

**ATTAINMENT OF SELFHOOD IN SELECT NOVELS OF
USHA K. R.**

Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Master of Philosophy in English

By
Isai Arasi T.
Roll No. 18MPENF002

Department of English
Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for
Women, Coimbatore

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Attainment of Selfhood in Select Novels of Usha K. R.” submitted by me for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) is the record of work carried out by me during the period from August 2018 to July 2019 under the guidance of Dr. (Mrs.) S. Chitra, Assistant Professor, Department of English and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institution of Higher Learning.



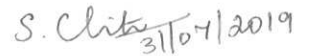
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Attainment of Selfhood in Select Novels of Usha K. R.” submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) by Isai Arasi T. is the record of research work carried out by her during the period from August 2018 to July 2019 under my guidance and supervision, and this work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institution of Higher Learning.

 31/07/19

**Signature of the
Head of the Department**

 31/07/2019

Signature of the Supervisor

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Chapter I

Introduction

Indian writing in English emerged as a result of the Colonial rule in India. The colonisers executed their plan of introducing English in Indian educational system to stabilize their power in India. Therefore, Indians naturally learnt to communicate and write in English. The early Indian English writers started to express the Indianness through their works, Indian culture and the problems faced by the Indians. Indian writing in English has recent history, it is only one and half centuries old. Raja Rao opines that:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part us The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone into the making theirs ...and our paths are paths interminable We tell one interminable tale This was and still is the ordinary style of our story telling. (qtd. in Satchidanandan, 186)

During the initial stage poetry and drama were popular among the Indian readers after which the arrival of fiction took place. Indian novelists followed and continue to follow the European techniques to express their ethos and sensibility. Dr. Satish Kumar in his work *A survey of Indian English Novel*, says that "The early Indian English novel is derivative and imitative of English models. Early fiction writers copied their language from the works of English Romantics and Victorians" (2). In the beginning novel existed only as a crude form of literature. Regarding this, K.R. Srinivas Iyengar in his work *Indian writing in English* comments "For the novel, properly so called, we have to wait till the latter half of the nineteenth century" (314).

Indian novel in English took its firm roots since the nineteenth century. In the latter end of that century, novel took its complete form of the Indian fiction with its themes, techniques and subjects. Meenakshi Mukherjee in *Realism and Reality* observes that:

The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content (8).

Indian writings of the pre-independent era dealt with freedom struggles and the cruelty of the British. The time lap between 1930s and 1960s became a blossoming period for the art of fictional writing. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao became the pioneers of Indian English writing, with a majority of their contribution to literature during this period. Indian writings of this era, mostly dealt with poverty, untouchability, agriculture, tradition, religion and caste system. Post- independence, a new trend emerged in the Indian novels. Writers began to discuss contemporary issues of the country. They deal with the issues related to class conflicts, purposelessness of existence and alienation of an individual. The focus of the novel is shifted from the society to an individual in the contemporary literature.

Indian English literature has taken yet another dimension with the arrival of female writers in the mid nineteenth century. Their discussions concentrate on gender issues, societal evils, culture, politics, economics and other concerns of the society. Their writings question the Indian patriarchal system and express their desire of not being puppets in the hands of

men. Indian women writers continue to enhance the quality and quantity of the Indian English literature.

Indian English novels by women writers can be divided into two phases. The first phase is about women in the pre-independent era and the second phase is about women of the post-independence. During pre-independence, women writers revealed the plight of Indian women who were shackled by the patriarchal boundaries. Rajalaxmi Devi's *The Hindu Wife* and *The Enchanted Fruit* voice out the women's cries against the social condition. Toru Dutt in her first novel *Bianca* which was written in the year 1878, deals with the lives of archetypes of women like Sita, Draupadi and Savitri. Women writers had and have been playing a significant role in Indian writing in English.

The women writers who belonged to the first phase focused on writing autobiographical works. They limited themselves to the domestic problems and difficulties of women in the Indian society. In their works they portrayed women as leading characters but limited their characters to achieve what they were trying to say. Krupabai Satthianadha's *kamala: A Story of a Hindu Child-Wife* depicts the life of child-wife, mother and a widow. It has received good response among both Indian and foreign readers. Krupabai's second novel *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* depicts the problems of colonialism, variances of religion and their effect on women.

Shevantibai Nikambe is one such feminist writer. Her *Ratnabi: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Wife* is a sad story of a Brahmin girl who witnessed cultural clash in her own home. H. Kaveri Bai is also a notable feminist writer and her prominent work is *Meenakshi's Memoirs*. The basic aim of all the first phase feminist writers was to explore and bring to light the actual status of women in the society. These writers had a lot of criticisms and were addressed as 'immature' as they had restricted themselves to domestic themes, yet,

they have successfully set their own standards towards the development of Indian English literature.

English became an official language during post-independence and the writers of this period concentrated on the discourse of colonisation. They involved themselves with the issues of de-colonisation and cultural changes. Post-independence brought sizeable changes in the literary scenario of Indian English writing. These writers deal with myths, dreams, relationships and traditions. They examine the individual, his loss of identity and his struggle to find his self. M.K. Naik in his book *Dimensions of Indian English Literature* points out Thari's views on Indian English writers:

The post-Independence Indian Scene (1947) with its criss-cross of rapid socio-political changes in a country where tradition still remains a strong force, has presented a stimulating spectacle to the Indian English writer, evoking a variety of reactions. These include nostalgic idealization of the days of freedom struggle; an urge to rediscover one's roots in the ancient Indian ethos as also to examine this ethos afresh in the light of modern ideas.... (qtd. in Jhan, 29)

The second phase women attained a certain level of maturity in their narrative style. During this period women attained public attention by using English as the medium of their creative writing. They dealt with socio-psychological problems of women, psyche of Indian females, their inner desires and their reactions to the world. They also discussed cultural changes and wrote how seasonal changes influenced women. The well-known women writers during this period were Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Raji Narasimhan, Rama Mehta, Santa Rameshwar Rau and Shakuntala Shrinagesh. The writers of

this age had vast knowledge and creativity that Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai are still regarded as tough competitors even to the contemporary writers.

Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004) is a novelist as well as a journalist. She is one of the pioneers of Indian writing in English and has inspired many writers. Her notable works are *Nectar in a Sieve*, *Some Inner Fury*, *A Silence of Desire*, *Possession*, *A Handful of Rice*, *The Nowhere Man*, *Two Virgins*, *The Golden Honeycomb* and *Pleasure City*. Kamala Markandaya's novels portray the changes that have taken place in the Indian society due to the east-west conflict. Kamala is seen to be very bold in expressing her anti-political and anti-colonial attitudes through her characters. She goes through the inner feelings of her characters and narrates their identity loss. Robert Payne in *The Saturday Review* writes of Kamala Markandaya as "She knows exactly how to produce the effect she desires in a prose that is remarkably agile and completely her own. She could, I suspect, write about anything; she has an almost frightening skill" (qtd. in Javalgi, 6).

Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays the lives of Rukmani family. Markandaya tries to expose how the industrial development and western culture took the lives of rural Indians to a different zone. Rukmani faces a lot of problems that she finds it difficult even to survive, but she never loses her faith. She strives to overcome the hurdles and wins in showing her true character to the external world. Kamala Markandaya's *Two Virgins* revolves around the lives of two sisters, Lalitha and Saroja. Saroja who tries to observe everyone loses her innocence when the events of her life go out of her control. But Lalitha differs from her and becomes a victim to modernity. The novel *A Handful of Rice* of Kamala Markandaya deals with the pathetic life of Ravi in a modern city.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927-) was awarded Sahitya Academy Award for her novel, *Rich Like Us*. Unlike Kamala Markandaya, Sahgal deals with psychological problems of women.

Her works mostly deal with two themes: political crisis in India and sufferings of women. Her women are found to be caught between tradition and modernity. They are intelligent and fight for individual freedom. Nayantara mostly portrays the plight of educated women in urban India. Meena Shirwadkar, in her book *Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglian Novel* says of Nayantara's works that "the central preoccupation of Nayantara Sahgal's novels is the suffering caused to woman in the prison – house of loveless marriage and her sufferings when she makes a break-away" (267).

Rich Like Us, debut novel of Nayantara Sahgal, centres around the character Sonali, a young lady who is the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Industry. This novel depicts the tensions created by Emergency in 1975. Sonali finds it difficult to continue her work in a corrupted environment and she decides to fight against that system. *The Day in Shadow* is a story of Simrit who gets divorce and lives with her children. She tries to come out from her disgusting memories of the past and starts her new journey with the help of Raj, a parliament member. The novel, *This Time of Morning* portrays two different shades of women, Mira and her daughter Rashmi. Mira is happy with her marital life and she tries to find her own self. But in the case of Rashmi, her marital life is totally worse and she gets divorce as she believes that equality of love alone would help her to identify herself. So, she chooses Rakesh as her perfect life partner to start her new journey seeking herself.

Anita Desai (1937-) is another prominent women writer, notable for her award-winning works in Indian Writing in English. She is considered as a pioneer of psychological novels. Like Nayantara Shagal, Anita Desai deals with the inner conflicts of human beings and the instability in familial bonds and social environment. Her novels are preoccupied by emotional sufferings of women. Anita Desai's characters search for truth through the examination of psyche and they are easily offended and it is understood that most of the Indian women cannot endure the crude realities of life. Anita Desai won the Sahitya

Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*. Jasbir Jain in her interview with Anita Desai observes that Anita Desai favours to explore “deeper and deeper into a character or a scene, rather than going round about it” (qtd. in M.A. Waheed 35)

Anita Desai’s notable work *Cry, The Peacock* is about the story of Maya who is not pleased with her marital life. She has a desire for liberty but has an inner struggle and is preoccupied with the fear of death which never lets her to be peaceful in her life. Her work *Voices in the City* is based on the lives of Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. Monisha is a sensitive married woman who commits suicide to attain liberty from the cares of life. Amla is different from her sister. Monisha’s death changes her life and she tries to lead a meaningful life. Anita’s *Fire on the Mountain* deals with the widower, Nanda Kaul, whose life has been overshadowed by loneliness and isolation. Other notable works of Anita Desai are *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer*.

Contemporary literature has the shades of past and reflects it on the present experience. Indian English writers currently concentrate on social issues like corrupted politics, globalization and religious inequality. Anita Singh in her article “Indian English novel in the Nineties and After” says “Global communication technology, multinational capitalism and current configuration of the world system have altered conditions of production and reception of art. Indian English novels have thrown up new signs of identity, opened up innovative sites for collaboration and contestation” (88).

Today, Indian women writers are full of competitive spirit with men and they paint the true picture of the present Indian society. Apart from domestic, social issues and its impact on women in India, problems of the working and educated women who try to break the traditional norms are the foremost subject of contemporary women writers. Another major aspect of women writers is the quest for identity. In most of their novels they portray

women going through some crisis due to marriage, love, sex and their search for self-identity. The perspective of present writers has shifted from tradition to the new image of woman who tries to have an individual life.

Shashi Deshpande (1938-) is another distinctive feminist writer. Like Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande also deals with the psychological problems of women. Deshpande's novels talk about middle-class educated women and their sufferings. Her protagonists are weak in the beginning but appear as strong women at the end. They are passionate for writing and feel that writing is not just a hobby, but a way of expressing oneself and liberation. In one of her interviews Shashi Deshpande says:

My novels always begin in a moment of crisis. Most of us go on unquestioningly until Suddenly all that you have taken for granted becomes doubtful, everything falls apart. You begin then to question everything. And it is through this questioning, through this thinking that you move on. Pick up your life once again. But you are never the same after this. This is true of all human beings, not just women In this thinking process, humans do discover their own potential. So do the women I have written about. (qtd. in Joshi, 174)

Shashi Deshpande's prominent works are *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *Roots and Shadows*, *That Long Silence*, *The Binding Vine*, *A Matter of Time* and *Small Remedies*. In *That Long Silence* Shashi reveals the hollowness of the modern life of Indian women. Deshpande depicts the story of Jaya, a middle-class educated woman who undergoes a conflict in her mind about her own identity and her role in this world. Finally, she breaks her silence and realizes her identity as a writer. *Roots and Shadows* is about Indu, a female protagonist, who undergoes her journey of self-realisation by crossing over the obstacles in

her life. Like Jaya and Indu, Sumi in *A Matter of Time* also starts her journey towards liberation when she is abandoned by her husband Gopal.

Shobha De (1948-) is a realistic writer. She portrays the glamour of Indian upper middle-class environment without any hesitation. The women in her novels are very bold, innovative and they are ready to accept the changes and challenges in the society. They never allow men to suppress them. Shobha De portrays the real picture of women who search for her identity in a hollow and stressful world. All her novels are set in Bombay and most of her major characters hail from Bombay and they consider it their land of opportunities. Santha Krishnaswamy in her book *The Women in Indian Fiction in English* marks that Shobha De's novels depict the predicament of women and says,

Her women characters try to strike a balance between instinctual needs and intellectual aspirations. Deeply exhausted by this trapeze act, they are further bewildered when the existential absurdity of life is unmasked before them, when they face loneliness and lack of communication and communality and are finally brought to mental crisis when masculine and institutional pressures are added to exacerbate them further. (qtd. in Myles, 102)

Shoba De's *Socialite Evenings* revolves around the character Karuna who is not happy in her married life and hence becomes a divorcee. She tries to sweep away the unpleasant things and concentrates on writing. She becomes an active socialite and an advertising copywriter. She goes through a lot of inner battles and finally achieves her desire. *Sultry Days* is a portrayal of woman against the domination of man when she is aware of her own self. *Snapshots* revolves around the reunion of a group of school friends. Shobha De takes a psychoanalytical approach to her women and analyses their torments of social ill-treatment. These miseries result in the identity crisis of women. Other novels are *Second*

Thoughts, Starry Nights, Sisters and Strange Obsessions. In her novels she firmly insists her readers that women should be economically independent and courageous in order to survive in this society.

Manju Kapur (1948-) is a successful woman writer who won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for her debut novel, *Difficult Daughters* in 1999. She gives attentions to more of historical and social content in her novels. Like Gita Hariharan, she portrays women's passage from traditionality to modernity in attaining their self. In her novels she proves that women are not silent to all the suppression but shows their reformation into outspoken characters, ready to tackle the difficulties on their own. Manju Kapur also deals with marital problems of the 21st century and tells how the social changes affect one's marriage. She has written five novels namely, *Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, Home, The Immigrant* and *Custody*.

Difficult Daughters concentrates on a young woman Virmati born in an Arya Samaji family in Amritsar. She is squashed between her family and her illicit relation with a married professor. Preoccupied by guilt and she wishes to be an individual rather than a wife, mother or daughter. *A Married Woman* revolves around the life of Astha and her relationship with another woman. This novel is all about homosexuality which is considered as a great taboo in the Indian Society. *Home* focuses on three female characters, Sona, her daughter Nisha and her sister Rupa who are trying to claim their identity. *The Immigrant* portrays the life of immigrants Nina and Ananda. *Custody* is about life of Raman, an executive officer and his dissatisfaction of marital life.

Gita Hariharan (1954-) is a well-known novelist who has portrayed cultural changes and social realities in her works. She boldly protests against the old tradition in India and she accuses that the out-dated traditions are the causes for social injustice. She includes myths as

references to man-woman relationship and patriarchal society. Gita Hariharan is a feminist and highlights it with distinctive sociological approach. She portrays different issues of Indian women and their strives to overcome them. Gita's women search for the abstract meaning of their life. The foremost themes of her novels are women's existence, identity crisis, gender injustice and patriarchy. She considers women as warriors in their own right.

Gita Hariharan's first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* won her the Commonwealth Writer Prize in 1992. This novel describes the lives of three generations, Devi, modern woman; Sita, mother of Devi; Mayamma, Grandmother of Devi and their misery in patriarchal society. They fight for their individuality and freedom. Her *When Dreams Travel* is a recap of *The Arabian Nights*. She has written this novel in a feministic point of view. *In Times of Siege* is about Shiv Murthy, a professor of History at an Open University in New Delhi who first identifies himself as historian later undergoes crisis with his relations. The pressure and stress make him panic and he feels hard to come out of the depression. Finally, he regains his identity with many difficulties. Gita Hariharan's other two novels are *Ghosts of Vasu Master* and *Fugitive Histories*.

Namita Gokhale (1956-) is a leading Indian English writer. Her novels show concern for women welfare. She projects women's sufferings in the attainment of their self and identity. Namita Gokhale like Shobha De writes about the margins of modern women. She happens to see the world beyond her limitations and makes her readers expand their thinking and analysing capacity. Namita always has surprise and suspense in her works which make them more interesting. She uses myths and folklore in her works. Few of Namita's works, contain paranormal aspects. She is very careful and sincere in her writing.

Namita Gokhale's novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is about the educated and economically independent women, Paro and the narrator, Priya. Paro fights to find her inner

strength and her identity. Through *Paro*, Priya identifies her own self. Gokhale observes how women try to be an individual beyond the limits of marriage, to accomplish their desires. In her other novel, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, she portrays the life of Gudiya and her grandmother. Gudiya is left by her mother and has no proper guidance or any other person to show love and affection in her life. So, she undergoes psychological stress. The sullenness of life makes her to realise her own self. The other novels of Gokhale were *The Book of Shadows*, *In Search of Sita: Revisting Mythology*, *Shakuntala*, *the Play of Memory* and *Priya: In Incredible Indyya*.

Arundhati Roy (1961-) is the most accomplished writer of the time. She is the first Indian to win the high-status Booker Prize for her debut novel *The God of Small Things*. She has a unique style and she is the first woman who has made the Indian writing in English to reach the global market. Mainly in her novels she ordains the theme of gender inequality and political crisis in present situation. The Booker Committee thus praises Arundhati Roy, “with extraordinary linguistic inventiveness Roy funnels the history of south India through the eyes of seven-year-old twins.” Arundhati Roy is a supporter of anti-globalization and a firm critic of neo-imperialism.

