CHAPTER – II

DAUGHTER: NOT BORN BUT BECOMES

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It’s a girl.

- Shirley Chisholm

2.1.0. In the first chapter, the reasons why women are subjugated and why they hold a secondary position were probed. The women’s craving for shedding off the feminity foisted on them and their inherent quest for establishing their self-identity were reinforced. With a brief infiltration into social, psychological and feminist outlook on breeding strategies and its ramification on girl children’s identity this chapter proceeds to analyse Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s moral responsibility in focusing the effects of such artificial conditioning and the functioning intensity of their creations as feminist critique. It proceeds to identify the nature of protest the protagonists exhibit while undertaking the daughter’s role. It is evident the novelists are conscious about such discriminations and through their daughter characters launch protest against the feminine notions and conditioning. Lessing observes in her autobiography it was her mother’s misfortune, “…to have an over-sensitive, always observant and judging, battling, impressionable, hungry-for-love child, with not one but several skins too few” (1995:26). The analysis of Lessing’s daughter characters and Rajam Krishnan’s daughter characters who take recourse to protest falls into three stages— the spirit of fighting they exhibit in their childhood, their acute consciousness at teens and the symptoms of non-conformity during adulthood.

2.1.1. From childhood on beliefs and attitudes help, perpetuate women’s inferior status. Some of these are sex-role stereotyping in textbooks, unequal pay for equal work, and the traditional division of labour within the family. Other attitudes are more subtle: for example, hoping that a couple’s first child will be a boy, thinking of a wife’s salary as meant to buy ‘extras’ rather than as supporting
the family. Even the pronoun structure of the English language suggests that women are different, that they are the ‘other’, not fitting the paradigm of ‘man’.

2.1.2. The responsibility of molding the child into ‘an achieving male!’ and ‘a docile female!’ solely invests with the parents. It is essential to take into account the various child-breeding methodologies, which differ according to the socio-cultural backgrounds. Both the West and the East treasure children but one cannot deny that differences exist in the nurturing of boy children and girl children universally. Lessing subtly remarks about the ‘love’ the mothers shower especially upon daughters during their childhood in her autobiography _Under My Skin_ (1995): “The trouble is love is a word that has to be filled with an experience of love. What I remember is hard bundling hands, impatient arms and her voice telling me over and over again that she had not wanted a girl she wanted a boy. I knew from the beginning she loved my little brother unconditionally, and she did not love me” (1995:25)—one can often identify Lessing in the persona of the protagonists featuring in her novels.

2.1.3. Parents and relations brainwash women into believing that their sole existence is only for male pleasure and it is the entire responsibility of a woman to keep her family content and happy at any cost irrespective of her own happiness and pleasures. None prescribes such rules to the males in the family to make the wife or mother or the daughter happy and that they should be devoted to such female members of the family.

2.1.4. Patriarchy conditions certain ideas in women from childhood. Some of the conditionings are—family is sacred; the woman is responsible for household duties and though a crowned queen, she is just a wife at home. Society demands a woman to be docile and modest; over flowing with love; she ever obeys her husband; she is only dedicated to the family and unselfish. Conditioning of female mind becomes necessary as she interacts with the world through the institution called family and hence creating certain psychological images in her is
necessary. Such conditioning in the male dominated society also screens her from understanding her subjugation.

2.1.5. The socialization of both sexes into basic categorization in patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role and status is what the feminists call ‘sexual politics’. Temperament is a psychological component, role is the sociological and status is the political component. All these form a chain and are interdependent. Temperament involves the formation of human limited sex roles: activities like domestic services are reserved for females, while technological innovations and other creative spheres are classified as male domains. Traits of dominance and aggression developed in the male sex are seen as evidence of their innate leadership qualities. Power and prosperity being synonymous, women’s alienation from property; legally, socially and morally, has caused her degradation. The institution called family forms the fundamentals of the social set up and is essential for the society for its reproduction and stabilization. The duties outlined exclusively for women in the family are to prepare workers for subjugation under labour exploitation and to indulge in reproduction for the rejuvenation / existence of the society. For unhindered continuous functioning of these duties, the society creates certain conditioning of the mind in women about family and about women in family.

2.1.6. Women develop group characteristics, which are similar to those, developed by people who suffer minority status and a marginal existence. A minority group is any group of people who, by their physical and cultural characteristics are singled out from others in the society in which they live. It is ironical that women who are equal in number to men should face such differential unequal treatment. Millett states, “Status, temperament and role are all value systems with endless psychological ramifications of each sex” (1970:122). Patriarchal marriage and family with its ranks and divisions of labour play a large part in enforcing such value systems. While patriarchal ideologies are maintained by conditioning the young, who follow the prescribed attitudes towards categories
of role, temperament and status, uniformity is achieved though schools, media and other sources.

2.1.7. Feminists like Kate Millett feel, only a handful of sociologists have addressed themselves in any meaningful way to the minority status of women. Male and female are two cultures and their life experiences are utterly different. Gender-identity development, takes place from early childhood. Notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperaments, character, interests, status, gesture and expression are developed in every child. Every moment of the child’s life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands, which gender places upon one. Dale Spender prudently explains this factor: “The child’s sense of self, even before it attains speech is emphasized through the way they are handled, touched, tickled and the way they are spoken to – in terms of sexual identity” (1954:58).

2.1.8. Gender identity (I am girl, I am a boy) is the primary identity any human being holds, the first and the most permanent identity, which has far-reaching implications. Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. Discoveries by the ‘California Gender Identity Center’ have proved that gender characteristics are societal, not biological traits. It has discovered that it is easier to change the sex of an adolescent male, whose biological identity turns out to be contrary to his gender assignment and conditioning through surgery but changing the educational consequences of years, which have succeeded in making the male temperamentally feminine in gesture, personality and interests is hard.

2.1.9. Human development, of course does not, occur in a vacuum. It occurs within specific contexts. The family is implicitly given centrality in most theories of normal or optimal child development. In studies of child development parents – predominantly mothers are usually either observed in interaction with or interviewed about theirs children. Parents are considered the major influence on
their children. The family therefore is a crucial site for the production of the ‘normal’ child, who among other things shows appropriate gender behaviour and has the gender identity appropriate to her / his sex.

2.1.10. Biological determinist explanations suggest that gender differences are naturally occurring rather than being subject to environmental influences. However, there are three major theories of processes by which gender development occurs. In social-learning theories, the child learns gender-stereotyped roles through observation and imitation of the same sex parent. In addition, parents, by using rewards and punishments, condition children into appropriate gender behaviour. In cognitive development theory, the child actively learns that each person throughout life belongs to one of two genders. In psychoanalytic theory, it is the awareness of genital sex differences between males and females that eventually leads, young children to identify with the same gender parents.

2.1.11. Millett demonstrated that for female, ‘normal’ meant passive while for male, it meant active. “Men had ‘instrumental’ traits, they were tenacious, aggressive, curious, ambitious, planful, responsible, original and competitive and Women had ‘expressive’ traits: they were affectionate, obedient, responsive to sympathy and approval, cheerful, kind and friendly”, (1984:86) Hester Eisenstein elaborates how the differences are nurtured.

2.1.12. Physical exertion is very generally a class factor, those at the bottom performing the most strenuous tasks whether they are strong or not. The heavier muscular personality along stereotyped lines of sex category based on the needs and values of the dominant group, such as aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male passivity, ignorance, docility, virtue and ineffectuality in the female— these are the classification of male, female temperament along with particular assignment of sex role, code of conduct, gesture and attitude. Sex role assigns activities like domestic service; attendance upon infants to the female and
the rest of the human achievement and ambition to the male, Kate Millett calls these activities animal and human respectively. Temperaments of dominance are developed as roles of mastery in males who are awarded higher status. The stereotype of woman is being nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support. Anger is ‘unwomanly’ but to achieve anything, to become anything one has to be hard and ruthless. Mental traits such as ambition, the desire to win, to excel, to be better than the others are never inculcated in girl children by mothers. If at all some fathers do it, women tend to lose it when they marry and become mothers. Molly in Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* though was talented in so many directions, dancing, singing, drawing, and journalism— after marriage felt boring so left everything, then became a minor actress— she was a dilettante.

2.2.0. As children the daughters figuring in the selected novels exhibit their awareness and spirit of protest as children in putting up fights against the treatment meted out to them and commenting profusely regarding the discriminatory attitude of viewing boys as superior and girls as inferior. Lessing’s Martha is the most rebellious as a child. Children are trained into feminine and masculine temperaments. For example, a girl child is not expected to ask questions or retort. In India they are often brain washed with the stories about legendary women such as Gandhari; they are brought up in a circumstance, which leaves them solely dependent on men physically, psychologically, financially and emotionally. There are certain comments on women such as they are beauty conscious and look at the mirror often. Certainly, an individual trained to be dependent on another naturally looks for assurance how they look to others. Hence, the fascination of seeing oneself in the mirror, of knowing how one looks to others, never palls. Women are all the time anxious to please others, and hence under the agony of finding out what do others feel about them, how they look to others. When Martha’s mother criticizes too much about Martha’s looks or figure Martha flies into rage and would shut herself in a room and placing the mirror on the pillow would gaze into it for hours.
2.2.1. The tendency to prepare women chiefly to fit for domestic work existed in the system, the upbringing, and in female education in both the western and the eastern countries. The predominant aspiration of parents especially mothers is to mold the daughters to that single purpose of pleasing a male. There is no question regarding failure to please as permissible or excusable. From the childhood, a girl’s life revolves around the tips of satisfying her husband. Martha’s mother and her mother’s friend often reinstate the idea that girls should be appealing to a male and they often provide tips about making themselves desirable to men. When Mrs. Van Rensenberg advised “A girl must make men respect her” and Mrs. Quest followed uncertainly “a man will never marry a girl he does not respect” (1952:58)— Martha startles them both with her hatred and contempt in her eyes and calls them loathsome, bargaining, calculating and disgusting. It is because of her age that she is so difficult, that is what the elders feel. Parents train daughters to be very careful. In Rajam Krishnan’s novel The House Sridevi, even at the age of forty if she goes in bus number forty-five she will only board the same and not any other bus, which goes by the same route, this is a sample of the stringent control that breeding conditions in women.

