CHAPTER – V

AS A SOCIAL ENTITY: ROCKING AND RULING

The test for whether or not you can hold a job should not be the arrangement of your chromosomes.

- Bella Abzug

5.1.0. In the earlier chapters, it has been discussed how the emancipating women in the novels of Lessing and Rajam Krishnan in the family were revolting and relinquishing the various roles foisted on them. This chapter further investigates whether the society ascribes any roles on women, and whether the protagonists fit into such roles or walk out as misfits and get eliminated or whether they bring about any transformations sustaining their individuality and identity. This chapter also investigates into the novelists’ portrayal of women as a social entity and the protagonists’ skill in maintaining successful interpersonal relationship with those other than their own family members. It estimates the social consciousness of the novelists; their perspective regarding the society in relation to the status it accords women. The other focus in the chapter is on women’s social identity and their awareness and effectiveness in fighting for social cause. It also probes into the role of society in a woman’s life as to whether it is oppressive or supportive. The attitude of other men whom the heroines encounter in their social life and whether their relationship is positive or negative from women’s angle and the novelists’ say over the issue are also scanned.

5.1.1. In this connection, it becomes necessary to undertake an analysis as to the nature of the role that the society assigns women, the responsibilities and capacities it expects from her. Women’s willingness to accept the socially invested roles, their ability to fit into the slots or their rejection and revolting is estimated. It is also vital to analyze the importance that Lessing and Rajam Krishnan attach to women’s expectations from the society, the possibilities of fulfillment of women’s societal expectations and the scope of women achieving
the required societal transformations if any as befitting their individual female dimensions.

5.1.2. The society, the larger unit of patriarchy as ever approves only those ideologies and strategies, which uphold male superiority and female subordination and hence to achieve women’s total bondage it has relegated her to domestic hole. However, the industrial revolution and economic constraints and man’s greed for luxury introduced the necessity of modifying domestic women into career women also.

5.1.3. The void, which Lessing’s protagonists experience in their familial life they endeavor to fill it through their career as artists and creative writers and undertaking active role in communist party. Living alone in an era of war and turmoil Anna is a truthful person and realistic writer wants to say disgusting things about life in her books but as she suffers from ‘writer’s block’ writes them and keeps it away because she feels it is chaotic and she has contempt for chaos.

5.1.4. Lessing’s heroines are endowed with remarkable sense of self-identity who strive to stabilize their position in the society and to uphold their freedom from parental domination. Mary the heroine of The Grass in Singing from the status of a petty railway official’s daughter rises through her education, industrious nature with positive career objectives. She emerges a successful, efficient, affluent secretary, a ‘niche’ in the town enjoying her prosperity and leisure like a princess. She is very happy to escape from her melancholy and ever-grumbling parents to live in the city going for movies and attending sundowner parties—above all her total freedom to do whatever she desired.

5.1.5. Anna is a successful professional. Anna’s success as a novelist is appreciable since she lives on the royalty from her first novel, Frontiers of War. She starts the second novel but suffers from ‘writer’s block’ and is unable to give form to her chaotic note makings. She identifies that the cause of her inability to write is being lonely, the absence of an understanding, loving, sensible male
partner and the post war England. Nevertheless, she does not compromise with her convictions of writing. When an American Television offers to buy her story and mould it as one-hour teleplay, converting the story of ironies of war as upholding war, irritated, Anna shocks the editor saying she is a communist just to chase him away deliberately. Martha disgusted with her suffocating experience as daughter, wife and mother also takes ambush in the communist party. Some times the social workers are demotivated. Anna was employed in a magazine editor’s office and visited people in distrust who wrote letters. At a certain point she is enveloped in depression observes, well, does it make all that difference? In this year of ‘welfare work’ I can’t imagine that the letters I’ve written, the visits I’ve paid, the advice I’ve given, even the practical help has made all the difference” (GN:318).

5.1.6. The society views upon the new living pattern of Ella and Molly– two females in a house and of course, male friends make professional jokes about the lesbians but Ella retorts about homosexuals among men. The conversations of the two women are sophisticated and full of critical insight, implicitly critical of men, for a sample here are a few phrases they use: “…class ridden country; this soil frozen soil; feel loaded up; culture: damned mother-ridden Englishmen” (GN:31). Moving to the Indian scenario Raja Krishnan’s protagonists turn out to be more determined and revolutionary in establishing their identity as successful career women and in fact go one step ahead and prove to be absolutely idealistic in dedicating their life for social transformations and emancipation of innocent ignorant mass living in the slum.

5.1.7. It is strongly engrained in Meena the orphan girl’s psyche that she would educate and grow up to be a respectable person in the society. Her target is always hard work and development. Though brought up in slum by her foster mother she grows up with moralistic and healthy habits, completes her graduation, and seeks employment in a school. Her ambition is not satiated with that and she wants to do post graduation in education. The commercial attitude of the school
where children are taught in a foreign language and imprisoned in a classroom through out the day is very disagreeable to Meena. She dreams about establishing a play school for the slum children exclusively and seeks the local political leader’s support, to construct the school in the slum.

5.1.8. Meena is full of innovative ideas and desirous of transformations. The educational system, which teaches, all subject to children of four years; the methodologies of theoretical learning are not agreeable to Meena. She desires innovative techniques in teaching mathematics and hates teaching them English. Her conviction is that law should imprison parents who send their four years old children to schools, where they are imprisoned for ten hours. She condemns schools as business houses, which do not offer a child the courage to face the hurdles of life. She ridicules the parent’s craze for training their children to be communicative in a foreign language and she detests the parents who are educated and affluent yet unable to teach their children the basics at home.

5.2.0. Lessing criticizes the English society and English men in the persona of her heroines. The protagonists like Anna and Molly are bored with their life, culture, country and their men. Molly spends a year abroad in Europe and she regrets the necessity of returning to England. She ironically criticizes England: “I liked at the nice decent faces, everyone so kind, and so decent and so bloody dull” (GN:61). Anna her friend also accepts that every body that they know are likely to spend their lives grumbling about England. Phoebe Connelly under the title, ‘When writing the personal was revolutionary wrote in The American Prospect:

In tracking Anna's psychological movements—her recollections of her years in Africa, her relationship with her best friend, Molly, her travail with men, her disillusionment with the Party, the tidal pull of motherhood—Lessing pinpoints the pulse of a generation of women who were waiting to see what their postwar hopes would bring them. What arrived was
unprecedented freedom, but with that freedom came unprecedented confusion (Oct: 2007).

5.2.1. Anna and Molly are rendered as women of varied identities and versatile talents. They do not fit into any stereotypes, and specific mould, rather could change as Tommy comments: “If there happened to be a revolution, they would be something different, if they had to be” (GN: 52). Their attraction for communism is also mainly because the party meetings are always bubbling with busy activities and lot of active people participating like literary men, publishers and friends. They yearn for a change from the monotony and drudgery of average women.

5.2.2. Anna and Molly are disgusted with their society. In the very beginning of the novel, their conversation is a stretch of comments about England:

All the time I was away, everything came naturally, the men treat you like women, you feel good, I never remembered my age, I never thought about sex. But as soon as you set foot here you have to tighten your belt and remember, now be careful, these men are Englishmen. Expect the rare exception. And you get all self-conscious and sex-conscious. How can a country so full of screwed up people be any god? (GN: 61).

5.2.3. Anna feels the place is full of hatred, envy, and people being lonely. On the surface, everything is fine— all quiet and tame and suburban, but underneath it is poisonous. Molly who has returned after a year from Europe would rather leave soon: “I’d go tomorrow if it wasn’t for Tommy. …Country full of screwed up people” (GN: 61). They feel everyone around them is neurotic and “…especially it is the way of this damned class –ridden country” (GN:30), feels Molly disgusted with the attitude of her society.
5.3.0. In all the chosen novels it is witnessed those women who aspire to come out of the traditional fetters in the patriarchal families are able to do that only after much hurdles and struggles because their non-conformity poses lot of problems for them, both from the family and the society. Rekha enters career with nil experience both in official and societal behaviour but learns her lessons. Unable to cope up with the double standards decides to quit the job. She is strongly convinced that she has to fight the injustice directed against career woman and for that she needs the support of a women’s forum and resolves to join one. Rekha is unable to adapt to her career role not because she is inefficient or less qualified, it is because she is unwilling and unable to relax the strict moral principles her orthodox family had nurtured in her regarding male intimacy and relationship. She is unable to cope up with her situations in the society. Though she in dismissed yet she decides to fight the atrocities and injustice through a women’s forum.

5.3.1. When a maternal uncle from North whose daughter is studying medicine, on his visit insists that Rekha should either perceive higher studies or go for a job, Rekha’s grandmother expresses her fear over society’s gossip and the possibilities of Rekha getting into trouble if she goes into the outer world for job. However, for shortage of funds they would have got her married by then. It is only because that Rekha’s father has deserted the family they consent to send Rekha for job temporarily. Rekha was very happy to escape her imprisonment at home when her uncle suggested that she should take up a job. The family, which hesitated so much to send the teenage girl for job fails to support her when she after some months returns home, complaining. The family refuses to sympathize with her about bitter experiences at her office— the unusual liberties taken by her male colleagues with sexual intentions, the humiliating way she was dismissed because she refused to accept the gift of watch that her manager presented.

