girls. For young women sex appears to be a surgical operation and the romantic fantasies of the young girl collapses before she accepts the reality. Compared to men women were devoid of knowledge. The experience of pregnancy makes the life of women negative. After giving birth to a child they appear unattractive and no longer fit for sexual gaze. Men admire women at the initial stage of their life with eternal beauty and physical charm. As time passes men lose attraction towards women. Beauvoir makes a point that a woman attains eternity by giving life to a child she should be looked as a creator of the universe and giving birth to children should bring a positive development in women to find their abilities and strengths which enable them to live successfully instead of mourning over the odds of the society. Felicity Joseph (2017) in his article “Becoming a Woman: Simone de Beauvoir on Female Embodiment” says that:

However, de Beauvoir also gives positive examples of having a female body. She shows us that there are situations in which young women can be comfortable in their bodies – indeed, not only comfortable, but joyous and proud. Consider a girl who enjoys walking in the fields and woods, feeling a profound connection to nature. She has a great sense of happiness and freedom in her body which she doesn’t feel in a social environment. In nature there are no males to gaze upon her, there are no mothers to criticize her. She no longer sees herself through other’s eyes, and thus is finally free to define her body for herself.

Focusing on the old age of women, Beauvoir admits that there are many positive traits of this particular stage of women. Women escape from the pressures of the society like dieting and taking care of their beauty. It is a stage of complete rest and peace for women. The acceptable fact is that a woman never sees her body with her own gaze since the gaze of male is spread all over. Beauvoir emphasises on the free space of women to take decisions. If a woman thinks that her body is gazed upon as a negative perceptions it becomes an evil thing, if she feels good about it, it will remain fair. Freedom and space are the two perfect choices of any individual that Beauvoir has advocated in her description of women and their existence in the society.
The phrase ‘feminism’ has its genesis from the Latin term ‘Femina’ which means ‘woman’. The term alludes to the belief that women are equal to men socially, economically and politically. The central focus of the term is to advocate equality of two sexes. The term ‘Feminism’ became prevalent from the earlier twentieth century for attaining women’s franchise in the West. Marxist ideology made feminists challenge sexism as well as capitalism. Despite much objection, feminism became during 1800’s and 1900’s and secured many new rights. Women secured the right to vote and after that the movement slowed down but when women realized that they are restricted from equal rights at the work place they decided to fight for their denied rights equal to men. The feminist movement during 1960’s promoted the organization called the ‘National Organisation for Women,’ through which women fought for their rights in all spheres. In the end of nineteenth century Feminism spread in France and then was rapidly taken to the entire Europe and America.

The term ‘Feminist’ arose due to various campaigns carried out for the emancipation of women which were fought throughout the nineteenth century. The movements fought through campaigns for women’s suffrage, for gaining education, professional rights, rights to own property and rights to have guardsman ship of their children for married women. In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft in her A Vindication of the Rights of Women demanded for equal status for women among men in the society and appeared as a powerful attack on the men in western society. The work of John Stuart Mill’s The Subjection of Women in 1869, Margaret Fuller’s Women in the nineteenth Century 1845, Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s Own in 1929 and Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex in 1949 express radical perspectives of feminist ideologies. Feminism is the ideology which explores the systematic social injustices caused by gender discrimination. It was noted as an organised movement for women’s rights in USA and a continuous effort was taken for the rights of women’s suffrage by the feminist movement.

Historically feminism was characterized into different phases. The first phase of feminist movement secured the victory over the issues of women suffrage. The period of feminist activity in United States, United Kingdom and Canada during the nineteenth
century and the early twentieth century is referred to as first wave feminism. This phase remained active till the First World War. At the initial stage of the movement it was considered that women were less intelligent, fragile, poignant, instinctive, illogical and appropriate only for the role of wives and mothers. Women were not allowed to vote and get educated in universities and schools but were only allowed to work in menial jobs. The salary and property of a married woman was under the care of her husband and they were liable for physical abuse and rape. Women did not have the freedom to apply for divorce but it was available to men, legally if a woman breaks her marriage she was considered not to have any rights on her children. Women had no right to their children if they had left a marriage and abortion was illegal in their case. On the whole the first wave feminism aims at enhancing the legal position of women.

The second phase was known as ‘New feminism’, a radical movement against the racial discrimination in America during the sixties. Radical feminism is a perspective within feminism that attempts to eliminate patriarchy by overlooking the existing communal norms and institutions. A radical feminist focuses on dismantling the patriarchy instead of compromising through the legal changes. The radical feminists believed that the most oppressed group was women in the Western society. This phase occurred during 1960 to 1980 which came as a response to the experiences of women after the World War II. The basic assumption of this period was women should be on power to men in all respects. The movement focused on the inequalities of laws introduced by Betty Friedan. During the second wave movement women attended schools and universities but they did not get an equal payment as men received for their work. Getting divorce became easier, but the women could not face the abuse of the society upon them. The husbands were rarely convicted in the issues of rape and physical tortures within marriages, abortion was still illegal. Though women were exposed to certain legal rights they were treated as subordinate by the patriarchal society. Women achieved rights of abortion, reproductive freedom and other women’s health issues.