The God of Small Things travels from childhood to adulthood of fraternal twins Estha and Rahel. This novel is a satire of politics. It has raised voice against injustice of subaltern and it also explores the suppression of woman in her family as well as in the society. All the women character of this novel requires the sense of fulfilment and suffers from demise. This novel discusses forbidden love, family story and sharp political drama. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* was totally portrayal of the contemporary society. The story takes place in Delhi and Kashmir and it centres around two characters, Anjum, a transgender and Tilottama. Anjum struggles to make her life pleasant in Delhi whereas Tilo, a trained architect makes a

journey to Kashmir to meet Musa. This novel has an extensive view of violence, injustice and suffering happening over the decades in India.

Anita Nair (1966-) is not only a novelist but travels on different genres like poetry, prose, essays, travelogue, non-fiction and play. She primarily focuses on culture and social subjects. She expresses the depth and reality of human being and his condition on the earth. She portrays the survival of Indian women in the present situation but not as a feminist. Anita Nair's women characters are brave enough to face the challenges. Even though their lives are complicated they try to fulfil their domestic responsibilities. Nair's sharp observation of the problems of Indian women is depicted in her works which makes her works outstanding.

The Better Man, first novel of Anita Nair, looks at the psychological problems of the major character Mukundan. The second novel, *Ladies Coupe* is about the middle-aged spinster, Akhila, who breaks the tradition which locks her up and also about other women characters who arise as self-determining personalities. The novel *Mistress* revolves around three characters Radha, modern girl who is wide awake of her individuality, Saadiya, a teenage daughter from the Muslim family and Maya. They are against the old tradition and patriarchal society and they challenge male oriented principles and are their domination over them. These three women know what they need in life and are aware of their own self. Anita Nair's other notable works are *Living Next Door to Alis*, *Goodnight and God Bless*, *Lessons in Forgetting*, *Alphabet Soup for Lover* and *Eating Wasps*.

Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai speak the women's points of views in all their novels. These writers encapsulate the spirit of Indian culture and traditional values. They present a new dynamic Indian woman. But Manju Kapur, Gita Hariharan, Arundhati Roy and Anita Nair try to liberate women from the patriarchal society. Their

novels centred on females create a feministic awareness among the women and urge them to capture a place for themselves in a male centred traditional society.

Dina Mehta is a short story writer, a novelist and a playwright. She has written two novels, *And Some Take a Lover* and *Mila in Love*. Both novels portray the lives of Parsi families. Her woman characters battle very hard to break up the traditional norms. Dina mostly concentrates on the marital life of women. *And Some Take a Lover* deals with a young idealist, Roshni who has completed her studies in Mumbai. She comes across three men in her life but all of them have agitated her. She tries to mould her own life but each time she fails. *Mila in Love* is about a woman Mila who has grown in a dysfunctional family. She moves to US and renames herself as Sharmila. When she comes back, she finds a lot of changes around her. This novel also deals with psychologically affected woman, Shivani, mother of Mila. She is accused by her mother-in-law because of her inability to bear a male baby to her family.

Kaveri Nambisan is not only a novelist but also a surgeon. Her novels bare a great influence of her medical career. She deals with psychological issues of women. Her first novel *The Scent of Pepper* pictures the life of Kodagu people. It describes the life experience of Nanji who tries to maintain her individuality and dignity even though she undergoes several difficulties. *Mango-coloured Fish* is a story of a young woman, Shari who likes to be an independent woman. She feels marriage as a curse and she never wants to stay trapped in it. She endures a lot of difficulties to identify her own self and to lead an independent life. *The Truth (Almost) About Bharat* is about a medical student, Bharat, who has not experienced any sort of frustration in his life. In his journey of life, he encounters many people who enrich his thoughts regarding the living of life.

Aruna Chakravarti's *Jorasanko* and *Daughters of Jorasanko* are reflections of the life of Tagore. They mainly focus on the achievements and trounces of Tagore women. Aruna's *The Inheritors* won first India Plaza Golden Quill Critics Choice Award in 2008. This novel portrays the lives of Bishnupada Beb Sharma's family and their attempt to find the actual meaning of their lives. Brinda Charry same as Aruna Chakravarti exposes the lives of Brahmin families. In her debut novel *The Hottest Day of the Year*, she portrays the life of a South Indian Iyengar girl, Nithya who stays with her uncle and widow aunt. She has a friend Sudha, a servant who commits suicide. It troubles her and she emerges as an extraordinary girl to stand on her own legs and fights for her own right. She has written two other novels namely *Naked in the Wind* and *First Love*.

Sudha Murthy is another prominent Indian writer and an engineering professor. She has written numerous books in English and Kannada. She deals with the current-day issues in her novels. Sudha Murthy's protagonists are well educated women who are ready to face the challenges under any circumstance. Sudha Murthy also deals with the relationships in a family and how it would help the individuals to shape their attitudes towards the benefit of self and the society. Her protagonists are from rural are semi-rural areas.

Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula* picturises the life of Shrimati and Shrikant. Shrimati is a talented person but she leaves her job and ties herself with household works because of her husband's request. She sacrifices everything for her husband but he fails to spend time with her. The loneliness makes her to think about herself and finally she decides to depart from Shrikant to identify her real self. The other novel, *House of Cards*, describes the life of Mirdula who marries to Sanjay, a doctor. She is not happy with her marriage life; she develops inferiority and feels that she is undesirable to her husband. So, she decides to leave her husband to make a peaceful life for her. She starts her journey towards finding herself. Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta* portrays the life of Anupama who suffers from

leukoderma. Like Shrimati and Mirdula, she also departs from her husband to identify her real self.

Tulsi Badrinath is a Bharata Natyam dancer and a novelist. She has written two novels, *Meeting Lives* and *Man of a Thousand Chances*. Both the novels were long listed for Man Asian Literary Prize in 2007 and 2008. Malathi Rao is an upcoming writer of this century who has won the Sahitya Academy award in 2007 for her novel *Disorderly Women*. This novel revolves around Brahmin women's lives who try to bulldoze the barriers built around them by the society. Sagarika Ghose, Sunny Singh, Nina Sibal and Sunetra Gupta are found as buds in Indian writing in English who are to bloom in future. The twenty first century women writers concentrate on middle class women who have a career. They do not deal with feminism like early writers instead they talk about the fusion of western and eastern culture and tell how globalization has changed the roles of women in this society. Sex, identity crisis, alienation and loneliness are the major themes of these writers.

Usha K.R. is one among the twenty first century women writers. She lives in Bangalore and works as an editor in IIMB Management Review. She began her career as a short story writer and later she placed her foot path in novel writing. She published her first novel *Sojourn* in 1998. *The Chosen*, *A Girl and a River* and *Monkey-man* are the other three novels written by her. She is also a review writer of other writers. She has won Katha award for her short story, *Speia Tones* in 1995. She has published many short stories in a number of magazines and newspapers such as Debonair, Femina, Savvy and Deccan Herald. Usha has also written stories for children.

Usha has written four short stories in anthologies, *Speia Tones*, *Head Haunting*, *Elixir* and *Boy to Chase the Crows Away*. Her short stories are in first person narrative or third person narrative and she uses limited characters. She portrays the life of Indian women

fighting to survive in this society. She does not deal with the lives of wealthy people. She always has a look on middle-class women. She never confuses the readers and her view is crystal clear.

Sepia Tones is a story of old woman, Vasuki who has a very tough time in joint family. She is a hard-working woman and she sacrifices her whole life for her family. She has spent her whole life in kitchen and washing room. Vasuki is selfless, she never thinks about her own life. She considers her family as a world and she takes care of her grown up children as well as her grandchildren. Vasuki says “I’m the woman of the house,” (17) with a smile but the truth is that she has never tasted her life and she lacks attention and care for her from others. Though she looks like Ravi Varma’s painting in photo, in real she has hollow eyes, dusted chins and gnarled hands. Like vasuki most of the Indian women spend their life for family and others, but do not think about themselves.

Head Hunting is centred on the character Gundamma, a match maker. She is called as Gandina Gundamma or Gundamma of the Grooms. Before she begins her job as a match maker, she was a cook and later had opened condiments store named as Sri Venkateshwara Condiments store. Her family life remains a mystery and no one knows where her husband is. She never speaks a word about him. There are lots of unrevealed knots in her life inspite of she pushing herself to move forward. She utterly opposes computerised match making centres and virtual matrimonial agencies. She also criticises the present generation’s satisfaction with the first meeting of the couples and supports the traditional customs. She firmly believes rishis and munis than technology. This story touches upon the caste issues which exist in the Indian society.

Elixir revolves around the middle-aged women. She often goes abroad due to her business and she is completely influenced by corporate world which is a fascinating life

according to her. She slowly starts to consume alcohol. She works hard and has too much of stress which affects her psychologically. She has a hallucination that an apparition had existed where ever she turns in her room. She consults a doctor who claims that she has no problems. She plans to see Kalimurthy, a priest. Soon she finds that he is a true healer because he never questions anyone but gives answers which heal their inner pains. After her meeting with Kalimurthy, she finds a lot of changes in her attitude. This story shows people running behind the useless thing in this world forgetting the familiar things which gives real happiness.

Boy to Chase the Crows Away is about two friends, Shipra and her friend. They both have their own love stories which are not successful. Both the friends meet after few years and they have a fruitful time. They share their life experience and recall their past memories. Shipra's friend finds a lot of changes in her and she does not fail to notice that Shipra has lost her innocence. Shipra does not share much about her husband and her family life. It shows that she is quite disappointed with her marital life. The conversation with two friends is lifeless. They do not have the spirit as they have in past. The crows which snatch the food symbolize the life of two friends.

Usha's language is elegant and she has a flow of thoughts which makes her novels more interesting. She observes even minute things and she never exaggerates. Usha is a realistic writer and portrays the day to day life as it is. She uses humour to criticise the society. The writing style of Usha has the shades of Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. She mostly sets her story in Bangalore and deals with the life of people who live in the electronic city like Shobha De dealing with Bombay people.

Usha gives primary importance to middle-class family. She pictures the existential predicament of middle-class family especially how women struggle to overcome their

difficulties. In her novels she deals with the educated women and their struggles to identify themselves and the challenges they face to achieve their own self. Cultural change is another aspect of Usha's novels. She focuses on the changes that influence the people and the environment. Mostly her characters try to adjust with the changes. Usha includes myth in her works to make the readers to understand the situation easily. She deals with her region. Usha K.R talks about the novel *The Chosen* in India Today: "Whether you write in English or Kannada, the cultural experience you are communicating is Indian and, more specifically, regional," she also said "With more and more Indian writers in English, the language resonates with distinct regional flavours" (np).

Usha distinguishes urban and rural life. Transformations of urban places and people are described lucidly through her characters. In her novels journey plays a significant role. Only through journey of difficulties and struggles one could get new experience which makes them matured. Woman feels secure when she is with her family but when she steps out of the house to face the world, it so happens that she has to tackle a lot of problems at which she might lose her own self. To regain herself, she has to overcome the problems. This concept is clearly exposed in Usha's novels.

The first novel, *Sojourn* portrays the journey of Neeraja from Bangalore city to Amrutapura, a small town. Like R.K. Narayan's Malgudi, Usha has created a mythical town Amrutapura. Keshav, Neeraja's husband is transferred to town and Neeraja has no other go. She has to move with her husband. She is quite upset with it but she accepts for her husband's welfare. She leaves her son to her mother and takes her daughter along with her. Neeraja is excited to see the new place but she is disgusted about the roaming of pigs around her house. There are a lot of things that disappoint her like bigamous landlords and Mahila mandali. Women in town are not ready to expose themselves as they are suppressed and lead

their life confined within four walls. The most embarrassing thing is that they are not aware of it.

Neeraja tries to come close to her neighbours Narasamma, Rajakka and Meenakshamma. She notices the routine life of town women which is different from her life style. In this novel Usha portrays the life of city and town people. The caste crisis which exists in Amrutapura is strange to Neeraja. At first she is unhappy but the arrival of youngsters, Giri, Lakshmi and Gopala makes her days pleasant. She is delighted to spend her time with them but she is not aware of Lakshmi and Giri's love affair. Neeraja plans to visit Purple Hills with them where she realizes the original intension of Giri.

Unfortunately, Lakshmi and Giri elope and the people start to blame Neeraja but the sad truth is that she is also betrayed by them. There is a crack in the relationship of Neeraja and her neighbours. They never converse with her and she feels alienated. Finally, her husband is transferred and she feels better. While departing she is touched by the gentleness of her neighbours as they send her off with gifts leaving behind their enmity. The bitter experience of town life makes her matured and prepares her mind for all the challenges in future.

Usha's second novel *The Chosen* revolves around the journey of young middle-class girl Nagaratna. The title of the novel *The Chosen* indicates the looming fate of human existence. Nagaratna is a village girl who is forced to move to Bangalore with her mother after her father's demise. She lives with her brother's family in Vitthala colony. She is unique and never imitates others and likes to be her own self. Nagaratna's classmate Shylaja admires her firm character and they both become friends. They are together wherever they go. After completing their studies, they choose different paths of their interest. Nagaratna has a desire to improve the economic condition of her family so she looks for a suitable job.

Nagaratna joins Vidyalaya School owned by Damayanti Pandit, daughter of the great spiritual guru, Tejas Pandit. Nagaratna loves Damayanti more than her job. She works hard to impress Miss. Pandit. She has an encounter with Vasant and they both fall in love but their relationship is not fruitful so they break their love up. Miss. Pandit offers Nagaratna to visit the ashram in Muttu and she accepts it. The experience she has in ashram is different and it makes her realize the austerity of life. She receives a letter from her mother. Through the letter she understands the pathetic situation of her family and she leaves the ashram.

Nagaratna is ready to talk with Miss. Pandit about her increment in salary but unfortunately, she is fired out. Miss. Pandit is depressed due to her father's remarriage so she leaves the school and stays with her sister. Nagaratna loses her job as well as fails in her love. She is totally upset and feeling the vagueness of life, she tries to commit suicide but fortunately she is rescued by her family. Finally, she understands that life is a mixture of misery and pleasure and that she has to accept it. She has no money or job but still she has hope. She emerges as a new woman to fight against the fate to achieve a better life.

Usha's *A Girl and a River* won The Vodafone Crossword Book Award in 2007. This novel exposes the life of both pre and post-independent India. It is centred around the lives of siblings, Setu and Kaveri. They are grown up in Mysore and their father, Mylaraiah, is a wealthy man. Mylaraiah is very comfortable under the British rule but this is not liked by his wife, Rukmani and his daughter, Kaveri. Once Gandhi arrives at their place, Kaveri is inspired by him. She participates in Quit India Movement which is organized by Shyam, against her father's will. Kaveri is forced to marry a lawyer and her marital life is not successful. Setu betrays his own sister to favour his father.

Fifty years after this, Setu's daughter is a student in distant Chicago. She tries to find her familial roots, hidden by her parents. She likes to unveil the misery of her aunt and starts

to search her aunt, Kaveri with two books and a letter found in her house. Ultimately she finds her aunt and comes to know about the insidiousness of family bond. Setu's daughter comes to know the shameful truth of her family. Through Kaveri's miserable life her niece understands that one has to accept the human stain to keep his life peaceful and sanity.

Monkey-man is the fourth novel of UshaK. R. The title is a metaphor for the transformation of city. This novel depicts the lives of four characters and their struggle in Bangalore city. The story begins with new millennium in Ammanagudi Street where a strange creature is spotted. Shrinivas Moorthy, a college professor, Neela Mary Gopalrao, secretary of Dr. Subramanyam, Pushpa Rani working in call centre and Sukhiya Ram are those who spot the creature first and they are invited to share their experience on Bali Brum's popular radio show. This novel throws light on the current situation of modern India and is based on a true story.

In New Delhi 2001, a strange monkey-like creature was spotted by people at night and it had also attacked many people. They described that the creature had metal claws and helmet and it might be four to five feet tall and it had three buttons on its chest. So many of them had complaint about the creature even many people who were attacked by the creature were admitted in hospital. But no one spotted it clearly or had proof and they did not know where it had gone and what happened to it. It is an unsolved misery till date. This incident was filmed in 2009 named, Delhi-6. In this film the monkey is called as Kala Bandar which means black monkey. It is a metaphor to characterise the evilness of man which hides inside him.

Srinivas Moorthy and Jairam are friends but they have different perspectives on their life. Srinivas never accepts the changes and he sticks to film club and old values but Jairam is a spearhead for changes. He is ready to take risks in his life. Like Srinivas Moorthy, Neela

Mary Gopalrao never accepts the changes and she is afraid if her colleagues would snatch her job, as they are too advanced and smart. Pushpa Rani is similar to Jairam, she is working in a call centre to uplift the economic condition of her family. Pushpa, Bali Brums and Jairam are on one side and Srinivas Moorthy and Neela are on the other side. These two extreme differences are designated as *Monkey-man*, half-human and half-simian.

Lakshmi Holmstrom in her review of *Sojourn* in *The Indian Magazine*, evaluates the bitter lives of corporate wives and the complexities of women's lives in small towns. She feels that Usha might be sharper to criticise the happening. Uma Parmeswaran has given review of *Sojourn* in *World Literature Today* and she has the same view of Lakshmi Holmstrom. She says that Usha exposes the male chauvinism and political corruption in towns as well as the arrogance of urban lives in a refined way. Usha Hemmadi in her article "Big City Girl's Small Town Blues" says of the novel as "*Sojourn* has an apprentice quality, not totally unexpected in a first novel. But there is also a kind of 'first draft' feel to it, which could easily have been remedied.... *Sojourn* is largely 'telling'" (20). She also points out that the dusty town is a cause for Neeraja to self-discovery. Urmi A. Goswami in her article "Attitudes and Expectations" says that "*Sojourn* provides a glimpse of the clash of stereotypical attitude between city and small town; and it does so successfully" (37).

Emma Dawson gives her review about *Monkey-man* in *World Literature Today* that *Monkey-man* is about the Bangalore city and the lives of people in it. She says "Usha K.R., though her markedly various characters, explores an Indian of then and now!" (69). Mridula Garg has examined the novel *Monkey-man* in *Indian Review of Books* titled, "Multiple Cities of the Interior". She says that the novel gives primary importance to Bangalore and to its inhabitants. She understands that "the familiar becoming bewilderingly unfamiliar, like Ammanagudi street turning from a middle-class residential colony to part market, part slum. Not sparing personal relationships, it adds piquancy to their puerile sparring and routine

dysfunction” (33). Rajat Chaudhuri well justifies the title of the novel *Monkey-man* in *Indian Literature*. He finds how the two mind sets of people, both traditional and modern tame and modify the people’s lives in Bangalore.

