

Chapter V

Existential Loneliness

Man seeks harmonious existence with his fellow-beings through which he hopes to attain selfhood. As a result, his relationship with his community becomes inevitable. Upamanyu Chatterjee's portrayal of human beings and their way of life reveal very closely the protagonists' struggle to adjust with others. The alienation from his biological environment compels man to have personal and social relationships with 'other' and 'others' respectively. Here the 'other' stands for one's partner and the 'others' for the community. In the philosophy of existence, an individual's personal relationship with his spouse is built more on biological factors than on economical and social grounds.

According to the existentialist thinkers, man's relationship with his respective 'spouse' and community will be peaceful and enduring, if it is based on love, brotherhood, equality, understanding, adjustment and the spirit of sacrifice. Otherwise qualities like jealousy, selfishness, indifference, mistrust and misunderstanding will spoil his relationship and end in man's alienation from others.

Chatterjee seems evasive in his portrayal of women in *English, August: An Indian Story*. All his women characters seem to titillate man's sexual instinct and the male characters in turn seem to describe the officers' wives whose main interest is gossiping and using their husband's clout to get a degree and a job in some small village. Then there are women like Neera, Agastya's cousin who stands out from the rest of the nameless women characters in the novel. Neera expresses herself in her letter:

To my closest friend, I'd like to say that I lost my virginity last week. How do you like my formal announcement? I haven't yet told anyone else but I was bursting with the news all these days. And oddly, my main feeling is one of great relief. It was like shedding a burden! Unlike the sense of loss a lot of girls told me they felt. My other feelings are very confused but I am unequivocally, relieved. I've taken the plunge, so to speak. (EA 286-87)

This statement reveals the cynicism rampant in today's society. When traditions and customs fail, the sacrament attached to these traditions also ceases to exist. For Neera's virginity is no longer shrouded with a halo. Instead of seeking fulfillment in love, she starts seeking fulfillment in physical attachment. Neera realizes that nothing has changed after the loss of her virginity.

Dhrubo, Agastya's friend, who writes about his friend Renu, reveals another woman breaking away from the bonds of the society. Here Renu is scared of entering into a relationship. The western concept of losing one's individuality in any relationship has made its inroad into the traditional Indian belief where relationship binds everything. In *English, August: An Indian Story* man-woman relationship is not discussed at a broader level. Throughout the novel, Chatterjee portrays Agastya to be obsessed with sex.

The second novel, *The Last Burden* is about the failure of human relationship when either man or woman lacks qualities like love, fidelity, self-sacrifice, endearment, adjustment and willingness to co-operate with the spouse. Many of the leading thinkers of the ages have hotly debated over the problems of the 'man-woman relationship'. But none of them have given adequate justification and solution to this eternal problem. Nevertheless, some thinkers have tried

to trace the causes of broken relationships or an individual's alienation from others. Existentialist thinkers believe that the reason for this crisis is man's superiority complex, his desire to dominate others and a mass wealth for personal glory. They opine that the society as a collective entity becomes responsible for an individual's ruin. Male dominance, gluttonous obsession and indifference of the society towards an individual have created an everlasting confusion and conflict in human life.

Corresponding to the levels on which human beings exist, in the psychological level, cynicism, erratic behaviour, maladjustment and misunderstanding of either man or woman, can often hinder the progress of life. Eventually this leads to conflicts and clashes between the two, resulting in the defeat of both. Chatterjee attributes this misfortune to man's flexible nature. *The Last Burden* gives a fascinating portrait of an Indian middle-class family and the awesome burden of family ties at the end of the twentieth century. *The Last Burden* is concerned with women's role as wife and sexual slave. Hence the underlying text is that of the Indian family slowly breaking up in a modern milieu. In this novel of narration, the narration revolves around the central character, Urmila, the mother of Jamun, the narrating protagonist.

Upamanyu Chatterjee does not deal with victimization following violent crimes in his fiction. However, he does dwell on mild victimization at the social level. *The Last Burden* presents a case of domestic victimization in and through the character of Urmila, who is the victim of male domination but not of physical assault or battering or rape.

Urmila's situation in life is exemplary of woman's life as wife and mother getting caught within the process of modernity. She is the first unmistakable victim in the home. Her role as a breadwinner in addition to that of the mother stretches the limits of her capacity to willingly

taking upon herself any kind of suffering for the sake of her children. Her story of woe reveals her to be an ever-complaining woman whose life is one of external suffering meted out by her circumstances in the form of her incorrigible husband, her growing sons who are constantly trying to dodge her and the agony of her piles. Bitterness and bickering is all she knows. Her life with her husband and her sons and everything around her is an inescapable burden that crows her down. Urmila is the ever-suffering woman when Jamun realizes ultimately that she had made meaning out of her life.

The novel also exhibits the inner friction of a middle class family where every individual appears to be thinking about his or her own self. The bond of love seems to be totally missing. The relationship between Shyamanand and Urmila exhibits their lack of understanding for each other. Urmila feels that Shyamanand doesn't like her being in a comfortable state. She tells Jamun:

‘see *again* – your father can't stomach my being comfortable! He may seem solicitous, but inly festers whenever he spots me at rest. The instant I pick up an efficient servant to somewhat ease my donkey work at home, he beings to niggle and crab—only because I may catnap one afternoon in front of the TV one evening. He's been like thus for forty years – a purulence in my skill. You must remember that chain of servants - Kishori, Blido, Ramteke, Chandan - that we had to help Aya. They all scrambled because they couldn't endure your father's prickliness. (TLB 113)

The burden of love, possession and ties are most evident in the relationship between Shyamanand and Urmila. Even though married for forty years, they have not established a

meaningful relationship and lives in a destructive atmosphere. This is an eternal problem. This sort of psychotic failure between man and woman is reflected in this novel.

Upamanyu Chatterjee brings out the routine life and chores of a woman in the middle class family through the character of Urmila. She has to wake up at four-thirty every morning including holidays and has her tea as the first thing in the morning. She suffers from piles and there is nobody to help her in her work. She cannot share about her problems with anyone. Hence she complains, “How to explain and who shall listen” (TLB 30).

After giving tea to Shyamanand and Burfi, she has to go on with the monotonous work of preparing breakfast, getting ready the tiffin boxes for her children and preparing for school. In the meanwhile she also gets ready for the office. In spite of her busy woks and preparations for others, she gets only a scolding from Shyamanand for delaying him for the office. After duty Urmila comes at six pm and continues to work. She is not appreciated by anybody in the house hold and nobody helps her.