2.2.2. Right from her childhood, Meena the heroine in Rajam Krishnan’s novel After the Sound of Fury is picturised as a revolting character, in the novel. She puts up a strong fight starting with her protests against the inequalities and the ill treatment in the orphanage. Her father leaves Meena, in the orphanage and never returns. Meena even as a child of four years, though an orphan protests the injustice she faces. Her mother dies in a foreign country and relations do not care for them as her parents had chosen inter-cast marriage. Her father decides to put her in hostel and when she is four years, he leaves her in the home paying the fees for one year and promising to return after a year from abroad where he has his business. She was called Reena then and the wealthy child was like an angel whom every one admired. She was cared for two years in the pay hostel after that she was transferred to the orphanage. In contrast to her earlier hostel, which
offered her a cot, bed, egg, milk and nutritious food, now she was exposed to poverty— torn mat, porridge, jealousy and fights. She was ditched from upper class treatment to lower class status. Reena was unable to digest her new lowly status. She often protests crying out shouting, does not show interest in studies and even runs away from the orphanage. She was found wandering near the beach and brought back to the hostel. Meena hated the cook at the orphanage. Those days were days of war between both of them. The cook teased Meena because of her good looks. Meena, retaliated the treatment given her. She had to clean the floor; often she was accused for stealing biscuits and other food items. She was insufficiently fed and hence hungry all the time. Her set of uniforms always disappeared from the peg. Even though she was punished with chores like washing vessels and collecting firewood, the child did not stop fighting the injustice.

2.2.3. Meena even as a child launches strong protest against the discriminations she faces. When Meena was in the paying hostel, many people took special care and pampered her. However, since her transfer to the orphanage no one cared for her. When there was a VIP visiting the orphanage to donate money or food, Meena was wanted to honour them and to be patted. She would rather die or beg than stay in the orphanage. The head sister requests ‘Aya’ to take care of the child. Aya who had lost two daughters was only happy to accept. Under the benevolent, love of her foster mother, though living in slum she retains her individuality and grows up as self-righteous, studious and grateful women and a graduate.

2.2.4. Rajam Krishnan’s daughter Valli in Mailampattu Valli shows her protest in developing secretively her own circle of contacts which her mother does not detect. Valli is a specimen of cases, which prove that children develop individual tastes, and aspirations, which the parents never imagine, suspect or understand.
2.3.0. Some mothers like Mrs. Quest consider daughters as unwanted burden, regard sons as power-symbols and perpetuators of the family. This is particularly true in the case of Indian Society where female feticide is practiced even today. Sons are elevated to heights and daughters barely existed. Lessing and Rajam Krishnan’s protagonists as daughters are hurt and disturbed as they are acutely conscious about such discriminations and they do question such partialities.

2.3.1. A feeling of fate, of doom was the message that Martha associated with her birth since the days she was in her mother’s womb. Her mother’s anger, love, fear and resentment sank into the passive brain of the infant and she believed that during the birth, “…from which Martha emerged shocked and weary, her face temporarily scarred purple from the forceps that her character and therefore her life were determined for her” (MQ:141). “I think that some psychological pressures and even well-meant ones, are as damaging as physical hurt” (1995:25) – are the hurt feelings of Lessing herself in her autobiography.

2.3.2. When Martha is declared pregnant, Mrs. Quest was immediately illuminated by decisions such as it would be a boy, who would be named Jeffery; who was to be saved by a proper education from Martha’s unconformities. He would be, in fact the child Mrs. Quest had always longed for, the person her own two children had obstinately refused to become. This conversation between Martha and Martha’s mother illuminates how much women yearn for boy child not only Indian mothers but British Mothers also: “Oh, so its going to be a boy ?” “Why are you going to have a girl then ? Anyway it’s no good making up your mind you want a girl. I was sure you were a boy. I’d even chosen the name— and then look what I got !” “I know, you mentioned it” (PM: 147).

2.3.3. Indian mothers also have a stigma towards girl children but on the other hand, boys are their jewel in the crown. Desire for sons rather than daughters are ingrained in the psyche of the feminine mother. Such a preference is actually a construct of patriarchy, used to perpetuate its rule. While daughters are considered
unwanted burdens, sons are regarded as power-symbols and perpetuators of the family. This is particularly true in the case of Indian society where female feticide is practiced even today.

2.3.4. Rekha in *The Chains* senses the discriminatory attitude in her joint family household. Rekha is disturbed over the fact that the males of her house enjoy special privileges. She observes that the young girls draw water from the well, wash vessels and fold clothes whereas boys have no work at all. In the joint family, which awards more concessions for men, even if the wife falls sick there are other women at home to cook and wash clothes. There are so many discriminations, even economizing it only fell on women. While men drink coffee with sugar women drink only sugarless coffee, she is also an earning members of the family even then why a women should be denied such pleasures is Rekha’s contemplation.

2.3.5. Parents also watch carefully with whom their daughters develop friendship. A girl’s parents closely watch her movement on all edges, also her friend’s circle, restrict her relationships, and lay rigid rules. Thiruveni was not much respected because of her parent’s background, so Sridevi in the Tamizh novel *The House* was scolded for having contacts with Thiruveni. “Do you have it in mind that you have to get respectfully married to someone or you want to be a destitute on the road? You shameless! You runaway!” (H:33), everyone at home tore her with abuse. When Thiruveni came to their house to give the photographs of the friends, her brother directly scornfully tells her, “All loafers come to the door step, where did you come?” (H:33). Devi was in fact jealous of Thiruveni for her freedom in wearing modern clothes and for avoiding jewellery like chain and bangles. Thiruveni’s white sari was much criticized by Devi’s mother and grandma. Devi was never allowed to remove the pearls from her neck; she wondered how Thiruveni was bare necked. Thiruveni was very studious and talented. She knew politics even at school and won prizes in elocution. She shared with Devi her views about inequality of girls in the families—“Is a women slave?
Are they treating men and women equally in any household? Why did you poke both your nose? Remove it, throw it away, and tell they were lost. Jewels are a burden and I’m going to learn cycling” (H: 35). A girl with so much accomplishment was not recognized but ill-treated because of her fatherless background. This is a sample of Rajam Krishnan’s subtle focus on feminist principles. As a critique, her novel instigates how the feminine bound females in the society condemn such liberated ideas. Mrs. Quest also in fact thought that Martha was becoming difficult due to association with wrong type of child meaning Marnie, Martha’s friend while Mrs. Van Rensberg, Marnie’s mother, a Dutch woman ironically dismissed Mrs. Quest’s strictness with Martha as one of those ‘English Foibles’.

2.4.0. The female protagonists of the selected novels take recourse to non-conformity through vehement criticisms and denials of the laid prescribed norms of feminity. However, parents may find fault with their daughters, Lessing’s daughters do not conform to their restrictions and narrow expectations. Mrs. Quest did not approve of Martha’s friendship with the Jew boys who gave her books for reading. Yet Martha would find suitable occasions to meet and chat with them always about world affairs, politics and economics. She would silently slip out with her bicycle to the station at where the Jew brothers the Cohen boys— Joss and Solly lived. In fact, these books mould and draw her attention to Marxism. From those books lent by Cohen boys at the station on economics, sociology and psychology, Martha had gained a clear picture of herself, from the outside. She was adolescent, and therefore bound to be unhappy; British and therefore uneasy and defensive; in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, and therefore inescapably beset with problems of race and class; female, and obliged to repudiate the shackled women of the past. She feels tormented with guilt, responsibility, and self-consciousness. Women’s original aims and desires are discouraged. Mary suffers a different problem— “She had profound distaste for sex; there had been little privacy in her home and there were things she did not
care to remember; she had taken good care to forget them years ago” (GS:39). However, the truth is she was unable to forget and that is the reason why she was unable to enjoy normal conjugal relationship with her husband Dick. Mary liked other people’s children but shuddered at the thought of having any of her own.

2.4.1. Martha was always ready to face with dubious confidence the long fight with her mother. She was determined never to give up though it would have been hard to define what it was she fought. The battle of the clothes raged for months, actually the rupture had nothing to do with clothes or niceness but it had become a focus for the silent struggle between the women. Mrs. Quest’s charge is that Martha is making herself ridiculous but Martha’s accusation is “Do talk to her; do tell her I’m not ten years old any longer” (MQ: 153). Both women were angry appealing to Mr. Quest for his support; they would not leave him alone, several times a day they came to him, flushed angry their voices querulous, demanding his attention.

2.5.0. Adolescence during which a girl child attains her puberty is the most torturous period both in the west and in the east is quite apparent in both the novelists’ revelations. Lessing narrates in her autobiography: “There is something about adolescent girls that does the strangest things to their parents” (1995:156). Parents make their daughter very much self-conscious about physical changes because they are anxious that their daughters must grow into a nice woman pleasing and approachable to a man. Beauty, complexion and behaviours are given special dimensions and stressed so much by the ever-anxious disturbed mothers that girl children detest their teen age so much and this develops into inferiority complex, which remains with them until their daughters, and granddaughters attain puberty and the undesired cycle goes on forever.

2.5.1. The mothers develop complexities about their daughter’s accreditation in the society for their good looks and features. The mothers are ever conscious about their daughter’s complexion and physical changes during their puberty. This
creates complex in girl children who become body conscious and develop a tendency to shy away from male and fear them. They brainwash girls into believing ardently that they should be appealing to a male, especially the husband and their sole existence is to gratify the male emotionally and bodily.

2.5.2.  Lessing’s own experience, as a girl at teens is explicit in her remarks about her own parents: “These two people, these sick and half crazy people, my parents…” (1995:156). Martha’s mother made joking remarks about Martha’s clumsiness and Mr.Quest her father complained that girls in this country matured so early. Martha was sixteen whereas her mother made ugly, even ‘obscene’ dresses for her breasts were well grown, and the yokes emphasized them, showing flattened bulges under the tight band material; and the straight falling line of the skirt was spoiled by her full hips. Mrs.Quest tried to hide the fact: her inability to provide a dress fitting with Martha’s beautiful, fully grown body. She rather advised that girls of nice family wore dresses of this type until coming out. Unmindful of Martha’s sullen criticism of her snobbishness she would smooth the childish dresses down ever Martha’s body, so that the girl stood hunched with resentment. Mrs. Quest outwardly projected the matter as an issue of social convention. Even Mrs. Van Renserberg her friend who said to her husband that Mrs. Quest was going the right way to make Martha ‘difficult’ though she could not say so to Mrs. Quest herself.