The third wave feminism continued to respond to the defeats of the issues of second wave emphasizing on sexism, racism, social class inequality and homophobia. During this phase women seemed to be indistinguishable to men, women were not forced
to enter into the intuition marriage nor beget children and the legal system was more protective to women’s rights. The women in the East are influenced by the major western feminist trends with different feminist thoughts like liberal, marxist, socialist, radical, psychoanalytic, existential and post-modern feminism. The concept of feminism was not the same since it changed according to the changing times, hence feministic ideas followed by groups of people according to their socio-cultural, traditional, geographical locality, regional background or any focused reason for the oppression of women.

Liberal Feminism argued that men and women are equal and believed that both are capable of producing moral judgments in relation to social and political spheres. Liberal feminism is also affiliated to the category of women's rights feminism and it was originally organized with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792. In succession to her Maria Steward, the Grimke sisters, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Molly Yard, Faye Wattle ton, Barbara Jordan and Patrica Schroeder came to light and supported her ideas.

Marxist feminism exposed the struggle of women against capitalism. The fundamental idea behind it was the matter of women’s liberation with regard to their ability of productive capacity improving the economy of the country. Capitalists aim to see women as wage laborers. Hence it was over thrown since it exploits the capability of women. Women had been dwelling in isolation at home. Marxist Feminists provided an opportunity to the working class women to set foot in the social domain of production.

Socialist feminism came into existence with the collaboration of Marxist and Radical feminism. Socialist feminists believe that capitalism and the patriarchy are the root cause for the sufferings of women. Few socialist feminists trust that capitalism and patriarchy are almost similar and the others believe that they run parallel to each other subordinating women in different ways. The failure of Marxist feminism is the central source for the emergence of Radical Feminism. Feminist focused not only on the abolition of capitalism but also on patriarchy which snatched the absolute freedom of women as daughters, mothers and wives since they do not have control over their bodies.
The cultural feminists give importance to the biological state instead of focusing on sex. According to them the conduct and attributes of women (nurturing, caring, emotional) and that is the reason for women and their oppression. They accept these characteristics as original and ensure that women should be given equal rights because of these attributes. They feel that society can be improved only through the empathetic nature of women which can work with men’s logical character.

The theory of Womanism advanced in order to popularize feminism all over the world. In the earlier stages of feminist movements they focused on the issues of middle-class white women. Nevertheless, women from all the classes, ethnicities and countries suffered equally which led to the formation of the womanist movement. The womanist theory identifies the reason behind every single woman suffrage in the society. The subjection of women in the society varied and the each cases of oppression was distinctive. The womanist movement kept its keen eye on various oppressive states of women and the ideal focus of Womanism was to avoid the imperialistic notion of men in the society and to bring equality between the sexes.

Post-modern feminism: Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristiva were the three writers prominent in the upliftment of post-modern feminism. Post-modern feminism accepts that women are treated as the other in the society and strongly criticise the prevailing patriarchal aspects. They even avoid the grand narratives of language exploring the suppression of women and evaluate the way language is masculine centered. Ecofeminism connects ecology and feminism conveying the fact that the society harms nature. The Eco feminists believe that there is a link between women and nature and the central goal of the movement is to abolish all types of social injustices and oppressions of subordinate groups like women, poor and children. They concentrate on the fields like spirituality, class struggle, economics, colonisation and racism.

The problems of women came to debate when the state authorized a survey on the position of women to a group of socialists and researchers. The report stated that in India women are oppressed due to historical and social culture. Some of the western ideas had to be rejected due to the system of structural hierarchies and their difference in western
and Indian Feminism. The issues of women gained international prominence during 1975 to 1985 which was announced as the United Nations decade for women.

Further the western notion of self is related to individualism that is to be free as individual, but an individual in India is always thought to be a part of the huge society. The survival of women in Indian society is based on patriarchy. In India certain communities like Shetty’s of Mangalore, Nair’s of Kerala and Bengali family’s display matriarchal inclinations. In these communities the eldest women of the family is considered to be the head of the family. The reason behind this was for instance in Manipur there were threats for the dynasties by the outsiders and the men had to engage in the forefront of the security hence women were forced to look after the home. The mother’s power was visible due to the historical reasons.

In Muslim families men and women were equal but it was not so in western boundaries. The Indian scenario highlights multiple patriarchies, hence feminism in India have changed over time with regard to cultural and historical realities. In fact India’s feminist movement was initiated by men with the efforts such as abolishing Sati, a practice of burning the widows on their husband’s funeral pyre. Followed by the abolition of child marriages, tonsuring of widows, introducing widow remarriage in upper middle-class society, encouraging the legal rights and education of women. Women were granted legal rights to own property and were given some basic rights.