Running a busy house in a mechanical way, she suffers from physical ailments also. Her illness is a symbol of maternal malady at the heart of every Indian family. Jamun says, “she had to combat her hypertension, her piles, corns, arthritis, heart, marriage [and] her mind” (TLB 4). In addition, Urmila suffers from alienation and her only solace is Jamun, who understands her better than all the others. She unfolds her ‘emotional self’, her ‘alienated self’ and her ‘isolated self’ only to him. Chatterjee evokes Urmila’s predicament in glorious prose; “...for her entire existence in those years has seemed to her to’ve been tyrannized by a medley of fear – terror that Shyamanand die on her hands in the house and floundering, in a cold sweat . . .” (TLB 210) .

Urmila, who has been the vital force and the lover of the family in the words of Pradeep Trikha, “is scissoned like famined earth (TLB 125) as time progresses. At sixty, she is left with her distress while Shyamanand is left alone after his retirement. It is only when Urmila suffers a stroke and is dying in the hospital that Shyamanand shows some concern. Burfi criticizes him saying, “he loves her only when she is absent and dying” (TLB 230). But Jamun is not quite sure whether Shyamanand is suffering at all. Chatterjee also very cynically suggests that this suffering or grief is just momentary and even when they are returning from Haridwar after immersing Urmila’s ashes, it is Shyamanand who brings up the topic of the will.

The number of compromises a wife has to make, the ways in which she has to adjust to suit to her husband’s taste and style, makes her a victim figure because she has to erase her true self and rewrite herself according to the desires of her husband, who is supposed to be her master in the patriarchal system. Such attitude is still prevalent in the contemporary society.

The mother is still the centre of the Indian family, the beginning and the end of its image itself. Urmila is a powerful presence, even though she is shown at her worst also she is trapped in a life-long struggle with her husband Shyamanand and by depicting this sort of family. Chatterjee clearly shows the ailments of the middle class life and through *The Last Burden* give a searing picture of reality.

Jamun struggles hard to free himself of the burden of his relationships with the women he has been associating. This action he could do only by relating himself to Kasturi and Kasibai because Jamun has developed a deep attachment to his parents. He thinks that marriage will spoil his relationship with his parents, he tries not to marry. He doesn’t want to enter into responsible and binding relationships. Jamun’s friend Kasturi is married to another man. But yet, through their

physical contact, Kasturi bears Jamun's child and makes her available to him whenever he needs her. He visits Kasturi after the delivery and they are happy to gaze at each other. Jamun brought two Lakme face powder compacts for the baby. After looking at the gifts she "shuts her eyes, smirking". Jamun is not affected by her attitude. "his viewed it just as an item in the larger shambles of his life – that is, as a detail that he can only observe, inertly, as on a screen" (TLB 290). It is clearly evident that Jamun doesn't have any regrets about what he has done. The similar arrangement he has had with Kasibai also does not affect him as it makes no demands on him emotionally.

The Mammaries of the Welfare State also presents the pessimistic view of man-woman relationship. Daya is a fleeting presence in the novel and nothing much of Agastya's relationship with Daya is revealed in the novel except that she is viewed as a mere sexual object by him.

In *Weight Loss*, Bhola's obsession with sex is brought out. The world looks like an unreal world because all decisions taken by Bhola are because of his sexual urges. Bhola's sexual urge makes him commit emotionally because he wants to be the dominant partner in his relationships. Lack of love and care, dysfunctional families and societies are considered to be main reasons for this problem. Bhola's family never gave importance to him, but when the father understands him, Bhola doesn't have time for him.

Not only Bhola but also others right from cooks to vendors, drivers to the quack doctor Borkar are obsessed with sex and all of them willingly play the game of sex. There is no value for the relationship. It is worthwhile to make a note of what Nandini Lal says about the book: "It may not be an easy read, however for readers squeamish about violence, squator or graphic sex. Upamanyu takes seriously the satirist's role of exposing society's ills - he goes a step further and exposes body parts as well" (7). Bhola develops an emotional bond with Moti, the vendor and is

not able to leave him or forget him. But when he is posted as a lecturer in a remote hilly area, he is separated from him. Hence he agrees to his marriage with Kamala. Mrs. Manchanda, who also has an illicit relationship with Bhola talks about his marriage and says “marriage is great fun. It gives infidelity a touch of chilli and pepper” (WL 222). Kamala’s first marriage was not a success because she had to resign her job to accompany her first husband. She becomes an associate with her first husband, in drinking and smoking. However, after drinking alcohol he becomes a beast. Hence she is not happy and not very keen to develop her relationship with him. Bhola is not able to forget Moti and Titli even after marrying Kamala. Chatterjee calls them ‘first lovers.’

The entire novel discusses Bhola’s sexual obsession. But after his marriage with Kamala both of them did not give any priority to that aspect at all. “They had gone to bed at four in the morning and Bhola had presumed that sex at that hour with an unsexy unknown – for him as well as for her – was not a priority.” Chatterjee says that “Bhola had sex with Kamala just eight times in the three years that they remained together” (WL 241). This shows that both of them are not interested in each other and hence did not lead a purposeful life. He has not established a good relationship with his wife Kamala.

Bhola longs for Moti. Moti too wants to see him after thirteen years. When Kamala is admitted in the hospital for her delivery, he gets a call from Moti and is much excited. Bhola “didn’t sleep a wink that night. He’d gone to bed too late, he had two Nescafe’s with his in-laws at the nursing home, he was expectedly tense about Kamala and then Moti’s phone call out of the blue totally knocked out of his skull any residual drowsiness” (WL 260). Bhola looks at Moti’s lips and wonders, “how many lovers he had in the intervening span of time and how many of them had been male” (266). Bhola is spiritually and morally degraded because of his obsession with sex. After the birth of his daughter also, he is not able to forget Moti. When Bhola is alone in the

late evenings or night, or when he closes his eyes out of tiredness, he remembers the time he spent with Moti. In spite of all these things, he is quite happy when a daughter is born to him and he shows his happiness when he sees his wife and daughter at the hospital. When he looked at her, “his eyes had filled with tears.” (WL 85) It shows that he will be able to develop a positive relationship with his wife.