5.3.2. Rekha who yearned so much to escape from the custody of home and insisted on going for job, eager for rising up in life was shocked at the scope of women being scandalized so very easily. Now she is surprised that the family only
looked up on her as an idiot girl who has lost a very good opportunity and that there could be nothing wrong in accepting the gift of watch. Rekha’s vital question is to what extent this compromise of moralities can be extended; she could go for a movie with her manager and what next? “He will ask me to stay till 7’o clock, he will ask me accompany him for a movie – shall I go?” (C:154). Her uncle’s reply “He only asked you to accept the watch why do you build up so much? You are very impertinent, you are like your father” (C:154), wounds her and in addition the reaction and comments of her orthodox grandmother shocks her: “She has thrown away her job” (C:152). Rekha’s uncle is more concerned with the verbal details of the letter such as the difference between terminated and dismissed than with the humiliated / hurt female emotions and conscience of Rekha who has been all along nurtured and conditioned through middle class morality, codes of chastity and behaviour.

5.3.3. A carrier woman is also expected to adjust and compromise at her office which woman with self-respect refuse to and hence she has to pay the price for her non-conformity. Ironically Rekha’s post is filled in by another girl Mangala who is ‘co-operative’ than Rekha. Nambi, the office assistant comparing Rekha with Mangala points out: “Look at Mangala just for the sake of sari, powder and cooling glass she is ready to compromise any of her rights, those hanker for freedom are ready to go to any extremes” (C:158). Mangala is appreciated by Nambi, “I never thought you will be so forward” “I have no other choice for a better future” (C:158), replies the elated Mangala.

5.4.0. The fact, who becomes social worker and why, is noticeable. Only those disappointed with their unrewarding familial roles or those who learnt a lesson from experience, cheated or feel exploited, undertake social work. Valli in Rajam Krishnan’s novel Mailampattu Valli starts her career as a child-labour and grows up to be a maid servant. Illiteracy, ignorance and the influence of immoral corruptive society pushes her to elopement at teens but luckily, a schoolteacher
brings her home. Though she looses her meager possessions like some jewels and cash, she gains wisdom from her bitter experience.

5.4.1. Cinema and bad literature always corrupt youth, Lessing also reinstates the point in the case of marry in The Grass is Singing. It is only when Valli’s lover leaves her in a new place Valli discovers that she neither knows the address or bus route properly. Her utter ignorance astonishes her and this brings a turning point in her life. With the help of the social work group she gets literacy through adult education program. This totally transforms her life and she evolves as an idealistic character. When she is eligible for medical admission she chooses to educate her slum people and study in part-time while undertaking a career. She creates a model village. She sacrifices all her personal concerns about marriage and settlement in life. She in preoccupied with social awareness and her sense of responsibility towards her society is astounding.

5.4.2. Devi, though a homemaker with average education is a prudent women who contributes economically through self-employment as a tailoring and handicrafts teachers. This offers her the scope of wider contacts with women’s association and certain VIP’s. Though all the time conscious about her snobbish, domineering; complex–ridden husband; she manages her commercial life and familial life very intelligently and appreciably. She develops many acquaintances because of her friendly attitude and cheerful nature. She is very broad minded and sympathetic towards Ranjani, a victim of molestation because the girl was organizing vigorous anti-dowry campaigns. Devi in spite of her uncooperative self-centered, narrow-minded husband provides accommodation for the victim girl in her house and even contemplates her son’s marriage with Ranjini.

5.4.3. Devi becomes tired trying to play her angel role throughout her life. However, the over domineering husband and overtly self-centered children drive her to the extent of leaving the family with a resolution of joining the association for women’s liberation. Devi is successful in her social relationship. Good
teacher, acquaintances respect her, develops intimacy and they are ready to help her in time of necessity. Her own circles of friends understand but whereas it is only the family, which disappoints and cheats her.

5.4.4. Lessing’s heroines are not women of limitations. For Lessing to apply her considerable literary skill to a true portrait of what the personal world of women looked like felt revolutionary. As Katherine Fishburn, author of a monograph on Lessing, observed, “Although what Lessing wrote at the beginning of her career no longer seems shocking, her early work did help break new artistic ground by validating the idea that the experiences of individual women were just as representative of modern life as those of individual men.” They thirst for more exposure to social happenings and social causes. At the same time they are bold enough to reject outright with the same intensity they anchored after it when hey realize that the social movements are also male dominated hypocrisies. Though they are eager to join communist party, after being for sometime in it, it sounds hypocritical since nothing much in achieved. Anna and Molly turn critical about communists and even ridicule them. In their observance most of the party members have half-written a novel and are looked upon as licensed humorists. Though like Anna and Molly Martha also feels awkward to accept that the party is not very genuine in the beginning but after sometime she is filled with rage at:

…having been cheated; she felt as if she had been lied to, led by the nose, made a fool of, all her life. She was angry with herself as she was with the people whom she saw in this beautiful naïve moment of awakening as an organized and cynical group who consciously devoted themselves to deceiving her and her generation out of their birthright (PM:373).

5.4.5. On self-realization that they have not done much to the party they leave the party. Moreover, they are unable to conform to its hypocrisies such as the
party’s tendency to hate and despise writers who join the party. The members respect only those who do not respect the party, their automatic defense of Soviet Union, the truth that any British who want to join or those who join the party, leave it after a while but remain branded as communist not fitting anywhere because the communist party also views them as British secret agents. It is an honest self-realization on Anna’s part that in spite of being in the party she is very critical about the party. Anna and Molly finally, are conscious that, “…the party has been saddled with a group of dead beurocrats who run it and the real work gets done in spite of the center”. Therefore they finally decide to leave the party with this conclusion, “Well, I’m so sick of it all, I don’t thing I want ever to bother with it again” (GN:64). In the post war period when people prided in joining communist party, pretended to like it, and aped the hypocritical behavior connected with it, Lessing through her protagonist gives a strong punch, disclosing the truth behind the hypocrisies of the communist party.

5.5.0. Rajam Krishnan’s favoritism for Marxism is evident in her delineation of Valli’s character and her achievements. Valli transforms from an ordinary ignorant maidservant who runs away with an acquaintance at work place to an idealistic character who creates a model village later. After her bitter experience of unsuccessful elopement in which she is looted of her meager jewels and money, she returns home with the help of a schoolteacher who guides her and moulds her through adult literacy. Valli’s mother is constantly worried about Valli’s marriage whereas she evolves as an exceptional woman from her lessons of everyday life in slum. It is society, which shapes and moulds valli rather than her mother. She becomes acutely conscious of the lowly life of her people who live a frustrated life in filth and poverty.

5.5.1. Valli greatly aspires to stop her village men migrating to the city. She regrets that the western culture has spoilt people so much that the luxury and artificial attractions lure them so much that they crave after money. She is pained that they sell all the produce from their agricultural lands for money sake.
Attracted by the artificiality of the city life; mistaking that they can enjoy carefree life of the city without much toil or physical exertion, move to the city only to suffer in poverty, filth, disease and unemployment. With the help of certain renowned social workers, she sets up a rehabilitation center in her village. The last few pages of the novel describes beautifully how these social workers bring about a drastic change in the eating, dressing, working and living habits of the villages and restore the prosperity and dignity culturally and economically. Rajam Krishnan’s eagerness in pointing out social atrocities is explicit in all her characters.

5.5.2. Rajam Krishnan uses Meena as her mouthpiece to hone her Marxist principles and beliefs. Meena express many vital socioeconomic views about India; educational policies and the necessity to transform future India and Indian youth. Her comment that in our country, the employment connected with necessities such as agriculture, farming, weaving and road lying is all considered lowly is truthful and thought provoking. Professions like medical and engineering are registered only for rich people. The value of profession is lost in Indian society, education should cater to individual aspirations is Meena’s strong conviction.

5.5.3. She is very responsible and self-righteous. She aspires to use her education for the emancipation of the slum people who are ignorant and idiotic, to indulge in research to uplift the society. She rejects the options of being employed in a bank. Meena even when under very crucial circumstances which lay many hurdles in the way of her goals nevertheless undertakes great risks to hold on to her ambition.

5.5.4. Meena is also a remarkable character that in spite of many disadvantages. However, an orphan girl brought up in the slum by her foster mother Annamma a well of human kindness, Meena emerges as an embodiment of achievement. She graduates, becomes a teacher and is quite ambitious to
acquire higher studies with the noble aim of helping the slum people among whom she grew. She is also eager to serve the downtrodden women especially whom she pities for their misery and innumerable sufferings whom the male torture for money and burden them with the sole responsibility of child rearing. Though initially her colleagues show reluctance in accepting her into their circle as she is from the slum background, Meena’s prudence, hard work, educational qualification, efficiency, balanced attitude and self-righteous character awards her the accreditation of the society. Meena never shows nor experiences an iota of inferiority complex, which is really an appreciable trait of Rajam Krishnan’s characterization.