In the nineteenth century many such women’s issues were brought to light and most of the early reforms were done by men. By the late nineteenth century women issues like women’s education were taken up. Through the independent women’s organisations in the late twentieth century women gained authority. During the initial stage of women’s rights movements the difference between the sexes was considered to be the major reason behind the promotion of women’s movements. In the late nineteenth century some of the reformers argued that difference between the sexes are not the central focus of women’s movement and pointed out the role of women in the society as their prime objective. The emergence of women’s associations and their contribution in the operations made women to indulge in the right to speech and education.
The origin and development of feminism can be divided into three stages: the first episode from 1850 to 1915. Colonisation in India brought concepts of democracy, equality individual rights and social reformation movements. The first phase of feminism evolved through men to demolish social evils like Sati system, widow remarriage, abolition of child marriage, reduction of illiteracy and ensuring property rights. Meanwhile the nationalist movement aroused and as a result the government made an effort to increase the age of marriage for women. The second phase lasted from 1915 to 1947 during which nationalism became pre- eminent and there were struggles against colonization claiming Indian independence. Gandhiji provoked Indian women to participate in the non-violence and civil disobedience movements against the British rule and uplifted the status of women through their participation in nationalist movements.

The participation of women in nationalism carved them into public arena and exalted their feminine roles at home as a sacrifice, tolerant and caring being. Peasant women played a vital role in the rural satyagrahas. Organisations such as “All India Women’s Conference” and the “National Federation of Indian Women” emerged. Women started marching towards political affairs with leadership roles in parties. In 1920 feminism gained importance through women associations. The associations emphasized on issues such as education, developing strategies for working women and women associations were set at national level. The All India Women’s Conference was intimately related to Indian National Congress and under the guidance of Gandhiji women participated in the national movements. After the independence of India, the All India Women’s Conference continued to exist. National Federation of Indian Women was formed by the communist party in 1954. The feminist schedules and activities started declining in 1947 after the independence since the nationalist activities were much focused upon. The active participation of women in the Indian independence movement enhanced their awareness and enlightened them with their identity in Independent India. Women became conscious about their role and rights and secured franchise and civic rights in Indian constitution.

The post-independence era constituted the third phase of Indian feminism. Indira Gandhi, the only daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru became the first woman prime
minister. In this period feminists began to redefine themselves to an extent to engage in the workforce. The feminists in the 1970s fought against inequalities of women like lower wages, relegation of women to menial work, and conditioning women as a product for labour. The services of women were taken for free of cost and the feminists aimed to eradicate it. In 1970s the Feminist class-consciousness also came into prominence and identified the disparities not just among women and men but also within autonomy of structures such as tribe, caste, language, region, religion and class. The focus of the Indian feminist movement had developed treating women as respectful members of society in the early twenty-first century with the power to determine the journey of their personal lives and the right of self-ambition.

In fact it was men in India who started writing about women first joined by women writers later. Due to the impact of British rule Indian writers were struggling in moving on power with the feminist movement worldwide. The first significant Indian writer was Rabindranath Tagore whose protagonists were mostly women. His novels like *A Grain of Sand* and *The Home and outside* are known for their courageous women protagonists.

The Bengali poet and a renowned feminist suffragette was the first woman to graduate with honours fought for the voting rights and women's education. Her best known work was *Nirmalaya*. The major Urdu writer in India was Ismat Chugtai, She is known for ferocious, humoristic and cynical treatment of feminist literature. A staunch feminism can be seen in her collections of short stories. She had to face the court for writing the story called *Lihaf* or the *Quilt*. The first Indian feminist writer to write in English was Kamala Das. Her collection of poems and fiction advent female sexuality vigorously and present them audaciously to the readers. Another Indian author with feminist ideology was Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni her famous works include the *Palace Of Illusions*, the book Mahabharata narrated from of Draupadi’s view which many writers have not ventured. The Malayalam writer who is known for her sense of feminist literature was Lalithambika Antharjanam her best known work is *Agnisakshi*. These are some of the precursors of feminist writers in India followed by many in the generations to come.
Literature is one of the instruments, and one of the most powerful instruments, for forming character, for giving us, characters armed with reason, braced by knowledge, clothed with steadfastness and courage, and inspired by that public spirit and public virtue of which it has been well said that they are brightest ornaments of the mind of man. Bacon is right, when he bides us read not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and to consider. Thus, literature enables us to weigh and to consider. (W.R Goodman, 1997).

The attempt of the thematic study on Feminist Existentialism has provided an opportunity to the scholars to research on the concerns of Indian women and their status in the society. There are many researches who have investigated the problems of women and their existence in Indian fictions from different aspects. Hence some of the references are made to such studies with regard to the novels of Kamala Markandaya and her women characters.