2.5.3.  History repeats itself, for the mothers who bore puberty as a pain and shame inflict the same impression on their daughters and the daughters struggle conformity like a disease. That was something shameful, this growing up and girl children are made to feel ashamed of themselves even in the presence of one’s own fathers. When her mother pointed out looking at her that she was growing up there was something unpleasant in the way she looked at her. Martha even feels that the age fourteen to twenty should be shifted to some other time until those happier times arrive when adolescents may, and with a perfectly clear conscience, again may enjoy them. Though she was often resentfully conscious that she was
expected to carry a burden that young people of earlier times knew nothing about, she was also conscious of developing a weapon in her, which would enable her to carry it. However, sometimes the question crossed her mind “... why do I have to go through with it?” (MQ:140).

2.5.4. Her mother a rather tired and disappointed but decided matron, with ambitious plan for her children, she always told her friend Mrs. Van Rensberg, “My daughter will be somebody, whereas yours will only be married” (MQ:160) — She aggressively stated in parties that Martha was clever and would have a career. This Martha knew pretty well her mother did only to project that her family was different and far ahead from others. Martha meanwhile in an agony of adolescent misery ponders that her mother was hateful, all these old women hateful, every one of these relationships, with their lies, evasions, compromises, wholly disgusting. However, the author says that she was suffering that misery peculiar to the young that they are going to be cheated by circumstances out of the full life every nerve and instinct is clamouring for.

2.5.5. A self-preserving nerve gets tightened in the brain and she grows composed. Youth suffered adolescence like a disease, Martha too was tormented and there was no escaping it. Whatever novels she laid hands described this condition of adolescence. Conformity with the psychological conditioning was painful rather than the physiological changes. Martha faces the agony of adolescent misery. Irritation overflowed into a flood of dislike for both her parents when she heard their discussions, which were always same, intolerable because they were saying the same things ever since she could remember. She was so resentful of her surroundings and her parents that the resentment overflowed into everything near her.

2.5.6. Martha’s way of laughing at herself, almost clowning, these graceless movements, made Marnie uncomfortable in a new way. She thought it extraordinary that Martha should wear such clothes, behave like a clumsy boy, at
sixteen, and apparently not mind. The irony is Mrs. Quest found Marnie altogether in bad taste, wearing grown-up clothes and lipstick at fifteen and talking about ‘boys’.

2.5.7. Martha often struggles from brooding underground rebellion. As a climax of such broodings, she cuts the bodice from the skirt of her dress. “Daddy why should I wear dresses like a kid of ten?” “Well you are a kid. Must you quarrel all the time with your mother”? (MQ: 150) When Mrs. Quest laid her hands on either side of the girl’s waist, Martha felt her mother was trying to press her back into childhood. Her mother only regrets that nice girls wear clothes showing their figure only after eighteen—Martha's reaction is “I’m not a nice girl” (MQ: 150). If Martha cries she cries, only with anger at the unjust accusations of her mother that Martha does not really understand, she is such a worry to her parents and that she wastes money. The battle of clothes raged for months.

2.5.8. While in the west where women are considered freer, the emotional drawbacks are same as viewed in the case of Martha Quest. In India the basic social concept associated with puberty was that a woman attains puberty only to become a mother says Rajam Krishnan in her book Feminity Through Ages (1998). When science was not much advanced, a woman’s efficiency was much appreciated in her embodying the Motherhood. ‘Mother’ for all beings was the emotion attached to the biological changes in women and she was given importance in this regard. However, as ages passed when the ‘Mother Right’ was replaced by patriarchy, the idea that the man who made the woman a mother replaced the mother ideology. The man who was a tool in making her mother began to be appreciated and respected.

2.5.9. Rajam Krishnan points out to very subtle attitudinal changes in celebrations connected with a girl attaining puberty in the olden days and modern days. The celebrations and ceremonies connected with puberty has denigrated
from the status of celebrating a woman’s capacity to bear children as a mother for perpetuating the society to the level of celebrating a woman’s capacity to satisfy a male and to reinstate that she is qualified to cater to his physical needs. This idea is much popular and publicized in Indian films and even people below poverty line make it a compulsory ceremony. Such practices only reinforce the idea of female subordination, which is in-built in patriarchal societies.

2.5.10. Female bodies acquire the metaphor of land and it is this body, which needs to be controlled. Female bodies become what Foucault calls ‘docile bodies’. The myth of creation projects women as secondary. In the projections of an afterlife in some religions woman is viewed as an attendant upon male sexual appetite. Other mythologies which project women as a source of temptation and a seduction, the linguistic bias against women and the actual kinship patterns which treat women as objects of exchange and hence equivalent to property, requiring ownership and protection— are all indicators of female subordination. Though Martha belonged to the western country, which believes exposing one’s body does not have any implications she too feels awkward and wants to bury herself when her mother eyed her and criticized her physical changes during puberty.

2.5.11. A man also shows symptoms of adulthood— his voice breaks, appearance of moustache, such external features renders him more pride, his new spirit of independence and freedom in appreciated but whereas a girl before she attains mental maturity, the physical maturity imprisons her and she is under compulsions which makes her alien to her own self. The innate qualities, her education and her talents are secondary as a woman’s chief occupation is regarded as satisfying a male, giving him happiness, not to be an affluent woman but dependent on her husband emotionally, physically and financially.

2.6.0. Lessing’s daughters and Rajam Krishnan’s daughters are strongly aware that women’s secondary status is only due to the patriarchal staunch and convenient belief that the sole existence of women is only for male convenience
and pleasure. These women have more exposure to better opportunities of education and economic independence. Hence, they protest against the hypocrisies of conservative family ideologies. Such women question the double standards and contradictions inside the patriarchal values. Especially the younger generations oppose the stunting of their personalities. The authors make it explicit that older generation women nurtured in feminine psyche are also counterparts unknowingly in completing the process of subordinations. Mother’s inhibitions about daughter’s puberty stage and its negative influence in impairing a girl's self-esteem leads to issues which cause inferiority complex in women which in turn creates sibling rivalry, jealousy and conceit in women and sometimes it upsets the mental balance of women who land up in neurosis. Those women who are conscious about their potentialities and have exposures towards education have an awakening that their plight is not biological but societal due to the artificial conditioning. Such emancipated women launch protests, the first step being contradicting parents at home, asking questions and thus establishing non-conformity.

2.6.1. Martha at sixteen is very critical about her parents, their taste, attitude, and views on life, their way of living and on the whole about her breeding. She hated in the first place about her mother being a stiff matron instructing her about everything beginning with what she needs to do and the way she should dress etc. Martha accuses her parents for spending lavishly on Mr. Quest’s imaginary diseases than they spent on her education. Martha understood his illness is only an excuse for being a failure. Her comment on her father when Mrs. Quest complains about Martha giving worry to her father is “He doesn’t even notice we’re here. He hasn’t seen us for years…” (MQ: 151).

2.6.2. For example, they had anticipated a profit in maize crop and hence only built a temporary house, which remained temporary throughout their life. Whenever they had a discussion on crops turning out good and of their good luck and finding a gold mine it made Martha irritable and she could never stand them.
When she was eleven or twelve, she could see clearly that her parents were deluding themselves. Martha disapproved with her mother’s taste—her mother had no instinct for cosmetics and she chose wrong colours. While Martha grew in violent opposition to her parents and continually trying to alter their influence on her, her mother did not know what to do with Martha, who seemed bent on behaving to make her mother as unhappy as possible.

2.6.3. Rekha in the Tamizh novel *The Chains* is disgusted with the idea of marriage and motherhood though she belongs to a conservative family full of aunts and uncles surrounding her. Rekha is also very critical and detests the fact that the aunts’ sole aim in life is only to physically satisfy their men folk and keep them in hold. They reject even family planning as they have their own suspicions and superstitions about the device and hence deliveries take place only at home. They ridicule family planning slogans and do not go to hospitals for delivery as they may compel them to undergo operations. Rekha is also sensitive to the facts that the children are often chided and cursed, as there is financial crisis at home due to more mouths to be fed and hence hates her aunts more for their blind conformities with pleasing their men folk. When they send their children away to grandma and the aunts shut their rooms every night Rekha is only ashamed that their aunts should denigrate so much. This creates an aversion in her for marriage.

2.6.4. Rekha is unable to digest her mother’s attitude towards her father who returns home after some years. He is changed so much in person but confesses that he had denigrated so much as to undertake butcher’s job in a slaughter house and has sought to drinks as an escapism but now he wished to return to the household with the repentance and promises to compensate for his short comings in the future. Rekha pricks her mother’s conscience through pointing that if her father had returned with wealth that she would have accepted him even though he has changed so much. She compels her mother to leave the house so that they can live with her father. “All the house chores you do here everyday you can as well do it outside anywhere and earn money” (ASF:72), but her mother’s million-
dollar question is: “How can I throw away the dignified and reputed protection of family, for what? (ASF: 72). However, the younger generation is ready to reject marriage and family to live an independent life and to savor self-respect.

2.6.5. Ella is another embodiment of feminist paradigm who is prepared to experiment with her course of life, to try to be a different kind of person, while she felt that her father’s generation simply submitted to something. The real difference between Ella and her parents is, she deliberately tries to be something else, trying to break her own form as it were. She believes she can change it but whereas her father believes that means only complicating things even more because it is already bad enough to cope with what one is. Anna another heroine figure in The Golden Notebook feels she is living the kind of life women never lived before, her vision or dreams about a life that isn’t full of hatred and fear and envy and competition every minute of the night and day. She cannot believe it happens to everyone. Anna insists, “I want to be able to separate in myself what is old and cyclic, the recurring history, the myth, from what is new, what I feel or think that might be new...” (GN: 145).