5.5.5. Devi’s sensitiveness to social cause and injustice needs appreciation. Sridevi, the protagonist in The House, objects to the corruptions in the civil supplies office. The protest she puts up against the exploitations by bridegroom’s family is interesting. She shows her retaliation by disappearing when they visit her house as part of the custom to meet the bride. Rendering shelter to Ranjini a victimized girl in her house denotes her nobility. Above all considering her as a prospective bride for her lawyer son — these emancipated attitude in a homemaker, an Indian middle aged mother is really remarkable and hence stand proof for the author’s ambition in achieving transformation in woman and in the society.

5.6.0. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. She painted the vision of a destructive discourse of women in family heralds, protest and rebellion. Her protagonists learn how to explore their inner eye at the same time life is full of trials in understanding their own heritage. The burden of choosing marriage and maintaining certain role with in a marriage and the agony arising out of the discrepancies between what a female protagonist hears— the society’s powerfully persuasive discourse and her own small questioning inner voice is realistically portrayed by Lessing. Above all, how the heroine is able to sustain a dialogue between the two, of course painfully is truly cast in The Grass in Singing.
5.6.1. The society is always critical about an individual especially about the women. Hence the kernel of the matter for women is always ‘what would people say?’ This is nurtured in to their very fabric from the childhood. Gossip and rumors are the best tools of the society in shattering the integrity of a woman. A woman is safe, if she stays inside the patriarchal custody, conforming to the varied roles entrusted to her, otherwise she is in pieces. Society’s views and criticism are much dreaded rather than respected and hence abided by women. Society is always ready to smear rubbish at the least provocation and possibility. Gossiping is one such cruel weapon the society uses to destroy a person’s self-confidence, self-esteem, and more especially in women because they are more vulnerable category.

5.6.2. It has already been mentioned in the earlier chapters that women are conditioned from childhood to be self-conscious, on guard about others opinion and approval. Hence, consequently some women dread much society’s views criticisms and even the silly gossips. The society is always prying and devalues a person. Mary is a specimen of one such female character who succumbs to societal gossip that takes wrong decisions and is victimized in the process of trying to conform to an absurd and mismatched wedding.

5.6.3. Society is always oppressive. Insists on women’s conformity, which is always painful and futile for women. Individual, women especially fear society so much that even an insignificant gossip causes drastic changes in their lives. Mary is the daughter of a petty railway official. Her childhood was full of economic pressures and strife between father and mother. She was happy to escape to a boarding school. At sixteen after leaving school, she takes up job in an office. At twenty, she had a good job, her own friends, and a niche in the town. In short, she was leading the comfortable carefree existence of a single woman in South Africa. However, she never realized how lucky she was and that she was living the similar way the daughters of the wealthiest in South Africa - and that she had the choice of doing as she pleased, marry anyone she wished. Her mother
and father die one after the other before she is twenty five till then nothing happened to break the smooth and comfortable life that she lead. Though there was nothing very distinctive about her she was very happy - perhaps her only positive quality. At thirty, she had become the personal secretary to the employer and was earning good money. Though she looks no different from the Mary of sixteen she almost felt outraged that she had reached thirty, did not celebrate the thirtieth birthday, and allowed it to be forgotten. This is an indication that she has some discomfort about her age now. As she was earning good money, she could have taken a flat run her own car and lived happily, with all her presentable personality but this was against her instinct. She liked the crowds of girls in the girl's club where she lived eating in the big room, and coming home after the pictures to find a friend in her room waiting for a little gossip. Impersonal air, detachment disinclination for intimacies and contacts established her as a person of some importance to whom others can tell one's trouble almost the role of a comfortable maiden aunt. She was unconscious of about a faint aloofness. She was quite content to be taken out by men who treated her like a sister, enjoyed sundowner parties, went to pictures even five days a week, was never in bed before twelve or later, almost made friends with half the town, never alone for even a moment except when she was asleep. She had a profound distaste for sex; there had been little privacy in her home and there were things she did not care to remember. There were times when she felt a little restless and dissatisfied but by morning, she would have forgotten it. However, the most vital thing is women are unable to choose to decide what they need exactly.

5.6.4. Society's oppressive nature victimizes Marry the most among Lessing’s selected heroines. Mary too did not know what she wanted; something bigger, she would think vaguely a different kind of life. However, this regretting mood did not last long. She was so satisfied with her work. She felt sufficient and capable; pleased with her friends whom she received on, with her life at the club, which was pleasant and gregarious, where there was always the excitement of other people,s
engagements and weddings and with her men friends who treated her just like a
good pal with none of this silly sex business. Anyhow, she becomes
conscious suddenly of a pressure to get married and especially when she was
suddenly brought face to face with the implications of the other people— the
society.

5.6.5. When sitting on a verandah in the house of a married friend, she
overhears accidentally people talking in low voices about her. They were
discussing her age, how it is seen on her skin now-a-days, her dress and hair style
unbefitting her age and the predictions that she would / should Mary somebody of
her father's age — and such discussions throw her off-balance. This is indeed
the author calls, a little incident, apparently unimportant and would have no
effect on a person who had the faintest idea of the kind of world she lived in but
this gossip had a profound effect on Mary. People do fear society so much, we
give importance to others opinions and views about us so much that it more often
leaves us hurt and unhappy.

5.6.6. Mary changes her make up though she feels very dissatisfied and
uncomfortable about it. Then she begins showing interest in men. As suggested in
the gossip she picks a man above fifty, a widower with half-grown children but
after proposal, when he starts making love to her, a violent revulsion comes over
her and she runs away. From then on, she dreaded and avoided men over thirty
though she herself was over thirty and all the time she was looking for a husband
without admitting it to herself. The fatal gossip has destroyed her own picture of
herself and Mary was finding it hard to create another to enable her to go on living.
She could not exist without that impersonal casual friendship from other people;
and now it seemed there was pity in the way they looked at her, and that they
impatiently looked upon her as futile. She had nothing to grasp hold of and felt
emptiness. She was afraid to meet people and she was revolted.
5.6.7. The gossiping society intrudes her bliss of affluent unmarried woman’s life creating confusion in Mary about getting married and she lands up, into a disastrous marriage. If only she had been patient and waited for another suitable young man of the city, she might have escaped the highly cruel poveristic dwelling in the suburban. The women's talk overheard by her drive her to a frenzy to get married quickly.

5.6.8. Her state education, had prepared her fit to be a successful secretary in an office. When it comes to her personal life, no one has given her any clue or idea about the reality of life. She is shown as fond of seeing movies and reading trash, bad novels. This has created only a figure of hands and hips in her imagination; hence, she is unable to fit Dick into this image a real man. She does not have a single guide, neither her parents nor any intimate friends though she is friendly with half the town books and movies does not help a woman to live her real life. Dick also another lonely man does not get any joy out of this ill-matched marriage. He has own image of the perfect girl an idealized image that he can never meet in reality. These two were living according to the standards and judgments of the society. They did not identify their own real self and its needs and preferences. They are manipulated by the society the neighbours and friends around them.

5.6.9. Mary is a very efficient secretary and enjoys the bliss of the highly paid successful career. She is perfect in her dealings with inter-personal relationships at her office and women's hostel in the city. However, matrimony into which the society has forcefully pushed her brings all disaster in her life. She turns out a failure in handling the natives who come to assist her in household chores as she lacks adaptability in handling these natives. Mary while in the city exemplifies as an excellent secretary which capacity was rewarded with high pay once in the farm, as housewife is utterly a failure in dealing with the natives though, “Now she was analyzing the farm, and the organization of crops in a way that made him feel humble”. (GS: 122) One after the other leaves her giving notice. Dick
desperately wished that she could treat them in a better way but she resented it. When Dick was very sick and she had to assume the charge she really liked it: “The sensation of being boss over perhaps eighty black workers gave her new confidence; it was a good feeling, keeping them under her will, making them do as she wanted” (GS: 112). Unable to leash properly her newly won managerial ship she misuses it which ends in her fatal murder.

5.6.10. Mary is unsuccessful in coping up her inter-personal relationship with Moses the African native and hence is victimized by male supremacy. The society only blames Mary in this context and pities Turner her husband. Lessing reveals with sarcasm the fact that society is always biased to a woman even if she is the victim it pities the husband rather than the woman who is the victim. The fear of Dick's anger drives her to be submissive to the Black servant and pleads him not to go. Mary observes carefully for changes in him but he behaves as before a machine without a soul. After a while being assured he doesn't want to leave she began again to use the cold biting voice to make sarcastic comments on the natives work especially to be relieved from her own memory of her shameful collapse. Moses straight away tell her to her face that if she were cross he would leave then onwards. Henceforth she could see that there is a sort of personal relation developing between her and Moses which is explicit in his voice, way of addressing her as though to a child; he started giving her lunch and at his own impulse no matter whether she liked it or not. Certainly, there was a new relation between them and she felt helplessly in his power. She saw no reason why she should; yet she felt the usual anger rise in her at the tone he used to her; at the same time, she was fascinated, and out of her depth; she did not know what to do with this personal relation. This is stretched to the extent that Mary is pampered and directed by Moses so much that she is unable to comb her hair or change dress without his assistance.