The article entitled “Significance of the title Nectar in a Sieve” written by K. Ramesh Srivastava, (1987) conveys the fact that the title of the novel is derived from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s famous lines quoted in his sonnet Work without Hope. The sonnet is written in the year 1825 it is a sonnet relating nature to the emotions of human. Ramesh analyses the life of Nathan and Rukmani with regard to the inner meaning of the title of the novel, in various aspects. The author connects the significance of the title with some of the happiest and saddest moments of the character’s life as mentioned below. The happiness is short lived in the life of Rukmani and Nathan due to the birth of sons and the wedding of Irrawaddy. The reaping of good harvests brings happiness in their lives but later things change. Their sons no longer provide their helping hand to their family, the daughter’s marriage gets collapsed, the hut and the harvest get destroyed and finally the land is taken away from them. Every tragic incident turns her towards hope in the path of Rukmani’s life. When Nathan dies, she comes back to the village with Puli and Selvam with her disappointment leading to hope.

Nectar in A Sieve is viewed as a portrayal of rural India in the article “Portrayal of Rural India in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve” written by L.M Joshi. His article highlights the upcoming of industrialization and its impact on rural human living.
conditions. The elements like poverty, lack of family planning, unemployment, prostitution, zamindari system, superstitious beliefs, lower status of women, marriage system explore the rural India. The author cites an example of traditional families pointing out the tragedy of patriarchy society where sons are considered as assets and the daughters are considered as burden on the family which could be seen in the life of Rukmani. The author points out a situation in Rukmani’s life when she gives birth to a daughter, her husband does not cherish but when she gives birth to sons, Nathan feels happy.

Gurpreet Kaur (2012) in her article “Postcolonial Ecofeminism, Women and Land in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve” suggests that the novel consists of postcolonial ecofeminism. According to Kaur, there is a relationship between the land and woman. She further ensures that the lead woman character Rukmani’s identity crisis is determined through her ambiguity towards nature and spaces. It is expressive of the postcolonial environmental condition that she captures. Rukmani’s identity crisis is reconciled through the land in which the family lived metaphorically in the novel. Rukmani involves in gardening which provides her peace and security. Gardening enhances her spiritually and economically. She earns out of her cultivation and feeds her family and gets refreshment through the green environment. At the same time Rukmani undergoes trouble due to the upcoming of tannery which causes pollution affecting the natural environment. Farkhanda Nazir (2013) in the article “Women and Nature: Eco feminist Study of Kamala Markandaya’s Novel Nectar in a Sieve” suggests that Rukmani is a keen Spectator, radiant raconteur and admirer of nature. Her gardening is a symbol of spirituality and depicts her deep love for nature. Farkhanda Nazir’s study shows Rukmani’s deep concern and affection for the land and environment.

Markandaya has portrayed a true picture of village life, where Rukmani and Nathan are not as single characters but they represent the whole community, where women in spite of their hard labour are devalued and exploited as entities having meager values. Rukmani’s efforts seem to be dominant over all her tragedies that she faces in the whole novel. It can be concluded that Eco feminist’s stance to establish value for both women and nature will be regarded some day and both these entities will be given value on equal bases and as independent living beings. (Farkhanda Nazir, 2013).
Women have a significant role in the novels of Kamala Markandaya says Dr. Rakhi (1999) in her article “Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*: As a Feminist Poetics” The feminine perspective and ideology have been investigated by the author Rakhi by assessing womanhood. Rakhi (1999) in her research article comments about Markandaya that “She does not create a woman world but she presents the real world. She investigates the actual social and emotional bonds that shackle women.” The author highlights the opening lines of the novel where an old woman that is Rukmani reminiscing her life one evening. Rakhi explores her thought of feminist ideology in her article and expresses her thought that the nostalgia of Rukmani is sensitive on her part and emotional in a woman’s life. Rukmani has both happy and bitter memories in her life. Due to some genic problem, she meets Dr. Kennington which helps her to get physical fitness for baring children. Many women from the rural background hesitate to seek a doctor for the problems of infertility but Rukmani dares to meet Dr. Kennington. At every instance of her life she does not burst out with extreme emotions but lives as a spirit of acceptance and a mute sufferer. The concept of feminist poetics is explored through the character of Rukmani who is a representative of rural women all over India.

H.M Williams, (1984) in his article “Victims and Virgins: Some Characters in Markandaya’s novels” says “through Rukmani’s eyes we watch the disintegration of Nathan’s family and at last his death.” The central focus of Williams is that tragedy of Rukmani’s family is witnessed by the readers through Rukmani herself. It is evident that Rukmani is the idol suffer and a victim of her fate. She appears to be the most memorable heroine for the readers.

Rachana Mishra and Anita Juneja (2014) in their article “Markandaya’s Women characters in her Novels: A Critical Analysis” state that “while Premala is an epitome of Indian tradition, Roshan Merchant, another women character symbolizes frank, liberated enlightened ultra-modern woman concerned not only about personal freedom but also about national as well as global freedom” According to these two authors *Some Inner Fury* narrates the story of young generation caught admist the cultural conflicts. The three women characters Mirabai, Premala and Roshan are portrayed as mature women who very well adjust with their problematic life. Premala learns to adjust with her husband
Kitsamy who is totally different from her. Premala is stirred by Indianness whereas Kitsamy is a person praising Western culture. Mirabai for the sake of her nation decides to sacrifice her love for an English man Richard Roshan even after her divorce lives according to her wish concerned about her personal freedom by involving in national activities.