Shubha Tiwari analyses the novel *The Chosen* and observes the character Nagaratna and her struggles. Tiwari in her article “Shades of Life in Usha K.R.’s ‘*The Chosen*’” says that “At twenty-one, she has all the necessary experience to face life. And the miracle is that she is not dumped, not stumped. Life goes on unabated. Happiness and zest also go on” (143). She examines the lives of the poor as well as the prosperous ones.

This dissertation aims to analyse the journey of women protagonists towards attaining selfhood in select novels of Usha K. R. The objectives of the study are

- To explore the socio- cultural changes of the contemporary Indian society.
- To introspect the influence of the western culture on the Indian lives.
- To analyse the existence of women in the present scenario.
- To study the crisis of identity of women
- To examine the struggles of educated women in attaining selfhood

Usha K.R. is a realistic writer. She does not talk about feminism alone but tells how the middle-class women thrive hard to find their identity. She also concentrates on social changes and their effects on the people. Usha always ends the novel with positive note. Her characters undergo many problems but are not tired nor fed up of them. They move forward with hope to attain their selfhood.

Chapter II

Socio-cultural Changes

Postcolonialism signifies the outcome of European colonialism in India and represents the struggles of the colonized people under the hands of the colonisers. Postcolonialism is all about remembering and recalling the colonial past. It talks about the issues and changes in culture and language and how people outranked them during colonisation. Barnes says that “The ‘postcolonial’ specifies ‘a transformed historical situation, and the cultural formations that have arisen in response to changed political circumstances, in the former colonial power’” (qtd.in Sharma, 51). Postcolonialism is an umbrella term comprising a lot of issues like alienation, identity issues, rootlessness, cultural change and language variances.

India is still under the shadow of European thoughts and ideas. Indians have accepted the political and economic ideas of western countries. After independence, India has shifted to a new culture and Indians have not demoralised the westerners. The originality of India is lost and the Indian soil has taken the fragrance of the Colonisers. The shadow of colonialism continues till now and this process of adaptation of different cultures is known as hybridity. Goethe proposed that the people “could not return to their settled and independent life again without noticing that they had learned many foreign ideas and ways, which they had unconsciously adapted, and come to feel here and there previously unrecognized spiritual and intellectual needs” (qtd. in Bhabha, 16).

The concept of Hybridity has been popularized by the postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha. The word hybridity originated from biology and it means mixture. Hybridity “is the creation of new cultural forms and identities as a result of the colonial encounter” (Pramod, 200). Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* says that:

The need to think beyond narrative of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of

cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provided the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. (2)

Bhabha says that culture is not a single phenomenon, it always has contact with one another. He expresses that no culture is pure and all are mixed with one another. The changes in culture are on-going and colonialism does not stop with the past; its history and culture interrupt the present. Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* says that:

Colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures which can then be resolved as an issue of cultural relativism. Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of the authority ...is that the differences of cultures no longer be identified or evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation: cultural differences are not simply there to be seen or appropriated. (162)

Usha K.R. in her novels explores the manner of western culture’s influence on the Indian culture and the changes brought by it to the country. She pictures people facing the changes and their difficulties in adapting to them. She discusses both the positive and negative aspects of cultural changes. Usha concentrates majorly on hybridity in urban areas where the western culture creates a greater impact than on rural places.

Hybridity is an important postcolonial concept, a colonial ambivalence and a colonial enunciation. According to Bhabha, “Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of

domination through disavowal” (Bhabha, 159). Hybridity has resulted in the intermixing of cultures. In India a lot of changes have taken place after colonisation. Even after the colonisers left the country their ideas and thoughts still keep the Indian people colonised.

Education is the base of everything and it is interconnected with religion. Each and every pre-colonial country has had its own educational system likewise India too had its own system of education before colonisation and its educational pattern was completely different from the present scenario. Students were educated according to their caste. Only high-class people were allowed to be skilled in Gurukulam. Women were also treated equally in getting education but slowly they were banned from being educated and were cornered to kitchens. Students were not allowed to stay in their houses but they had to reside in ashram for a certain period of time and practice guru’s instructions. After colonisation this method, thoroughly became out of shape.

During the colonial period many schools were started and every student was educated after the pattern of the British. Children from all classes received the gift of education. Women started to regain their rights and they themselves became educators. Caste issues and gender disparity lost their firmness in the Indian soil by the colonial education. The education system came under the government’s control and English became the second language. British introduced English to spread their language around the globe and also to introduce the culture and other language in India which they thought would make their job of colonisation easy. Thus English became the country’s official language and people showed keen interest in learning it. John McLeod in *Beginning Postcolonialism* says “After independence, many colonial nations inherited economic, governmental and educational institutions, several of which were often administered in English. The English language of this colonial ‘inheritance’” (122).

Though education during colonisation reached even the common man, it lost its originality. Before colonisation Indian education had taught spiritual lessons to the students and then dealt with religion, customs and traditions of the society. But the modern system of education is astray from those subjects. Moral education has lost its significance in the present scenario. Today's education fails to give spiritual knowledge to the students. It makes them techno humans. The negligence of traditional education has affected the culture to a greater extent.

Today's education provides a lot of courses to enhance the technical skills of students but it stops providing them social and moral norms which makes them less humane. It creates a false assumption that life is competitive and the students have to improve their skills in technology to occupy unique positions for themselves. Present education fails to give confidence and other self-development skills to the students. Neela concentrates on defending her job and she does not have confidence that she would get another if she loses the present one. Lack of confidence makes people corrupt and it is evident from *The Monkey-man*, when Neela hides the cheque of Alka and the appointment letter of Prithvi.

In early days students received free education but now education has become more like a business. Due to the impact of western culture, Indians have developed a mentality that English is a matter of their prestige. Today, most of the parents wish to send their children to private institutions. In *Sojourn* Neeraja leaves her son in Bangalore while she moves to Amrutapura with her husband. She thinks her son would get good education in the city than in a small town. Narasamma says that her husband has spent "fifty thousand... fifty thousand..." (39) as donation for his son's engineering seat. In *Chosen*, the landlord near Nagaratna's cloth shop sells his land "for his son's education" (10).

Today, people consider foreign universities are great educational hubs due to the influence of English. They do not cling to their own ancient system of education but imitate the foreigners. In *Monkey-man*, Srinivas Moorthy contributes a lot of things to the college out of his respect for education, but he is not repaid for anything. The institute fails to recognize him and underestimates him because he is not a person educated in foreign like Jairam. Present education makes the people move towards the materialistic world rather than a peaceful life.

Language is essential for human beings and it is used for personal conversation as well as administrative purposes. It plays a strong role in commerce, education and industry. But in India it has become the irresolvable problem in India due to the growing egoistical attitude of people towards the variances. India is a multicultural, multiregional and multilingual country. To unite Indians, it was thought that there should be a common language so, Hindi was introduced as one of the official languages but it was not successful. Therefore, since the British colonisation, English is the important medium of education and all the other global fields. English has become the official language of India. It plays a significant role in each and every field.

English is the language of computer, business and science. English has become mandatory for all the persons, irrespective of his nativity and educational specialisation. In fact, English decides one's fate of livelihood today. Sadly, the usage of English curbs one's mother tongue and all the other regional languages. In this view, English language can be called a destructive weapon of the native cultures. Mahatma Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* states that "we want the English to rule without the Englishman" (np). Due to the presence of English many languages in India have become diminished.

English occupied a position for itself during the independent movement and even great personalities like Raja Ram Mohan Roy preferred English for interactions on the global arena. Though the colonisers have left the place, their language has enslaved the entire country. Today the international education system will be a total failure without English. English writings take their country's fame to global heights. Suryanarayana Rao, husband of Meenakshamma, is a professor in Government College. He writes a book named *The History of Our State – in One Thousand and Questions and Answers* in English. He did not choose to write in his regional language because he thought English alone is capable of taking his message about the fame of his place's divinity around the globe.

People fail to understand that English is just a language for communication instead they deem, it as their issue of dignity and hence give importance to English than their own mother tongues. Those who speak English fluently are seen as ideal men. More than their knowledge in the subjects, people find communication and writing skills difficult. Indian people believe that if they know English they can flourish in any field. English is a flexible language and it adapts to every situation. This quality impresses everyone. English has adopted many words from various regional languages and Indians use Indianised English bringing words from their mother tongues and this process of amalgamation of languages is called linguistic hybridity. Amardeep Singh in his article "Mimicry and Hybridity in Plain English" says "Linguistic hybridity, one benefits from reference to terms from linguistic, including the ideas of slang, patois, pidgin and dialect" (np).

Indians consider English not as a foreign tongue. They use it in all formal, informal and social situations. Indians due to their passion for English language allow it to dominate their own language. In *Monkey-man*, while Shrinivas Moorthy is in canteen, he hears the show of Balaji Brahmdra, generally known as Bali Brums, who works as RJ in radio station. He observes that "Balaji Brahmdra prattled on in a clever patois, slipping between English and

Kannada easily, with Hindi thrown in from time to time, as this was a metropolitan city with a growingly mixed population.” He also notices “a comic act in Kannada in which a woman with a philistine’s accent explained Kannada slang in English” (33-34). Indian English differs in slang according to their regional language.

English has become an essential part of one’s life and it has become stronger than it was in the pre-independent period. Many people today even take the skill of speaking in English as a pride. In *Monkey-man* Neela wonders and suspects how Pushpa Rani gets job in Call Centre because she thinks that Puspha Rani’s “only skill was typing and shorthand, and the ability to talk endlessly and with great certainty in her bad English” (*Monkey-man*, 74). Neeraja also has a bad experience of reading the badly written booklet by Suryanayana Rao which consists “poor grammar and the bad spelling, she had vaguely sensed his excitement, his total absorption in his subject” (*Sojourn*, 154).

Dr. Subramanyam, boss of Neela, picks her as secretary because he thinks that Neela is “a trained secretary who could manage office accounts, ...handle computers independently, knew enough English to write a letter without glaring mistakes of spelling and grammar....” (182). English thus determines one’s career and sometimes it becomes a barrier to so many people. Though they have talents they lose job opportunities because of poor communication skills in English. Numerous people do not have bright future just because they are not skilled in English language. All the students are not educated in English mediums due to their financial crisis so they learn through their regional languages. The most pathetic truth is regional languages are not given importance like English. English language has not only influenced the education system but also the cultural practices and customs of India. English has made Indians westernised and has changed their lifestyle.

Culture represents the human values and emotions of one place and it also includes the customs, music, festivals and tradition. Edward W. said in his book, *Cultural Imperialism* says that culture is

like the art of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. Included, of course, are both the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history. (xii)

India is known to be a rich country for its cultural heritage and it has the pride that it is one of the ancient cultures in the world. In the pages of Indian history, many ups and downs are recorded in the development and reign of the Indian culture, yet it shines like a sun today. Cultural change is a cyclic and a never-ending process as globalisation still wreathes different layers of the society according to the age groups of people's communities.

Pramod K.Nairin his *Postcolonial Literature* discusses Bhabha's concept of mimicry:

Colonial power requires that the natives adopt and internalize the forms and habits of the colonial master: the native should mimic the master. The entire colonial mission is to transform the native into 'one like us' – a copy of the colonizer. For Bhabha the mimicry is a defence, fraught with the resistance of the native. The native is in a position to return the gaze of the colonial master, since he is now camouflaged. A reversal has been achieved through the mimicry of the coloniser by the colonized. (28)

Westernisation keeps Indians captive in all day to day happenings. It reigns over Indians' education, food, dress, festivals, etc. India has lost its tradition and it is sad that the

majority of the Indian young generation are unaware of their history. Most of them choose to live in the western countries. Westernisation has reduced, their love for their culture, tradition and even for their country.

Various food corporates and IT companies in India affect the Indian food culture. The settlement of migrants in metropolitan cities has made the number of restaurants and pubs go on a larger scale. Another reason for the increase in hotels is that working women find it difficult to cook at home. Nutritious Indian food have lost their importance and foreign cuisine has occupied its place among to the natives. With different shifts of work, the diet of the people in IT sector has changed and they crave for fast food items. Both adults and children have trained their tongues to be the slaves for western food.

Children are very delighted to have packed and tinned snacks like potato chips, cake and puffs which contain baking powder which is harmful to health. They have waved a good bye to all the traditional and healthy snacks. The colouring of the western food is attractive than its taste and they appeal especially to little children. Nagaratna and her friend Shylaja like Jam cake during their schooling. Shylaja says that “‘If I don’t eat jam cake today,’ ‘I’ll die!’” (16). During childhood days Pushpa Rani and her siblings are interested to buy:

The foreign made, highly-coloured packets of potato chips, lined with silver foil on the inside, which each shop had strung up at local entrance. These packets, plump with promise, had come to replace the local red-spotted chips ...quite literally turned out to be full of hot air for the fat packets never continued enough and the chips sounded like seeds in a rattle when you shook them, and Pushpa Rani and her brother and sister were always accusing each other of having taken more than their fair share. (87-88)

Today's generations take pride in having pizzas and burgers as they are costly western food. They think eating traditional food is an old fashion and they are fond of dishes which have trendy names. Fancy names like vegetable burger, doughnut, pasta, spring roll, mojito, pineapple pastry, tomato soup grab the attention of the people. The habit of consuming soft drinks has increased. In the olden days, Indians used to welcome the guests with traditional drinks like lassi, kesar milk, tea, etc but now soft drinks like Fanta, Coco cola, Pepsi, etc. have become the welcome drinks. Instant food is also available in shops. Western culture with its new technical inventions also reduces the manual work of man.

A few years ago, there were cows in everyone's house so they would not have to go out and buy milk but now the number of cows has declined so milk comes in plastic packets. Sometimes traders mix milk powder with water and sell it as milk. But still there are few who survive unfascinated by the fashion of the food system. They still have strong passion for their traditional food. In *The Chosen* Nagaratna sees the vegetable burger is selling good but the palya bun, Indian food, is being sold better than that. In *Monkey-man*, Neela, Aluka and Dr Larson are very eager to eat the sprouted moong which is healthy and they feel "The sweet version has jaggery, not sugar, mind, and ghee, and the spicy version has pepper, rice and desiccated coconut—a perfect balanced meal" (68). Only few are interested in traditional food.

The western culture destructs the Indian tradition ultimately. The dressing sense of Indians has changed, men have chosen pants and jeans to dhotis and T-shirts to shirts. Women from saree to salwar Kameez to jeans, kurti and T-shirt as like men. Only during functions men and women like to wear traditional dresses. This change make Indians fail to realise the significance of their own culture. Neeraja never wears saris but she chooses "a red patterned silk sari with a thread border" (45) to attend Meenakshamma's function. Especially the young generations are very excited to wear modern dresses than traditional dresses.

Lakshmi likes to wear Jeans but her family does not permit her to do. But she wears jeans and T-shirt in Neeraja's house without her parents' knowledge and admires herself by standing in front of the mirror.

These days even parents take pleasure in upbringing their children according to the western culture. They encourage their children to follow the western trends and fail to make them know the glorious past of India. The young generation grows up embracing westernisation but even Indian adults who have grown up according to the native culture try to follow Westernisation and modernity. In *Monkey-man* Bella, colleague of Shrinivas Moorthy, protests against the institution opposing sarees. She suggests them to allow lecturers come in salwar kameez. When Lakshmi sees Neeraja's nightie, she admires it. Nighties are famous among women and they feel comfortable in it. There are few people who are displeased with the modern dress and they try to restrict the youngsters not to wear them but they are not ready to accept it.

In *Monkey-man* Pushpa Rani likes to wear modern dresses. She admires the girl who is "dressed in black trousers and a black T-shirt and her hair was cut short in a fringe across her forehead...her black polished square-toed shoes gleamed from the floor.... Just what Pushpa Rani would like to be, and how she would like to be seen" (78). Not only Pushpa, but most of the young people aspire to be westerners and hence imitate them in all aspects. After joining call centre, Pushpa Rani wears low waist jeans; her salwar-Kameez and single plait with oiled hair are gone and she is a lady of fashions. Dr. S. Kumaran and Arularasi in their article "Postcolonial Ecofeminism: A Study of K R Usha's *Monkey-man* and Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*" say that:

Not only the nature of work of Pushpa Rani changes, but also her physical appearance has undergone changes losing her original and

natural identity with modern attire and cosmetics that suits the call centre culture. just as Bangalore that attracts everyone with its glorious high-class appearance with tall glass building and amendments, Pushpa gains attention and gets into a comfortable life by adopting the westernised culture. (1276)

In *The Chosen* Nagaratna's classmates criticize her for wearing long skirt which is above her ankles and for her oiled plaits which she ties at the top of her head using her bright ribbons. The person who tries to be original is seen as a jocker by the society. The people of young generation hesitate to apply oil on their head. Modern outfits make them feel that they are very much in touch with the modern world. They feel comfortable, confident and try to show themselves modern by wearing those costumes. Neeraja stuns seeing a salesgirl who wears western-style business suit and a bow tie: "She assured her that she needs no longer go abroad for her shopping" (113).

Pushpa Rani has gone to bar with Ranjit, her colleague. She notices except few all others are dressed in undistinguishable black suits and they do their works behind the counter and she thinks there are no waiters around the place. She sees a boy who is "walking across to a group of people—a mix, she noticed, of Indians and foreigners, some of whom looked either Chinese or Japanese, but it was very difficult to tell these days when everybody coloured and streaked their hair and dressed the same—with a tray of differently coloured drinks" (194). Finally she realizes that the persons who have worn identical black suits are waiters. In most of the working places uniform suits are provided to attract the customers.

The people never take time to think that imitation is crime and are never ashamed in following or imitating westerners because they accept it as a part of their culture and they do not like to differentiate it. Homi K. Bhabhain *The Location of Culture* says "Mimicry repeats

rather than re-presents” (125). Indians not only like to be westerners in ideas and thoughts but also in their appearance. So, they use a lot of cosmetics to become fair. They hallucinate that the cosmetics would show them like the typical English people. They are running behind the chemicals than the natural things. There is a touch of westernisation even in media, with this attitude growing, the usage of cosmetics is on air.