5.6.11. The doctor suggests that their house needs proper roofing and it is the heat, which has much change in Mary. The doctor insists that she must be taken to
some other place on a vacation. Dick gets another English man temporarily to take care of his farm while he and Mary went on vacation. This man is shocked to see Moses’ domination over Mary. She hoped that somebody like Peter would save her from the binding clutches of Moses. As a consequence of this moral support lent by Peter she speaks harshly to Moses asks him to go away and Moses disappointed enraged and jealous by the intrusion avenges his emotions with Mary's murder on the early morning when she is about to depart for a vacation. However, it is long before that Mary had been spiritually murdered. After her murder what the white neighbors thought about the murder was quite extraordinary. They pitied Dick Turner with a fine fierce indignation against Mary as if she were something unpleasant and unclean, as if it served her right to be murdered, for women relationship with any men other than her own husband always means more troubles and complications in her life.

5.6.12. Society has been always cruel to an individual. Long before the murder marked them out, people spoke of the Turners in the hard, careless voices reserved for misfits, outlaws and the self-exiled. The Turners were disliked, though few of their neighbours had ever met them, or even seen them in the distance. They (Mary and Dick) simply kept to themselves this was the reason for their dislike. They were never seen at district dances, and the people felt they must have had something to be ashamed of; their secluding themselves was a slap in the face of everyone else. The house in which they lived a little box of iron roofing does not befit the standards of white living.

5.6.13. Compared to happy carefree life that Mary led in the city superfluous money, dance, and movies many men to take her to parties, etc., marriage has only complicated her life and offered no happiness to Mary or Dick. Who is responsible for their tragedy?—— they themselves; the society; Mary's parents; poverty; racial discrimination or all these factors in unison? Death is her penalty for retrievals from putting up a fight and for her unwanted conformity to society’s view.
5.6.14. Those women, who try to conform against their self-will, only face disaster. Those who fight back and establish their identity, discover their social and professional status. However, they are temporarily depressed due to oppression but they do not disappear into the society. They do establish their, ideological professional self. Those who conform to the society’s norms though it means disrespecting their instincts they survive. But others like Mary perish tragically and are unable to survive because they could not cope with conformity willingly and consistently.

5.6.15. Lessing comments on adaptability in this novel. A person needs to be extremely adaptable—this adaptability alone redeemed them in society, it was strange to see how quickly these ex-English schoolmen, extremely English accustomed themselves. At first, they may be different, so proud and withdrawn; but cautiously learn the new ways, with a fine sensitiveness, an alert self-consciousness. Men are not forcefully nurtured to fit into any particular slot, any conformities and hence adaptability is easier and successful for them. Mary was living in city out of a feeling of superiority to men. In fact, her contempt for men protected her from men, an egoistic efficient secretary, obsessed with the heat and boredom, so bored as to embroider her underwear; unable to adopt to the native’s indirect domination, turns naïve in relationship to others. Lessing’s criticism against the society which she lived was, “Sjamboks are not so good for people less sure of themselves” (GS: 14)—Mary turns a victim of atrocious murder.

5.7.0. The selected novelists are feminists with pluralist view because they conceive of an equitable world in which women and men can be equal and yet different. They envisage a world free of male privilege and women’s subordination, a rebalancing of the social, economic and political power between women and men. The world that feminism promises to reconstruct will be devoid of ‘masculinist hierarchy’ but will retain sexual divisions. In this connection what is the conviction of our novelists? Do they want a society devoid of men? To
understand this notion their delineation of male characters under societal background and their intrinsic significance need to be analysed.

5.7.1. These men, the tools of oppression in Patriarchy are not depicted as villains. In fact, it is the realists’ focus on the hypocrisies of these males imbibed through unjust masculine nurturing, which makes these novels not only personal but also political. More than the men of filial relation, men outside the family, in professional context such as the boss, male acquaintance and friends are depictions as men minus morality, vicious, greedy and inconsiderate of women’s values and Morales. Men in society are oppressive, only cheat, and exploit women taking advantage of their subordinate position, empower them through physical and mental aggression, violating and tress passing limitations at the least possibilities and provocations. The protagonists do fairly well as career women and social workers as they are recognized for their qualification, efficiency and potentiality. However both the British and the Indian authors focus on one side the society which accords them recognition and accreditation and on the other side the darker side of the society with exploiters and cheats who await ever ready to engulf and extinguish women. The tools of the oppressive society are male ego, sexual desire, gossip and scandalizing, girl child abuse and sexual extravagances. However, our protagonists who are rebels most of the time do not succumb but put up a protest and fight rather than be victimized.

5.7.2. There are certain stigmas prevalent about male female relationship also. Men cannot digest their girl friends or wives drawing the attention of another male. Paul Ella’s man, Douglas Martha’s husband restricts their women’s movement and makeup constantly in public. Anna is disgusted with her observation the moment a wife leaves her husband for delivery or for other reasons, immediately men ring up their wife’s friends and try to commit them into a sexual encounter. Men always consider their relationship with other women casually and do not attach any significance or seriousness or commitment, she is
just a ‘flighty piece’ but whereas women are sentimentally or emotionally entangled with a man whom they meet often.

5.7.3. Paul who visits Ella for five years expects invitation to go with him when he is leaving for Nigeria but only later she realizes that he has started withdrawing long before, in fact he was always withdrawn and never with her. He had been calculative but whereas she suffers, missing his companionship almost feels as in imprisonment for the next few years—engulfed in by a shadow and in fact insecurity nausea sets into her. She almost starts fleeing from men like a teenage girl. Ella the new woman can live without a husband but not without love whereas Muriel the homemaker manages to live without love but cannot live without a husband though he sleeps with another woman for four years.

5.7.4. Moses, the South African male servant, is typical of men in taking advantage of Mary’s pitiable circumstance. For the fear of arousing Dick’s anger, she asks him not to go, almost pleading and shaking with sobs. Moses subdues Mary by directing the course of her day starting with that she has to improve her health until grooming and dressing. She is unable to come out of his strange clutches into a sort of personal relationship. She hates it and at the same time being somehow fascinated yields to his directions. Mary does not muster up courage to do without him nor does she protest or check his impertinence. Though it seems he is only enacting his role as a dutiful extra-caring servant it is clear from his endearment to Mary to stop her vacation that he too has developed some emotional involvement with Mary. May be he is indirectly punishing her for her extravagance: her whipping him across his face when she went to supervise the natives when Dick was ill. When Mary shows signs of hatred and disinclination to comply with his domination he immediately takes quick revenge by murdering her. Mary and Dick are also responsible for his conduct as they both take risk by submitting themselves to the native in whom slavery was nurtured predominantly for ages. A person cannot be enslaved always. The pent up emotions escape and he avenge at the suitable opportunity. He too seems to have only contempt and
hatred towards his mistress. When a man encounters subordination in the name of racial discrimination he turns violent, but women who are subordinated only fight with silence as weapon, wither away without any protest, or return for compromise.

5.7.5. The Slatters, Mary’s neighbours in the South African farm personify ‘society’ for Marry and Dick. Even if a woman is, murdered people only pitied the husband as in the case of Mary and Dick Turner as if she were something unpleasant and unclean, and it served her right to get murdered.

5.7.6. The prosperous neighbouring farmer Sally tries to covert Dick’s farming land by some hook or crook. He often misguides Dick in planting crops, or gives wrong suggestions such as building up a pigsty during wrong season. He tries to get Dick under his wings by tempting him to take loans from him. But Dick never yields. Moreover Mary’s reluctance to be friendly with them, her rejecting their invitation for parties, all these irritate them and they spread rumors among the suburban people many of whom had not even seen Dick and Marry at distance. Sally is indirectly relieved and happy that they are going away on vacation and that he could somehow try to transfer Dick’s cultivatable lands to his name. If only Dick and Marry had been cunning and tactful, they could have thrived on Sally. Mary in the city while employed was also detached from the society, yet she was happy leading a content, superfluous life. However, after marriage the same detachment from the society only brought her tragedy and notoriety.

5.8.0. Since woman’s place is integrally embedded in social life, any change means potentially changing many things—personal identity sexual mores, family arrangements, childbearing customs, educational patterns, religious ideology, political and economic structures. Eisenstein says, “In my understanding of the term ‘feminist’, then, I see an element of visionary, futurist thought. This encompasses a concept of social transformation that as a part of the eventual
liberation of women will change all human relationships for the better” (1984: 144).

5.8.1. The singular contribution, made by John Stuart Mill to the arousal of feminine consciousness, was The Subjection of Women (1869) the most controversial and provoking strong hostility. He concentrated in this book on the abilities of women and made vigorous plea for their right to enter any trade or profession. Mill’s sympathetic attitude towards feminism was one aspect of his belief that the liberty of the individual is necessary for the development of the society. As he says, he wrote The Subjection of Women to show that the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes— the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in itself, now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality; admitting no power of privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.