The years he spent alone in the hills are a testing time for him. He feels that he misses Kamala and frequently has sex with Mrs. Manchanda, who, in her husband’s presence calls him her brother. Mrs. Manchanda and Bhola are not loyal to their partners. Moti wants to satisfy his physical desire with others, because there is no possibility of establishing a truthful, meaningful and purposeful relationship with his wife. This is because of his physical desires he has developed even at an early stage. It is also because of man’s egoism, enmity and rigid taste and temperament. Man-woman relationship fails due to man’s inherent weakness and limitations.

Love, which was thought to be a means of harmonious life, has ceased to be so. This is attributed either to man’s or woman’s greed for ‘possession’ and ‘domination’. Life is measured according to its practical values and all life generating values. Those values are ignored or misused in the contemporary society. This is revealed by the study of the conflict of the sexes in Chatterjee’s novels.

Modern man has become materialistic and mechanical and he does not have time for the beautiful aspects or values of life; his life is turned into a life of sufferings. In Chatterjee’s novels love is asked to depart from human heart. The power of love leads neither to psychological ascendancy nor to the attainment of selfhood. Everyone undergoes identity crisis. Erick H. Erickson in his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, states that:

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them: while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is, luckily, and necessarily, for the most part unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or, elated, 'identity consciousness.' (22-23)

Man's relationship with society is found to be on the decline as that of man-woman relationship. Existentialist thinkers say that the man-society relationship will succeed if the qualities like love, faith, friendship, sacrifice, broad-mindedness, mutual understanding, respect and regard are opted. In existentialist terminology this mode of social relationship is characterized by 'I- Thou'. It brings peaceful and productive co-existence between an individual and society.

A happy relationship between an individual and society will be impossible if these qualities are neglected. An individual must try to adjust with the larger community in order to achieve his objects. If he thinks he is superior to the community he will involve himself in everlasting conflicts which will make him an alien to his community. So, Chatterjee tries to say that either everyone in a family or in society should try to understand one another and should not try to dominate others.

Chatterjee's novels portray social relationship of the protagonists in a negative way. Man is a social animal. He should lead a purposeful life. He should not be a spectator in the world. He

is an active agent who is involved with others. Man's existence and attainment of essence is closely related to the social phenomenon. This involvement of man with others is fundamental for the realization of self-hood.

In *English, August: An Indian story* and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, this kind of man can be seen only in few places. The protagonist Agastya in the two novels does not lead a harmonious life in the society. He doesn't want to mingle with others but remain alone. He does not like to go from one place to another place. The reason behind this is that life in Madna is quite new to him. As he comes from a cosmopolitan city, he is not able to lead a happy or comfortable life in Madna. He finds that it as an 'alien' place for him to live. According to Sartre man's being in the society is basically being with others. Sartre seems to think that man's co existence with society is a basic phenomenon.

Man's relationship with society on many occasions is not easy and worthwhile. As an individual, man is responsible for his failure to succeed in interpersonal relationships. His ambition to lead a westernized and a luxurious way of life automatically spoils his relationship with his community. Chatterjee says 'man-society' relationship will not be harmonious so long as man and society do not agree about human values. There should be a proper understanding between an individual and community. Otherwise man's inter-personal relationship is naturally bound to fail. This is revealed in *English, August: An Indian Story* and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*.

As soon as Agastya reaches Madna, he feels that the place is unfit for him to live. He realizes that:

. . . he was to lead three lives in Madna, the official, with its social concomitance, the unofficial, which included boozing with Shankar and Sathe, and later, with Bhatia, and the secret, in the universe of his room, which encompassed jogging by moonlight. Each world was to prove educative, and the world beyond Madna was continually to interrupt and disturb him, through letters and the radio, and through ungovernable memories. When he was leading one Madna – life, the other two seemed completely unsubstantial. (EA 48-49)

Sathe, the cartoonist also finds the people of Madna as absurd and completely with the one mixed up with culture. Since Agastya is not able to adjust in the new place even though he knows that this situation is only temporary. He has to live there only for a few months and within a year he will be posted as Assistant Collector in a remote place. He is surprised to see the hectic social life in Madna. Agastya learns a little about government offices but he learns a lot about “the ways of the wider world” (EA 71). Chatterjee clearly states the predicament of Agastya as “Endless movement, much like uncaring sea, transfers to alien places, passages to distant shores, looking for luck, not sensing that heaven was in their minds. I was not born for this, said Agastya silently” (EA 165). He admits that all he wants is happiness. His father and Dhurbo have suggested that through the experience of Madna, he can learn more. But he feels that he has learnt only the “impotence of restlessness” (165). He is not able to adjust himself in the social life of Madna. For him “Madna and Delhi seemed two extreme points of an unreal existence; the only palpable thing was the rhythm of the beast beneath him, a wonder, that could link such disparate worlds together” (EA 177).

Agastya keeps his official engagements to the minimum and he escapes into the private world of music, marijuana and masturbation. He tries to relive the past. He finally decides to quit

the job and return to Calcutta because his mind is always preoccupied with the mundane pleasures he had been enjoying at the metropolitan life of Delhi and Calcutta.

Agastya becomes aware of himself and his physical needs. He compares the life in Madna with the life he had in Delhi. Things like food and sleep which he had taken for granted earlier now acquires significance:

Food became very important in Madna, and he was soon to encourage and concentrate on his stomach pangs. For hunger was evidence of one's good health, and thinking about eating itself gave him something to do. It made him calculate which houses in Madna he could attack for lunches and dinners, and if compelled to eat Vasant's carbage, then the menu for it. A very few days in the district, and he was sick, even scared, of abstract thought – the problem of food gave him something concrete for cognition... Before Madna, he had always taken food for granted, like air... Now he did hope that there were places in Madna where one could eat cheaply, but he didn't have the will to hunt for them... and may be all over the town he would get only chewing – gum chapatis. (EA 65-66)

In Madna, his sleep is disturbed and for getting sleep he repeats the activities of the afternoon, thinking that before coming to Madna he had always slept well. "But in Madna he seemed to have appalled sleep. When he finally dropped off, it was out of weariness even with despair thus he played out, in one day, one kind of life of the lonely" (EA 73-74).

Life in Madna is inescapable for him and he feels lonely too to talk to anyone. After sunset, he usually goes for a walk and the town looks very dirty and too crowded. He does not want to meet anyone in the office though he goes there to do his duty. He has the habit of walking

along the train tracks. All these things clearly do not show that he avoids the company of people; nor does he want to develop any relationship with others in the society.