Beauty parlours are started everywhere and women use cosmetics to beautify themselves as much as they can. In early days women used turmeric, multani mitti, curd, honey, butter, etc. to apply on their face to get glowing and healthy skin. But today’s generation apply cosmetics to make their skin glow but it is not good for skin. Shrinivas Moorty’s mother uses the traditional method to make her skin glow but later he finds that her mother and sister are “rubbing on their faces something called Afghan Snow, that came in an icy white glass jar and had a picture of melting snow-covered peaks on the outside” (17).

Lakshmi is very concerned about taking up the course of a beautician because she wants to earn more and she feels happy to be a beautician. Lakshmi is astonished when Neeraja gives her a shampoo. She says “A foreign shampoo” with deep breath and remembers her cousin who buys a bottle of shampoo when she comes to visit her. Lakshmi says that “she hate the shikakai that we use at home. It feels like mud paste and it always makes my eyes sting...” (106). Now a days all like to use shampoos and conditioners for hair and skin care because they are easy for use and they also do not take too much of water and time. But all the shampoos are full of chemicals and affect the cells. Many people do not realize this and some are careless even after knowing this.

In western countries people mostly shorten their names. The same thing happens in India. Balaji Brahmendra, a RJ in radio station, is well known as Bali Brums among the people. One of his callers says that her daughter strictly instructs her to address Balaji only as

Bali Brums. Even Neela likes it and she feels happy to pronounce the name. Neela's full name is Neela Mary Gopalrao but she is known as Neela or Neely. Miss Pandit's name is Damayandhi but she mentions it very rarely. In some cases, people translate their original name into English. Bali Brums calls Pushpa Rani as Flower Queen. Thus, covering themselves with westernisation, people are ready even to lose their uniqueness and originality. They never understand that they are willingly losing their 'self'. Edward W. Said in *Culture Imperialism* says that "Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale" (407).

In early days Indian women never told their husbands' names as they considered it as a sin of disrespect. But these days women call their husbands using their names and treat them as friends. When Neeraja calls her husband using his name Neeraja's neighbours criticize her. Neeraja notices that women in Amrutapura are not allowed to go inside the kitchen and puja room during menstruation. This happens not only in Amrutapura but all over India. Even Indians do not talk about this in public as it is a taboo to them. But in current scenario the people become aware of it and even the government plans to give rest or leave for the working women during their periods. The western influence brings a lot of changes in women's life and they have received good position in the Indian society.

Today there are more parties and celebrations. People are very enthusiastic to celebrate occasions like the New Year, valentine's day, etc. which were not celebrated before independence. New Year becomes a part of Indian celebrations and it is a government holiday. Most of the people take resolution during this day and they celebrate it with their family and friends. In the novel *Monkey-man*, Pushpa Rani, Ranjit and his family go on a trip to Coorg. They go there to enjoy the new year. In the morning they go fishing and in the evening, they enjoy dancing for the western music: "Pushpa Rani danced her way into the new year, the first time ever to western music, but she was not unprepared or fazed by it for

she had seen it on TV and in films all her life” (195). Youngsters like Pushpa Rani admire the glittering life of westerners. Valentine’s day is another day celebrated among the youngsters today, which has led to the death of morality in the young blood.

In ancient days, Indians did not mind their birthdays as a special occasion itself but days later they celebrated it by giving sweets to their neighbours and by receiving blessings from elders and by visiting temples. But in this century of post-colonisation, people like to celebrate their birthdays in a western style. They cut cakes; arrange feasts with both hot and soft drinks which again bring down the moral code. In *Sojourn* Neeraja makes plans for her daughter’s birthday even before a week and she likes to host a party. Parties are social hubs in which most of the men and women, especially youngsters get together. Nagaratna attends the birthday party of her neighbour and is impressed very much that she wishes to lead a life similar to her neighbour.

The British host both formal and informal parties. Social gatherings are necessary and common to them. They share both joy and happiness with one another in parties. This culture influenced Indians during colonisation and from then on, pubs have become very popular in metropolitan cities. Today pubs are the most frequently visited places in India, irrespective of the gender. Nagaratna’s colleague Lavinia suddenly faces a problem in her house. Her father runs a hotel in loss, so her brother “wanted to convert it into a pub” (Chosen, 58). He believes that he can mint money through pubs. But his father denies his idea. Ranjit, Pushpa Rani and her colleague go to a bar to entertain themselves. Ranjit orders beer and her colleague, Philomena orders Shandy. Pushpa Rani is not aware of the name of the drinks so she shows the blue-coloured drink, Blue Curacao. They enjoy the situation and even Pushpa likes to come again for drinking.

Party with drinks have become very common in metropolitan cities. Both men and women enjoy the drinks and it has become a fashion among the IT workers. Today like westerners many people conduct parties even in their houses and estates. Consuming alcohol has become very casual and has become a mandatory fashion of the present generation. Neeraja and her husband Keshav arranged a party before their departure. In *Monkey-man*, Neeraja likes the party and she feels proud while her house is adored by artificial lights and “She had been flitting from group to group, drink in hand unsipped” (14). Jairam and Geeta have a party in their home and they invite their friends for “a glass of wine” (45).

Not only drinking has become common among women but they boldly smoke too. This happens mostly in urban cities due to much of the influence of western culture. Women demand equal rights today without understanding what real empowerment means but they like to imitate men and have given upon morality totally. In *Monkey-man* when Shriniva Moorty meets Geeta in an evening party, he finds that she has not changed in any way. Geeta calls him out and says that she is “dying for a smoke” (50). It is evident from this that the impact of western culture has enhanced the life of women at the same time so many of them have taken wrong ideologies from the foreign culture.

Globalisation and its ideologies have spread all over the world. FJ. Lencher in his book *Globalization: The Making of World Society* mentions that globalization is “a process in which more and more people become connected in more different ways across larger distances” (15). The worldwide connection makes the people communicate, travel and invest internationally. Globalisation brings greater transformation in culture, everyday life style and also changes social conditions. India is not an exception to these shifts. Indian age-old traditions are shrinking due to this process of transformation.

Usha pictures the situation of Bangalore city through which she points out the cultural changes in India especially in metropolitan cities. She shows how Bangalore has been transformed from 'Pensioner's Paradise' to 'Silicon Valley'. The city today is the nerve centre of IT industries. In *Monkey-man* a reference to the city is made as: "In the four hundred years since its founding, the had forgotten its mud fort origins and far outgrown the four tower outposts which its founder had built to mark the limits of its healthy growth. Those towers now formed the heart of the city" (13).

Most of the people are very curious to move to the cities because they believe that their life would change better and they would lead a fruitful life. Dr. S. Kumaran and N. Arularasi in their article "Postcolonial Ecofeminism: A Study of K R Usha's *Monkey-man* and Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*" say that "The city is covered with high-tech modern buildings and shopping malls that gain the attention of youngsters. The tall buildings and bridges enable the city to be identified as developed and modernized city that caters to the needs of younger generation people whose thoughts are influenced by the western ideologies" (1275).

The cities are owned and controlled by many industries so people think they would get job to enhance their life. People attracted by westernisation, move to the cities like flying termites attracted by the lights. Due to this, the city becomes over populated. In *Monkey-man*, Dr. Suryanarayana Rao, notorious demographic historian, says that "in the year two thousand, we have crossed five million, five and a half to be more precise, but when we started in nineteen forty-seven, there were just about four lakh Bangaloreans. Moreover, the city has expanded eight-fold from a mere sixty-six square kilometres to five hundred and thirty one!" (31)

Cities become highly trafficking in all aspects due to the increase in population. In *Sojourn*, Neeraja returns to Bangalore to celebrate Diwali with her parents and friends. She finds tremendous changes that have taken place in the city. She likes to visit her old house but she does “not remember the roads being so crowded and with such a profusion of vehicles” (110). She feels very difficult because she has been away from the place for less than two years but the changes she finds make her to feel that is away from decades. She is not familiar with the place and felt that she stands on another world. she says to one of her friends, Sonia that the city “fatigues” (115) her so.

Usha in *The Chosen* says that as a result of huge population, cities become “dusty plains” (11). Traffic on roads is the biggest issue in Bangalore which disturbs the daily life of the citizens. Dr Larson, in *Monkey- man* is a colleague of Neela, and he takes a drive with Alka and Neela to a temple but it is hard to reach the temple due to traffic. He says that the place “has changed so much in such a short time. The traffic was not so bad last year” (64). The noise produced by vehicles irritates people. Most of the people own two wheelers and cars to reach their work place which make the roads damaged soon and the air gets polluted. The plastic bottles and covers thrown on the road side which cause disturbance to the people while driving and walking.

To extend the roads government uproots the tress on the roadside. Forest areas are destroyed in order to construct buildings and factories. People like to have a sophisticated life. In cities the ponds are dry and empty. People occupy places and build apartments. In *Chosen*, Nagaratna lives in Vitthla Colony, during rainy season the colony people are totally depressed because “the streets at the bottom of the bowl are flooded.” When the “city started spreading, it sucked up all the lakes and ponds to make way for low-cost housing” (8). When heavy rain flows the total place gets muddy and is flooded. People are narcissistic and they

never take concern about the welfare of the society and future generation. They think that they move towards civilisation but the truth is that they move towards destruction.

The houses are changing into apartments and multi-stored buildings. Bharatender Sheoran in her article “Globalization and Industrialization: A Menace to Nature and Woman in Usha K.R.’s *Monkey-man*” says that “not only the eating habits get affected but also the homes they live in have been transformed from open and garden bearing bungalows to matchstick type multistoried flats” (551). Neeraja in *Sojourn*, visits her old house and she finds very difficult to recognize her Bungalow which is too smaller and defenceless among the two buildings on either side. On one side there is a “brand new block of flats towering over it” and on another side “mega building project” (111) is going on. She is seen as a proud woman who admires her bungalow always but now it has turned to be a sad sepia. Even Shrinivas Moorty’s father has interest in flats so he transforms his Bungalow into a flat. People run behind apartments than the individual houses. They think that the life in flats is civilised and so they like to live there.

In *Sojourn*, Rajakka is proud to show her modern house to Neeraja and she says that windows and every door is made in teak wood and the floors are “tiles...tiles” (41). In *Monkey-man*, when Srinivas Moorty attends his friend Jairam’s house warming ceremony, he hears Jairam’s father complaining his son for the “toilets were western style; not a single squatting-on-your-haunches type Indian one” (55). Nagaratna’s house is very small even though the materials cover one fourth of the house only a little space is available for them. The people never like to be the same as in their past. They try to change themselves according to the modern world and they become materialistic.

The arrival of IT fields has brought a lot of changes in the life of people. People have become prey to modern life and materialistic world. Times ago, the Ammanagudi street in

Bangalore is filled with the smell of cow dung and each and every house has at least one cow. In the present situation, cows are sold and cow sheds have become empty. They revamp the cow shed into a plaza due to the hit of IT. In *Monkey-man*, Bhimaiah, one of the Golla brothers, bulldozed his own cow pen and “put up a building to specification and now the many-paned, glass fronted face of I-Soft Global Technologies glinted in the morning sun.” He names his plaza as Bhimaiah Plaza and later changes into Deluxe or Pearl Plaza. Now the “cows had been replaced by programers and writers of code” (14).

Earlier people used to overflow in the streets to visit the shops. They were more interested to buy fancy items, cosmetics, fruits, flowers and vases made of plastic to decorate their houses. Super market evolved very recently, only a decade before. Customers are very satisfied purchasing in super markets because each and every item is placed in front of them and they can view it easily and make use of the trollies to carry their products. But, mostly they forget to buy the products which they need instead choose unnecessary things. When Neeraja visits a shop mall she finds what her friend, Sonia, said was right “they are fabulous, just like the ones abroad” (112). Most of the items are imported from foreign countries and people are eager to buy it than their own country products.

The nation moves towards digitalisation. Not only shops and malls occupy the road side areas but computer classes and internet cafes are available everywhere due to the growing technological needs. Computer and typewriting classes are started to develop the technical skills of students. Nagaratna has enrolled her name in typewriting and shorthand in Shri Balaji of Commerce Institution and after that she continues her computer classes. Srinivas Moorthy finds a lot of changes in Ammanagudi Street, first there were only two shops available but now either side of the road is occupied by hot soup cafes and cyber cafes which provide internet access all through the day.

The western culture has had a negative hand on the Indian culture at the same time it has also brought few positive things like the newly standardised education system. It educates everyone without class disparities, enriches the knowledge of the students and updates them with international news. In *Sojourn* Lakshmi, daughter of Meenakshamma from brahmin family, does her degree with Poornima whose caste is low comparing to Lakshmi. Poornima's step mother, Rajakka, points out Meenakshamma's house to Neeraja and proudly says that "Her daughter Lakshmi is our Poorni's classmate" (*Sojourn*, 42). Her son Gopala too is about to complete his engineering. In *Monkey-man*, Aluka from low status is trying to enhance her situation through her education.

Before colonisation India depended on agriculture but now the situation is not the same. With the influence of western culture and the development of technology, the country focuses on industries and IT companies. Technological hike has also played a major role in rising the standards of English, with English as the code language. This is one of the main reasons for India to adopt English as the medium of instruction in schools. Until the arrival of British the Indian education system was religion oriented. But now it is science and technology oriented.

After independence India uses the theories of western education than its own. Academic subjects are upgraded to compete with the technical world. All the students have become technical oriented as the current educational syllabus stresses on it. Technical and graphical courses have reduced the scope of typewriting and other skills and crafts.

Technology and digitalisation offer a lot of opportunities provided they are skilled in using them. They reduce manual works. In *Chosen*, Joycey works in Vidyalaya school; she "was a computer specialist, she was here just part-time and her job was to computerize the accounts and familiarize the ole-timers with the machine" (276). Now the usage of

blackboard is gone back and the institutions moving towards Power Point Presentation. It is effective and it makes made the students to observe the classes attentively. Jairam, Head of Centre for Inter-Disciplinary Studies in National Trust College says that:

He brought his own laptop to class and flashed on the wall his lecture condensed to twenty slides with five bullet points in each and soon all the teachers were vying to do the same. In time the students too had caught on and now in the new centre it was officially recognized that given the urgency of the times and the vast amount of knowledge that had to be absorbed and conveyed, the old notes and ‘easy writing’ method was a waste of time. In the new Centre for Inter-Disciplinary Studies there would be computers for all, power point presentations galore. (218)

Indian education system has undergone tremendous changes and has introduced ample courses to increase the knowledge of students. Inter-disciplinary studies provide many courses to the students so that they could opt for courses of their interest. It is an additional qualification for them. In *Monkey-man*, Pushpa Rani, works in a call centre and put her brother too in a “call-centre training course after which he joined a sister concern of Trix Solutions” (90). Other than technical courses, women studies, and many non-technical courses are also taught in institutions for the sake of education to reach all people irrespective of their age groups.

People are more interested in English series, movies and theatre clubs have great impact on Indian students. This club brings out the hidden talents of students. Shrinivas Moorthy, history professor in National Trust College during his college days along with his friends enacted in drama. He enacted as Julius Caesar, his friend Jairam as Mark Antony and his girlfriend Geeta as Cleopatra. The drama hit among the audience and both Shrinivas

Moorty and Geeta were called as Julius and Cleo after the play. Other than films and theatre clubs, there are other clubs like literary club, humour club, etc, engaging people with quality work.

Study of Dialectical Materialism, study of Scientific Socialism and other unlimited groups are preferred by the girls. Beautician courses are trending among students both male and female. In *Sojourn*, Lakshmi does her graduation but at the same time she likes to do beautician course in Bombay:

She would start her own little parlour, it wouldn't cost her much. Besides, banks were free with loans to women entrepreneurs. Armed with a beautician's diploma she imagined she could compensate for what nature had denied her—sharp features, a fair skin. The art of bleaching would help her conquer her hairline moustache, the technique of threading, her shaggy eyebrows. (101)

A century back the social status of women was not good. They were dependents on men. Women were restricted to enter official places. Few years later, only the upper-class and royal women got the opportunities to receive education. In the eighteenth century, education came as a dawn on the women by the British and today it takes up challenges in all tasks, they prove that they are equal to men. Education has granted women freedom to talk and express in the society without any hesitation. Women enjoy the hybrid culture. This culture has given freedom to them to decide their life and desires. Mostly the middle-class women are pleased with this culture as reflected in Usha's novels.

In ancient times Indian women were equally educated with men but slowly the numbers of women started to decrease. After independence once again women have started to get education. Women's colleges and schools have been established in this century.

Education is must for women not only to improve themselves but also to enhance their family and nation. Usha has exposed that the education of women has made them economically free and that it enables them to stand on their own. Neeraja works as an advertising agent and considers it as a tool to expose her creativity. Nagaratna is a young girl among all Usha's leading characters. She has completed her studies and works in Vidyalaya School to improve her family situation. Her sister-in-law, Pushpa Rani has completed her graduation and has got an "accountant's job" (Chosen, 17) in garments. Other women characters are Neela, the secretary of Dr Subramanyam and Pushpa Rani who is an employee in a call centre.

Many institutions have tie-ups with other universities in India and even with foreign universities to emphasize the knowledge of students and make them highly qualified people. The people get educated in western countries and return to India with western ideas. They implement those ideas in Indian education. Shrinivas Moorthy gets an opportunity from Canadian University but he refuses to go so it goes to Jairam and he makes use of it. He returns to India completing his doctoral degree and becomes a chief person to his college. He brings the changes in his college according to the western idealogues. The person who completes his graduation in foreign is much preferred to take up Indian jobs.

The person who speaks English is respected by the people and even they admire the person. In *Chosen*, Nagaratna is criticised by her classmates because of her physical appearance but her "performance in the English class that won her their grudging respect. In the babel of ungrammatical voices, she shone by comparison. While the teacher's sarcasm made the class squirm, she stood up and gave the right answers" (14). Parents are very proud to send their children to English medium schools and consider it as their prestige. Nagaratna's sister-in-law in every morning reminds her son to check whether he has taken his English textbook. She considers "English textbook was the guarantee of all knowledge" (91).