5.8.2. A woman is safe if she stays inside the patriarchal custody, playing her varied roles entrusted to her, otherwise she is in pieces. Meena and her mother need the protection of the Mason the local leader. A woman cannot live alone. Annamma a widow and her adopted daughter Meena to live in the slum need the support and approval of the local leader Kannairam Mason. As Kannairam has access to the local MLA, he is powerful in the slum. People living there in the authorized area have to pay him rent and Annamma needs his recommendations to serve as house cleaner in some houses. In fact, Meena is able to graduate decently without any disturbance only because the mason supports them and acts as a protector impressed by Meena’s studiousness and intelligence. But when grown up Annamma does not consent to his proposal of Meena’s wedding with the mason’s son, he is extremely enraged and reacts. He abuses them and threatens to kill them. When Annamma is dead, Meena does not feel safe even for a single night, her hut is destroyed and possession’s looted. Deivanai, another destitute who helps Meena when in need offering her dresses and warning her about the
danger awaiting her if Meena returns to the slum. For Devanai there is no house, no husband, no job and no commitments but pregnancy is endless for her. The local men exploit her against her consent and willingness. It is only Annamma though she grumbles gives her support from time to time including of accompanying her to the hospital for abortion.

5.8.3. Kannairam featuring in *The Sound of Fury* by Rajam Krishnan is an influential person with political contacts, almost a local leader in the slum. He is a self-centered man full of ego and male chauvinism. Mannikam, Meena’s brother though living in the slum has some noble traits whereas Kannairam exploits others for his prosperity. He is ready even to exploit Meena for whom he had some regard because of her disciplined ways and ability for education. Once when he sniffs the Meena an attractive educated girl can be used as bait to influence local MLA Perumal he begins brainwashing and compelling Meena to adjust with them. He least bothers that Meena is a very unsuitable match for his son but threatens her into marrying his son.

5.8.4. When Meena’s mother is dead, he voluntarily spends lavishly for her cremation ceremony. The next day threatens Mannikam and Meena to repay all the expenditure because he is angry that Meena does not agree either to his plans for her marriage nor to adjust with the MLA. He imprisons Mannikam using his influence. If only Meena had returned to the slum the next day her future might have been as pathetic as that of Thevanni the orphan destitute.

5.8.5. Kannairam who had been a moral support when Meena was a child, when she is desperate for consolation, sympathy and security he himself threatens her security and behaves cruelly destroying her hut and looting her belongings. So whatever interest he has shown on Meena is only out of self-centeredness and just to utilize her as tool for his own aspirations and ambitions. He does not have any regard for Meena as an educated individual young woman.
5.8.6. It is not only the slum men, demoralized living in filth and poverty who exploit and cheat women. There are men who are rich, influential and powerful and yet very immoral, debased and diabolical in exploiting women for their ulterior selfish motives.

5.8.7. Meena such an intelligent girl with innovative and revolutionary ideas only feels reduced to a meek frightened insecure girl especially after her foster mother’s death especially when in the company of exploiting men like Ramalingam the correspondent. Women without strong background are though of as their prey whom the Male wish to manipulate according to their whims and fancies. Such men think they have every right over the women who seek employment. Not only for the employers but also for the male colleagues and even acquaintances in the surrounding, woman is very easily approachable whether she consents or denies is only secondary.

5.8.8. Ramalingam— Manager of Gnannadasamy mission children cultural academy is one such typical exploiter in the novel *After the Sound of Fury* a VIP, business diplomat, a B.L. graduate associated with many departments and secretary to a Mission, yet he is a man of duel character. He poses as a disciple of swamiji parading as an intellectual with broad views on women’s liberation and such jargon. However, in reality the teachers working in the school are paid very less, have to stay after school hours for coaching classes, cuts a day’s pay if they take leave without information, the certificates of the employees are taken away, and thereby making sure, they do not indefinitely leave the job. He promises the parents that the school would provide shortly its own transport. But for three years children are transported through cycles with motor and framework. The school called Children’s Cultural Academy is like any normal school where children are held inside the class like prisoners without scope for any playful or healthy atmosphere. For construction of meditation hall, he takes donation from students; when there is a ‘sacred lamp’ pooja this is also conducted in the school premises
thereby extracting hard labour from teachers and students. He forces teachers to sell tickets for the pooja.

5.8.9. Innocent girls are pulled into scandal for the sake of men’s publicity even before they realize the situation they were caught into. As Meena is smart and attractive, Ramalingam gets cheap publicity by publishing a photograph of him self and Meena posing as though he is dictating and she as taking notes, which Meena hates but could, not disapprove, as he is her master. He knows pretty well that the implications in his circle would be that he has illicit contacts with Meena, which could blemish her reputation. However, he does not have regard of anybody’s self-respect especially that of poor people.

5.8.10. Ramalingam is a man of false pomp and splendour. The way he behaves with Meena on the very first day, the impertinent questions he puts Meena regarding her parentage exhibit his debased character. The irony is the so-called intellectual he who prides over his accomplishments and endeavours to write a book on Indian Art and Culture criticizes the noble act of mother feeding an infant as an act of selfishness. He comments that everyone expects something else in return for all their activities even a mother feeds the infant only to enjoy the physical ease, for the pleasure that she receives in turn and otherwise she wouldn’t do it. The mentality that every happening is based on some deal, some reciprocation, expresses his debased, diabolical and inhuman principles. He is the soul embodiment of indignity, cheat and roguishness.

5.8.11. He criticizes harshly shamelessly Meena’s parentage and suggests that most probably, the head sister of the convent who showed extra care for Meena’s comfort could be her own mother and that is the reason why she has shown special affection in Meena’s case. His cheeky remarks such as women feeding a child only to ease herself is very disgusting. He thinks that Meena could be influenced easily and would yield to his wish if he bestows her with little attention like small gifts and offering delicious dishes when she visits him and by dropping
her in his car when it is late. He speaks to her rudely when she refuses to accept such gifts and the car drive; he scorns her accusing that she is too proud for her background. Women are forced to comply with the behaviour of upper class men even if they are strong willed and stubborn. Men go to any extent to influence them. It is said that his wife has left abroad due to difference of opinion with him. No wonder such an influential man is unable to influence his wife to live with him.

5.8.12. To keep up his pretence as a well-wisher of orphan girls like Meena he arranges for her wedding a very unsuitable match with Sarangan his driver whom he calls a distant relation. On the contrary he prides himself over his benevolence for arranging the marriage under swamiji’s presence and with the aid from his mission. Sarangan who has close contact with Ramalingam is very scared for Meena’s safety when she stays in Ramalingam’s house for a single night, as she does not have any other abode at that time. Ramalingam seems to be such a rogue that a woman cannot be trusted to be safe with him even for a single night. Sarangan later after marriage even suspects Meena of illicit relationship with Ramalingam having accepted to stay with him. It is very ridiculous that such a debased scoundrel delivers lecture about Indian culture, Indian woman, their chastity etc. in public. If only he had been a noble man he would have shown parental affection towards Meena, given her scope for higher education under his protection but he only makes her notorious by publishing the photograph.

5.8.13. After Meena’s marriage, he cuts off his intimacy just acts as a detached superior, does not allow concession to her and cuts off the pay whenever she takes leave. Ramalingam is a specimen of scoundrels who exploit women for their pleasure. There is no difference between the so-called intellectual aristocrat Ramalingam and MLA Perumal and Kannairam the chief mason in the slum. They all belong to the same category of men– the rogues.
5.8.14. Lessing also boldly criticizes men for the advantages they take with
women and not sparing even the protagonists’ fathers. Martha’s own criticism
about her father is that Mr. Quest was a voracious flirt, “…a rake but he did not
know it” (PM:46). In addition, she recollects the memory of her father and other
women around encouraging each other and his robust enthusiasm and relish
during such moments.

5.8.15. Mary in *The Grass is Singing* (1950) is unable to have normal sexual
life with Dick her husband. The novelist implies in this connection that Mary had
very little privacy when she was a child, often dreamt as an adult some obscene
images of her father, and would wake up reminded about the unwashed strong
smell of her father that she had experienced as a child when playfully he pressed
her face on his lap.

5.8.16. She experiences an aversion when the middle-aged man who proposes
to marry her, tries to kiss her, she runs away literally from the place and very
much upset about her behaviour later. All her boy friends treat her like sister and
when Dick her husband regrets that he cannot afford a honeymoon she is very
happy about it.

5.8.17. Men inside the family though are not very violent are yet in their trials
to conform with established norms of masculinity do cause emotional violence
directly or indirectly. Other relationships outside the family— men in the society
such as friends, colleagues, superiors and acquaintances are unreliable, deceitful
and ever ready to exploit women; their only interest being physical satisfaction or
establishing their superiority over women, in other words endorsing masculinity
and usurping the female.