Agastya wants to alienate himself from the society. As far as possible he wants to spend most of the time alone in his room.

His secret life that year was lived in his hot dark room in the Rest House, or in other hot dark rooms in other Rest houses, His secret life became much more exciting and more actual than the world outside. In the afternoons the rooms were dark because the windows had to be closed against an incandescent world, and the window panes were painted on opaque pink. . . There would be marijuana and Nakedness, and soft hopelessly incongruous music, (Tagore or Chopin), and the thoughts that ferment in isolation. (EA 26)

He is condemned to solitude. However, the protagonist does not think that the world is altogether a bad place; he feels that it may be so only for him. He is unfit for the place like Madna. Therefore, he desires to resign his post rather than to live his miserable life in the present society.

Chatterjee writes about the hostile society and the struggle of the individuals to develop meaningful relations with others. Agastya feels frustrated and disappointed in the society since he feels that the job has taken him away from the pleasures of metropolitan life, he wants to resign his job.

In *Mammaries of the Welfare State*, the same kind of feeling is experienced by Agastya. At the very beginning of the novel, Chatterjee presents the condition of Agastya: “Agastya was so enervated by this life in that city that ever so often, when he was alone, he found himself leaning

back in his desk chair or resting his head against the armrest of the lumpy sofa in this office that served as his bed, shutting his eyes and weeping silently. The cry generally made him feel better”(3). From the very beginning of the novel, he faces housing problem. He is not ready to share his room or adjust with the roommates. He is ready to complain to the superiors about the housing problem. He spends three or four nights a week at Daya’s place. At the very beginning of the novel itself he has tried to write his resignation letter. Chatterjee says, “Every now and then in his career, once a week on the average, Shri Sen regrets his decision to join the topmost Civil Service of the country. On the other days, when he reflects, life outside the government appears tense - making, obsequious and fake”(117). Agastya considered Shri Makkad who was socially and culturally came from a different planet, a friend. He enjoyed and spent time with Shri Makkad. He felt that he had not been able to distinguish between the Police State and the Welfare State in his eight years. Agastya always had great respect to the police.

The Mammaries of the Welfare State portrays bureaucratic society in India and also talks about the corruption prevailing in Indian bureaucracy. Agastya’s journey does not reveal nation less lost than his own self. According to Chatterjee, Agastya represents the bureaucratic processes of the welfare state – where corruption and power reign supreme. Nandal Lal in the article “The Bleating Bureaucrat” says “Upamamyu Chatterjee succeeds in writing wittily on an existence that is both corrupt and dreary. Nothing has changed in Madna or Civil Service. He faces bribery and when he refused, everyone looks at him long and sadly. Two Bangalis Agastya and Dhurbo are the only ones left unimpressed”(20).

The Mammaries of the Welfare State is not like *The Last Burden*. There is no domesticity in this novel and the entire novel revolves around the city of Madna which faces the problems of plague and a hunger strike. Being a human, Agastya does not want to have good social

relationship with others. Here urban consciousness is clearly revealed through the character of Agastya. She is too self-obsessed to mingle freely in the mainstream life of the society where they are forced to live. As a member of the post-colonial India he carries the mixed culture wherever he goes. She is longing for the pleasures of the present. According to existentialist thinkers, man should alienate himself from society in order to lead a free and responsible life. Alienation brings a sort of dread, anxiety, anguish and nothingness. As a result man feels despair. Through this novel, one can understand that there must be a modest social and moral order of life. The man who makes his life fruitful should harmonize his relationship with society.

The novel *The Last Burden* portrays the middle class family in the modern society which considers family as a burden. All are alienated from each other. Nobody cares for anybody in the family. Jamun is the only one who has consideration for all the others. He understands his mother Urmila's problems. This kind of treatment is not only found in her family but also in the contemporary society.

Chatterjee clearly says how the joint-family system is breaking up. He analyses the negative aspect of the nuclear family through his important characters. Jamun leads a meaningless life in the contemporary society as he faces alienation and existential problems. This could be clearly seen in the relationship between his brother Burfi and himself. It also reveals how elderly people are treated badly by the younger generation. These elderly people become a burden for their sons and daughters.

The Last Burden according to Nilufer E. Bharucha is "a powerful and, mature exploration of the changing face of the Indian family and notions of filial responsibilities"(72). Jamun's elder brother Burfi and his wife Joyce are bored with the elders. All of them are waiting for Urmila's

death. There is no love or tenderness in all this. The sons quarrel between themselves over the expenses and also how much they will get out of Urmila. Moreover, they wonder as to what should be done with Shyamanand after the death of Urmila. Chatterjee thus portrays the true nature of family relationships in India. The novel itself produces no positive values. All the characters in the family think only about themselves, not others.

The family life and man-woman relationship in the family are portrayed in a negative manner. This attitude can be true because in India joint family system is breaking down rapidly and is replaced by Nuclear families set up. People in the nuclear family do not have the opportunity to live with elders whom we think will guide us to a good level in the society. Sohail Ahmed says in the article, "Burden of Family Ties in the Last Burden" that, "*The Last Burden* is a fascinating portrayal of life in an average Indian middle class family" (22). It is the portrayal of the burden of family ties. Chatterjee tries to present how the parents are making emotional demands upon the children. There is a conflict between parents and sons.

Jamun and Burfi are attracted more towards western culture than to the Indian culture. These characters reveal how the Western culture makes an impact on our contemporary society. The sons feel that the father often interferes and intrudes between them. *The Last Burden* also shows the parents' disappointment at their sons failing to live. According to them they fail to live up to their expectations and meet their emotional demands. The condition of the elderly people of India is seen through Urmila's words:

. . . For sure, Burfi and Joyce dream of their own establishment, and are rueful about living collectively. . . Why are the old abandoned? . . . I read that derelict parents nowadays are prosecuting their issue for maintenance. You must foster

me, for I fostered you . . . For hundreds of years, generation upon generation, why've the old been abandoned . . . Pista and Doom'll shed you in a big house that you'll shout you erected for them . . . and next their young will . . . (104-05)

The characters in *The Last Burden* do not establish a modest affinity with others. There seems no harmony between the members of the family. They are not able to have a good social relationship with others. They undergo alienation and isolation. In these circumstances man withdraws from society and leads a lonely life. It is the fine portrayal of the human relationships in the contemporary society. He has no sense of belonging to society amidst which he lives. He considers himself an alien in his own society.