Many of them use English phrases in their conversation due to the influence of western education. Miss Pandit, Principal of Vidyalaya School motivates Nagaratna when she attends the interview. She says “Cultivate a Quietness of the Mind” (, 48) to have a peaceful life. Miss Pandit often uses English quotations to motivate others and she even trains her students to write poems in English and corrects their mistakes. She has completed her degree in US and it is exposed in her language. Sometimes Nagaratna feels difficult to understand the words used by Miss Pandit. So, she often uses Oxford English Dictionary to find the meaning of the words. Rajakka is an illiterate but she admires the modern life. When she converses with Neeraja she pronounces the word modern as ‘madren’ which shows how she adores the language. Indians like to be westerners.

There are plenty of job opportunities available if the person is good at English. Neeraja works as an advertising agent in Sam’s office. To sell a product one should advertise it and make it to reach every people. The benefits and the substances contained in that product are written in English so it is not possible to be reached and understood by all the people. Nagaratna does it correctly. Nagaratna is quite able to speak in English so she gets a job in school. She even tries to enhance her language skills and whenever she hears a new word, she finds meaning for the word and uses of it. When Miss Pandit asks her to talk about “Herbarium” (127) to a man who is going to visit the next day. Immediately she searches meaning for the word in the dictionary and prepares herself. Usage of English dictionary is familiar among students than their regional language. The most pathetic situation is that they do not even know how to use their own language dictionary. English diminishes the glow of regional languages.

Call centre is a new entry in this new millennium. Being good in English is the only qualification which the call centres requires to recruit people. Puspa Rani has discontinued her studies because of her family problems. When she is at home, she sees an advertisement:

“Do you want to be a call-centre professional? Do you have the confidence for a global encounter? All it asked was for you to be young, ambitious, resourceful and English-speaking” (78). After her training she joins in a call centre and she enhances her language. Finally, she gets promotion and shine among her colleagues. She is not a graduate but gets a job because of her language skill. Women feel free in the hybrid society and they welcome it with open hands.

Due to the influence of European culture, India has attained a lot of changes, it has both negative and positive impacts. The lives of people have become materialistic and they run behind the money. They like to have junk food and soft drinks as well as consume alcohol which is not good for health. But on the other hand, women get education and they are not dependents anymore but strengthen their family with their earnings. They contribute a lot to the development of the nation. Due to globalisation, there are a lot of job opportunities created. Make in India scheme has been introduced by the government to develop the technical skills of Indians. Thus with the western ideas and trends, India appears to be more civilised and it will not take much time to become a developed nation in the near future but sadly, India lags behind in morality and westernisation is the major cause for this.

Chapter III

Identity Crisis

Oxford dictionary defines Identity as “who or what a person or a thing is” and it is the quality or a label of a person or a group which differentiates one from the others. When a person fails to realize himself, the crisis arises making him feel insecure. This happens due to a change in his aims or due to inferiority when one is not sure of his role in the society.

Erikson comments on crisis as “a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation” (16).

Erik Erikson is a German-American psychologist who has made successful contributions to the field of psychology. He is the one who coined the term Identity crisis. A large percent of the humanity experience identity crisis today because of various types of failures. Erikson also had undergone such a conflict during his childhood. He grew up under his stepfather and when he came to know about his real Jewish father, he had a conflict who he was actually. He has given shape to identity development and identity crisis.

Erikson is influenced by Sigmund Freud and he believes that the personality of a person is developed through a series of stages. Unlike Freud’s theory of psychosexual stages, Erikson believes that the society and culture play a significant role in developing the personality of a person. Erikson develops eight stages and in each stage it is seen that people experience different conflicts and tasks and they try in different manners to overcome it and solve the problems. The conflicts mould people’s minds helping them to find themselves. If they fail to solve or tackle the crisis they feel uncomfortable or defeated.

People and the environment they live in are interrelated always. Socio-cultural environment of people determines their identities. When there is a need to transfer from a

familiar to an unknown place it creates a crisis in people's minds because they find it very hard to adopt to the new cultural atmosphere. The new place makes them feel alienated or isolated and they are occupied by numbness. They hardly mingle with inheritors and always maintain silence. They might have been fixed and settled in a certain destination of their comfort but when sudden changes arise, they are shattered like glass. Culture also plays a major role in defining people's identity. Erikson says:

We cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor we separate (as I tried to demonstrate in *Young Man Luther*) the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crises in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other. In fact, the whole interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental and the historical, for which identity formation is of prototypal significance, could be conceptualized only as a kind of psychosocial relativity. (23)

Most of the contemporary women writers concentrate on quest for identity. Usha is no exception to it. Usha's protagonists have their own desires and they do not like to play a passive role in this society. When they try to define them, they undergo a lot of difficulties. In *That Long Silence*, Jaya says that "To achieve anything, to become anything, you've got to be hard and ruthless" (1). When Usha's protagonists face new challenges, they have an inner conflict and crisis inside them which make them feel restless, lonely and alienated.

In defining one's own self, society also plays a significant role. The person who does not have good contact with the environment and people undergo identity crisis. Jeffrey Weeks in his article "The Value of Difference" says:

Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others...sense of personal location,

the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others, and in the modern world these have become ever more complex and confusing. (47)

Neeraja works in an advertisement agency but she is forced to move to a small town, Amrutapura. She leaves her job and accompanies her husband for his better future. She feels very hard to leave her friends and her pleasurable life. She worries much about her destination. She consoles herself and confidently says that “The change will do me good” (15). But she loses her temper when she finds the pigs playing in mud and the sounds of pigs annoy her a lot. Her temper goes high when Mahila mandali along with all other ladies from the town group to create a nuisance.

When one feels uncertain about his survival in a new place automatically the crisis arises in him. Neeraja also feels the same in the new place. The activities and behavior of the people are different. She is preoccupied with nostalgia of her old house which is adorned with artificial lights, party and her friends. She compares it with her present place where the pigs roam around and the smell of cow dung is in the air, she “was unprepared for the assortment of people and animals, the noise and the frenzied activity on the half- kilometre stretch of road” (35). She slowly loses her hope and doubts herself how she is going to survive in the small town which creates crisis in her. She knows that there is no other go and she has to be there for her husband’s sake.

In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna is happy in her village but she is not aware that her life would become miserable after her father’s death: “The most dramatic moments in life, those which rewrite our futures, seldom come with preamble. You are cheated of the clash of cymbals and the rolling of drums, so Nagaratna was to learn” (10). She feels terrible; she does not know how her family is going to pay the debts. Finally, they are forced to sell their

properties to get out from the debts. Nagaratna and her mother move to Bangalore city along with her brother Satya. While travelling in bus she watches the field and the river that disappear. She worries because it is the last time for her to see these things and she is not sure whether she would come to the village or not. Leaving her own place disappoints her. Nagaratna is not sure about the happening around her which creates crisis in her.

Nagaratna and her mother reach Bangalore and she feels numbness than exhausted. Her mother is awake all night and she feels difficult to sleep in the new place but Nagaratna sleeps well but “in the depths of her consciousness, where random images sometimes get embedded, yielding nuggets of explanation in some far future, the image of her nephew tied to the door like a dog to a post seemed to illuminate her new life” (13-14). In her village she has a pleasant experience with nature but she does not feel the same in the city of Bangalore. The unfamiliar environment creates fear in her which spoils her peace and makes her anxious. She feels alienated.

The city atmosphere scares Nagaratna. The noisy street covered with buildings and shops irritates her. In Vitthala Colony there is no space for privacy which is worst thing to bear. Nagaratna feels lonely and she is not close to anyone. Nagaratna’s classmates criticize her dressing sense because she wears long skirt and folds her oil hair at top of her head as in her village. She is ridiculed by all. She is not happy since the arrival of the city. She loses her enthusiasm. Nagaratna isolates herself from others and preoccupies with her past life in village. She always looks doubtful and undergoes identity crisis.

The transformation brings a lot of crisis among the people but there are few of them who face it in optimistic ways. Neeraja, in *Sojourn* and Nagaratna in *The Chosen* are close-packed, and feel very hard to overcome the past life in their native but Pushpa Rani in *Monkey-man* is not similar to them. She is easily adoptable and very clear in her view. She

undergoes a difficult situation when she is too young both mentally and physically which stabilizes her to face the world firmly with fearless. She is bold enough to take decision which makes her to cross the obstacles to reach her identity. She learns that if the people build up their “inner strength” they can “be flexible when required” (83).

People feel lonely when they migrate from one place to another. But few people feel inconvenient in their native because of technological development. They find it very hard to cope with the development which isolates them from others. Neela is not very active to the present world because she is not much skilled in technology like Alka who is working under her. She feels that she might lose her job because of the present youngsters who are highly talented. She loses her confidence and doubts her identity. Because of her deficiency, she blames “It’s all those software companies...too many outsiders with too much money” (64).

Moving from one place to the other, people find it hard and complicated to get along with others. They isolate themselves from the society which create crisis in the inner self and they are not confident about themselves. S. John Peter Joseph in his article “Alienation and Rootlessness in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya” quotes the words of K. Raghavendra Rao: “alienation is a condition of loss of an essential part of the self. It is, therefore, a condition in which the self is placed in a position of insecurity, anxiety, anguish, loss of identity and loss of authenticity” (qtd.in Joseph 106). Usha’s protagonists also feel alienated in new places and they undergo inner conflict.

In *Sojourn* Neeraja feels embarrassed when her neighbours converse with her, they never allow her to speak instead they say whatever they wish and share their personal experiences. They talk about the caste fearlessly and in a casual way they touch on all personal and public aspects and make Neeraja anxious. She never expects this because the society where she grew does not encourage social talks by women and they consider it a

taboo and avoid talking publicly about caste and other national topics. There are a lot of things distressing her. The town becomes an obstacle to her destination. She never gets a chance to expose herself. It makes her depressed and she feels alienated. She is not able to lead a peaceful life and she undergoes identity crisis.

The town disappoints Neeraja. So, to ease the pain she writes letters to her friends. Whenever she tries to connect her with her neighborhood, she is completely avoided by them. They have accepted her smile and pass glance but not encourage her to participate in their conversation because they look her as an outsider. They are not comfortable with her presence which makes her feel cornered. She tries to mingle with them but their strange behaviour makes her feel bad. She feels as though she exists in a different planet surrounded by darkness. New place, new people and their behaviour scare her and she feels lonely.

Neeraja is not interested in anything. Her loneliness consumes her, she feels as if she is standing on the fire. She loses her hope:

She was losing bearings, her moorings were slipping away from her, that she was frittering away her strengths in activities which she had never imagined would fall to her lot, in the kind of dull domesticity which in the abstract she had despised and with the kind of people she had never seen as flesh and blood and for whom she had felt a distant sympathy. But before her panic stratified into disgruntlement and then into depression she reminded herself that she was at best a reluctant accomplice. Her core was left untouched. Her real self stood outside her skin, watching her go through the motions of life, drawing from it a vicarious amusement. (81-82)

In *The Chosen* Nagaratna is not aware of her problems. She “did not know which was worse, her sister-in-law’s gentle teasing or the phlegmatic way her mother ignored her needs.

Both made her feel small and trivial” (25). She doubts herself whether she is correct or not. She is totally insensible and has no clear vision about herself and her future. She does not know what she is going to do after completing her graduation. She does not like to be “supine Manjula, thick-skinned Sheels, Shylaja and Pushpa who demanded so little and were so easily satisfied” but she is obscure of herself and does not know whom she wants to be and “what of Nagaratna herself?” (39). She has an inner conflict which makes her restless.

After completing her degree, she has a fear about her future and she does not know what her role in the society is and how she is going to protect her family. When the role changes the crisis occurs. As a student she does not have any responsibility but when she comes out to face the world alone it creates conflict in her. Additionally, she is trapped by her father’s death. When she is new to the city, she often thinks about her father and she misses him. She feels lonely and alienated. Years pass but still she is unable to overcome the memories of her father. This shows that she does not have any friends or partner like her lovable father. She views her life suspiciously. She is always alone and does not talk too much with her neighbours. She not even interferes between the conversation of her mother and sister-in-law. She never mingles with anyone and her loneliness keeps her isolated.

People find difficult to adapt themselves to a new environment. They are unable to adjust their lives completely in a strange land even if they try hard; surely there are few things which irritate them. They fear about their survival in the new place and how their future going to be. These things mess up their minds and make them feel hopeless. The changes, challenges and hopelessness make them restless. They find hard to define themselves. They undergo a depression when they fail to experience or get what they expected. Usha’s protagonists feel very hard to adopt to the new environment. The identity crisis begins when they move from one place to another.

In *Sojourn* Neeraja feels hard to survive in the town because she does not have any facilities as in the big city. She lives without machines, like oven, washing machine, etc. and is not happy in Amrutapura. When she is in Bangalore, she organizes Eves for Environment and creates awareness among people. She does it in the small town Amrutapura but she does not receive any proper response from the ladies as well as from the higher officer. She writes a letter to the higher officer requesting him to take some action against the Hanumappa, to whom the pigs belong to. The people of Amrutapura do not like her activities. There is no one to listen to her and it hurts her. There are a lot of people around her but she feels lonely and alienated. She undergoes identity crisis. There is none to give ears to her words. Neeraja's environment hinders her in establishing her identity in Amrutapura and she is not able to lead her life peacefully.

Neeraja thinks that the trip to Bangalore will heal her anxiety. But the experience she undergoes there increases her depression than before. The city is familiar to her but she visualizes a lot of changes in two years. The changes are incredible to Neeraja. She feels herself as a stranger in her native which makes her anxious. She stands away from the crowd and watches them with tearful eyes. She visits her Bungalow "on which she had always pride of herself, was now a sad sepia. The garden looked forlorn, the trees stunted and the lawn patchy. A thick layer of dust lay on the leaves. Clearly, her garden was losing the battle against the new constructions" (111). She thinks that she has become the oldest and useless like her old bungalow. Again Neeraja is torn between the two cultural clashes of two environments. She finds hard to define herself. The changes make her feel inferior and her self-esteem goes down.

The same happens to Neela in *Monkey-man*, who thinks herself great until she meets Pushpa Rani. She treats Pushpa Rani worse than a dog but now her growth is unbelievable and unexpected by Neela which disappoints her. Erikson in his work *Identity: Youth and*

Crisis, says “identity confusion is accompanied not only by an inability to concentrate, but by an excessive awareness of as well as an abhorrence of competitiveness” (171). Neela feels inferior because of Pushpa Rani who reaches high position which she cannot attain. The development of others makes her inferior. This attitude troubles her and puts her in a state of crisis.

Nagaratna in *The Chosen* seeks for a job. She thinks a job can change her lifestyle and lead her towards a happy life. But she finds it too difficult. Shubha Tiwari in her article titles, “Shades of Life in Usha K.R.’s *The Chosen*”, says about Nagaratna:

For all her psychic energy, her personality, and her good English, the system does not see Nagaratna and any different from countless others with a B.Com. Degree and a diploma in short hand. Her sandals wear out. Her confidence is on the brink of falling into the abyss of depression. She is desperate for a job and a job is not in sight. (135)

Finally she gets a job in an ashram school as an office assistant. But she is not able to completely enjoy the happiness because of her mother and sister. They have no interest in sending her to the school. Nagaratna resists her family’s wish and joins in the school.

At the school, Nagaratna gets promotion but she does not receive any conformation letter or any increment in her salary. She does not question it and she not even consider it as a big issue. She fails to understand the real intention of the institution which tries to make use of her. Even her family warns her but she never takes their words seriously. Gradually her behaviour changes and she behaves rudely to everyone. She feels happy with Miss Pandit but she fails to feel completeness in her life. Something makes her restless. The loneliness of Nagaratna stays in her heart like a stain on cloths. She misses something which she does not

know how to express. She loses her enthusiasm and is uninterested in herself. She is not sure about her identity. Vasant, the beloved of Nagaratna questions her:

What was her favourite colour? She did not think it would matter to anyone, not even to herself, what she liked and what she did not, because things happened regardless. Twice a year she had been taken to Chickpet and a salwar-Kameez set, reasonably priced and of durable material, had been bought for her and she had never stopped to ask whether she liked it. She did not dislike it, certainly, for what everyone else wore? (141)

Nagaratna is pleased with the presence of Vasant. His special care for Nagaratna makes her feel happy and easily she falls in his trap. When Vasant questions her where her resident is, Nagaratna instinctively answers that she is from Gubbigudu. She does not accept Vitthala Colony as her own place and feels embarrassed to talk about the colony with Vasant. She thinks he may have a bad opinion about her if he comes to know about her real residential address. Nagaratna feels inferior to talk about her real situation and she feels ashamed of being a middle class girl. She is not satisfied with her life which makes her restless. She is totally depressed with the life she has now.

When people feel stressed and hopeless in their life they need a companion to comfort and stabilize them, it may be a friend or a lover or anyone but a trustworthy person. If they have such companions surely they will regain positive attitude towards their life and will be able to get rid of the crisis. G. A. Ghanshyam in his article “Intriguing Tale of Loss and Loneliness of (New) Woman in *The Girl*” quoted the words of Deepak Chopra, “Out of loneliness, all of us seek a source of love that will fill up the lack we feel inside, and that’s exactly what happens, no more and no less” (qtd. in Ghanshyam, 220). Pushpa Rani is stable because she has her father’s support. Pushpa Rani’s father trusts her and he stands firmly like

a stick to balance the creep. This helps her to realize herself. But this is not happening to all. Many fail in their relationships which cause great pain in them and increase their crisis even more.

Betrayal or loss of loved ones is also a cause for identity crisis. If the person faces the betrayal it would be very hard to overcome it. Such bitter incidents make them angry. They feel sad and avoid mingling with others. They isolate themselves and feel very hard to accept the truth which creates inner conflict. They become totally shattered. Usha's protagonists also undergo this situation and they struggle a lot to overcome it.