5.9.0. The patriarchal society does not respect a woman for her education and
potentials but rather attaches value only to her family background and her lineage.
Success in life does not just depend on education; salary but family background
alone gives power and strong hold in the society in patriarchy. Mannikam
Meena’s brother is noble but he is not powerful to safeguard Meena. Irrespective of her potentiality, a woman is only viewed as a means of pleasure, for the male’s requirement. In the absence of a proper family background, everybody tries to own her. She gets lot of publicity and opportunities for high-level contact like Ramalingam the correspondent, Perumal – the MLA etc. Nevertheless, they are all hypocrites and cheats who treat women cheaply for their own pleasure. Perumal invites her to Mahabalipuram for pleasure and Ramalingam acts noble by proposing her to Sarangan. If only Meena had been weak and selfish, they would have exploited her for her youth and beauty and cast her off later. If only she had been cheap, she could have capitalized the situation and risen up the ladder of economy and splendor in the hypocritical society. For Meena her self-respect was the only amour. Even at puberty she did not enjoy any sensation or thrill, on the other hand she is only filled with disgust as in the slum puberty is made much publicity and only creates the undercurrent of thoughts that it is only a token that a woman is ready to be the tool of pleasure for a man. Even when she was married, she did not have nay such sentiments of emotional thrill or expectation. Even pregnancy did not bring her happiness — on the contrary she was filled with fear of the extra expenditure; extra mouth to feed and other fears regarding care taking of the baby and of herself in the event of Sarangan’s migration to Dubai.

5.9.1. Theivanai a secondary character in *After the Sound of Fury* is yet another example for how cruel the men in society are. She is another destitute woman in the slum who is exploited by men like chief mason Kannairam for satisfying their animal instinct, the physical pleasure. Though she strives to earn for herself as a floweriest or doing other menial jobs such as selling milk packets and so on — the society especially men do not leave her peacefully to lead her own life. From time to time, she becomes pregnant and seeks Aaya Meena’s foster mother Annamma to assist her during abortion like taking her to the hospital. Annamma though scolds her provides her food often ad helps her when she is sick. Theivanai complains that though she wishes to lead a good life
blameless life, the local men do not allow her to do so. They drag her at midnight stuffing her mouth with cloth and force her to have sex with them. Such destitute women without a family of their own to protect them are victims of the society, which treats them cruelly. The other women in the slum do not have any consideration or kindness for Theivanai except Annamma and Meena. Gratefully Theivanai repays Meena when she is in danger of molestation during a critical situation giving her the only new sari when Meena has lost all her belongings. Even when Annamma is dead, Theivanai remains a constant moral support for Meena and Manikkam. She brings them food or cooks in their own house when they are grief ridden. In fact Meena reconciles with Sarangan only to avoid herself degrading into another Theivanai. Theivanai’s life is so pathetic that she dies during the third abortion, which is too late. It is very pathetic that Meena comes to know about Theivanai’s demise only after two months. Even if she had known earlier, she could not have performed any decent cremation, as Sarangan would not have allowed it. Meena believes that they would have used her body for dissection from the mortuary. When Annamma is dead the ladies to whom she had been maid servants do not offer any help other than the monthly salary it is only Theivanai who readily gives her only new dress to Meena which is a timely help, a magnanimous act for her status. Society is focused as opportunistic and ungrateful.

5.9.2. Kannairam who has been a sort of patron all along her childhood, plans to get married Meena to his son. Kannairam a mason has strong political contacts. Meena and Annamma who does not like his proposal wait eagerly for a suitable chance to move away from the slum when they are financially strong. Meena’s correspondent Ramalingam a man of false pomp and vanity also shows some interest in Meena. He compels her to assist him in his endeavours to write a book on ‘Indian Tradition and Culture’. When he publishes a photograph of Meena and himself in the cover page of magazine as publicity for his future book, Kannairam
is enraged as Meena has developed close contacts with Ramalingam who belongs
to the opposition party.

5.9.3. Kannairam on one hand threatens Meena to comply with his wish,
which is becoming his daughter-in-law. He even promises her that with the aid of
the local MLA Perumal he would set up a school in the slum, which Meena could
run as the head. He even takes her to Perumal for an interview. Perumal a typical
politician is not interested in Meena’s ideals or ideas. He carelessly invites her to
Mahabalipuram to discus the project that shocks, enrages Meena, whereas
Kannairam takes it very easily, and advises her that if only she made certain
adjustments with them she could one day become the MLA herself. Meena has the
scope of high-level contacts and they expect her to adjust with them, which
Meena’s noble nature does not allow her. She rather feels insulted by such offers
and hopes she could live an independent decent life caring for Annamma with her
own economic support.

5.9.4. For Meena life after puberty in the slum had always been fearful and
insecure. She is a gentle girl who gets up everyday at 3.30 a.m. to use the common
toilet in the slum. She yearns to get away from the slum where there is so much
corruption, ignorance and exploitation. She thinks she can be happier in a better
surrounding, more respectable and independent. After Annamma’s expiry, she is
totally at the mercy of Kannairam and his gang in the slum. When she was
growing up it was all right, as he rendered his support for her education and
dwelling in the slum. Once when matured, strangers like Kannairam and
Ramalingam propose bridegrooms for her marriage. They do so hoping they are
offering her a decent life that which she could never imagine as for her blemished
background.

5.9.5. Meena feels now that she has some basic qualification she dreams of an
independent decent life, offering a decent comfortable life for Annamma to whom
she is much indebted. Meena never feels guilty about her background and she
does not have any soft dreams about love and married life. However, people around her do not leave her alone. In the school where she works as K.G. teacher, she is unacceptable among the circle of teachers who treat her differently for her slum background and consider themselves as superior and respectable. On the other hand, big shots like Ramalingam the correspondent himself shows special interest in her and invites her home everyday in the evening and assist her in his writing a book. He tries to cover her up by offering delicious food, drinks and gifts of costly pen etc. When she refuses, she scorns her for being too proud for her low background. People around her do not recognize her for her identity, as an educated self-made individual. She could conform neither to the slum nor to the school atmosphere. All she wants is self-identity and to be treated like any other human irrespective of her parentage that is her slum background, her beautiful youth etc. She is not happy with the proposals, as they are all uneducated and not from very decent background. In fact Ramalingam confuses her by pretending as though he is going to propose her for his own son, for a fraction of her valuable time Meena too has vague hopes that he has only proposed for his son but soon she learns it is only for Sarangan his driver he has proposed her. Critical circumstances like inability to carry on life in the slum after Annamma’s demise, pressure from Kannairam to marry his son, fear of being molested and raped all these push her towards accepting Sarangan’s proposal though she does not have much preference or inclination. Thus, societal values compel or threaten a woman to abandon their original aims and desires.

5.9.6. Society exploits young and old women for various reasons. Whenever they seek any change from their monotony or take upon pleasure trips alone in the absence of male there in no security. In Rajam Krishnan’s novel Valli’s mother and a gang of old women start on a journey to her native hometown to participate in a spiritual temple festival. To their astonishment, they are looted of their jewels and cash and imprisoned for thieving the house where they take shelter. Then
Valli comes to their rescue and with the support of neighboring village social worker group releases them.

5.9.7. In general, the patriarchal notion is that women are jealous because they are narrow minded and very possessive. However, both the novelists portray predominantly the traits of jealousy in their male characters. Paul who reads Ella’s writing always criticizes her and never agrees to her convictions or appreciates her. He is a psychiatrist calls himself the doctor of soul yet could never accept Ella’s talent whose very first novel fetches her royalty to carry a superfluous life for some years. Unable to appreciate spontaneously without constraint “I’ve read one of your stories. It was rather good.’ He said it with pain, as if would rather the story was bad” (GN: 192). Anna is filled with feeling of hatred and resentment when he makes some crack about the fact that she has written a book — “…he resents it, makes fun of my being ‘an authoress’. (GN: 217)

5.9.8. She helps him to reply some queries in women’s magazines yet he is very sarcastic in his remarks about Ella’s writing. The Indian male protagonists are not any different. Sarangan also objects to Meena’s career. He wants her to be totally under his shelter and custody. Devi’s husband also could not digest her circle of acquaintances that come to learn tailoring and handicrafts. He throws away the cloth pieces and other item she keeps in is shelf. He sees to it that he does not stay at home when she begins her classes in the afternoons. Mannikam Meena’s brother is an antithesis the opposite of Ramalingam. Though poor and though Meena is not blood born he is so ambitious to a good status. He helps her in whatever way in her endeavors, slaves for the mason the local political leader who is influential, with the meager sum that he earns he would bring cosmetics for Meena even neglecting his mother. This is a very noble male character in contrast to other womanizers and immoral cheats.
5.10.0. Rekha the protagonist’s experience as a career woman in the novel *The Chains* by Rajam Krishnan is a typical, realistic, unexaggerated sample of the diabolical behaviour of some men in work place. Nambi her immediate boss tries to draw Rekha into intimate relationship. His compulsions to accompany him to the hotel, his detached casual way of talking while he scratches her leg underneath the table, his cracking obscene jokes, his constant efforts to maintain closeness with her and to detain her for longer hours in the absence of other employees and finally his gift of watch which he himself tries to tie in her wrist holding her hand — all these irritate Rekha and frighten her for she is not used to male company or behaviour as she was so long brought up in the secured, secluded orthodox household. When she objects to Nambi’s behaviour she is only advised by well-wishers to leave the job but even before that, Nambi dismisses her because a woman uncooperative to male’s desire would not be tolerated. The irony is the orthodox family, which restricted her so much taking up employment, now criticizes her for her unadjustable behaviour and comments that the foolish girl has thrown away her job because of her arrogance and haughtiness. This double standard of the patriarchal institutions shocks her more than Nambi a third person’s undue extra vengeances.