Way to Go is a farce; an eighty five-year old, half paralyzed, Shyamanand goes missing. Jamun leads his life of desperation: "Life was quiet and dreadful. The only one whom it had been worse had been his father but he seemed to have got away" (WTG 19). He tries to balance the feelings of despair and resignation since the suicide of his friend and neighbour Dr. Mukherjee.

G. J. V. Prasad says that *Weight Loss* "is a novel about a society where almost everybody has sex on the mind all the time, where morality or codes of acceptable behaviour are only about maintaining facades, where nobody's life is fulfilling any way and also he adds that "this is a novel about dissociation, about dysfunctional societies"(195). On the one side Bhola wants to maintain the body, on the other side he seeks ways to fulfill both men and women bodily appetites. This is reflected in the number of people he slept with eight-four men and four women.

In this novel Upamanyu Chatterjee satirizes the society by exposing its ill through the character of Bhola. At an early age itself he is obsessed with his Physical Education teacher Anthony. Bhola Chases Titli and her husband Moti when his friend Dosto loves his driver. Later

he completes his education, gets his job and marries Kamala. Bhola is not afraid of the society or others. Though he looks as if he leads a comfortable life with Kamala he is not satisfied with his sexual life. He is not able to forget other partners especially Moti. Bhola is a morally and spiritually degraded man who reflects the condition of the contemporary society.

All personal and social relationships are bound to fail in the pride of power, prestige and fortune and end in man's ethical alienation from society. This is clearly evident in the characters of Agastya, Jamun and Bhola. They are not able to establish meaningful relations in the society. They always want to be alone in their own world. From the moment the society fails to support man, he starts seeking consolation in his own conscience, will power and action. He tries to make his life meaningful and authentic after his detachment from the society. It depends upon man to think whether he should achieve perfection in life with the help of the existing social order of life or alienate himself from the society together. Man's solitary life in different social settings is depicted by Chatterjee as his men are isolated from the society in search of a new order of life. It demands them to make their life subjective making the solitary man acquires more importance.

Human passions and virtues like love, faith, patience, enthusiasm, action, courage, confidence, hard work, a sense of responsibility and sacrifice animate and encourage an alienated man into a higher realm of life. Upamanyu Chatterjee's protagonists, who in spite of their loneliness, despair, dread and difficulties achieve self-realization, are strong individuals.

The individuals evolve and are moulded by the society to a certain extent. The protagonists of *English*, *August: An Indian story*, *The Last Burden*, *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, *Weight Loss* and *Way to Go* are distinct from one another. They are rebels in the sense that they refuse to succumb to the pressures of the society and revolt against the social rules in different

ways. In Chatterjee's novels, these values have no relevance and most of the people have broken away from their cultural moorings. These novels portray the frightening reality of the existential angst in today's youth and also the total loss of traditional values in the society.

Upamanyu Chatterjee's characters experience all the existential problems. His novels present a very morbid picture of society, reflecting the dull and monotonous cycle of existence. His first novel, *English, August: An Indian story* portrays the contemporary youth's search for identity. Agastya Sen, the young IAS Officer feels dislocation when he is suddenly transplanted from city the life he has seen enjoying to the realities of life in a small backward town Madna. It is a fine portrayal of young Indians with similar backgrounds. In the course of his movement, he moves from a sense of alienation towards escapism and finally he finds his solution through a positive involvement in the compelling realities of life in this country. Agastya suffers from boredom, alienation, rootlessness, nothingness, dread, despair, anxiety and the absurdity of life. He is not satisfied with the society and gets frustrated.

His second novel *The Last Burden* has focused on the family. This novel is considered by critics as a work of far greater substance and originality as compared to his first book *Indian, August: An Indian Story*. The author brings out the complex problems of complex age in contemporary society. His concerns are about the contemporary society with the disintegration of the family, discontinuity of the tradition, conflict between the generations and several other issues which result in the loneliness and the isolation of the individual. In this novel the existential struggles of the protagonist Jamun are found.

The Mammaries of the Welfare State, a sequel to his first novel *English, August: An Indian Story* is a tale of serialized angst of Agastya. It reveals the reality of the country where the poor

and the downtrodden lead a miserable life. Agastya Sen is back and lives the life of absurdity. He does not find any interest in his job. He finds only boredom and dullness. He manages to survive by balancing work with as much leave as he can afford to get away with. But in this novel also, the welfare state makes life complicated for him leaving him frustrated. *Way to Go* gives a picture of people who get depressed by life and in the end realize that it is not the best way to spend a life. It is a fine portrayal of the people who live in despair.

Weight Loss gives a picture of a morally and socially degraded man. He is obsessed with sex always seeking partners from the society including men. But he becomes a family man by marrying Kamala. Still he is in search of other sexual partners especially Moti, thus giving a negative side of India which nobody is aware of. In these novels, existential crisis can be found. They focus on the subjective awareness of his style of existence, the existentialists' concern with the absurd, alienation, exile, dread, anxiety and despair. In *English, August: An Indian Story*, the substance of life is experienced through social and political relations. Agastya Sen becomes a commentator on the absurdities of Indian society: attitudes, behaviour, systems of belief of the administrator, the doctor, the holy man, the illiterate workman – all at one time or another are discussed and observed. He is confronted with two extremes of experience, “Madna and Delhi seemed two extreme points of an unreal existence; the only palpable thing was the rhythm of the beast beneath him, a wonder, that could link such disparate worlds together” (EA 177).

The first twenty pages set the tone of the entire novel. Madna is peopled with various men – of the officer class and sycophants who gather around the man of importance. These officers and their wives come to life in Chatterjee's descriptions. He cannot fit himself in Madna. Being brought up in the city, he cannot find any fortunes in the place like Madna. The main theme of existentialism is absurdity, which compounded of dullness, boredom, anchorlessness and

hopelessness. He considers himself in Madna as “with no special aptitude for anything” (EA 3). He considers himself a misfit – anchorless and misplaced by his competitive qualifications. He finds happiness in nothing and thinks of himself that in the place like Madna he does not seem to fit in. He feels “emptier than usual” (EA 134) and writes to his father: “I’m wasting my time here, and not enjoying the wasting. That can be a sickening feeling” (EA 131).