Ramesh Chadha, (1988) in the article “The Interplay: Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury and Esmond in India” explores that Some Inner Fury is concerned as a novel investigating women having individual awakening and identity with feminist poetics. The cross-cultural interaction in Indian fiction could be traced by Markanday’s novels as seen in this article. The article presents the idea that each and every character of the novel is the victim of their destiny. In an Indian traditional family every individual seems to be distinct from each other due to the influence of Western culture. Most of the researchers have traced out the element of cross culture in the novel. Ramesh traces out few lines from the text in order to show the character of Kitswamy, the eldest son of the family who is deep rooted with English customs, as he hates his own people who follow Indian way of living. Kitsamy’s attitude could be witnessed through these lines. “It was a hot dazzling day beyond the shade, though it was still early the air rose shimmering from the earth, the mid-summer sunlight was nearly white. My brother, in collar and tie and suit in brown leather shoes and pork pie had shifted impatiently from foot to foot.” (Markandaya, 2009). By highlighting these lines from the text (Ramesh Chadha, 1988) depicts the anglisised nature of Kitsamy.

K.U. Vibha Jain’s (2002) article “Concept of Woman in Nectar in a Sieve” praises Rukmani, the central character of the novel and says though Rukmani is down-trodden with her miserable situation due to poverty, she does not accept the defeat. Kamala Markandaya has defeated the traditional concept of weak woman and identified women as powerful being. The article “Some Inner Fury, A critical perspective” by S. Krishna Sharma (1984) states that the story is a study of characters involved in romantic aura and fury of nations struggle for independence. According to the study the novel is a mixture of romance, violence, tragedy and patriotism.
Mr. C. Sengupta, (1990) analyses the theme of alienation in the characters Govind, Kitsamy, Richard, Premala, Marlowe and Mirabai in his article “Alienation in Kamala Markandaya’s Some Inner Fury: A Study of Characters”. The author comments on various characters as Kitsamy is alienated from his own nation and his attitude is completely anglicised, Govind is alienated from other characters since he is involved in violence and destruction activities. Premala changes her identity completely in order to match Kitsamy, and accepts false image of being westernized. Richard is caught between his nation England and India, but is alienated in both the places. Mirabai’s alienation is a deliberate one that is from her own love affair. Thus alienation has assured the proportions of great problem in modern fiction, whether British, American or Indo-Anglican.

Krishna Sharma (1984) in his article Some Inner Fury: A Critical perspective say’s that:

In conclusion, a word about the title Some Inner Fury carries a romantic aurora, particularly in the non-definitive ‘some’. There is the fury of Govind and his associates who set fire to the school and mob the court which represents on a small scale the fury of a nation’s struggle for independence. There is the other fury of love which consumes Mira for a time. (Krishna Sharma, 1984).

The article “Stability and changing Social Scene in Markandaya’s A Silence of Desire” written by Mr. Ramesh K. Srivastava (1982) portrays two kinds of people one group which remain, stable and the other group which involve in changing due to the influence of British culture. The two couples Dandekar and Sarojini lead a happy life but their happiness gets collapsed due to the difference in opinion. Dandekar was a man of reason whereas Sarojini is a great worshiper of god. The impact of Western culture had changed the lives of many as Christianity was flourishing all over with many Indians getting converted into anti-Hindus. We witness Dandekar, an Indian influenced by Westernization trusting in the reasoning power than having faith in god. Through these characters the novelist portrays the changing norms of Indian culture.

G. Nageshwara Rao (1993) in his research article “Betwixt negation and affirmation: An Approach to A Silence of Desire” says that the title A Silence of Desire is a very suitable title conveying the ancient Indian thought. In Indian philosophy silencing
the desire is an important step, in the novel Markandaya employs the concept of silencing the desire in order to search the philosophical values in a man’s life. Most of the researchers have analysed the character of Sarojini in different ways. She is portrayed as a devoted responsible wife fulfilling her responsibility with excellence and is proven to be a trust worthy soul mate. Sarojini’s character is analysed with regard to Biblical perspective in the article “Images of Women in Kamala Markandaya’s A Silence of Desire: A Biblical Perspective” written by Edith Deen. The author praises the genre of Indian English fiction written by many novelists, who have portrayed women possessing spiritual and modern values.