In *Sojourn*, Neeraja meets Giri, a young boy, nephew of her landladies. She allows him to play in her house along with Lakshmi and other youngsters. She feels that young people will bring strength and happiness to her but the fate twists her life. She trusts Giri and Lakshmi but they elope without informing Neeraja. Both their families blame Neeraja and they hold her responsible for everything. She is betrayed by Giri and Lakshmi and becomes a victim to which she is not related. This affects her everyday life and is not able to lead a peaceful life and she is affected mentally and wants to leave Amrutapura.

Already she is not comfortable with the place and now she additionally carries the blame of the two families. The continuous defeats like fail to clear the pigs and false judgment of the young couple make her depressed. She is not able to lead a normal life. Erikson points out that "state consists of a painfully heightened sense of isolation; a disintegration of the sense of inner continuity and sameness; a sense of over-all ashamedness; an inability to derive a sense of accomplishment from any kind of activity" (168).

Neeraja finds it very difficult to get out from the pathetic situation. The betrayal of young people makes her restless and she is not able to concentrate on her domestic chores. She stops talking with others and tries to be alone: "the unexpectedness of their betrayal

burned a trail in her insides” (162). She comes to know that Giri has reached his house and nothing is known about Lakshmi. She feels the strangeness among the landladies. The landladies feel uncomfortable due to her presence which makes Neeraja uneasy.

Neeraja feels bad about her situation and she is in need of support from her husband Keshav but he has gone out for his business purpose. She is helpless and distressed. She stands in balcony and hears cawing of a lonely crow. She is not able to eat properly and always looks like a person who has lost everything. She cuts down her contacts with the world. Silence, loneliness and isolation are the best cohorts which accompany her. She thinks deeply about her failures which she has undergone and finds it very hard to overcome it. She senses the loss of her self-confidence.

After the elopement of the young couple Meenakshamma stops talking with Neeraja. She does not even send her twin children to play with Pavana. Even the landladies reduce their conversation with Neeraja. So she spends her time by playing with her daughter, Pavana. She cannot bear the silence and loneliness for a long time. It makes her to feel in a gloomy world. She spends her time uselessly and her activeness is gone. She also relinquishes her interesting work, writing letters to her friends. She feels the whole town become numb as well as her life. The alienation and isolation of her create a crisis in her. She suspects her own self.

Keshav is sure that Amrutapura is like a cobweb and it can be cleared easily. He clearly knows the place is not the future for him, it is just a stepping stone or a part his achievement. But Neeraja fails to understand this and she often thinks about the unpleasant past which makes her hopeless. She dreams of her future abroad with her family. She considers herself as a queen and agent of “cross-pollinating cultures” (*Sojourn*, 171). But the

loneliness in Amrutapura prickles her. Her wrong judgment about the young people shatters her totally. She becomes a stranger to everyone in Amrutapura.

The days have passed and Keshav gets promotion and the time comes for them to leave the place. This is what she expects but she is not in the mood to enjoy the situation. The loneliness of Neeraja makes her depressed. Even in the farewell party she is not happy. She feels that she misses something which she cannot identify or realize. A guilty feeling pricks her and she feels restless. She likes to know what has happened to Lakshmi but she is not bold enough to ask Meenakshamma.

In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna senses loneliness even though she is surrounded by her family. Her mother and sister-in-law are not ready to listen to her words and understand her feelings. They insist her to do the work they offer but she refuses to do it. She does her duty correctly still she does not feel completeness in her life. The pressure at work place and home makes her fragile and she doubts her own ability. She finds identity crisis in both the places. Because she is not able to establish herself as a good daughter at home and an assistant officer at the work place.

Nagaratna is not close to anyone. The depression due to loneliness keeps her apart all the time. She fails in taking decisions and she feels for it later. This also creates crisis in her. When Shylaja asks her to accompany her to the ice cream shop Nagaratna resists the offer but later she thinks why she does not go with them. Even she does the same to NPP sir, typewriting master. She rejects his proposal without second thought. When she has a chance to meet NPP sir with Shylaja she feels bad. She comes to know that they both are going to marry soon which hurts her and her eyes filled with tears. She becomes too “silent, knowing that in some way she had been bested, that others had got on with their lives leaving her out in

the cold, and that while she had been scrabbling on the ground ineffectively, they had struck wellsprings of delight” (108).

Nagaratna thinks that real happiness lies in the sophisticated life but soon she realizes that it is not true but its just an assumption. She has a chance to go to Muttu where she meets Guruji, Miss Pandit’s father. She thinks that she will be happy in the place but it does not happen. She sits near the window, thinking about her life. She feels sleepless all the night. She thinks ashram will be the right place for her. But soon she realizes what she thought is wrong. She meets a lot of people but their friendships fails to reduce her loneliness.

Vasant visits the ashram and he hesitates to talk with Nagaratna. He tries to avoid her. She is not happy with his behaviour. Nagaratna understands that the relationship between them is not going to continue and they have to end up. In ashram she does not have identity and she does not understand who she is in the ashram. The betrayal of Vasant makes her life very hard. The life in ashram and Vasant’s betrayal bring mental, physical and emotional stress to her. When she returns to her house she feels “I could die before I reach home, she comforted herself as she drifted into uneasy sleep. I could suffocate to death in this airless bus or just get squashed between two seats” (263).

Nagaratna reaches Vitthala Colony and she is fed up with dirtiness and the crowd. She finds some changes in her home. Soon she realizes her family is in economic crisis. She is totally upset with her mother because Sarojamma works as an assistant cook to Indramma, house owner. If Nagaratna’s father were there he would not have accepted his wife to do this. Nagaratna is broken completely because she does not expect this. The unfavourable situation affects her mentally and she feels guilty. The difficulties weaken her and she is not stable to bear further more crises. She feels gloomy and loses hope.

Nagaratna becomes tired of the deplorable situation. At the working place her colleagues openly make fun of her. It affects her deeply and she has not enough courage to face them or fight against them. She becomes weak and feels alienated. She feels her life is tasteless and useless. Gradually the situations worsen than before. She feels as if she has lost herself. She is not comfortable at the work place as well as at home. In both the places she undergoes crisis which makes her feel depressed. She is afraid to face the crisis and it affects her desire to live. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence*, the character Jaya says that "Self-revelation is a cruel process. The real picture, the real 'you' never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you really look" (1). Nagaratna finds hard to define her identity.

Mamta, colleague of Nagaratna, replaces her and becomes the right-hand of Miss Pandit. It affects Nagaratna, she realizes that she has lost her power in her working place because of Mamta. The relationship between Miss Pandit becomes worse and they do not have a smooth relationship like in the past: "She has become so quiet and lifeless, she seems tired all the time" (287). She becomes absent-minded. The challenges and the betrayal of the people frighten her. She buries the worries inside her and finds very hard to carry it.

Ranganatan, son of Indramma takes Nagaratna to his factory. There she encounters Vasant, the betrayal in a distance and she comes to know that he is the owner of the factory. She hides herself before he looks at her. She feels there is no space for her "to grieve: neither at home nor at school. If she should hiccup in the bathroom through her tears, she will be heard. If she should hiccup in the bathroom through her tears, she will be heard.... So Nagaratna carries a grinding stone in her heart which pulls down her shoulders and weights her walk" (298).

Nagaratna likes to talk about her increment to Miss Pandit. But the situation is not favourable to her. Miss Pandit is not in good mood because her father marries his secretary without informing and she is totally disappointed with his deed. Nagaratna thinks that it is not the right time to demand so she does not talk about her payment. She returns home with failure. The continuous miseries of Nagaratna weaken her stability. She loses her peace and happiness. She feels her life is worthless and she struggles with inner conflicts. Manju Kumari in her article “Existentialism: An Effort to Emerge out of the clashes: A Study of U.R. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara* and *Bharathipura*” says that:

Many curiosities, contradictions and questions remain unsolved in this world and sometimes and questions remain unsolved in this world and sometimes endeavors for the solutions sweep away all the reason and meaning and lead towards a kind of contradictions or conflicts. These contradictions and conflicts, ultimately, end in a loss of individual identity and meaninglessness of this world. In this modern era where conflicts are pervasive, this sense of lost of identity increases. (237)

Miss Pandit departs from the school and her nephew, Priyam, becomes the principal of the school. Nagaratna receives a letter from Priyam stating that she is fired from the job. It is a great shock to her. She feels all the doors are closed to her and there is no other go: “Something hot and wet is scalding the skin of her hands as they clutch the rusty railing of the balcony. She licks her tears as they come sliding past her mouth. They are salty and they turn bitter in her throat. The street is lifeless, she is surprised at how dead it is” (312). She thinks death is the only way to end the problems.

At the age of twenty-one Nagaratna has undergone a lot of difficulties. She is betrayed by the people whom she believed the most. Moreover she lost the job which she

likes the most. She is frustrated by her state and decides to end her life. Shubha Tiwari in her article, “Shades of Life in Usha K.R.’s *The Chosen*”, says “Naga is left in the lurch, as though she is nothing, she does not exist, she is of no importance to anyone. She is rejected just as husk is separated from grain and blown into the wind. Naga is simply dropped out of scheme of things” (142). She thinks death is the only solution to free her from the troubles. She drinks poison when no one is at home. Sarojamma finds her unconscious and she takes her to the hospital and finally she is rescued by her family.

In *Monkey-man* Neela is the best illustration of the hybrid society. The inter caste marriage of her parents does not disappoint her but it is the reason for others to disrepute her. She is matured enough to view the temple and the church as the same. The light from the candle and brass lamp are similar to her and she does not find any difference in it. At first, she is good but soon she becomes worse because of her colleagues. She is not confident of herself and she is also not able to cope with the present scenario. The lack of skills and adjustment make her to face a lot of obstacles and she is not able to establish her identity. She fails to define herself and her capability.

Gradually Neela is preoccupied with grudge because of her colleagues. She is not happy with the young people who work under her especially, Alka and Pushpa Rani. She considers permanent employment is actual power. Sometimes she has a crazy thought that Alka might get good position than her or she might snatch her job. These unwanted thoughts of Neela make her lose her temper and behave violently with others. Neela is in lack of self-confidence which leads her in the wrong way. She hides the cheque of Alka and behaves as if she does not know. She knows Alka has not enough courage to question her.

Pushpa Rani works under Neela before she places her foot at the call centre. When Neela encounters Pushpa Rani she finds confidence and new spirit blooming in her. Neela

has offered the job to her for fifty rupees; even the sweepers are better paid than her. But now Puspha Rani gives jobs for others and even her photo arrives in the front page of a English magazine which irritates Neela. To express her bitterness, she questions Pushpa tartly but Pushpa tackles her easily. Neela exposes her enmity openly. Sudista Prasad Singh in his work *New Concepts of Post-modern Novelists* says that people “have to overcome their predicament through firm resolution. Accepting the truth in life they should change the circumstances and assert their identity” (27). The madness of Neela is uncontrollable. These things happen due to her lack of acceptance of the reality.

Pushpa Rani has understood that Neela suffers inferiority complex which has made her to trouble others. She avoids to show kindness to her and moreover she thinks that Neela is “lacking in self-esteem, in positive, feel-good emotions” (84). Neela is not in her control and she lacks confidence which is the main cause for her problems. Still now she thinks what she has done is right and does not even regret for it. Dr. S. Kumaran and N. Arularasi in their article “Postcolonial Ecofeminism: A Study of K R Usha’s *Monkey-man* and Anuradha Roy’s *The Folded Earth*” say about Neela that “Though a woman of dual religious heritage, she climbs up the ladder of power by manipulating her female attributes. As a result of her unidentified life, she vests her anger on the powerless subordinate and over the less resourceful like clerks and peons with a rod of petty cruelties” (1276).

Prithvi Kumar brings an unexpected twist in Neela’s life. Neela has no friends in her life except Molly; even she is not close as before. The approach of Prithvi Kumar impresses her and soon she falls in his trap. She likes him when he praises her and she becomes a key doll in his hand. Prithvi offers business trip to Neela and she accepts “without realizing it and without meaning to she found herself cooperating with him” (184). Once her aunt Lakshmi brings a proposal to her and she accepts to meet him. When she meets him, “He asked her no questions about herself, her plans, what she wanted out of life or even who her favourite film

star was and volunteered no information about himself either” (181). She does not like him but she finds the qualities of Prithvi Kumar in him.

Neela accepts the business trip of Prithvi and she stays in Rajitha Lodge waiting for his arrival. She calls him and asks about the meeting but he responds as if there is no business meeting and he smiles. She understands the real character of Prithvi Kumar and she feels ashamed of herself. She is afraid how the people look at her in the office. She regrets, “For days after that, she ruminated over her behaviour, growing breathless at her stupidity. How could she have agreed to such a tryst? A lodge on a highway—even a child knew what that meant.” Prithvi Kumar with Alka and Pushpa Rani laugh at her which irritates her. She cannot bear them so “she was being fierce with them to pre-empt any sly remarks” (189).

The betrayal of Prithvi makes her upset. Nagaratna fails in her love so she is fed up with the life and is scared to face Vasant again but Neela does not resemble Nagaratna and she is different from her. The betrayal of Prithvi Kumar causes mental stress to Neela. She isolates from others but the pain she undergoes makes her to take revenge on him. She decides to punish him. She hides the promotion letter of Prithvi for more than three weeks and she thinks that he may not get the job. Her thought is right; he missed the job opportunity in her office but instead of that he gets a new job in Hyderabad. The stress, depression, loneliness, inner conflicts and crisis make her act in a negative way to harm others.

The difficulties and betrayal make her behave in an arrogant way. She does not feel guilty when Alka comes to know that she is the person who has hidden the cheque. Neela is depressed because she does not have any friends to share the pain of her affliction. The routine days reduce her anxiety and

her behaviour in the office returned to a semblance of normalcy. But that was not enough. She needed to talk to someone. She needed a friend, a

dispassionate, objective voice of reason she could confide in but one who would ask no questions, demand no explanations and pass no judgement. Molly would not do; in fact her docility was a hindrance. She could be shocked so easily. (190)

Neela has no adjustment with her colleagues and that behaviour isolates her from others. She has no one to share her problems with. She hides her worries inside her but when it reaches extreme level she bursts like a volcano and spreads the heat to her colleagues. She fails to realize her own self and feels inferior to others by looking at their ability to do things perfectly. She does not even try to understand her own potential. Neela is upset with the successful growth of others in the working environment. She faces identity crisis and it makes her lose her confidence.

Few decades before women did not participate actively in the social development. But nowadays they are not the same. They are ready to face all types of challenges. Women are successful in each and every field like men. They play a significant role in this society. Women not only do the domestic works but also go for work to enhance the economic condition of their family and also to develop the nation. They face so many challenges in this society and have different roles to play and they have to find their original identity. While facing the challenges and changes in the society automatically they get into confusion and doubt their own self-identity.

Nagaratna in *The Chosen* is under the guidance of her family so she does not know the reality of the world. When she comes out of the house to face the world, she is totally disappointed. She begins her new life which is very heavy for her to go ahead. She has more responsibility than before; she has to face the problems at home as well as at the work place. The problems make her weak and she finds very hard to define herself. The extreme pain she

feels is that not losing her love but losing her job. She considers her job is the source of her life. She is disappointed with the things happening around her. She is not matured enough to bear the pain so she tries to attempt suicide and she fails in it. She is rescued by her mother.

In urban cities changes take place drastically. Due to globalization, world becomes more competitive and new professionalism is introduced. Some of the people like Pushpa Rani make use of the opportunities and shine like a star in their life. Nowadays women compete no more with men but among themselves. When the condition is not favourable for them they feel inferior and experience identity crisis. It causes depression and they feel themselves as worthless. The fear on their own ability make them to do wrong things like Neela who tried to spoil others job to safeguard her own job. Sometimes the fear of life and doubt of self-esteem make them to choose death as a solution like Nagaratna.

Neeraja in *Sojournis* is a creative writer and a self-esteemed woman. She works as an advertising agent but she quits her job for her husband and takes care of her children. She participates in social development activities and creates awareness among people with the support of Eves for Environment Organization. But after reaching the town she is not actively participating in anything. She sits home like a caged bird. She does not get any chance to expose herself. This makes her lonely and depressed. She starts losing her own self. She meets her friend Bulbul and she finds a lot of changes in her. She finds that her friend has developed a lot but she remains the same.

Usha has well portrayed in her novels the fact that when life goes smooth people do not find any difficulties in it. If they lose the sameness or continuity in life crisis occurs. The changes in environment alone do not create depression but the changes in age, career and relationship also create a crisis. When the changes affect the smoothness of life they have to

face stress and depression. These things make them restless and they become doubtful of themselves. Women are the main victims of identity crisis in our century.

Chapter IV

Attaining Selfhood

Attaining selfhood is important to a person to lead a meaningful life. To search for oneself is an inborn quality of any individual. To attain selfhood, one should realize his own self and should have a healthy personality, positive thinking, and should undergo a lot of challenges and trials. Kilroy J. Oldester says,

Selfhood allows a person to hold a sense of a personal narrative comprising of a sequential autobiography of his or her life experiences Selfhood entails numerous personal assessments and its spackled span includes evaluation of a person's abilities in relation to other people. Selfhood includes comparing and rating a person's level of intelligence, personality quirks, and physical powers with respect to other people. It also encompasses a personal image of a person's body type, and a lengthily list of other observable facts including assessing a person's comparative physical, mental, and psychological strengths and deficits. (np)

Man's relationship with the society and his experiences constitute selfhood. Self gives total awareness of oneself and it makes him to realise one's role of individuality in this society. Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, identifies five features to become a fully functioning person: open to experience, existential living, trust feelings, creativity and fulfilled life.

Individuals' growth occurs when they face problems and they struggle to master it. In his book *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* Carl Rogers says when a man,

Listens more accurately to the feelings within, and less evaluative and more acceptant toward himself, he also moves toward greater congruence. He finds it possible to move out from behind the facades he has used, to drop his defensive behaviors, and more openly to be what he truly is. As these changes occur, as he becomes more self-aware, more self acceptant, less defensive and more open, he finds that he is at last free to change and grow in the directions natural to the human organism. (63-64)

He also believes that the individuals become creative, adaptive and autonomous persons because of their experience.