Agastya’s life is spent by dozing a little in his room, watching lizards racing across the room, day dreaming, thinking of the past, extracting invitation for a meal either from his seniors, friends or subordinates to escape the awful meals prepared by the guest house cook and visiting various officers to learn the intricacies of bureaucracy. He has to move from one room in the rest house to another room in some other house. It is homelessness of a kind and it is a reflection of an inner sense of restlessness also. In the first day the collector’s overbearing manner leaves him with a lambent dullness when the people are waiting for justice. He wants to run away from this situation. The action to exercise provides a relief from the absurdity of his daily routine: “Running felt splendid, clockwork movement, the criss-cross of arm and leg, rhythm and balance, the steady, healthy panting, the illusion that the body was being used well. The mind wandered pleasantly, yet not into chaos because the physical strain provided the leash” (EA 36). She is preoccupied with sex and soft drugs. When he departs for Madna, Dhruvo asks, “What’ll you do for sex and marijuana in Madna?” (EA 13). He could easily avail himself of these in Delhi but Madna could offer him only little of these. So he manages to live with their fantasized manifestation. Agastya is shown as suffering from the problems which are part of contemporary heritage.

In his office, he was educated on the intricacies of administration by the government officers. In Madna, he learned that “the importance of restlessness” (EA 165). Agastya finds that

in Madna “living had become a simpler business, gliding from day to day and discovering more and more what he did not want” (EA 177). At the very beginning of the novel Upamanyu Chatterjee portrays his protagonist’s predicament:

Anchorlessness – that was to be one of his chaotic conditions in that uncertain year; battling a sense of waste was to be another. Other fodder too, in the farrago of his mind, self-pity in an uncongenial clime, the incertitude to his reactions of Madna, his job and his, and his inability to-it - other abstractions too, his niche in the world, his future, his elusive mocking nature of happiness, the possibility of its attainment. (EA 24-25)

The novelist explores this theme of anchorlessness and loneliness of an entire generation along with the satiric portraiture of whole Indian Administrative Services. In his official action, there is a sense of bewilderment. Agastya is confused about his place in the bureaucratic set up. The inability to reconcile this reality with his father’s inspiring vision of an IAS Officer’s responsibility aggravates his feeling anchorlessness. He feels that, “I don’t look like a bureaucrat, what am I doing here. I should have been a photographer, or a maker of ad films, something like that, shallow and urban” (EA 14). His mind is restless. Though he doesn’t like his job, he remembers what his father said to him, “For most Indians of your age, just getting any job is enough. You were more fortunate, for you had options before you” (EA 34). He does not adjust to the circumstances in Madna; nor is he able to look at any positive aspect of job in Madna and is unwilling to stay there. He could sleep at all in his room and spends his time with Shankar and at midnight he goes for walking. He thinks “If you don’t exercise every day, unless you’re ill, you will never leave Madna” (37). He spends time by writing letters to his father and friends in the office. He finds nothing valuable in the office. When he writes letters to his father he conceals his

dislocation and his problems. She feels quite aloof from him and feels that working in Madna is a waste of time: he feels that he is living somebody else's life. He finds no coherence between his past and present life, or even between the three spheres of his life – official and unofficial and the private. He is totally confused about what he wants in life, and desperately tries to find a way out of his vague restlessness. Without any aim or hope, he wants to lead a happy life in this modernized society. He knows that he represents many who are like him - with no special attitude for anything, not even wondering how to manage, not even thinking.

Man, after his estrangement from society stands in solitude as a forlorn consciousness striving for higher phases of life. His goal to excel and become superman is temporarily hampered by his inevitable abandonment of society. In this circumstance Sartre asserts man's life will be a success or a failure according to his conscience, choice and subsequent action. For instance, Agastya continues to be absurd in *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* has a sense of anchorlessness. His inability to adjust and to do things in Madna aggravates his feeling of anchorlessness. His life in Madna exposes the shallowness of his existence and the feeling of loneliness.

According to Chatterjee, the whole structure of Civil Service is its administration; but it is a part of something bigger and has nothing to offer. The Indian bureaucracy has rendered him a crippled person who still suffers from the hangover of a colonized past as Indianization of administration has taken place. Thus it is in a form which is almost absurd. Though Agastya moves from Madna to the capital, he continues to complain about the pointlessness, the horrifying comic fatality and irrelevance of the daily acts: He says "I'm sick of my life here" (TMWS 8) and "I'm sick of the pointlessness of the work I do and the ridiculous salary that I get for it" (TMWS

12). His feelings of loneliness and boredom are seen throughout the novel. Drafting in his head letters of resignation from the civil service had been one of his past times in the last eight years.

Through a conversation between Groovy Suroor and Agastya, Chatterjee presents the Indian bureaucracy and the state of Agastya in that society. He says,

I feel weird. I ask myself all the time: How do you survive on your ridiculous salary? And *why* do you survive on your ridiculous salary? At the same time, I feel grossly overpaid for the work that I do. Not the quantity, which on certain days can be alarming, but the quality. In my eight years of service, I haven't come across a single case in which everybody concerned didn't try to milk dry the boobs of the Welfare State. (TMWS 23)

Agastya is frustrated by the absurdities of the bureaucratic life around him. Daya offers him a job in her agency. He was invited to handle the Public Affair portfolio. He will be given a three bedroom apartment, a salary of thirty five thousand rupees per month and bonus, and electricity, petrol, car and cooking gas bills will be paid whereas he is hesitant to join the job immediately. Thereafter, he tries to write a resignation but fails.

Agastya talks about the law that governs the transfer of civil servants. According to him it is,

a sort of corollary to the law of karma, namely, that the whole of life passes through innumerable and fundamentally mystifying changes, and these changes are sought to be determined by our conduct, our deeds (otherwise, we would quite simply lose our marbles); only thus we even pretend to satisfactorily explain the mystery of suffering, which is a subject that has troubled thoughtful souls all over

the world since time immemorial. It is also hypothesis that justifies the manifest social inequalities of the Hindu Community. (TMWS 116)

Though Agastya often regrets his decision to join in the Civil Service, for him “life outside the government appears tense-making obsequious and fake” (TMWS 117). He cannot find any satisfaction in job as well as in his private life in Madna. Charterjee explains that what helped him to be away from his suffering: “he’d discovered that cannabis and hashish, steadily imbibed, helped marvelously to lessen the pain and discomfort of his senselessly strenuous swimming and jogging sessions. Dope, he was convinced, was the antidote to much of the suffering of the civil servant” (TMWS 119).