5.10.1. In *The Chains* while women like Mangala are attracted towards Nambi’s flirting and provoking behaviour and exchanges, Rekha detests his behaviour. She feels he is taking liberties with her, whereas Mangala’s question is why should she safeguard her chastity and toil for the family as a cook in the Doctor’s family where she is employed. Nambi in fact compares Mangala and Rekha and interjects that when there are women like Mangala to give men whatever they desire in return for petty gifts like saris, powder and watches and cooling glass Rekha is unwanted in the office and he dismisses her. Rekha only tears the order, throws at him, and decides to find some other job. She is not ready to compromise with Nambi at any cost. She is shocked to find her family revolting against her quitting the job.
5.10.2. Rekha is another noteworthy young woman who transforms from feminine to feminist phase when circumstances put her face to face with a larger society, which is contradictory to her conservative background and breeding. Certainly, this transitional period between conformity and non-conformity is stressful and much tasking for Rekha. When a woman attains economic independence and acquires considerable educational skills, the cocoon that she fitted into earlier is not suitable for her now. Rekha who was idle and ignorant at home, for the past two years after matriculation once employed learns a lot from her six months experience. She is attracted towards the Women’s Revolutionary Organisation, which fights for women to be intellectually respected, to draw equal pay, allowances and equal job opportunities on par with men and to fight against the degrading of women through advertisements and in the name of art. Rekha strongly agrees to the fact that it should be proclaimed to the world strongly that: “we shall prove that each woman is not just a symbolic representation of gender differences” (C: 122). She decides to adjust the annual membership somehow without informing the truth to her grandmother who would not permit her undoubtedly to join the movement.

5.10.1. Her mother who is very anxious for the approval of the society rejects her husband who returns after some years of separation because he is a pauper and has been serving in a slaughter house and hence taken to drinking which he himself honestly confesses. The reason she gives Rekha for her refusal is what would the society say — her father’s background would only be a negative in her marriage market and hence she remains quite when the family members whip her father calling him an imposter. But Rekha recognizes her father and outraged at her mother’s behaviour retorts “who are they four, the society? What did they do for you?” (C: 78). She offers assurance to her mother to leave the unfavourable household. Rekha is astonished at the double standards of the society and family.

5.10.2. Rekha is surprised that her family disapproved to her leaving the job. She is disappointed because she expected understanding, approval and sympathy
from then but she did not get any. She decides to acquire more technical skill such as learning typewriting and shorthand and also decides to join the women’s forum, as they would understand her better and offer her solutions for her troubles.

5.11.0. In the society, comparatively a woman who is docile submissive and subordinate or the one who pretends to be so is able to thrive well whereas ideologies taught to a woman are that to be a woman is to be ideal, good, pure, holy, patient, all-suffering, ever-faithful, the ever-pure wife, never returning injury etc. Ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood—marvelous unselfish, all suffering eternally forgiving. “In the west woman is wife in the east she is mother,” says Swami Vivekananda in his book My India Eternal (1993:67). In India, the woman was the visible manifestation of God and her whole life dedicated to the thought that she was a mother, and the perfect mother must be chaste. However, feminist do not think that we are men and women, but only that we are human beings, born to cherish and to help one another. When Swami Vivekananda was asked about solving women’s problems his answer was, “Hands off! They will solve their own problems” (1993:77).

5.11.1. The meaning of feminism is not some eternal and universal essence, but, the difficulty of the sexual relation between women and men. This relationship is a social order, in which unconscious and conflicting drives and desires pressurize on the conscious behaviour political though alone cannot always anticipate these drives. What both feminism and femininity stand for is not woman who like man is no more or less than human, but the social organization of sexual difference and division. When it is examined what regard recognition or reward women are bestowed in comparison with men certainly we come across many discriminations. In education and individual talents, women excel but it is not appreciated only slighted away or ridiculed. As professionals and employees, women are excellent workers but paid less comparatively. Those who exercise ‘feminine charms’ only, they are rewarded irrespective of their intrinsic talents or
qualifications. Both men and other women in the society keep a woman who behaves like man that is independently and confidently at checkpoint.

5.1.2. Wherever women have access to education, they are empowered. Still even in a highly sophisticated country like France 95% of the women are assaulted. There is an argument woman are genetically / biologically weaker and hence they are assaulted but in that case children are also weak. Why men assault women can be traced back to primordial ages where men hunted and women just shared the meat. Then women might have developed laziness, thrived on men, and may be that is the reason why men were ill treating women. But now women have started working and yet why women are physically assaulted by men?— because men lack ethics in their education and upbringing, but whereas women is socially conditioned to be tolerant, magnanimous, sacrificial, submissive, loving, caring etc. What needs to be changed is this social and psychological conditioning and serious counseling should be offered to the society to develop new ethics, which need to be included in the educational system for boys. Traits like endurance, patience, tolerance and sacrifice should be inculcated in a boy child also.

5.1.3. A higher percentage of women now hold managerial and executive jobs these days than they used to in the past. True we have come a long way, but it is not still far enough. According to a study of more than 400 executives (74% of them women), conducted by an International Organization Development expert Adrian Savage, a majority of those surveyed believed that different standards were used to judge the performance of women and minorities. They also felt that the ‘glass ceiling’ seriously hampered their career advancement potential as compared to their male counterparts with similar qualifications and experience. Even in a seemingly technologically advanced liberated and forward thinking country like US, only 5 percent of all senior manager positions are filled by women. What’s more, the remuneration of female manager is a mere 68 percent of what their male counterparts earn on an average.
5.11.4. Lack of pay parity along with the omnipresent glass ceiling continues to impede the career advancement and success of women in business. But women have their own special strengths and abilities that can, with a little planning and strategizing, help them come on top even in fields that are typically seen as male bastions. Many a time it is the social framework rather than the company that hinders career progress of women. Women are more reluctant than men to put themselves forward as competitors, further, they are more likely to sacrifice their career or leave the corporate world entirely for the sake of family.

5.11.5. Modesty has traditionally been seen as a virtue and it is not easy to unlearn what was drilled into them at an early age and change their roles at work. As a result, women are relatively less aggressive at workplace about promoting themselves. No matter what their career aspirations, women are capable of busting every last male sanctuary and achieving dizzy heights of success and glory through sheer talent, hard work and determination though they have to work twice as hard as men to prove themselves on par with men.

5.11.6. Doris Lessing is now widely regarded as one of the most important post-war writers of the twentieth century in English. Using detailed, realistic descriptions, symbolism, and imagery to evoke a wide range of environments and moods, Lessing achieves what Edward J. Fitzgerald termed “tension and immediacy” in her work. Critics argue that her enlightened portrayal of marriage and motherhood, her anti-apartheid stance, and her experimentation with genre and form have made her an exciting—and often controversial—literary figure. In fact, commentators have regarded her exploration of such complex issues as racism, communism, feminism, psychology, and mysticism as courageous. Several critics have discussed her place within world literature and have investigated her influence on other writers. In The Encyclopedia of World Biography Thomson Gale states, “Lessing was deeply concerned with the cultural inequities of her native land”.
5.11.7. Women become authors of their own lives, exposing a struggle to experts and define themselves through coming to terms with their post experiences. Reversal of sex roles—nothing more innovatory in such fictions—is the complaint of literary academy. This is only typical of the (male) academy’s response. ‘Reversal of Sex Roles’ in itself is very adventurous and astonishingly innovative. Fredrick Karl’s view on all fiction by women writers in the Post-1960’s period is “The ‘female experience’, like all other experiences must be handled in modern and post modern terms…” (1985:424), just repeatedly learning the experience, he feels is old-fashioned. Lessing expresses an intense struggle for sexual definition, in the preface which makes her earlier work so remarkable, especially in The Golden Notebook Anna is an embodiment of ‘feminine consciousness’. “…I had written a tract about the sex war…” (1983:10)—though the author is surprised to view this is how the readers have perceived her novel still this novel focuses on sexual relationships and problems of independence for intelligent women.

5.12.0. The protagonists do fairly well as career women and social workers as they are recognized for their qualification, efficiency and potentiality. However both the British and the Indian authors focus on one side the society which accords them recognition and accreditation and on the other side the darker side of the society with exploitors and cheats who await ever ready to engulf and extinguish women. The tools of the oppressive society are male ego, sexual desire, gossip and scandalizing, girl child abuse and sexual extravagances. However, our protagonists who are rebels most of the time do not succumb but put up a protest and fight rather than be victimized.