2.6.6. Ella’s father criticizes much Ella’s generation. He feels that they ask such a lot and they seem to claim happiness: “Your lot—you seem to think something’s owed to you. You all think you can do anything.” Ella’s comment is “you seemed to be content with so little” “Content, content! What sort of word is that?” (GN: 410). Ella’s father believes the kind of Ella only complicate things even more. As a reaction to her father’s views, she tries to force patterns of happiness or simple life but she only fails. The crux of the whole book is as Ella feels that man and woman are both at the end of their tether, both cracking up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits, and out of the chaos, a new kind of strength is born in them. Molly’s son Tommy feels he would rather be like Anna and Molly rather than be like his father Richard the business tycoon.

2.7.0. Other than questioning and criticizing, another form of non-conformity that the daughters exhibit is escapism from parental custody from their feminine
bound household and parents domination which seem to suffocate their individualistic spirit. *Martha Quest* is essentially the story of a rebel. When we first meet her, she is a girl of fifteen living on an impoverished African farm with her parents a girl of passionate vitality, avid for experience and for self-knowledge, bitterly resentful of the conventional narrowness of her home life. From this background she breaks away to take a job as a typist in the local capital, and here, in the world of the big city, she begins to encounter the real life she is so eager to experience and understand. In flight from her mother, Lessing herself left home when she was fifteen and took a job as a nursemaid.

2.7.1. Mary in *The Grass is Singing* could look back as the happiest of her childhood the short period during which there were no quarrels, though the mother kept weeping as her brother and sister died of dysentery that year. Her father and mother who had done nothing but quarrel and fight over the store bills and money twelve times a year were good friends because of the sorrow for a short while. Mary only feels that they were elder to her and so she felt no loss of playmates and if it all there was any loss it was compensated by the happiness of living in a peaceful house. She was happy to escape from home when she joined a boarding school and in fact dreaded going home for holiday times to her fuddled father, her bitter mother, and the flyaway little house that was like a small wooden box on stilts. Mary and Martha always craved to escape from parental custody. They were happy to join a boarding school.

2.7.2. Rajam Krishnan’s daughters also those who are discontent with their status and familial background seek remedy through falling in love and thus view it as a scope of escapism from their parental custody, which they detest. Some of them choose their own partners and the parent’s choice are not agreeable for them. Similar to Martha, Valli decides to get married as an overwhelming resistance to maternal supremacy. Valli thinks if she seeks for permission to marry Raji who attracts her in the flat where she is working—her mother may not give her concern. Therefore, she plans to get married without informing and then come for
blessings and believes her mother would accept. She tries to fit her life in the same sequences as she has seen on the movies. In the movies the heroes and heroines always confront their parents and get married secretly. When Raji suggests they elope from the city and get married in another place she immediately agrees. Her widowed mother amidst poverty brings up Valli a single parent child, from childhood labouring as maidservant. She is familiar with upper-class manners and decent language. But her mother never thought of sending her to school. Education is only for rich people she thought and she could not afford to get an educated bridegroom for her. “Why does she need education? Without education, she is quite clever. If she gets married to someone who cares well for her that is enough”, (MV:10) is her mother’s opinion and pride. However, her mother does not know that Valli has developed craze for luxuries, as she had been serving in such homes from childhood as a house cleaner. Her ambition is to live in a storied building, have a transistor, to buy cosmetics and nice saris and hence she earnestly saves money for this purpose. She buys gold-coated artificial jewels and is crazy of films.

2.8.0. Rajam Krishnan picturises the tensions and agony the parent’s of young daughters especially the Indian mothers who strive hard to keep up pace with the societal norms and expectations. Parents are very conscious about the society’s views and recognition. They are very careful that their wards especially daughters do not get into any scandal / complications so that her reputation is not spoilt. This creates lot of tension, compulsions and pressure on both the parents and the daughters. When Valli fortunately returns home safely after the episode of eloping with her lover who takes her possessions and gets her into a wrong bus and absconds, Valli’s mother frets about ‘what the society would say’ and that Valli may lose her respectability. However, the young teacher who safely brings her back home from the village consoles her that this incident should serve as a good lesson for Valli and she would not fall a victim in future. A mother’s worry is who will marry Valli who has run away with a man and has returned later?
Rajamkrishnan strongly advocates the significance and necessity of educating girl children.

2.8.1. Giving her confidence to carry on individually her life through the means of education or proper worldly experience never strikes the parents. In fact, she is isolated from society as much as possible, kept away from the menacing truth and realities of life and suddenly at teens, the ‘Pandora’s Box’ is open before her. Poor people think spending on a girl’s education is a waste. The common belief in their circle is, “If a women is given education she would write love letters to her secretive lover” (MV:35). So from childhood they labour and starve and save money to spend for her marriage. But unfortunately, whatever jewels and wealth Valli saved, the cheat Raji her ex-lover has run away taking with him. If only that money had been spent on Valli’s education Raji could not have cheated her at all and humiliated her: Valli resolves to join the adult school as guided by Kammalama a social worker.

2.8.2. After joining the night school ‘Arivoli Iyakkam’, the magazines in which she was only viewing the photos of heroes and heroines now kindled her intellectually. She read many books with the only aim of learning more and more and acquiring more knowledge. Cinema, luxuries and cosmetics do not lure her anymore. The same world, which was very narrow for her earlier, now acquires a broader horizon. She lives in the same house in the slum but her world has stretched wider and wider. Rajam Krishnan, to reinforce the idea that women need only education and not valuables and riches, in contras to Valli’s character focuses Kasthuri an I.I.T. Engineering refusing jewels to adorn herself– tall and beautiful, lovable and an affectionate person. The author describes that Kasthuri gets married simply with no jewels, currency, gold and silver but Bala who is also an engineering student but proud thinks she is superior to Valli and ill-treats her with no discipline or compassion. Radhamani her aunty believes that Bala’s education is trash because she does not know to respect others and hence she would not be respected also and so she withdraws her support for Bala. “She
wants to build a lonely castle high and away from others. But you think about using your knowledge for others benefit” (MV: 53).

2.8.3. The author’s intention to stress upon true values rather than false pomposity and splendor of jewels is obvious through the portrayal of noble, selfless humanitarian characters who love to guide the society. Radhamani the social worker is one such ideal character who influences Valli greatly whom herself turns out idealistic after acquiring proper education.

2.9.0. The unique sense of feminist consciousness in the chosen novelists is evident through the fact they depict those daughters who conform to feminine norms as undergoing much pain, struggle and stress, which is very detrimental to their mental health. Rajam Krishnan through Sridevi picturises how the childhood nurturing of feminity in girl children leaves them incompetent in their later stage of their life while they undertake the roles of a wife and mother. She suffers from inferiority complex from her poverty-stricken childhood breeding and hence is easily subdued by her husband and falls a victim to his ego. She never receives any recognition from her family mainly because her husband does not respect her because of her poor background and he is very egoistic. Similarly, the children also do not understand her emotions, sacrifices and her sentiments. They want to sell the house, which money shall bring them their choice of life.

2.9.1. Women at teens face a myriad of experiences. They are better tuned at this stage for a better comprehension about their state and status in the patriarchal society. The protagonists’ awakening towards the double standards, the problems such double standards pose for them, the protagonists’ protests through non-conformity to comply with the hypocrisies are very clearly stated by both the novelists—Doris Lessing and Rajam Krishnan. Parents and the society have been nurturing certain virtues and codes of conduct but the teen-age girls face the raw fact that the society does not reciprocate any such virtues or codes of conduct towards them. In all the protagonists’ lives the stark reality that there is so much
discrepancy between their expectations and the practical affairs in reality dawns upon them as double standards of the society—strikes them as thunderbolt. However, the heroines do not perish under the impact or vanish but recoup from the shock. Equipped with newly gained self-confidence and individuality as weapons they establish their self-identity. Both the novelists invest their young daughters with individuality and constant strivings in their quest for attaining self-identity. Their heroines subsequently take recourse to non-conformity.

2.9.2. The impact of conformity on the teenage daughters is only pain and unending struggle. Femininity is thrust upon girls from childhood that is why they never grow up mentally. They are expected to be pure and innocent. Hence, they drown up in self-pity. Valli of *Maliampattu Valli* is an apt specimen of a daughter who is denied education but she is introduced to the artificial city life. She apes them in city manners and behaviour. Neither her mother nor Valli understand that she lacks the basic education to thrive prosperously in a city. Once when Valli’s lover takes her outside the city and deserts her, she understands that she has been such an utter fool not even to know where she lived, the name of the place, her date of birth, the bus, which she came by, or the routes or location of her house.

2.9.3. Rajam Krishnan’s novels stand out as a true critique as they bring out the hypocrisies of the family which transforms its ideologies as a chameleon as befitting the economical pressures and requirements. Rekha the innocent girl brought up in the midst of strict moral codes of a conservative family on encountering the wider world is shocked at the double standards of patriarchy. She is placed under the compulsion to alter / adjust her strict principles of chastity and purity, which she could not or not ready to, but her convention bound family also does not mind much which fact troubles her and confuses her.

2.9.4. Even the male dare not bypass the restrictions in the orthodox family of Rekha. None of the facilities of the modern age has reached their household. No tap connections only well water; no gas or kerosene stove only fire wood, brass
utensils; no grinder only manual grinding stone; dim bulbs and no proper electrification— the deteriorating financial status ushers in certain inevitable changes, which also shakes the roots of the conservative ideologies of the family. Rekha after completing her matriculation had to stay idle at home for two years. Even the permission to learn sewing at the local women’s society was not easily sought from her grandmother. Her aunts— maternal and paternal were only engaged in reproduction and did not need any other recreation but Rekha through constant insistence gets employment.

2.9.4. Meena is alien to the slum because of her complexion and aristocratic looks. The slum is like a dirty surly giant waiting to devour goodness all the time. “It is like being amidst a great demon’s gang and one has to be cautious all the time” (ASF:9). However, they live in the slum in an unauthorized land, which the mason, local leader claims authority, and it is also a fact that Meena was able to survive without any disturbance and disgrace because the locals know Kannairam is a sort of patron for Meena who is studious and self-righteous. ‘Aya’ has gained certain respectability in the slum because of Meena’s smartness and behaviour. The chief mason Kannairam who is politically influential, almost a leader in slum also appreciates Meena and supports them and hence they are not disturbed by any loafers in the slum. Meena is the only remarkable girl who obtains graduation in the slum.