Charterjee’s second novel, *The Last Burden* gives a picture of the middle class family in the contemporary society. It talks about familial ties in the fast changing economic scenario. The novel reveals that the joint family system is being replaced by nuclear families. The reason behind that is modernity. In the modern society, materialism is given importance. There is no place for values or relationships. Because of this relationships become a burden. Jamun, the protagonist of this novel is a sensitive individual. Jamun thinks that parental love is a burden. Even his elder brother Burfi and his wife think the same. Changes in social values and standards make them to feel like this. This feeling is sensed throughout his novel. He feels guilty of neglecting his duties but he is unable to do much to rectify the situation. Charterjee satirizes the educated people who are not taking up the responsibilities. For them money is all that matters. They quarrel with each other when it comes to taking care of their parents. The novelist also suggests that this is the nature of family relationships in India which avoids responsibilities. Jamun thinks about Urmila’s life after her death:

What had her life been for? Why had she come to life, and why had she survived for over sixty years? Surely, at bottom, for nothing? The aspiration of her existence had for sure not been happiness, which appears to him, uncertainly, to be one feasible vindication for living, the single glow amongst the anguish, malevolence rancour and rage. But Ma'd never conceded to an instant of any species of delight in her drab childhood, her toilsome youth, or her catastrophic marriage. (TLB 255)

The book opens in the month of August. The leaves show the shade of yellow colour. It symbolically shows the decaying atmosphere. The characters' names Jamun, Burfi, Pista etc. reflect the decaying nature of things. The joint family set up, once a cherished institution in the Indian society, is coming to ruins. In this novel, there is no change in the life of any character. One can find only childish bickering and quarrels. They pass through the cycle of existence being like this. There is no sign of affection seen in any of the characters.

The middle aged people in the social set up are the real conservers of traditional values. But they are also affected by mid-life crisis. Man's existential loneliness which triggers the anxiety associated with one's ultimate helplessness is well portrayed in the character of Shyamanand. The state of Shyamanand is revealed after the death of Urmila: "In Shyamanand, alongside this caring, her departure appears to have planted a more persistent acrimony, so that when one death leads him to reminisce of others in his long, undistinguished life, [...] more the comfortless, bitter sensations kindled by each event" (TLB 254).

Jamun in the city feels anchorlessness. His only companion is Hegiste. He doesn't lead a comfortable life in the city. Often he thinks about his mother and family. Yet he is obsessed with

modern life. Chatterjee says that “Each atom of the stuff of existence around him is transmuted, steeled and fissioned, is a deflector of a crystalline light. He feels wobbly” (TLB 24). Jamun “has bought the same brands of refrigerator and geyser as at home, and also has struggled to debar the blues from his white rooms” (TLB 4). Sohail Ahmed says, “Jamun finds himself in the midst of infinite complexities” (23). The novel deals with wasted aimless lives and becomes a metaphor of the monstrous ugliness.

The protagonists of Chatterjee’s novels find their own existence a burden. Disappointed and depressed, they live in their own world, thinking their own thoughts and seeking their own self. Chatterjee records contemporary man’s trials and tortures and traumas. They are neither able to communicate with the world at large nor relate themselves to their surroundings. *Weight loss* is about Bhola and his strange life from age 11 to age 37, whose attitude to most of the people around him depends on their lust worthiness. From Bhola’s experiences in the school, Chatterjee clearly portrays that he is not interested in studies. There is no place for moral values. He wants to enjoy life. He does not realize what he is doing. In school, Bhola doesn’t want to learn and he just wants to pass the time. It is said that “Not quiet knowing how to kill time till the bell, Bhola wandered off to the changing rooms” (WL 10). He is doing mischievous activities towards Anthony. He spends most of the time sitting under the trees. There is no improvement in the character of Bhola.

Chatterjee says, “All things must befall one before they can pass” (WL 13). For Bhola his sexual obsession changes from one person to another person as he grows up. Throughout his life time he keeps seeking sexual partners especially Moti and Titli. Even after the marriage he goes in search of these two people. This is the example and the ultimate exposition of man’s existence and his mechanical and aimless, absurd and ineffectual life. Man has lost peace as the

sense of fear only predominates. Post-independent Indian society with its almost institutionalized competition, growth of scientific technologies, moral decline, spiritual degeneration and confused values plays a vital role in the predicament of modern man. The result is frustration and inability to communicate with the members of the family.

In these novels the characters have problems like sense of alienation, dislocation and exile. Upamanyu Chatterjee depicts the solitary of man who is unable to enter into a meaningful relationship with other human beings. This is the evidence that alienation is significantly affected Indo-English novel. The problem of alienation is intimately related to the loss and quest for one's identity. In *English, August: An Indian Story*, Agastya on his arrival in the hot and ugly town of Madna experiences a sense of dislocation. Adding to this, he is unable to adjust to the bureaucratic set up. He encounters a variety of people who have possible ways of overcoming his sense of dissatisfaction and alienation. He finds all these things unacceptable. Hence escapes himself into an enclosed world of his own and is compelled to live three lives – official, unofficial and private. This problem leads to an acute sense of alienation.

The protagonists of these novels suffer of alienation. Agastya as an IAS officer in *English, August: An Indian Story* and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, Jamun's role as a son in *The Last Burden* and *Way to Go* and Bhola as a man who is obsessed with sex in *Weight Loss* are journeys of modern exiles in their own land seeking after self-discovery. In *English, August: An Indian Story*, Agastya Sen's experiences as an IAS trainee at Madna in Maharashtra are dealt. His background is responsible for his sensibility. He is a product of a very prestigious public school at Darjeeling. He wished that he had been an Anglo Indian and spoke English with their accent. He wished that he had Keith or Alan for a name. His, friend gave him many names like 'Last Englishman', 'hey English' and 'August'. Finally he accepts August. Being modern and being in

the modern society he is not able to think himself to be in the remote place called Madna. As Meenakshi Raykar comments, “His background has been a very powerful alienating force which has left a sense of displacement” (110). The reason for his rootlessness and alienation is clearly understood. His Darjeeling School education and the luxurious life he lived in the cities like Calcutta and Delhi obviously made his mind to think about just one way of life. Professor Nissim Ezekiel has pointed out in his view of the novel *English, August: An Indian Story* that “It is Agastya’s Darjeeling school that established his alienation of which he remains conscious virtually throughout this Indian Story” (qtd.in Ravi 123).