Through the struggles one faces, he can learn a lot to develop his capability and skills. Rogers has compared human beings' life with the seaweeds. He observes that the seaweeds resist against the mass waves when they are hit again and again. After every attack the seaweeds would stand firm and are always ready to face the next attack. They never give up and it shows their inherent desire to live life. Rogers says that "Here in this palm like seaweed was the tenacity of life, the forward thrust of life, the ability to push into an incredibly hostile environment and not only hold its own, but to adapt, develop, and become itself" (np).

Usha K.R.'s protagonists Neeraja, Nagaratna, Neela and Pushpa Rani undergo the process of attaining selfhood. Their experiences in the outside world make them know themselves and help them to establish their identity. The challenges and changes one faces would bring him stability. Usha portrays through her characters that attaining selfhood is not easy for women; and that they have to undergo a lot of difficult situations. The tough situations mold them and make them aware of their potentials. The struggles they face in their personal life make them realize that they are capable of far more than they ever imagined.

The contact with the environment assists them to construct their self. It would help them to realize their role in this society as well as their own identity.

Usha K.R.'s characters' journey in the process of attaining selfhood reflects on their own capabilities and chances to know how they are unique from others. Neeraja in *Sojourn* moves from Bangalore to a small town, Pushpa Rani in *Monkey-man* starts her journey from Sundarapalya to the city of Bangalore. Nagaratna in *The Chosen* leaves her village and settles in the city. The changes in the environment have given women different experiences. It is the new environment which has made them rethink about their own self.

In *Sojourn*, Neeraja is active, creative and talented. She has worked as an advertising agent. She is "ambitious for herself and a mentor like Sam who had demonstrated how fulfilling life could be. Much as she liked Sonia and valued her friendship, she was convinced that her own vision of life was decidedly superior" (22). When her life is in a smooth track a sudden change occurs in the form of her husband. Neeraja's husband has got transfer to a small town, Amrutapura. She is not happy with it and later accepts to accompany him. She thinks that changes would bring good things in her life.

Neeraja is struck with right balance. She is stable until she encounters the changes. She has a clear vision about her future. But her husband's transfer to a small town shatters her. She tries to calm herself and says that the journey would bring a good change in her life. Usha Hemmadi in her article, "Big City Girl's Small Town Blues" says that "Neeraja is an independent women, efficient and totally urbanized. Such watering down of character persists throughout the novel" (20). She dislikes the place and behaves like an urban woman in the rural place. But her attitude towards life never changes.

Neeraja meets her landladies and she finds their nature of character. Their open talk about the caste disappoints her. She is totally embarrassed with the environment and the

people. The town people are not under the shadow of western culture. They grow upon what the environment and culture have taught them. Urmi A. Goswami in her article titled “Attitudes and Expectations” mentions that Neeraja fails to understand “each set of people have their own understanding of life, fostered as it is by their different environments” (37). Rogers says that the individual growth depends on the environment and it should provide genuineness and empathy to them. But Neeraja never feels the genuineness in the town. She is not an easy-going person like her husband.

Neeraja never accepts the practices of the people of Amrutapura. She is angry with Kirshnappa, bigamous landlord. She argues with Keshav that “his (Krishnappa) second marriage can’t be legal. As a government employee how could he...it could land him in trouble. In fact I’m surprised it hasn’t already” (44). She has no patience to accept the wrong doings. The town has disappointed her and she finds the place is covered with number of discoloured buildings and dust. The most disgusting thing is pigs which are roaming around the place. Neeraja finds very hard to adapt to the situation. She tries to overcome it by writing letters through which she gets satisfaction. Her experience makes her analyse her own self. Usha’s women protagonists represent the contemporary women who are well-educated, strong and eager to lead their life in their own terms.

In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna is a lively girl. She has a lot of good experience in her village and she loves the nature of her place. She never feels depressed until her father’s death. She flies as a free bird in her village. After her father’s death she has forced to move Bangalore along with her mother. She never likes the place. The city is over populated and filled with dust. The sudden changes suck her energy and she feels numb. After few days she understands the reality and tries to lead a peaceful life in the new environment. But she struggles between self and society. Nagaratna’s classmates amuse her and they criticize her dressing sense. She never bothers about them and tries to be what she is. She does not copy

the style of others and not even Shylaja's who is a beautiful and a charming woman. Shylaja wants to have friendship with Nagaratna and "In Nagaratna, Shylaja recognized an original" (15). Shylaja impresses others by her beauty but Nagaratna impresses others by her knowledge in English. In her class room she is the only girl who knows the plural of mouse and how to end a letter. She always sits alone and thinks about herself. Nagaratna never participates actively in gossiping with her neighbours. Mostly she avoids them and tries to isolate her from others.

The two characters, Neeraja in *Sojourn* and Nagaratna in *The Chosen* have some uncomfortable feelings in new places. They have changed their attitude towards the new place and try to lead a better life. But Pushpa Rani in *Monkey-man* does not have such problems. She adapts to the environment easily because she is very eager to learn new things to enhance herself. Pushpa Rani is the paradigm of today's generation. She is very active and creative. She is good in academics but the illness of her father makes her drop her pre-university course. At a young age she bears the responsibility of taking care of her family. She is never fed up with it instead she tries to face the challenges. Her relatives force her to marry and she also has an offer to work as a maid but she refuses both. She is not scared of her relatives and does not accept their favour. Instead "she set her face resolutely towards Bangalore, whose lights were fast approaching Sundarapalya" (89). She never let others decide her life. The sudden change in her life does not shatter her instead makes her stronger than before.

In *Monkey-man*, Neela is a daughter of parents with different religions. At first, she struggles a lot to overcome this religious conflict. Then she develops a matured feeling that the church and temple are alike. The light from candle and the light from brass are same to her. She has pushed "herself hard with what little she had, Neela was the hope of the nation" (183). She does not go for any journey like other women characters of Usha. She struggles in

her own environment to accomplish her selfhood. She is not ambiguous about her position and she does not bother others' critical comments.

Neela is self-confident but the changes in the society and the development of the country scare her. She starts to behave ruthlessly to safeguard her position. She hates talented young people. Slowly she realizes that she is losing her own self and becoming some other. The changes in the society bring changes in her too. She has no confidence on her ability and she is afraid if others would pluck her position. She hides the check of her colleagues and the promotion letter of Prithvi Kumar. She knows what she has done is wrong but she has compelled herself to protect her position at the working place.

People have to overcome the conflict to achieve their selfhood. They should be aware of the present situation and they should not be preoccupied with the past and future. It does not mean that they should not think about it but they should remember the lessons of their past experiences to make their present life peaceful and to march forward towards a good future. Living in the past, one fails to enjoy the life and is heavily burdened at heart. Thinking of the past alone will not help an individual, so one should work hard to set his future also right. One should be active in present with determination and goals to attain selfhood.

In *Sojourn*, Neeraja is preoccupied by the past which makes her stop thinking of the present situation. In city Neeraja does her work perfectly. She has organized Eves for Environment to create awareness among the people about nature. She is happy and comfortable in Bangalore. She likes to conduct parties and enjoys with her friends which are not possible in the town. She admires her old house adorned with artificial light. She compares the women of city and the town and finds tremendous changes between them. Neeraja's friends go for jobs and support their family in balancing the economic condition of

the family but in town most of the women stay in the house and do their domestic chores and spend their time in conversing with neighbours which annoys her.

Neeraja who is very active feels hard to stay at home without doing any job. She feels very bad at first and gradually she involves herself with her landladies. But she is not satisfied with them also. She encounters Meenakshamma who spends her whole life in kitchen. She finds that Meenakshamma does not have any goal in her life but sacrifices her whole life for her family and their goodness. She has no second thought of herself. Likewise, the landladies do the filial work without getting tired for their husband and children. But Neeraja is not like them. She thinks that she is unique and feels proud of herself. She has a desire but she does not take any steps to implicate it. Instead she complains about the ladies and spends her time uselessly.

In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna is also preoccupied with her past which makes her life much harder like Neeraja. Nagaratna often thinks about her past life in village. She misses her father and she never shows interest on anything. She isolates herself from others and thinks about the river, fish and rice fields. She feels that she has lost something in her life. Nagaratna does not even mingle with her own family members. The changes in environment affect her a lot. She does not know how to react in the present situation. The crisis she undergoes makes her realize her own self. Carl Rogers talks about man's ability:

To be open to experience makes him far more realistic in dealing with new people, new situations, new problems. It means that his beliefs are not rigid, that he can tolerate ambiguity. He can receive much conflicting evidence without forcing closure upon the situation. This openness of awareness to what exists at this moment in oneself and in the situation is, I believe, an important element in the description of the person who emerges from therapy. (115-116)

In *Monkey-man*, Pushpa Rani never thinks of her past. She always thinks about the present situation and tries to enhance herself. She has got a job in Research Institute but the salary is not high. Neela as a senior officer of Pushpa Rani treats her like a donkey in the absence of Sukhiya and Daise. She orders Pushpa Rani to run to the canteen and go to “library and enter these books into the register, rush to the gate and fetch me an auto” (70) and assigns some other works also. After few days Pushpa Rani is fired from the job for a silly reason but she does not worry for it. Maya Angelou in her poem “Still I Rise” expresses that “you may shoot me with your words/you may cut me with your eyes/you may kill me with your hatefulness/, but still, like air, I’ll rise” (np) likewise Pushpa Rani has a hope on her. Immediately she seeks for another job without hesitation. Her thirst to find her selfhood never lets her to take rest. It stimulates her to do something to define herself.

To overcome the worries, one has to involve himself and participate actively in the societal activities. The acceptance of changes and the positive approach to the challenges would regain the liveliness of a person and will make them aware of their capability and individuality. Neeraja feels lonely and she tries to overcome it. She meets Lakshmi, daughter of Meenakshamma, who is very enthusiastic and interested in western culture. Neeraja feels for her and she finds “That a girl’s life should have no surprises, no discoveries, no awakenings, no excitement of any sort” (61). She is upset with Lakshmi’s life and tries to enhance her. Neeraja encourages her to be bold and active. She supports her to achieve her dream. Neeraja feels happy to help others. She realizes her real self when she helps others. She likes to be a candle light to the people who are in dark.

In the city, Neeraja makes use of maids to do her domestic chores. But in town she finds tough to get a maid. Even if she gets maids, they do not work for long but quit the job very soon. Neeraja’s neighbour advises her to do her work on her own. She gradually learns how to make papad and tries to survive without washing machine and oven. She does her

work and gets cooking tips from Meenakshamma. She accepts the people but not the pigs. She learns the practices of the town people yet she does not feel complete. The life of Neeraja in Amrutapura becomes smooth but she has not sensed it. She is not happy in doing domestic chores and talking uselessly with others.

Neeraja feels very bored and she thinks that she has lost her real self. To regain her liveliness, she has a plan to do something better for the place. She involves herself in Mahila mandali and tries to create awareness among the ladies. She expresses her efforts to her friend, Bulbul: “since I became a member I’ve been working discreetly, trying to hint to them that they can do more with their lives, that they should get involved with things beyond themselves” (86). She forces the ladies to fight against the pigs which she hates the most. She feels proud because Mahila mandali ladies have written a letter of protest for the first time with her guidance.

In *Sojourn*, Keshav finds a lot of changes in Neeraja. She gets engaged with people and “her role was changing. She was no longer satisfied with being an impassive observer, a passer of witty asides from the wings. She was getting involved” (97). Neeraja thinks that the ladies are not leading a proper life but that she is perfect. She does not consider herself as part of them. Keshav says ““I don’t think of them as the downtrodden who need to be uplifted either. I have a job to do and I’m doing it. Neer, you cannot teach people to change. They must realize things by themselves”” (98). But Neeraja fails to understand her husband because of her pride which she recognizes later. The problems which she encounters with the neighbours make her realize her own self. Neeraja considers herself as a person who can change Lakshmi. She assists the young girl to achieve her goal of being a beautician. Neeraja thinks that only she can bring the changes in the place and feels very proud about herself. She helps Lakshmi to overcome her fears.

Neeraja has got a chance to return to her native and she finds a lot of changes within two years. The city, Bangalore, becomes too crowded and even she finds her old house with much difficulty. The house looks vulnerable between the two new buildings on either side. She compares her situation with her old house. She feels that she is useless for her friends as well as to the city. She is scared with the incredible growth of the city and her friends. The native place looks strange to her and she feels lost in her own place.

Neeraja undergoes two different types of changes and in each change, she has different experience. At first in Amrutapura, the new environment creates fear in her and she has a doubt of surviving in the place but slowly she makes the place familiar to her and she establishes her own identity. Next the changes in the city, makes her to lose the hope on herself. When Bulbul asks Neeraja to assist her to develop Eves for Environment, Neeraja refuses it and she says “It’s your show now” (112). She does not have confidence in herself and she remains a failure in wiping out the pigs from the place. The failure of Neeraja makes her too sad. But it does not pull her down completely still she has hope and waits for a chance to do something for the people. Erikson says in his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis* that “identity-consciousness is, of course, overcome only by a sense of identity won in action. Only he who “knows where he is going and who is going with him” demonstrates an unmistakable if not always easily definable unity and radiance of appearance and being” (300).

Like Neeraja, Nagaratna in *The Chosen* has also changed herself and the nostalgia of her village has gone. She starts to admire the city life especially her neighbour Nirmala and likes to have a peaceful life. But she dislikes the dirt of Vitthala Colony and the people who live there. Professor Shubha Tiwari in her article “Shades of Life in Usha K.R.’s *The Chosen*” expresses that “The big thing is that she (Nagaratna) wants a better life. She is not satisfied with the mundane, low, cheap, inconsequential existence. She has that necessary

hunger, that sparkle that makes one move forward in life” (np). She likes to have a sophisticated life and is not ready to accept her middle class life.

Nagaratna, after completing her studies seeks for a job. She never likes to be like Pushpa, Shylaja or anyone. She likes to be herself and unique among them. She rejects the job offered by her sister-in-law and she chooses the job of an office assistant in school which she likes. Nagaratna “did not want a job like Pushpa’s or Shylaja’s” (41). She takes decision on her own and works according to it. Nagaratna finds hard to get a job. She never thinks about the challenges in life but soon she realizes how difficult the survival is.

Taking a decision on one’s own is also one of the qualities that is needed to achieve selfhood. When Nagaratna is doing her studies, she does not have any responsibility or fear. But when she faces the world out of her family shadow, she feels difficult to survive. After many rejections she has been employed in Vidyalaya School and she is impressed by Miss Pandit. Her family dislikes the job even though they accept it because of Nagaratna’s happiness. She never changes her decision for any reason or even for the sake of her family. She is too stubborn which makes her family accept her decision.

Miss Pandit appreciates Nagaratna that “today you look so pure, so clean, I believe I can see all your chakras... shining, absolutely radiant” (91). Nagaratna likes to wear silk saree but she wears cotton to impress Miss Pandit. She changes everything; she is not herself as she is in school. She has lost her originality and slowly becomes some other person. She has not given importance to her family and does not involve herself in filial matters. Nagaratna thinks Miss Pandit as her world and her word is enough for her. She enjoys the job and feels happy to accompany Miss Padit but does not feel complete in her life. After Pandit’s refusal she realizes her mistake and starts thinking about herself. She feels that she

has lost her own identity in school. When this realization takes place in her, she seeks her inner self.

The encouragement and care from others help an individual to find one's own self. Nagaratna's relationship with Vasant and his special care on her makes Nagaratna fall in love with him. The entry of Vasant in her life makes her forget everything and she feels happy when he is with her. She even forgets to attend her friend Shylaja's wedding and has a great time with him. She cannot explain her feelings in words. Usha says,

When she was with him, she was herself, her true self. She was not the Nagu of home, nor the Miss Nagaratna who overawed the primary School, not Miss Pandit's slightly hesitant, on-her-toes Nagaratna, not the prima donna of Ranganatha's dreams. She had come, with Vasant, the closest to the blueprint of herself, that formless essence that was her, that only she could recognize.

(141)

Vasant is the first person who makes Nagaratna think about herself. At first, she never listens to anyone but now she is quite good with others and she is ready to love the colony and the people around her. The care of Vasant brings a lot of changes in Nagaratna. But she hesitates to tell the truth about her family and where she lives. Still she is not ready to accept the reality and her middle class life. But her relationship with Vasant makes her realize her own self. Positive thoughts are essential for one to attain selfhood. Optimism helps people to overcome the negative criticism and does not let them be discouraged by failure. In *Monkey-man*, Pushpa Rani does not regret when she loses her job; instead, she takes it in a positive way. She thinks there must be a better job waiting for her. She looks for the advertisements for job offers in which she finds the job which suits her. She spots an advertisement in which a young girl wore modern dress and her hair was cut short. She

admires her and “Just what Pushpa Rani would like to be, and how she would like to be seen” (78). Pushpa Rani is unique from other women characters of Usha K.R. She is very strong. The pathetic situation of her family never pulls her down. She starts her journey in finding her selfhood.

Pushpa Rani gets a job in a call center. The job is not very easy but she has to work hard. She has gone for training and it is very difficult. She feels hard to twist her tongue. The night shift work is very hectic to her but she makes it possible. She works when others sleep because she does not like to miss the opportunity to make her life successful. Pushpa Rani’s quest for identify keeps herself active. Rollo May in his book *Man’s Search for Himself* says that “consciousness of self, this capacity to see one’s self as though from outside, is the distinctive characteristic of man.” He also adds that “man’s consciousness of himself is the source of his highest qualities. It underlies his ability to distinguish between “I” and the world” (58). She starts to observe others and questions herself how she is different from others.

People should have belief in themselves only then they would achieve their selfhood. Carl Rogers explains in his book *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist’s View of Psychotherapy* about his client in the process of becoming:

While he is learning to listen to himself he also becomes more acceptant of himself. As he expresses more and more of the hidden and awful aspects of himself, he finds the therapist showing a consistent and unconditional positive regard for him and his feelings. Slowly he moves toward taking the same attitude toward himself, accepting himself as he is, and therefore ready to move forward in the process of becoming. (63)

Neela in *Monkey-man* never thinks positively about her real self. At first, she does not think what is her role in this world and in which way she is different from others. Carl Rogers in his work *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* says that “we cannot change, we cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly accept what we are. Then change seems to come about almost unnoticed” (17).