2.10.1. Rajam Krishnan criticizes the male society for its treachery and immoralities and physical lust inspite of the traditional cultural ideologies such as looking upon women as goddesses and avatars of devi the divine incarnation. Unprotected teen-age girls are victimized to male exploitation and desire in India. Crucial common sharing of basic necessities such as water taps and toilets chained the people of the slum. There were many indecent and obscene quarrels for the sake of possessing a woman and the fury of hell descended there. Unfortunately, Meena becomes the origin of one such quarrel. Meena decides to leave the place immediately after her mother’s demise. She is unable to stay there even for a
single day. The news that Meena is getting married enrages Kannairam and the sons who torture her abusing her for her tricks and for cheating them, they force her to return the money, which they spent for her mother’s funeral and accuse her of cheating them and of being disloyal to them. They call her immoral. Only Thevanai the destitute is truly affectionate. Poisonous tentacles try to crush her from all sides. However, she retains her individuality at all circumstances, under the most crucial situations and dangers.

2.10.2. The hands which cradled and cared for her now compel her to cut of her connections with Aya and Manikam her brother. Some regret that if Manikam had studied he could have married Meena which comment Meena takes only as an insult but she honestly strives to gather respectability and regard for Manickam. Even during such crucial circumstances, where she is left without a house or any security she consents to marry Sarangan on condition that he promise to treat her brother respectfully. Though she puts up utmost stamina to fight against the manipulating society, at certain crucial juncture she confesses to Sarangan, “Life is not just being educated or becoming self-supportive through earnings, only good family background makes one powerful in the society, only that fetches happiness and peace” (ASF:166). Immediately after her mother’s demise, she is not able live in the slum even for a single day. A woman has to agree to whatever conditions the powerful male lays according to his whims and fancies. Once when the mason suspects that Meena has no intentions to marry his son, they destroy her hut, loot even her meager clothes and possessions and imprison Manickam on false accusations. Even women dare not help an unmarried beautiful girl like Meena when she seeks assistance from houses where her mother served as housemaid. “Why should women be so cruel to unmarried women? Are they so very dangerous?” (ASF:123) reflects Meena. She never looses her ray of hope under the most crucial circumstances.

2.10.3. On the pretext of writing a book on culture and tradition he makes obscene statements very casually— a mother lactates the baby only for her own
comfort, in the ages of ‘Sakhas’, brother and sisters (one father but varied mothers) married, copulation was looked upon not merely for population growth but for pleasure also. Ramalingam offers the opportunity of printing her photograph in the cover page of a magazine. He expects Meena to be excited and accept this offer readily which Meena only refuses. He calls her an idiot and advises her that being publicized as his secretary is a great opportunity moreover she is rootless and this identity would only offer her protection from the society. He even chides her, “Why are you so put down? Have I taken you to a brothel? Go and touch up your face in the toilet mirror”. (ASF: 80) He rather orders her and though Meena is totally reluctant and disgusted she is unable to reject. Meena undergoes mental torture, which results in stress and disturbed sleep. Women try to compromise as much as possible. Ultimately, it turns futile someday. They try to console themselves that nothing is wrong, try to take it easy, but the reality knocks them finally. Her own photograph comes as a surprise to Meena in the magazine. She remembers how in a fraction of a second the camera operator adjusted her sari. She looks very sexy on the cover page exposing her body. She feels like adjusting her sari. She is shocked at the pose and the imaginations it may create about her and Ramalingam.

2.10.4. Ramalingam showers hospitality on her at home offering seat, cool drinks, eatables, and a costly pen etc. but cuts her pay for one-day leave. His son consoles her when she lost the silver plate during the pooja— she is touched by his concern. This hospitality and concern is never spontaneous and true, they would anticipate something else in return. The local leader Kannairam mason shows keen interest in implementing Meena’s plan for starting a school in the ‘Periyar Nagar Slum’. Meena eagerly waits meeting the minister in this regard. She builds up castles in the air. She can escape from the servility and humility that she feels under Ramalingam’s service. She is under great expectations and excitement. The minister without noticing so many awaiting his presence gets into his car. Meena is shocked that a representative chosen by these people ignores
them so casually. After making them to wait for a long time, the minister offers a meeting during which he does not speak about her proposal for the innovative school at all. Meena eagerly explains about her plan for nursery in the slum to which his reply is “I am going to take rest in Mahabalipuram on Saturday, no one knows. If you have any scheme you bring it there. What can I speak here?” “I cannot come to Mahabalipuram”. “So is this place Ok for you?” (ASF: 111). Meena felt like slapped on her cheek and she understands that the scheme is all a cover for his sexual desire, which is the only, predominate motive. She does not even greet him for politeness sake and just walks out abruptly.

2.10.5. There were two more young women waiting for three days to meet the minister with their mother, to invite him for the daughter’s wedding — could it be really the wedding! The mason who knows well about the minister is also a counterpart and it is with this debased motive he has brought her to the minister. Has women degraded to that extent that they openly glance at her with animal instinct and approach her? She wants to insult Kannariam but women in her position could never show their outburst as they are conditioned so psychologically. Even the Bajan, a grand pooja at her school Meena’s feels these were all pretexts to assemble women and give scope for men to enjoy their company. When the minister Perumal lectures about Indian culture and how women are respected in India and that they are the custodians of Indian culture, she feels like slapping him.

2.10.6. Women at teen age are vulnerable to treachery and cheatings. They seek counseling with men around them in work places for their sufferings at home, especially poor women coming out for a change and consolation fall victim to cheats who offer false sympathy and exploit them physically also abducting whatever earnings they have and cast them away. Until her graduation, they were self-dependent, Aya and Meena but this marriageable age is the most troublesome. People interfere deciding their course of life. Kannairam wants her to marry his son Thangavel who rents mike set and electrical wire works. The irony is the
poor woman Aya brings up Meena slogging in many houses. The local leader, the minister, and her school correspondent all these scoundrels try to claim rights over her. Each one thinks, as she is without a proper background of a family she is their possession and that she should dedicate her beauty and her intelligence for their satisfaction, developments and group politics and should support their political factions. “Look you are my property” (ASF:115)— the mason claims that it was due to his support that her mother got a place in the slum and served in houses that he recommended, even Meena’s job she acquired through his recommendations. Her refusals to get married, her contacts with Ramalingam irritate him so much and it is very ironical that he accuses her of indecency and immorality. It is ironical that he almost acts as a go in between the minister and Meena. In spite of such crucial circumstances, Meena puts up a strong protest and rejects Kannairam, the minister and Ramalingam though she is caught between the contradictions of two opposing parties. They deny her the independence to decide her life.

2.10.7. A woman’s status is only at the level of being hunted. She imagined that the minister would recognize her intelligence and innovative proposals. “Even if a woman is educated, intelligent talented and undertakes some profession there is no value. A woman is a woman” (ASF:121). Meena was unable to digest this bitter fact. She who wanted to build a nursery in Periyar Nagar Slum finally marries Sarangan, her correspondent’s assistant and a distant relation and enters a new life leaving behind her the slum and Manickam her only relation.

2.10.8. All young women yearn for loving, understanding, appreciating people around them. However, she is only cared as a treasure for her chastity not as a personality. Meena without Aya is a zero. Ranjini in the novel The House is a secondary character, a specimen of young woman victim who wants to live with Sridevi for sometime. A woman who is revolutionary and conducts successful anti-dowry campaign needs to be taught a lesson— during a public meeting, four youth cut off electricity and man handle Ranjini. She wanted to sue them in the
However, nothing materialized as people only discouraged her because they did not want to give undue publicity to the atrocity. She loses interest in studies and becomes much depressed. Even girls like Nalini, Sridevi’s daughter only felt that girls like Ranjini deserved this punishment. Both men and women treat a woman who puts up a fight against the male domination in the society cruelly. The society rather punishes a victimized raped girl than the culprit who commits such atrocities. Ranjini’s pathetic question for Sridevi in Rajam Krishnan’s novel *The House* is also similar: “Aunty a girl like me cannot live a lonely life, No? (H: 215). The patriarchal society helps neither a destitute girl like Meena nor a courageous self-dependent girl like Ranjani who boldly questions the double standards of the hypocritical society.

2.11.0. Even the unprotected teenage girls in Rajam Krishnan’s novels like Rekha and Meena launch protest against treacherous womanizers and take recourse to establishing their self-identity though it is strenuous and difficult. The surrounding considerably molds any child. However, Meena inspite of the slum breeding remained remote to all the influences of her slum background. Her practices and mode of life were individualistic and she is a strict disciplinarian. Her denials to fall into the trap of Ramalingam who tries to exploit her youth and poverty, her putting up a staunch protest against poverty through hard work and steady progress to the level of a postgraduate student are remarkable for an orphan girl like Meena. However, Meena holds on strongly to Aya and being a meticulous and industrious student, she writes medical entrance. Her only aim is rising higher through education and hard work.

2.11.1. Meena is a specimen of Rajam Krishnan’s young women who are unique in their feminist consciousnesses. She is very much self confident with not a trace of inferiority complex. She is rather proud about her foster mother who brings her up in a slum slogging as maidservant. Meena’s ambition is to care for her mother and give her all the comforts. When Ramalingam, her employer assuming to flatter Meena speaks derogatorily about the slum she is on the
defensive and vindicates the possibilities of nobility in the slum. She is blended with communist and revolutionary ideas such as that people who do hard, strenuous work should be highly paid, and bank clerks should be paid less. Her protest for the traditional and theoretical educational system for kinder garden schoolchildren is sensational. She is ambitious to set up a school in the slum for the emancipation of slum children. The mason, a popular local leader also shows interest and introduces her to the minister. Meena is hopeful that this self-employment may solve many problems for her, she can avoid exploiters, and womanizers like her school correspondent.