5.12.1. Meena is full of innovative ideas and desirous of transformations. The educational system, which teaches, all subject to children of four years; the methodologies of theoretical learning are not agreeable to Meena. She desires innovative techniques in teaching mathematics and hates teaching them English. Rajamkrishnan uses Meena as her mouthpiece to hone her Marxist principles and
beliefs. Meena express many vital socioeconomic views about India, educational policies and the necessity to transform future India and Indian youth.

5.12.2. Rekha enters career with nil experience both in official and societal behaviour— nevertheless learns her lesson. Unable to cope up with the double standards decides to quit the job. Though she in dismissed yet she decides to fight the atrocities and injustice joining women’s forum. Ironically, another girl Mangala who is more 'co-operative' than Rekha fills in Rekha’s post. Though non-conformity poses certain discomfitures, they still endeavor to uphold their self-identity.

5.12.3. Only, those disappointed with their unrewarding familial roles or those who learnt a lesson from experience, cheated or feel exploited, undertake social work. Rajam Krishnan’s favoritism for Marxism is evident in her delineation of Valli’s character and her achievements. Valli transforms from an ordinary ignorant maidservant who runs away with an acquaintance at work place to an idealistic character who creates a model village later. The last few pages of the novel describes beautifully how these social workers bring about a drastic change in the eating, dressing, working and living habits of the villages and restore the prosperity and dignity culturally and economically. Rajam Krishnan’s eagerness in pointing out social atrocities is explicit in all her characters. Devi’s sensitiveness to social cause and injustice needs appreciation. Devi expresses her objections to the corruptions in the civil supplies office.

5.12.4. Mary is a very efficient secretary and enjoys the bliss of the highly paid successful career. She is perfect in her dealings with inter-personal relationships at her office and women’s hostel in the city. Society has been always cruel to an individual. Long before the murder marked them out, people spoke of the Turners in the hard, careless voices reserved for misfits, outlaws and the self-exiled. The Turners were disliked. Society’s oppressive nature victimizes Marry the most among Lessing’s selected heroines. The gossiping society intrudes
her bliss of affluent unmarried woman’s life creating confusion in Mary about
getting married and she lands up, into a disastrous marriage.

5.12.5. Mary is unable to cope up successfully her inter-personal relationship
with Moses the African native and hence becomes victim to male supremacy. The
society only blames Mary in this context and pities Turner her husband. Those
women, who try to conform against their self-will, only face disaster. Those
who fight back and establish their identity, discover their social and professional
status. However, they are temporarily depressed due to oppression but they do
not disappear into-the society. They do establish their, ideological professional
self. Those who conform to the society’s norms though it means disrespecting their instincts they survive. However, others like Mary perish
tragically and are unable to survive because they could not cope with
conformity willingly and consistently.

5.12.6. Compared to happy carefree life that Mary led in the city–
superfluous money, dance, and movies many men to take her to parties,
etc., marriage has only complicated her life and offered no happiness to
Mary or Dick. Who is responsible for their tragedy?— they themselves; the
society, Mary's parents; poverty, racial discrimination or all these factors in
unison? Death is her penalty for retrievals from putting up a fight and for
her unwanted conformity to society’s view.

5.12.7. Since woman’s place is integrally embedded in social life, any change
means potentially changing many things — personal identity sexual mores, family
arrangements, childbearing customs, educational patterns, religious ideology,
political and economic structures. Eisenstein says, “In my understanding of the
term ‘feminist’, then, I see an element of visionary, futurist thought. This
encompasses a concept of social transformation that, as part of the eventual
liberation of women, will change all human relationships for the better.
5.12.8. The selected protagonists are women whom the authors have invested with sense of individuality and hence the heroines are not the mediocre women who happily fit into or pretend to fit into home-maker angel identity. They are unwilling to disappear into the extraordinary cover of motherhood sanctity but they are individualistic and realistic personalities with an aim and desire of their own.

5.13.0. The society is always critical about an individual especially about the women. Hence the kernel of the matter for women is always ‘what would people say?’ This is nurtured in to their very fabric from the childhood. Gossip and rumors are the best tools of the society in shattering the integrity of a woman.

5.13.1. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. She painted the vision of a destructive discourse of women in family heralds, protest and rebellion. Society is always oppressive. Insists on women’s conformity, which is always painful and futile for women. Individual, women especially fear society so much that even an insignificant gossip causes drastic changes in their lives. Lessing comments on adaptability in this novel. A person needs to be extremely adaptable—this adaptability alone redeemed them in society,

5.19.2. These men, the tools of oppression in Patriarchy are not depicted as villains. In fact it is the realists’ focus of the hypocrisies of these males imbibed through unjust masculine nurturing, which makes these novels not only personal but also political. There are certain stigmas prevalent about male female relationship also. Men cannot digest their girl friends or wives drawing the attention of another male.

5.13.3. A woman is safe if she stays inside the patriarchal custody, playing her varied roles entrusted to her, otherwise she is in pieces. Men inside the family though are not very violent are yet in their trials to conform with established norms of masculinity do cause emotional violence directly or indirectly. The
patriarchal society does not respect a woman for her education and potentials but rather attaches value only to her family background, her lineage. Success in life does not just depend on education; salary but family background alone gives power and strong hold in the society in patriarchy.

5.13.4. In general, the patriarchal notion is that women are jealous because they are narrow minded and very possessive. However, both the novelists portray predominantly the traits of jealousy in their male characters. Paul who reads Ella’s writing always criticizes her and never agrees to her convictions or appreciates her.

5.13.5. Both the novelists condemn the negative influence of cinema and trash books in the life of teenage girls. Lessing identifies Mary’s unhealthy habit of seeing movies frequently and reading cheap novels as the reason why she has made a wrong choice of marriage and hence her marriage was a total failure. Rajam Krishnan also reinstates the same idea in her novel _Mailampattu Valli_. Valli labours as a maidservant from childhood. She loves watching movies and this provokes the ignorant illiterate girl to elope with a scoundrel who cheats her of her cash and jewels and leaves her alone in an unknown place but this brings about a turning point in her life. She determines to become a literate and as a consequence she rises up to live as an ideal character that transforms her slum into a model village.

5.13.6. The selected novelists are feminists with pluralist view because they conceive of an equitable world in which women and men can be equal and yet different. They envisage a world free of male privilege and women’s subordination, a rebalancing of the social, economic and political power between women and men. The world that feminism promises to reconstruct will be devoid of ‘masculinist hierarchy’ but will retain sexual divisions. In this connection what is the conviction of our novelists? Do they want a society devoid of men? To understand this notion their delineation of male characters was undertaken.
Lessing also boldly criticizes men for the advantages they take with women and not sparing even the protagonists’ fathers. Men inside the family though are not very violent are yet in their trials to conform with established norms of masculinity do cause emotional violence directly or indirectly. Other relationships outside the family—men in the society such as friends, colleagues, superiors and acquaintances are unreliable, deceitful and ever ready to exploit women; their only interest being physical satisfaction or establishing their superiority over women, in other words endorsing masculinity and usurping the female.

5.14.0. To sum up this chapter on Women as social entity: Rocking and Ruling has highlighted the social consciousness of the novelists; their perspective regarding the society in relation to the status it accords women. On scrutinizing the novelists’ portrayal of women as a social entity and their protagonists’ ability to maintain inter-personal skill with other men in the society, it is evident that these characters are rendered as unwilling to disappear into the extraordinary cover of motherhood sanctity but they are individualistic and realistic personalities with an aim and desire of their own. Anna is a successful career woman. Anna’s success as a novelist is appreciable since she lives on the royalty from her first novel. The society views upon their new living pattern—two females in a house and of course, male friends make professional jokes about the lesbians. Devi’s sensitiveness to social cause and injustice needs appreciation. The other focus in the chapter is women’s social identity and their awareness and effectiveness in fighting for social cause and the role of society in a woman’s life whether it is oppressive or supportive. Lessing’s heroines are not women of limitations. They thirst for more exposure to social happenings and social causes. Lessing’s heroines are endowed with remarkable sense of self-identity who strive to uphold their freedom from parental domination. Lessing criticizes the English country and men in the persona of her heroines. The protagonists like Anna and Molly are bored with their life, culture, country and their men. Anna and Molly are rendered as women of varied identities and versatile talents. They do not fit
into any stereotypes, and specific mould. Similarly, Rajam Krishnan’s daughters are also depicted women craving to establish self-identity. It is strongly engrained in Meena the orphan girl’s psyche that she would educate and grow up to be a respectable person in the society. Her target is always hard work and development. On scrutiny what role the society ascribes on women, it is evident that the society is always critical about an individual especially about the women. Hence the kernel of the matter for women is always ‘what would people say?’ This is nurtured in to their very fabric from the childhood. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. Society is always oppressive. Insists on women’s conformity, which is always painful and futile for women. Individual, women especially fear society so much that even an insignificant gossip causes drastic changes in their lives. However, the consoling fact is that the protagonists are neither lost in their trials to fit into such roles nor do they walk out as misfits or eliminated. They positively strive to bring about transformations sustaining their individuality and identity. This is a very remarkable, similar feature in both the feminist writers.