The women in Indian English fiction are shown as good women similar to the women of the Bible who possess certain characteristic attributes, which upgrade them by rendering their duties who appear as the beacon of light giving advice for the future generations. These virtues are like pearls which are to be searched or explored or churned from the depths. Though the characters appear to be simple they carry a vision and a message and all these traits may not be apparent in the character of Sarojini, but some of the traits are myriad, which make her deeply religious woman and a devoted wife and a loving mother. Though the writer does not have the tendency to bring out the characteristics traits present in the Biblical woman Characters, certain features indicate that they also possess certain spiritual values which were there in some of the characters of the Bible.

_A Silence of Desire_ is reviewed as a novel exploring the theme of marital consonance and dissonance by K. Anand and M. Muthuvel in their article “Marital Assonance and Dissonance in Kamala Markandaya’s _A Silence of Desire._” The authors convey the thought that in every one’s married life there arise misunderstandings as experienced by Sarojini and Dandekar, but the bond which reunites the couple is their silence, the silence of desire and trust in theme. The conflict between spiritualism and faith runs through silence throughout the novel effectively. Kamal Markandaya has chosen three places home, office and ashram to highlight the silence among characters. “One can find through silence Markandaya presents the theme of marriage and how it
results in marital assonance and dissonance in psychological plane between the married

The research article by S. John Peter Joseph, (2004) “Need for the Coexistence of
Spiritualism and Scientific Rationalism: A Study of Kamala Markandaya’s A Silence of
Desire” not only convey the theme of clash between faith and reason but it strongly
proves the need for the coexistence of Spiritualism in human life. Dandekar appears in
the novel as a man of rationalism throughout but Markandaya makes a transition in the
character of Dandekar and makes him understand the need for spiritualism.

Sarojini may have been cured in the hospital but continues to retain her
faith in the Swami’s healing power. Dandekar may have laughed at the
Swami but could not help being influenced by him. Thus, the novelist
presents a world where science has its own place but only coexistent with
human faith. (John Peter, 2004).

Dr. P. Anuradha Sudheer (2013) in her article “Critiquing images of women:
Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala and Shoba De” explores the thought that
Kamala Markandaya is a sensitive writer who has identified the short comings of the
society. It is also suggested by the author that Markandaya’s novels have traditional
women acquiring certain modes of conduct in their relationships. Most of the women
characters of Markandaya possess spiritual and moral values. Anuradha (2013) comments
on the two novels of Markandaya that is A Silence of Desire and A Handful of Rice. In the
novel A Silence of Desire the theme of marriage is explored which depicts the
relationship between Sarojini and Dandekar. Sarojini is a spiritual being of Hindu
customs and traditions, her frequent visit to temples and her divine preaching denotes that
she is a typical Indian women. In the novel the author describes Sarojini as “a good
wife… good with children, an excellent cook, an efficient manager of his household, a
woman who still gave him pleasure after fifteen years of marriage,...” (Markandaya,
2009). Hence the traditional and conventional picture of Sarojini is analysed in the article
through the lines mentioned from the text.

Being women novelists, almost all of them put every effort to draw
attention to the situations and predicaments of women, by presenting them
as prominent figures in their novels. Of all the novelists, who have shown
considerable talent in projecting feminine sensibility, Kamala
Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala and Shoba De deserve particular attention because they have eeked out their own identity in the oeuvre of Indian novelists. Almost in all the novels of these novelists, women have significant place out of whom, some women are portrayed as traditional and others as modern. (Anuradha Sudheer, 2013).

The novel *A Handful of Rice* is advocated with respect to the theme such as crisis of human values by Mr. Subash Chandra, (1993) in his article “Crisis of values in *A Handful of Rice*”. According to him human nature is credited only if an individual possesses good values and morality, if morality does not exist humanness is absent. Hence Subash further questions the existence of morality filled human beings, whether the individual is trapped by the society or he is responsible for choosing the good or evil. The analysis is strongly made in order to find the cause of crisis of values in the character Ravi Shankar’s. In the research article Crisis of Values in *A Handful of Rice* Subash portrays the evil in the post-independence urban Indian society with all its corruption and dehumanization like smuggling, blackmarketeers, economic exploitations and many other evil traits.

The author further makes a comparison of Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* since there is a connecting theme of alienation and disharmony in both the novels which highlight the living conditions of poor in urban as well as rural atmosphere. “*A Handful of Rice* is the natural sequence of *Nectar in a Sieve*. *Nectar in a Sieve* reveals the misfortunes that one normally encounters in village and *A Handful of Rice* does the same in the town”. (Banumathe Balan, 2013).

The problem of unemployment is traced out in these lines uttered by Ravi in the novel: “To them too the city was a jungle, he had witnessed their violent assaults upon it too often to doubt that. A man-made jungle, as full of snares and traps and unkept promises for them as for him and his like”. (Subhash Chandra 89) The description of Ravi’s desire and ambition of living is pictured as he wishes to have a bed, a cycle, a proper room for living a happily with his wife Nalini but he could not achieve it, getting depressed he meets Damodar for seeking some criminal activity for which he might get a good payment.
Ravi is forced to indulge in corruption due to his helpless condition, but Nalini advises him to stay away from corruption. Ravi accepts the words of Nalini but his inner conscience makes him wonder about Damodar’s help. The paper also makes an analysis of Ravi and Nalini, Ravi often indulges in theft and criminal activities whereas, Nalini kindles goodness in the heart of Ravi. Both stand apart from values but they love each other. Ravi becomes vexed and ill-treats Nalini and their only son Raju and decides to involve in criminal activities. Ravi realizes his mistakes only towards the end of the novel hence the transformation in his character is the central focus of the novel. The crisis in Ravi’s value ends with a change, he gets purified and becomes good.