2.11.2. Rekha launches a vehement protest not only against the treacherous male at the office but also at the double standards of her family. Family reputation needs to be maintained at the cost of self-denigration of individuals. Rekha's mother is ready to sacrifice the husband's relationship in her life for the sake of her children. Money is more valued than people in families are. For money, Rekha is allowed to go for job not because that she would gain worldly experience, respectability or self-dependence. Her status at the office and at home does not improve in any way.

2.12.0. At the threshold of their adulthood, the next threat of conformity, which daughters face, is marriage. If a bridegroom does not seek a girl within five years after her puberty she will not be married to anyone else is the popular notion about teen-age girls in the Indian society and Valli’s mother in Mailampattu Valli is so worried about her marriage as it is delayed. Mary in The Grass is Singing is a victim of society’s criticism. Assuming wrongly that she is bound to satisfy the expectations of the society, she encounters an unsuccessful marriage. Marriage is compelled and the society reinforces the idea that marriage is her only security. Meena regrets that the society artificially and unnecessarily compels a woman into marriage:
I want to spend my energy for social cause, I want to learn things that are more intellectual and only that can give me happiness. Marriage means new responsibilities, and I am not interested. However, the society around me does not permit me; a woman does not have the rights to act according to her will (ASF:200).

Mangala her headmistress warns her, “If you don’t have a male companion somebody might rape you” (ASF: 200). This biological factor is considered as a weakness and this is used, as a weapon by the society to subdue and have control over her against her will.

2.12.1. A teenage girl is expected to conform to the matronage of the parents at home and out side to tolerate and accept silently the advances made by the male employees and colleagues or fellow travelers in the bus. Meena’s plan is to get a good job and care for her mother. Her friend’s mother regrets had she studied until school final and had she gone for higher studies her world would have been different but unfortunately she was married and had to bring up children. Her vital question is “Shouldn’t a girl stay independent without marriage?” (ASF:65). Though shocked about her open criticism in her husband’s presence the stark truth was obvious to Meena.

2.12.2. Rajam Krishnan doubly reinstates that marriage is compelled or circumstantial as in the case of Sridevi and Meena in her novels. Even though Meena is educated, the slum male often remind her that after all she is a woman and propose to her, rather compel her to marry though she is least interested. Her mother insists that for a girl the protection of family is very vital and she worries a lot that orphans like Meena will not be treated properly even by their husbands because there is no one to support them. Hence her anxiety is she should seek an educated, decent people’s circle, but Meena is reminded about Ramalingam her correspondent, she doubts if he is a decent man.
2.12.3. Parents of Meena, Valli, Sridevi and Rekha look upon marriage as a security for daughters. Once a daughter is married, they imagine that she would live happily ever after and that their responsibility is over. Thereafter it is her lookout to carry on her life whatever may be the circumstances and situations, either congenial or atrocious. This is what a daughter means, a burden a responsibility, her chastity a treasure that has to be carefully safeguarded under constant vulnerabilities and untoward possibilities. It is ironical that parents who bring up a girl child to be very dependent on a man, during their senility look upon their daughters as their protectors and saviors.

2.12.4. The young teacher who directs Valli safely to her house questions her mother, who as a widowed single parent brings up her daughter:

Can a parent look upon their daughter as a burden? Is she a lifeless non-living thing? Is she a possession? If she gets married, would she receive all the securities needed? Under whose protection are you now? A girl has to be self-dependent that is more secure. Education is inevitable for that. Is woman only a responsibility and marriage the destiny? (ASF: 56).

2.12.5. The practice in the Indian Society in considering a girl child as a mere responsibility and once she is married relinquishing even that responsibility is questioned in this novel. Rajam Krishnan through Sridevi picturises how the childhood nurturing of feminity in girl children leaves them incompetent in their later stage of their life while they undertake the roles of a wife and mother. Sridevi suffers from inferiority complex from her poverty-stricken childhood breeding and hence is easily subdued by her husband and falls a victim to his ego. She never receives any recognition from her family mainly because her egoistic husband does not respect her because of her poor background. Similarly, the children also do not understand her emotions, sacrifice and her sentiments. They want to sell her dear house, which money shall bring them their choice of life.
2.12.6. Mary settles down in the city as a successful secretary, superfluous and much sought after by her boarding mates for general counseling and for harmless parleys. She is quite happy and content until the gossiping society comments about her ageing and for remaining unmarried— an accidental overhearing which completely diverts her life in a different and fatal direction. So long as she was confident, self-assertive in her decision-making, she remained happy. Once when women stop carrying a shield of self-confidence they become victims of marriage and connected bondages, which they are unable to conform. Though the like of Mary are happy in their non-conformity with the regular chain of femininity, the society confuses and misconducts them to their doom. Lessing endowed with prudent female psychology pities her state; “It is terrible to destroy a person’s picture of himself in the interests of truth or some other abstraction. How can one know he will be able to create another to enable him to go on loving” (GS: 43). Mary is a victim of the society’s criticism and coping to keep up with expectations of the society she landed up into an unsuccessful marriage.

2.12.7. Marriage becomes inevitable. Society and parents brainwash a young woman into believing this strongly. Mary was almost a rare phenomenon a woman of thirty without love troubles, headaches, backaches, sleeplessness or neurosis. She was acting as a sort of universal shoulder for the world to weep on but listening to a wayward casual gossip about her getting aged and being an old spinster Mary’s personal opinions about herself were destroyed and she was not fitted to recreate herself.

2.12.8. Mary settles down in the city as a successful secretary, superfluous and much sought after by her boarding mates for general counseling and for harmless parleys. She is quite happy and content until the gossiping society comments about her ageing and for remaining unmarried — an accidental overhearing which completely diverts her life in a different and fatal direction. So long as she was confident, self-assertive in her decision-making, she remains happy. Once when women stop carrying a shield of self-confidence they become victims of marriage
and connected bondages, which they are unable to conform. Though the like of Mary is happy in her non-conformity with the regular chain of femininity, the society confuses and misconducts them to their doom.

2.13.0. Girl children are conditioned from childhood to compromise and conform to docility. Though they are unconscious about it at childhood, at teens they begin to realize and start protesting and especially our protagonists put up a strong resistance. Meena though a very loving and committed orphan child brought up by a foster mother with the same dedication as an original mother, refuses to marry Sargunam whom her mother approves immediately. Meena’s ambition and target is to rise in the society with higher educational qualification and not at all to marry and settle down as a homemaker. She aims to achieve recognition in the society, craves to be self-supporting and take care of her old mother who has undergone innumerable sufferings to raise her. She does not hesitate to reject her mother’s desire.

2.13.1. As a youth, Meena continues her resistance in an exploiting society where powerful men try to possess her. She even rejects marriage when it is left to her choice, even though there is much scope for a secured life for an orphan girl like her. She is strongly determined to continue her higher education, set up an innovative nursery at the slum, and to dedicate her life for the downtrodden mass.

2.13.2. Rekha too is not the common type but rather an idealistic character who never gives up even when pressurized on one hand by the economically deteriorating family and on the other hand by the society to relax the moral standards which her conservative family has nurtured into her all along. Though surprised at the double standards of the institution called family and its larger unit the society, nevertheless vows to join women’s liberation movement and redress her grievances and to help other women who are in the same plight. She refuses to marry her aunt’s son and questions her mother’s rejection of her poverty-stricken run away father who returns repenting and pleading forgiveness for his past
neglect of duties. Valli another idealistic character learns from her experience the importance of education and the need to fight against the hypocrisies of the city life, which she formerly aped.

2.13.3. Boundaries for a woman seem to be very complex. When to stay within the boundaries, when to extend it or make it flexible is confusing for middle class daughters like Rekha who were brought up all along their childhood with strict moral preaching about behavior and chastity. While returning home after losing her job because she was not able to adjust with the officials, she wonders that women who are so flimsily dressed, exposing their bodies, what security such women may have for their sensitivity. She concludes that such women were either not taught about the boundaries or they did not accept the boundaries. Therefore, they are free from the ensuing fear and the struggle with self-respect. Constant changes in the society cast before women the fluctuations and false compulsions. Yielding to those or putting up a protest depends on each individual. Rekha decides to uphold self-esteem rather than being a victim of modernity—which only exploits women in certain aspects.

2.13.4. Rekha resolves to join the women’s liberation movement. She understands that her life is at a crucial turning point. She too has to cross the boundaries, not to denigrate herself but to bring innovations in her life and transformations for better achievements. Otherwise, there is no redemption, for she would absolve in the darkness of monotony and hypocrisy of femininity. A girl from orthodox, middle class family decides to protest both the hypocritical conventions and double standards of patriarchy and the upper class society which exploits women.

2.13.5. Martha takes resolutions from her experience as a daughter that she would not be like Mrs. Van Rensberg and her mother—a fat and earthy housekeeping women; she would not be bitter and nagging and dissatisfied, like
her mother and also she hated marriage and her comments are: “Mary young? Me? I’d die first. Tie myself down to babies and house keeping ...” (MQ: 216).

2.13.6. Rajam Krishnan often highlights the role of education in a girl’s life. Proper education though late at adulthood for Valli brings about extreme transformations in her character. The slum background where Valli lived – men being male chauvinistic, all the responsibilities rested on women. He would indulge in all vices and beat the wife for money. Child breeding also fell on women’s chore. The society accepted the atrocities of the husband because he is a man. Now that Valli is educated, she wants to care for the society. The ignorant girl who was crazy after collecting jewels and personal things now thought about uplifting the society, the downtrodden people around her. When her teachers compel her to join the medical college she prefers to study some course in correspondence so that she could earn her living and also educate the slum mass. She aspires to bring about transformations in the society where she lived and she indeed achieves.

2.14.0. The protests, which symbolize their non-conformity that the protagonists launch, vary. In most of the cases as with Marry, Martha, Meena and Valli it improves their life situations, they escape from drudgery and servitude. In the case of Sridevi who does not have the guts to refuse an extravagant marriage suffers from guilty conscience all through her life and takes strong resolution when old after undergoing great humiliation, submission and servility all through her life. Women who put up a protest do face hazards of isolation and unhappiness but yet this is better than total conformity and hence they choose non-conformity as in the case of Anna the new women who marries only to avoid bringing scandal to her daughter’s birth, divorces soon after and resolves to live unmarried as ‘free woman’ without marriage. However, society and family always discourage any advances from a woman in the direction of non-conformity.
2.14.1. The heroines are able to protest only as long as they are daughters inside the family, during their teens till they attain the marriageable age or till they enter into a new relationship of male bondage— either a lover or a husband. Wifehood is the worst stage during which a woman totally surrenders her self-identity and individuality at the altar of the angel in the house syndrome.