Agastya experiences alienation in Madna. He seems that he is living in some other world which he doesn’t seem to fit in. He is dissatisfied with the contemporary culture, its standards and moves. In this novel, his sense of alienation is counter balanced against his father’s maturity and knowledge of life. The letters which he writes to his son, Agastya, are examples of these problems. He gives advice: “But Ogu, remember that Madna is not an alien place. You must give it time. I think you will like your job eventually, but if you don’t, think concretely of what you want to do instead and change” (EA 95).

Agastya feels alienated not only professionally but also socially and culturally. He does not expect the life at the urban background, Madna, for a person from a small town. The author says that “Hundreds of Kilometres of a familiar yet unknown landscape, seen countless times through train windows, but never experienced - his life till then had been profoundly urban”(EA 4). To him these places had been seen as names out of newspapers. After reaching Madna he “looked out at this remote world and felt a little unsure, he was going to spend months in a dot in this hinterland”(EA 5). Chatterjee describes his condition: “He feels homelessness: Glimpses of Madna en route; cigarette-and-paan dhabas, disreputable food stalls, both till by fierce kerosene

lamps, cattle and clanging rickshaws on the road, and the rich sound of trucks in slush from an overflowing drain; he felt as though he was living someone else's life"(EA 5).

He is unable to relate to the life around him and he seeks privacy in his room in the rest house. For him life in Madna "had suddenly become a black and serious business, with a tantalizing, painfully elusive, definite but clichéd, goal, how to crush the restlessness in his mind. That is why he began to feel that his experience of Madna was wasted time, the seconds ticked away as he saw his unhappiness etched even in the stains on the wall" (EA 135). In *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, Chatterjee is more pessimistic by portraying the bureaucratic life as Agastya finds only corruption, exploitation, indifference and snobbery rampant. These problems aggravate his personal problems and make him develop a strong aversion towards his much coveted and respected job. He tries to escape from this situation. He is not able to accommodate himself in his job or in changing the administrative system for the better. Thus anchorlessness and alienation have taken a deep root in his psyche. He hated the Welfare State "for having dislocated him" and also feels", foolish and naked, empty-handed, as though he'd wronged both his family and his future" (TMWS 200).

In these two novels *English, August: An Indian Story* and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, Agastya alienates himself from society on account of his non-adjustment. It leads a solitary life without any control over his self. He is neither able to console himself in crisis nor capable of doing anything worthwhile. He is ignorant and unprincipled and ruins his own self. *The Last Burden* portrays a modern middle class family where all are alienated from each other. Jamun is emotionally attached to his mother. She suffers a lot in the family. Her only solace is Jamun. She feels alienated and isolated in the family. She clearly presents the condition of life she leads: "All family narratives or despicable, hideous – if they're faithful to the essential life – aimless rancour

for one another, the most guileless event, milks from us our watchful malice – living together merely to thrill in unkindness, marrying, mounting and spawning because we're all afraid of being corporally alone" (55).

In this novel, all the characters experience alienation. Both Jamun and Burfi are alienated from the family and Shyamanand fails in his relationship with his sons. At the crucial moment of Urmila's heart attack he expects them the most. They seem to him: "brand-new and alien, in jeans and T-shirts of dubious shades and articulate a puzzling species of English; whereas Urmila and he had ripened in a earlier, illusory genial world . . ." (TLB108).

This novel can be read as a journey from rootlessness to maturity, also deals with the 'burden' of family ties and relationships. Chatterjee has pointed out, "I wanted to write about the suffering that family members inflict on each other and the terrible responsibility of emotional dependence, I wanted to describe the burden, I suppose of attachments" (qtd. in Sengupta 29). The people in the family are deeply despairing, cynical, lacking in warmth, violent and divided.

Jamun wants to be away from all these problems by making himself away from the society and the family. He lives in an urban space which is physically clean. He has a strong desire to live in the city. In *Way to Go* also Jamun is a man who keeps himself away from others including his brother and his father. In *Weight Loss* Bhola is alienated himself from the family and society. In his family he doesn't have good relationship with his father as well as his mother. Nobody cares for him also. This may be one of the reasons why he has become culturally and morally degenerated. He feels alone. He is more obsessed with Moti and several years have been spent to find him.

Even after his marriage with Kamala, there is no change in Bhola. He doesn't have great love for her. They are not in perfect harmony with each other. Still he searches for Moti and other partners. He alienates himself from the family. However, an alienated man is threatened by anxiety, dread, anguish and nothingness. He remains in psychic tensions. Man's failure to achieve a harmonious, sexual, personal and social relationship culminates in his self-alienation. The protagonists of these novels suffer from a sense of exile. This feeling of exile is because they are living in two mutually opposed traditions. Chatterjee gives a picture of the post-colonial society where exile and alienation seem to be an integral part of human condition. The portrayal of sufferings is seen in Agastya, Jamun and Bhola.

All the protagonists of these five novels are frustrated. The protagonists' frustration towards life and bureaucracy is evident in all the novels. The heroes are influenced by westernized thought and hunger for that kind of life. The protagonist of *English, August: An Indian Story* belongs to such a generation. Chatterjee says that he belongs to "Cola generation" (47), "the generation apes" (28) and the generation that would love to "get AIDS because it is raging in America" (76). "You are an absurd combination," says Agastya's uncle, "a boarding - school - English literature education and an obscure name from Hindu myth" (EA 129).

Agastya's mind continues to be restless and unsettled. His bureaucratic life is unsatisfying. In such a mood, "Agastya was enraged at himself . . . for not having planned his life with intelligence, for having dared to believe that he was adaptable enough to any job and circumstance, for not knowing how to change either for wasting time (EA 112). Agastya feels that most men like him "chose in ignorance, and treated in an uncongenial world, and learnt to accept compromise, with or without grace or slipped into despair" (EA 113-14). Finally Agastya departs

to Delhi with the thought that he did not want challenges or responsibilities, but just to be happy to lie under the roof of his house in Delhi immersed in him.

In *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*, one finds the same feeling dominating the mind of Agastya. According to him the day to day life is frustrating. His job is the main reason for his frustration towards life and society. In *The Last Burden*, Jamun is also frustrated in life. Even as a teenager Jamun “feels for his parents’ love that is only the tenderness of remorse, just a sorrow, a shame at their happiness” (TLB 198). An individual who is fallen from grace can also become an authentic man if he improves the quality of his life. He suffers not because of his own limitations but because of his weaknesses which he overcomes later with fulfilment. He may adjust with his self, society and biological environment so much so that he may ensure the process of his self-purification and realization.