Describing the writings of Markandaya Krishna Rao says; “The variety and quality of the ‘felt life’ in her fiction renders it label-proof in that it indicates the direction to a plausible resolution of, rather than offer definite solutions to, human problems”. (Krishna Rao 77) The novel is viewed as a classic tale of lower middle-class society by Promod Kumar Singh in his article “A Handful of Rice: A Classical tale of lower Middle Class People.” The author mentions that Ravi could not give a proper medical treatment to his son due to his poverty, like many urban poor middle-class families and he brings back his wife Nalini and new born babies back to his home within thirty days in order to avoid medical bills. The source of economic exploitation is identified in the lines: “The increasing price-rise of essential commodities gives pain to Ravi and Nalini like crores of poor Indian masses. Ravi reacts sharply when he comes to know that the price of rice has risen from rupees eighteen to twenty.” (Promod Kumar, 2001). According to the review Kamala Markandaya has skillfully represented the vision of day-today problems of poor masses in India. Apart from it the author has focused on gender discrimination in particular saying about the birth of girl child.

*A Handful of Rice* deals with urban economics, characterized hoarding, black-marketing, soaring prices and exploitation. The main themes of this novel are urban poverty, the exodus from the village to the city, and the disintegration of the rural way of life under the impact of large-scale industry. The novel is narrated by the omniscient narrator and not by the hero-protagonist, Ravi. (Visalakshi 19)

In the article “A Tryst with Conscience: A Handful of Rice” K. Venkata Reddy explores the theme of hunger. The author compares the two novels of Markandaya *Nectar*
*in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice* and says that the former novel depicts poverty only in Rural India but the later deals with urban life with its struggle for survival. Mr. Reddy analyses the life of the protagonist Ravi Shankar, and says that Ravi Shankar is “A perpetual victim of poverty, he is tired of hunger. To escape from the rural poverty and hunger, he leaves his village and joins the general exodus to the city” (Venkata Reddy, 1990).

Arthur Pollard (1984) in his article “Kamala Markandaya’s *The Golden Honey Comb*” praised the artistic beauty of Kamala Markandaya for creating such an excellent story of Indo-British encounters and further develops his idea commenting on the novel that *The Golden Honey Comb* paves way to recognize the role of women at frontline which is evident in these lines: “Though this novel is a tale of father and son, it may be said to be dominated by women- the Dowager, Mohini, Janaki and then Usha and Sophie.”(Arthur Pollard, 1984). Pollard represents the idea that the women characters play a vital role in the lives of two majestic men, Bawajiraj II and his son Rabindranath.

Mohini stirs patriotic consciousness in these two men who later realize their responsibility and render their duties for Indian independence. A detailed study of characters is also made in the novel with reference to the plot. Rabindranath is the most fascinating character in the novel; he is exposed to a new way of life unlike his father. Rabindranath is introduced to Indian culture and tradition and he is educated and becomes a dedicated citizen of India ready to fight against the British rule. Ravi involves in all sorts of mass struggle and decides to build a dam for the sake of people even though his father was against it. The father and Son stand apart by thoughts but they are united by souls having the relationship of a father and son. Markandaya posturises many events of mass struggle present in the history of Indian nation and in the epilogue the information of India’s freedom is given.

The content in the article “*The Golden Honey Comb: A Critical Appraisal*”, Kamala Markandaya traces out the adolescent aspects of Ravi. He develops love for Janaki, a working girl in palace garden. He also gets attracted towards Jaya and has physical relationship with her. Later we find Vimala the Dewan’s daughter falling in love for him but the Dewan arranges her marriage with another guy, but the Dewan does not
mind his younger daughter Usha having interest on him. Another girl, the daughter of Sir Arthur, named Sophie gets attracted towards him. “And yet another glimpse of closeness of the two distinct races is to be had in the hunting spree of Rabi and Miss Sophie. The two people also come very close to each other during the wild yet harmless Holi celebrations in Devapur state.” (A.N Dwivedi, 1984).

Mr. S.P Appasamy, (1978) in his article “The Golden Honey Comb: A Saga of Princely life in India by Kamala Markandaya” views the novel as depiction of colourful life of Indian Princes which narrates the facts of historical vision. The author makes an analysis of women characters in the novel and says that they are strong enough to make choices and take decisions. Bawajiraj’s mother, Manjula and his mistresses Mohini try to revive him but they do not succeed but they are successful with Rabindranath whom they educate in Indian ways. The power of women is voiced out in the article in the following lines: “It has often been remarked though women do not have a place in public life, they have a very overpowering influence on the affairs of both private and public life” (S.P Appasamy, 1978). The women characters Manjula and Mohini realize the importance of refining Rabindranath and they play a vital role in transforming his character by stirring nationalism in him.