2.14.2. Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s daughters are compelled to conformity at the marriageable age. Deceptions of married life are many. For instance, homemakers are thought of as more empowered than unmarried girls and daughters. Of course though at teens girls fear wedlock and socializing into a new relationship in an unknown family and insecure about satisfying the in laws expectations and in undertaking the role of a wife— in meeting the demands of married life yet, at a certain stage women do expect to get married and get away from their existing state. The emotion behind this urge can be identified as a desire for escapism. During teens, their sharper intellect and the courage of adulthood signal that their existing subordinated status at home under the constant prying dictatorship of mother personality and other males at home is detestable. Due to such internal pressures, they choose marriage as an escapism. This only symbolizes their non-conformity with their state at home and as token of spirit to establish self-identity and so do Mary, Ella, Anna ; “But all women conscious, sooner or later, of that impalpable but steel— strong pressure to get married…” (GS:15).

2.14.3. The second-class citizen status which women are accorded in the society is mainly identified as corollary to the nurturing and maintaining of sexual politics which state is achieved through the psychological mode of conditioning/creation of female psyche has been focused in this chapter. Role-playing is an ideology, which is imbibed in girl children from the childhood, since it is not natural or spontaneous but rather unreasonable, it is imposed on girl child from the infant stage through conditioning of the mind. Cultural gendering of roles like masculine and feminine creates certain repercussions in women’s life. Such social
conditioning in patriarchy causes the stress in women in family during their teens until they reached the marriageable stage, in short until under the custody of their parents. How the mother of a son is biased against her daughter-- its detrimental psychological effects on a woman’s spirit of self-identity, the woman’s plight caught up between the dichotomy of liberated intellectual self, and the femininity thrust upon her by patriarchy have been illustrated.

2.15.0. Comparison between the British and Indian daughters’ awareness regarding the breeding strategies presents certain interesting details on similarities and the discrepancies in both the societies. The universal consideration is that women and children are vulnerable category all over the world. The over-protection, over-caring parenthood in fact increases the vulnerability. It is strange in the selected novels, it is obvious: those who are under parent’s custody want to escape it but those who do not-- have the scope of parents custody regret its absence. Those who grow by themselves without much matroning or pampering and motherless children like Anna keep on searching for true love and affection, which they are unable to find fulfilled throughout their lives. In fact, Anna lives with her friend Molly whom people look upon as identical in spite of their drastic differences in their physical appearance. It is because their lot is free women, the same types, living without husbands but married and divorced to give respectable identity to their issues; undertaking various employments such as acting, writing and creative artists in short.

2.15.1. In the west, the absence of proper parental care and too much independence affects the stability of their lives and poses problems like sexual disorders or cracking up and hence the youth who face immense disturbance and turmoil go seeking psychotherapy. In the east parents indulge in too much of caring, imposing stringent restrictions through conditioning and thrusting of femininity upon girl children. This causes discontent among daughters affecting their individual personality— consequently the craving for upholding self-identity sets in leading to non-conformity to established norms of femininity which can be
seen as undercurrent in their thoughts and speech at youth though the crisis occurs at a later stage while in their middle ages. Sridevi because of her middle class breeding develops submissive attitude towards her husband and children. She yearns at heart to support her parents and siblings being the elder daughter but can never muster up the courage to do so. She retaliates during a very crucial stage in her life during her daughter’s marriage.

2.15.2. In the plot construction of the British novelist, the childhood days and details about the protagonists’ parents and their breeding styles are mentioned very insignificantly and slightly. They occupy only a meager portion, which summates to about, two whole pages in a book of about five hundred pages as in The Golden Notebook. Other descriptions of parenting are a wayward casual, passing criticism or information, which Ella and Anna share with boyfriends and just a few moments of Mary’s childhood stages with her parents in the author’s introduction of the protagonist. Lessing mentions about Mary’s parentage in the beginning of the novel just to imply how much she enjoyed her superfluous role as secretary in the city office in comparison with her poverty-stricken childhood nurturing as the daughter of a petty railway official. Lessing endowed with prudent female psychology pities her state; “It is terrible to destroy a person’s picture of himself in the interests of truth or some other abstraction. How can one know he will be able to create another to enable him to go on loving?” (GS:43). Mary falls prey to society’s criticism and coping to keep up with expectations of the society she lands up into an unsuccessful marriage.

2.15.3. Ella’s mother died when she was very young, she seldom thinks of her mother or her father who was a silent, hard-bitten man, an ex-army officer from India who brought her up. Ella’s own comment about her childhood breeding: “If you could call it a bringing up, I was left to myself, and I’m grateful for it” (GN:175), though she says laughingly is self-explanatory about her individual way of living as a ‘free women’ later. Her father as far as Ella remembers is a quiet man, absorbed in his garden, his books; a military man turned some sort of
mystic. His response to Ella’s queries about his concern for his daughter is “But all these family ties— family stuff, marriage that sort of thing, it seems pretty unreal to me. Blood ties — do you feel it? I don’t” (GN: 408). Yet certainly Ella is able to feel a bond at least when she is with her father on a visit. Though he also responds saying, “I’m pleased to see you when you do me the honour. Don’t think you are not welcome” (GN: 408), Ella only feels he does not like seeing her much.

2.15.4. When one of her male friends Paul enquires, whether Ella’s father likes her— a startling question though, she describes him as an isolated man with affection and bitterness which she had not figured out so long being there at heart, she discovers that she is unable to give an answer to that question, “… I don’t know. No, come to think of it, and I never have, I don’t believe he does, not really”. (GN: 180) Ella realizes that she seldom spoke of her father or even thought of him. She recollects while talking to Paul that when she went home for weekends her father was pleased to see her though he never complained about her not coming home more often. Her presence she felt did not make any difference to her father. He just carried on his routine going for walk after breakfast, gardens in the afternoon, reading until very late. She was not on his ‘wavelength’, he would rather communicate with God, Buddha, or somebody or sit with his close colonel friend for hours without saying a word but not with Ella. If even Ella tried to say something, he only sounded embarrassed, or talked about something else. Therefore, Ella seems to be a neglected lonely child and this could be one reason why she hated marriage but was hankering after men who would love her. Though her father’s conviction is, “you’re my daughter. So I believe. I know nothing about you” (GN: 408), he is interested to help her, give her whatever money is left with him, but he is neither able nor is interested to know about the state of her life and not ready to approve of her life style for sure. He regrets that her husband could not understand her either. When he hears, the most important thing in Ella’s life that she loved a married man for five years— his reply is only — “Your
business, not mine. You’re not like your mother, that’s something”. (GN: 408). He wholly retreats unable to bear the pressure when Ella straight to his face asks him, “You don’t ever wonder about me? What I’m doing? You don’t think about your grandson?” (GN: 408) his answer is a straight ‘No’; his strategy of life is that people are just cannibals unless they leave each other alone. “We can’t help each other. People do not help each other, they are better apart. As for as you— what do I know about you? You’re a modern woman, don’t know anything about them”. (GN:409) However, Ella only reflects sarcastically that he never knew about his daughter but he was unable to have conjugal relationship with his wife also and hence he sought another woman.

2.15.5. Ella’s recollections are vague flashbacks of her childhood days— her later exchanges with her old father when she is a fully grown up into a free women exhibits that no one really seemed to be responsible for the child’s growth, whereas in the case of Martha on the contrary she was constantly under the prying eyes of her parent. Anna an artist woman and independent insisted on sexual freedom. Anna and Molly share a flat and Ella and Julia, the chief protagonists in the novel which Anna writes who also represent the heroines of The Golden Notebook these pairs in fact serve as a ‘Mother image’ to each other. Ella discusses with Julia about her affairs with men. Whom Julia herself has introduced her to. However, she doubts if she really had to play up to it all the time and besides most of the times, Ella feels maternal towards Julia and a need to protect her though, ‘... I don’t know from what’ (GN: 176).

2.15.6. Anna often gets frigid, numb and sensing an inability for feelings, she visits the psychiatrist to cure her of this ailment. This doctor she calls ‘Mother sugar’. An individual recognizes one part after another of his earlier life as an aspect of the general human experience and this the novelist compares to “… fitted it like a piece of Mosaic into a very old pattern, and by the act of setting it into place, is free of the individual pain of it” (GN:32). Anna was able to feel pain only after visiting Mother Sugar for a considerable time of period. She wants
to walk off, by herself, Anna Freeman with the help of the psychiatrist she has rescued herself from the private pain because she ‘worked through it’ and accepted it and made it general and became free and strong.

2.15.7. The way Anna was brought up this is what she was able to cope up with. As a creative artist when she looks out for the outlines of a story she was able to find again and again nothing but patterns of defeat, death, irony, which she deliberately refuses and tries to force patterns of happiness and simple life but she fails. She decides to accept the patterns of self-knowledge, which means unhappiness or at least dryness. She turns out to be Anna Wulf a young novelist with writer’s block. Divorced, with a young child and disillusioned by unsatisfactory relationships, she feels her life is falling apart, in fear of madness, she records her experiences in four note books, addressing in turn her problems as a writer, her political life, her relationships and emotions and everyday events — a woman searching for her own personal and political identity. Her father is unable to match her wavelength and on the contrary, he accuses her for expecting too much from life such as contentment. Anna’s heroine in her ongoing novel also reflects Anna in all aspects. Ella’s self-intro briefly to Paul explains her childhood breeding and its effects: “If you could call it a bringing up, I was left to myself, and I’m grateful for it, she said laughing. And she had been married, briefly and unhappily” (GN: 175).