A.V. Krishna Rao, (1997) in his research article “Golden Honey Comb: A Brief Study” mentions that Markandaya projects the image of national consciousness and gives solutions to human problems through her fictional creations. “Kamala Markandaya’s novel, in comparison with those of her contemporary women writers, seems to be more reflective of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India as she attempts to project the image of the changing traditional society.”

B. Sudipta, (1995) in her article “Women characters in the novels of Virginia Woof and Kamala Markandaya” says that both Markandaya and Woolf write about the victims in their writings and Markandaya presents a real picture of women and their struggle in the society. The similarities in these two writers are they focus on the familial affiliations and subjugation of women. “The quintessential element in a woman is her motherhood-the essence of which has been encapsulated in the novels of Virginia Woolf and Markandaya. They expose the inherent woes of womanhood in their distinct styles
and techniques”. (Sudipta, 1995). The author highlights two novels of Markandaya in order to trace out the concept of independent women through the characters Mirabai, and Roshan in Some inner Fury and the theme of universal motherhood through the protagonist Rukmani in the novel Nectar in a Sieve.

Mr. Prem Kumar (1987) from Washington in his article “From Confrontation to Reconciliation: Kamala Markandaya's Evolution as a Novelist” comments on the growth of Kamala Markandaya as a novelist. Prem Kumar explores his vision in the respective novels as: Nectar in a Sieve depicts the rural India of Post colonialism with the impact of East-West encounters. The women characters in Some inner Fury are viewed as Markandaya’s depiction of traditional and modern women, whereas A Silence of Desire is reviewed as clash between spiritual faith and scientific reason through the characters Sarojini and Dandekar. A Handful of Rice justifies the poverty and misery of rural people who migrate to towns for their livelihood as the protagonist Ravi quest in search of employment. With regard to the novel The Golden Honey Comb the author remarks that the Indo-British war is highlighted in the colonial India in the novel. “Markandaya shows the alienation of royalty from their own people through an ingenious scheme, the Subsidiary Alliance, which reduced the princely states to mere "golden honeycombs." (Prem Kumar, 1987).

Through the review of Kamala Markandaya’s research Articles in the select novels, it is evident that themes like nationalism, cultural rootlessness, identity, exile, isolation, multiculturalism, feminism are mostly dealt. Many researchers have focused on the themes which are mentioned above and very few researchers have stated her as an Existential writer. The research gap identified through these reviews is the presence of Existentialism and Feminist Existentialism. Hence the research aims to analyse the feminist Existential concepts in the select novels of Kamala Markandaya with respect to her five novels Nectar in a Sieve, Some inner Fury, A Handful of Rice, A Silence of Desire and The Golden Honey Comb. The research is entirely a thematic study with regard to the concepts of Feminist Existential philosophies. The research work will prove Kamala Markandaya as a Feminist Existential writer by interpreting the themes of De Beauvoir’s Feminist Existential ideologies.
Existentialism in Indian English Novel has its roots in western philosophy. Since our civilization has been tending towards modernization. It has become inevitable for man to ask himself who he is and what his relation is to the physical and social world. The modern Indian is surrounded by the forces which are commanded and controlled by existentialist dilemmas. (Dr. H.P Singh, 2015).

The thesis is a sketch of critical understanding and interpretations of the feminist existential issues and how Kamala Markandaya has brought this idea in her literary works. An understanding of the feminist existential issues and a detailed study towards the protagonists of Markandaya’s novel bring out the optimistic approach of the philosophy of Existentialism. The objective is to identify the existential themes, thoughts and ideas in Indian English literature. The thesis will examine select novels from existential concern from feministic perspectives and will deal with the required focus on the living conditions of the women protagonists. A study of feminist existentialism in select novels Kamala Markandaya conveys the facts of womanhood. Born in an unknown world and accepting the facts of life, experiencing defeats and success shape an individual. In today’s world women have achieved great success but injustice still prevails. Every woman has some bond with men as a mother, sister, wife and daughter, hence the cultural and historical misconceptions of women as inferior must vanish, there sustains humanity. Respecting the emotions of one another denotes humanity, in order to safe guard humanity women should not be suppressed and put to suffer. Women must deny their secondary role in the society as Beauvoir provokes in her book The Second Sex with the powerful themes which is discussed in the next chapter. The chapter gives an analysis of major tenants of Existentialism, Existential philosophers, Existentialism in Indian English Fiction, Kamala Markandaya’s focus on the existential characters, Feminist Existentialism, the different phases and types of Feminism, Feminism in India, Review of Literature and finally exposes the knowledge gap.