2.16.0. This chapter began with the focus on how women’s capacities for playing varied roles and their abilities to get gratification from it are strongly internalized and psychologically enforced by being built into the feminine psychic structure. Lessing and Rajam Krishnan are convincingly feminist critics as they depict their rebelling daughters who protest to conform to the roles foisted on them. All the female protagonists refuse to assimilate the gender identity fostered into girl children through various tools of nurturing, which restricts their speech, gesture, body language, and mental aspirations — in short, girls are grooved mentally and physically for male pleasure and gratification. They are not
stereotypes of women with specific temperament and specific capacities for role-playing similar to those who are conditioned psychologically and socially. They are acutely conscious that conformity only awards them minority status, which in turn only develops inferiority complex and self-pity in them who view femininity as a curse and puberty, a punishment. Certainly, their inability to conform to such artificial conditioning creates anger and stress which in turn society and family ridicules as neurosis. Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s daughters though they belong to varied countries / families / cultures / societies, yet their sensitivity to the pangs of suffocation, awareness towards the illogical conditioning and its constraints are identical which only vouches that the universal oppression of women commences from the day she is born.

2.16.1. Women’s capacities for playing varied roles and their abilities to get gratification from it are strongly internalized and psychologically enforced by being built into the feminine psychic structure. It becomes explicit that patriarchal institutions with religious sanctions have molded women into conforming themselves with feminine mystique because of which womanhood has become synonymous with femininity.

2.16.2. The ensuing conflict between the female protagonists’ original desires and the dominant feminine hood drive them to the realization that patriarchal womanhood; femininity is not the natural human condition and hence these women are induced to protest the hypocrisy behind such feigned ideologies. Their awakening towards the patriarchal suffocations and their attitudinal changes; gradual but steady seeking of self-identity signals a revolt of the protagonists against their other relationships which is not so much a personal attack on the persons as it is against the institution they represent.

2.16.3. Here, the focus is on the acute consciousness among the female protagonists towards sexual politics— the socialization of both sexes into basic categorization, which has strong impact creating two categories, and anything and
everything connected with female category is always derogatory. This state is achieved through psychological conditioning. Lessing writes in her autobiography *Under My Skin* “...power of that rebellious flame, strong even now, tells me it was by no means the first time I was told, lyingly, what I must feel under my skin.” (1995:24), when she is very old recollecting bitterly the memories of her childhood or rather as a female child.

2.16.4. The specific gender identity nurtured in girl children develops certain group characteristics in them, which accord them only minority status. The girls develop inferiority complex and all the protagonists express the consequential internal trauma they undergo during adolescent age. They feel that puberty and physical, bodily developments are shameful and to be hidden. The ideas such as beauty, complexion and feminine charms are compulsory for attracting male is nurtured into them as their prime destiny. They detest and constantly protest the deliberate suppression of traits such as ambition, achievement and anger in girls both in dreams and in desires, which is conditioned into female psyche by the parents and the society. In short, the protagonists are spokes persons of the novelists’ objections towards the prevalent norms, the ways that the adolescent females are trained to be feminine both consciously and unconsciously. The state of such conditioned girl children, introspection into their tendency to retaliate and protest and their pangs in the process were the focus in this chapter.

2.16.5. The femininity that is nurtured into girl children from childhood suffocates them. Martha faces the agony of adolescent misery rebels her mother’s strivings to hide her physical change. The battle of clothes is carried on between the mother and daughter. Anna and Molly feel they grew up by themselves their mother being dead when they were quite young and hence brought up by their fathers; who were ex-army men. They are strong women who are anxious to establish their self-identity and resolve to live alone, without marriage as ‘free women’ but they resort to the psychiatrist ‘Mother Sugar’ who guides them to ‘feel’ as their main problem is numbness, frigidness and naivety. Anna is almost
a split personality, suffering from writer’s block and unable to write the book which she has planned earlier. Mary is also very happy to escape to a boarding school, avoiding going home even during holidays.

2.16.6. The aspects of interpersonal relationship between women and women / men and women are expressed in all the chosen novels. While considering other female character’s impact on the female protagonists the most obvious problem is the vying between tradition and modernity, which poses certain conflicts in the protagonists’ lives. Conventional feminine bound older generation imposes / creates certain complexities for the younger generation females. These conflicts could be identified as the residue of generation gap between the older generation who cling on to tradition and the younger generation who thirst to shed away traditional clutches and are eager to welcome new set of values. Certain self-imposed restrictions due to conditioning of gender and the absence of rapport and understanding between other female characters also pose certain problems for the protagonists, which can be identified as internal conflict and external conflict. These conflicts originate from the traditional, patriarchal society laying unjustifiable restrictions on women alone. Women cannot be studied in isolation because it is reinstated in Indian Society that at every stage in India women are dependent: before marriage under the custody of the father, after marriage under custody of her husband and after her husband under the custody of her son. Customs and traditions are handed over from one generation to next generation and each nation savors their own respective selective traditions and venerates them. Changes in traditions are effected only after chain of revolutions and protests. But the general aspect of all cultures globally is that women are subordinate to men in all aspects and hence non-conformity always poses struggle for such women who have turned self conscious about their individual identity and naturally they reflect a hatred towards the conventionalities. Self-introspection about one’s individuality also mixed with certain fears about the approval of the society causes pain in such women.
2.16.7. The attitude of women to their role foisted on them largely has been one of unquestioning acceptance of tradition. “This is not surprising since the lowly status, it was made out, had religious sanction” (1982:217). The age long customs and practices were thought to bring fame and protection to women. Some women have no objections, they accept them, and others who could not find an alternative accept them under compulsion. These are subordinate women, who neither seek any changes nor show any protest. However, there are certain categories of women like our heroines of the selected novels who have an understanding that the influence of men is domineering and male chauvinistic and there begins the protest. They seek remedies through sustaining their individualistic spirit of self-dependency and through education. When they encounter the society and when they undertake professions, their individuality is affected and an impulse to transform the tradition germinates in them. However, certainly non-conforming women face lot of challenges in various dimensions—socially, psychologically and physically.

2.16.8. The chief female characters featuring in the selected novels are conscious about their subjugation and hence seek to retain their individuality and self-identity. In the course of their protest, they travel unfettered, even if it means rejecting or bypassing unwanted traditional bias. In fact, all the chosen novels project how the female protagonists evolve through their sensitive denials, disapprovals, retractions and rejections, their temperament and the way they face their varied circumstances.

2.16.9. The various dimensions of their protests are as follows: the daughter characters exhibit their consciousness regarding their independent spirit through non-cooperation towards parents, create conflicts, face conflicts, indulge in conflicts, try to come out of their conflicts and finally succeed in their protest. Their protests are expressed through the protagonists’ feelings and emotions, through language and action, depending on each individual character. Some protagonists like Valli rise to the level of idealistic character. This chapter has
deal with the protagonists’ protests as girl children / as daughters— their consciousness, endeavours to express their awareness regarding their subjugation, the gender issues involved in this connection and the impact of such protests.

2.16.10. The novelists themselves can be identified with the protagonists who are all middle class women clamoring for self-identity, hankering after non-conformity. In fact the unique feature of the selected novels is there is no story development or plot construction but mainly characterization, which is the chief mode establishing the experiences of the protagonists and their predominant emotion, which is non-conformity. Their course of action, the decisions made by the protagonists and their conclusions enlighten us regarding the intensity of their protest and their achievements through such protests and non-conformity.

2.16.11. This chapter has highlighted that it is in the childhood breeding process of the protagonists lies the root cause of their protests. The discriminations create discomfort and the discontent in them, which they expressed in the course of their life through the disapprovals and disagreement with principles and characters that cross their lives; the final decisions and changes they sort to anchor in their lives.

2.16.12. Being a girl child has exclusive significance in both the west and the east. The differences between nature and nurture are brought to light in this connection. Gender issues pertaining to girl children breeding, the existing gender discriminations, intricate differences in the breeding methodologies and social values in both the countries, the startling truth behind why female feticide is widespread in India has been brought under discussion. Lessing recollects the memory of how her father used to tickle her till she were in tears and exhaustion and ache, relates this to the idea of middleclass girls conditioned into being a good sport: “For being a good sport was necessary for the middle-class life. To put up with ‘ragging’ and with being hurt, with being defeated in games, being ‘tickled’ until you wept, was a necessary preparation” (1995:31).
2.17.0. To sum up, the second chapter estimated the depth of sensitivity the heroines possess as daughters towards the discriminations. It also measured the intensity with which they steer, if they do towards non-conformity to patriarchal ideologies the kinds of their protests and denials and also traced the ensuing consequences in the family. This chapter proceeded to scrutinize the way family and society react to the young daughters’ criticisms and rejections of patriarchal conditioning and behavioral non-conformities in daughters as ill befitting the role thrust on them. This chapter presented the way Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s daughters reacted to the male chauvinistic audacity and impertinence. It finally enumerated how the female protagonists who possess unique sensibility towards suppression and subjugation establish their self-identity. Chapter II has focused the protagonists’ myriad experiences that girls at teens face due to the biological vulnerability. The analysis was undertaken in three dimensions— the female protagonist’s feminist consciousness as a child, as a teenage girl and as an adult. It also traced their consequential awakening towards the double standards of the patriarchal society that accords them only the secondary status ‘the other' while exploiting their youth for its personal ego and pleasure. It has finally analyzed whether the female protagonists who possess unique sensibility towards suppression and subjugation establish their self-identity. It has been pointed out that Lessing’s daughters Martha, Ella, Anna and Molly with strong determination resolve to live up their own lives, as they desired because conformity has only awarded them pain and stress irrevocable. Rajam Krishnan’s daughters— Valli through her personal experience and Rekha in spite of her conservative family background rise to idealistic levels, vowing to join women’s liberation movement and dedicate their lives for emancipation of women and the downtrodden. Valli is in fact a highly remarkable idealistic character who transforms a village into an idealistic village. Mary confused by the society’s view yields to unsuccessful marriage. Meena, though a graduate and though marriage is not very desirable she switches over to compromise due to compulsive circumstances. Sridevi with her limited education and with her usual middle class
family background accepts her parent’s guidelines and hence she is unwillingly caught up in an extravagant marriage— the impact of which as an institution in all the lives of the protagonists the ensuing chapter elaborates.