Human life does not move smoothly always. So many problems occur and people have to take risks to overcome it. If they are afraid to take risks, they may not achieve their goals in their life. People have to undergo a lot of crisis to define themselves. The ability of the person is defined by how they face the problems. In *Sojourn*, Neeraja's life is smooth in Amrutapura but not pleasant. Suddenly the entry of Giri, nephew of landladies, makes a change. She regains her spirit. She likes the accent of Giri and she allows the youngster around her house to play cards in her house. She feels “how my social life has deteriorated that an engaging adolescent is almost sending me into a paroxysm of delight!” (127).

The happiness and the pride of Neeraja fails to make her realize the real intention of Giri. She likes to enhance the life of Lakshmi and takes a risk to change her. She tries to assist the people but she is not able to recognize whether they are the right persons who deserve it or not. Giri and Lakshmi betray her and they elope together. They make use of Neeraja. She is totally disappointed with the young couple. She puts a lot of efforts to change Lakshmi but at the end it goes vain. She feels that she has “failed in her duty. She had encouraged them all along and now, what she had sown, they had to reap” (161). All of them question her about the elopement, their anger hides the reality. Neeraja becomes the victim. Then gradually Neeraja adapts herself to the environment but the appearance of Giri shatters her happiness and she is totally upset with the life in Amrutapura. This incident affects her a lot and she starts thinking about herself.

One can reach their selfhood with the accompaniment of a trustful relationship. At the same time one trustful man can break or spoil everything through his betrayal. Neeraja in *Sojourn* becomes absent minded and she finds hard to concentrate on the simplest things because of Giri and Lakshmi. At first, she is brisk and creative. She works hard to achieve her goal and she knows who she is but now she becomes the opposite of what she is. Neeraja fails in judging people which she cannot bear. Usha Hemmadi in her article, “Big City Girl’s Small Town Blues”, says that “Neeraja is drowned in her view of life, her doings and feelings. Her creator gives her little chance of testing herself against others” (20). She feels lonely and loses her self-confidence. She isolates herself from others. She loses her trust on people and makes television her friend. She spends her time in watching television with her daughter. She concentrates on house chores and even fails to reply the letters from her friends. The loneliness makes her think about herself.

Like Neeraja, Nagaratna also trusts Vasant and Miss Pandit but she fails to realize that they are not trustworthy. She believes Miss Pandit and Nirmala are great personalities and considers them as her role models. But she fails to see the spirit of her own mother who is not low to Miss Pandit and Nirmala. Usha says “Sarojamma, who had never really felt diminished by her widowhood and who had come to terms with the practicalities of her situation, was a little surprised at the signs of capitulation in her friend” (145). Sarojamma always advises Nagaratna to swallow her grief and carry on the life. But she never accepts the reality. She has the confidence in her but she feels bitter to accept her real middle-class life. Until Nagaratna accepts her reality she cannot find a change in her life.

The sophisticated life strikes Nagaratna. “She had never slept on a softer bed, on sheets so crisp and white and faintly fragrant, and with a sharp implosion of happiness she thought of how much the day had meant to her” (196). When Miss Pandit questions her “what is the one gift you would ask for if you were asked to choose?” without second thought

Nagaratna says “Money” then after a second she says “I mean integrity ... steadfastness of purpose” (255). She has a wrong assumption that happiness lies in wealthy life. She fails to realize happiness lies in her own hands.

Loneliness helps people to think about themselves. In ashram she has lots of time to think about herself. She has “lain in Suguna’s room, in the bed by the window, and puzzled over it night after night. But little given to reflection, she found the process of conscious thought difficult and just as shadowy connections were beginning to form, she was saved by sleep” (258). She admires the place because she does not see any rags and dirt around the place. This is how she expects to be in her life without rags and dirt. Nagaratna does not think about her family when she is in the ashram for three months.

Nagaratna has got a chance to see the dance performance of Moyna. Every day she sees the dancers while rehearsing and it gives a strange excitement to her. She thinks that the dance is so shadowy and there is no cohesion in it. She considers it as useless but

On the stage, they had suddenly acquired meaning, they had transcended their sum total to become much more, a whole world. She had seen in the performance not just skin and muscle, grace and beauty and passion, but the possibilities of a transformation, the fruition of a dream. The possibilities of her transformation. The fruition of her dream. That possibly her life could be her own. (259)

Vasant visits ashram but he avoids Nagaratna. She understands that he does not like her and is ready to break the relationship. She believes that he is the first person who has made her to realize her own self but now she is disappointed when it becomes fake. She becomes impatient and the ashram has turned into fetters. She realizes that she is not real with Vasant and Miss Pandit and she hides her reality from them. When she receives a letter

from her mother in which “she saw it now as her shameful secret. Something she had hidden all along, pretending to be what she was not. An impostor, that was what she was” (262).

The betrayal of Vasant shatters Nagaratna but this incident in her life makes her to accept the reality. She is ready to start her journey to attain her selfhood. When she reaches her home she finds a lot of changes. She comes to know that her mother works as an assistant cook to Indramma. She feels guilty for not taking up the responsibility of her family. She realizes her mistake and tries to erase the thoughts of ashram. Nagaratna finally finds that her life is in her own hands and it is not in Miss Pandit or in others’ hands. She accepts her middle class life whole heartedly and tries to enhance her status.

When people come across difficulties, they realize their own self. They are never afraid of future. They welcome new challenges and face them with experiences which they have undergone in the past. In *Sojourn*, Neeraja has received a news that her husband has got promotion and that they have to leave the place soon. She feels happy but the thoughts of Lakshmi prick her: “She had never intended Amrutapura to be anything more than a minor footnote, an amusing footnote, in the main text of her life but now, it had insinuated itself into every page, like a Rorschach blot, murky and devious in portent” (172). She notices the empty place and finds that the pigs are gone. Finally, the pigs are removed from the place and she feels happy about it.

Mahila mandali ladies conduct farewell to Neeraja and Keshav during which one of the ladies gives a speech and promises that the mandali would go on the path of self-awareness. Neeraja feels happy because the sparkle she has thrown burns like a fire among the women. She feels that “Since change was inevitable, you ought to, as soon as its first glimmerings were perceptible, be its agent and not stand by simply or resign yourself to it, allowing yourself to be swept away. Things, she believed, always happened for the better”

(141). Before departing she meets Meenakshamma because she wants to know about Lakshmi. Meenakshamma says to Neeraja with her teary eyes that she has met so many unexpected things:

‘You have a vision of life, you think things will follow the pattern you have foreseen...you think that if you have been dutiful and good and put up with suffering you will be rewarded...but...,’ she shook her head wearily. ‘My only solace is prayer Neerajamma. And now I also understand that you can only pray for strength to face all that He has intended for you.’ (176)

Neeraja comes to know about Giri and Lakshmi. They both have chosen different ways to achieve their desires. Neeraja feels good and she wipes out the guiltiness. Now she is clear about her future and the moment she and Keshav imagined comes true. She sees “herself as an ambassador, the queen bee, agent of cross-pollinating cultures, organising Bharatanatyam recitals and exhibitions of terracotta. Once she would throw her parties with unerring regularity, this time on foreign soil” (171). She sets her life “towards the rising sun” (181). She eagerly waits for new challenges and experiences.

At the end of the novel Neeraja realizes that she has attained her selfhood. She is the person who helps others to shine in their life. She never likes to be a passive character in her life. Neeraja realizes that she is unique from others and she is not one among the Amrutapura ladies and she is not afraid for the changes instead she tries to learn everything. She feels the journey to Amrutapura helps her to attain her selfhood. Urmi A Goswami in her article “Attitude and Expectations” expresses that Neeraja has

viewed her time in Amrutapura as a ‘*Sojourn*’, a stepping stone to bigger and better things, it had become an integral part of her life experience and she could no longer view the women and their lives with the same detached

amusement that she did earlier. For the town folk this episode further serves to underline the difference between them and Neeraja, and brings home the point that she could never be one of them. (37)

In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna finds changes in the attitude of Miss Pandit at a later stage. This makes her realize her mistake. She starts living for her own self. She gives up wearing cotton sarees and starts to wear silk sarees which she likes the most. She starts to lead a life for her and for her family. In one of her interviews, in *The Hindu*, Usha k.R says “we also need to deal with ourselves, our own home, and see things through our own eyes. There is no question of being voyeuristic about ourselves” (np). She starts to realize her original self. Nagaratna questions herself what is a job which does not pay well and what means promotion without increase in the salary? Shubha Tiwari in her article, “Shades of Life in Usha K.R.’S *The Chosen*” expresses that

The same Naga, when faced with the bitter truth of being used and thrown off, decides to talk about a pay hike. But then, it is already time for her to leave the school. After the betrayal and humiliation, knowledge comes to Naga in painful pangs. She cannot escape the truth of her birth, her family, and surrounding. Her fate clings to her very closely. (np)

While Nagaratna gradually realizes herself, the sudden disappointment in her life shatters her without having a job and she does not know how to lead her life. Suddenly she takes a wrong decision of drinking poison but however she is saved by her mother. Now she realizes the value of life and she understands that “life is a continuous process of growth, of evolution. In the right environment, we grow towards the light, to reach our fullest heights, our complete possibilities.... Our ability to spread light and contribute to the world in which we live depends on our own inner transformation” (311).

Nagaratna feels that she is born new and she decides not to work in the school and she does not like to see Vasant. She feels everything looks brighter. She finds a new spirit in herself. Now she is not the same Nagaratna who hides while seeing Vasant. She is ready to face him and is not afraid of anybody. She knows that there is no job for her and the savings of her father are used up for the nursing bill. Still she has hope. Nagaratna believes in herself and she knows the days are not going to stop and the world is not going to end with her present situation. She believes that she would surely achieve her dream. Carl Rogers in his book *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* says:

The individual explores what is behind the masks with which he has been deceiving himself. Deeply and often vividly he experiences the various elements of himself which have been hidden within. Thus to an increasing degree he becomes himself – not a façade of conformity to others, not a cynical denial of all feeling, nor a front of intellectual rationality, but a living, breathing, feeling, fluctuating process – in short, he becomes a person. (114)

In *Monkey-man*, Pushpa Rani sees everything in a positive attitude and she becomes a successful person in her life. Her parents are so proud to see their daughter's photo in the cover page of the English magazine Nation Today. In the interview she says that her inspiration is her father. She says though her father is ill, "he keeps smiling. Life has treated him harshly but he never forgets to feed the sparrows on our balcony each morning. From him I have learnt what courage and determination mean." When one of her colleagues says her face is her fortune, she retorts that "Not my face but my taken, my ability. My face is just a mirror" (81).

Pushpa Rani realizes that she has a great future and keeps working. She understands her role and moves forward in attaining her selfhood. W.E. Henley in his poem "Invictus"

mentions that “I am the master of my fate:/I am the captain of my soul” (np). Likewise, Pushpa Rani being a successful woman, attains selfhood.

Neela realizes that being in love does not suit her. She is ready to drop all her baggage and moves on in her life. There is a lot of changes in her. She does not get angry when Prithvi Kumar’s thoughts arising instead she feels it as an unpleasant memory. She regrets her mistakes and even thanks Bali Brums, RJ in radio station, for helping her to connect with her inner self and for having taught her to be a real person. Neela realizes herself and she attains her selfhood. In the new year she starts her new life and she accepts Antonia Larson’s offer to travel to China, the Philippines and Mauritius. She becomes an assistant-cum-manager in the new project. She realizes herself and throws her evilness away. She believes that she has her own role in this world and that she is different from others.

Pushpa Rani attains her selfhood with the encouragement of her father. The positive approach of her father, changes her view and looks everything in a positive way. Even in her difficulties she never feels bad because of her father’s support. Neela attains her selfhood with the help of Bali Brums. She has never seen him before but his motivational speech brings her back and she realizes how stupid she is. In *Sojourn* Neeraja has her husband’s support. When the town people blame her for the elopement of Lakshmi and Giri, Keshav stands for his wife. She supports her and believes her. He brings her back from the crisis. In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna attains selfhood because of her mother and family.

Through the female characters of Usha’s novels, it is well understood that one can attain selfhood with the support of family and others. Society also plays a significant role in making an individual find his identity. Apart from this, one should accept his/her real self and be clear about oneself. Only then the person can attain selfhood. Adopting the changes and facing the challenges would bring new experiences and it would make people understand

them. It makes them realize their own self and helps them to attain their Selfhood. Usha's protagonists of the novels Neeraja in *Sojourn*, Nagaratna in *The Chosen* and Neela and Pushpa Rani in *Monkey-man* undergo a lot of struggles in their journey. The experiences in their journey have made them to realise their own self. By understanding their own self, they try to lead a better life for the family and for the society. Thus all the protagonists of Usha K.R. attain selfhood.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Indian writing in English deals with a wide variety of subjects. At first Indian writers imitated the English men later they developed their own style. Indian English writers reflect Indianness in their writings and they have their own style of writing. Indian English novelists R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, etc have enhanced the Indian English literature. They have made Indian writing in English to stand firm in English literature. Indian writing in English carries the fame of the country to every corner of the world. The novelists mostly deal with the contemporary issues and create an impact among the readers.

Women writers play a significant role in Indian writing in English. During pre-independence women writers concentrated on the sufferings of women. They explored how the women limited themselves to domestic works. The writers concentrated only on women and they portrayed the suppression of women by the male chauvinistic society. They dealt with feministic points of view. The notable women writers of this period are Shevantibai Nikambe, Krupabai Sathianadha and Rajalaxmi Devi.

After the independence there were lots of women writers emerged. From 1950s to 1970s the women writers dealt with tradition-modernity. They focused on the self-awareness of women. The remarkable writers are Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal. In 1980s there was a maturity in women writers' use of language and style. They replaced the self-effacing tone with self-asserting tone. Anita Nair, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy are outstanding writers of this period. In 1990s women writers did not carry the colonial baggage. They dealt with different aspects of contemporary India. They mostly

dealt with middle class life in rural and urban set up. They also dealt with the psyche of women and how they try to define themselves.

The contemporary women novelists deal with middle class women. They talk about the career of women beyond feminism. The contemporary writers' major themes are alienation, loneliness, identity crisis, quest for identity and search for selfhood. Mostly they concentrate on women's struggles in attaining selfhood. Early writers dealt with the external conflicts of women. But the contemporary writers deal with the inner conflicts of women. Malathi Rao, Dina Mehta, Aruna Chkravarti, Sudha Murthy and Sunny Singh are the emerging writers in this new millennium. Usha K.R. is one among these writers who portrays the journey of womanhood towards attaining selfhood. She started her writing career a decade before.

Usha K.R. deals with the middle class life and also focuses on cultural changes and its effects. She discusses the western culture's influence and its effects. She portrays the socio-cultural changes in India that have changed the life of the people. The changes affect people and bring conflicts in their life. Usha's protagonists have been affected by the changes and they face identity crisis in society and at their workplaces. They find it hard to overcome the crisis and are not able to establish their identity. Usha concentrates on the crisis of her female protagonists and she ends the story in a positive note. Her protagonists are very strong and they face lots of challenges. They struggle to overcome it and finally attain their selfhood.

Chapter I Introduction deals with the development of Indian writing in English and the emergence of novelists in Indian English literature. In early stage women writers concentrated on domestic problems. They dealt with issues like suppression of women and women's struggles in the society. Contemporary women novelists concentrate on the psyche of women and the different faces of contemporary India. Mostly they deal with the cultural

changes and the quest for identity. The novelists mostly deal with the middle class educated women.

This chapter also discusses about the contemporary women novelists and their notable works. It gives a detailed analysis of the characteristic features of Usha. K.R's novels, writing style and technique. Usha is a realistic writer. She does not exaggerate the situations and her writing shows her passion for her culture. She compares modernity and tradition, urbanness and rurality and the life style of people in both the places. She uses humour to criticize the faults in the society. She shows how the western culture influences the Indian culture.

Chapter II Socio-cultural Changes discusses the cultural changes and its effects in India. She portrays the city of Bangalore to show how the urban place is easily influenced by the western culture and how the life of the people in the city has undergone a drastic change. Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity is used to express the cultural changes. The Indians are influenced by the western ideologies. They like to be westerners because they consider British as the civilized people. Usha shows how the hybrid culture brings a great impact in the normal life of the common people. This chapter depicts how the western ideas have influenced the Indian education system and how the English language plays a significant role in India. The coloniser left the country but their ideologies and language still rule the Indians. The western culture continues to influence the food habits and the dressing sense of Indians.

This chapter also discusses the positive side of hybrid culture. The life of women has changed due to the influence of western culture. Women are economically free and they are very bold to express their opinions. The hybrid culture plays an important role in the industrial growth in India and creates a lot of job opportunities to youngsters. This chapter deals with both positive and negative aspects of hybrid culture.

Chapter III Identity Crisis deals with identity crisis of Usha's protagonists. The term identity crisis is defined by Erik Erikson. The crisis occurs when the person is not stable about himself or undergoes changes in his life. They feel very hard to define themselves. The changes make them feel alienated and fill them with anxiety. They isolate themselves and feel restless. They face inner conflicts which make them impatient and affect their peaceful life.

This chapter deliberates on how the loss or betrayal of relationship creates identity crisis. Usha's protagonists undergo crisis due to displacement. The crisis makes them feel tough to survive in this society. The complex relationship with the society also creates identity crisis. This chapter shows how the protagonists of Usha face the crisis and talks about the difficulties they undergo.

Chapter IV Attaining Selfhood depicts how the women protagonists attain selfhood. Carl Rogers says that every individual has the capacity to grow and develop. He believes that the growth occurs when the person faces the problems and difficulties with strong mind set. A person has to undergo pathetic situations and should not give up in any circumstances. Usha's protagonists face problems which create crisis in them even though they overcome it. But, the difficulties make them matured and lead them to attain selfhood.

This chapter brings out that the acceptance of one's real self and shows that having strong belief in oneself will lead an individual towards attaining selfhood. Usha's protagonists are very strong and they learn good things from their experiences and struggles. The positive approach on difficult situations leads them to achieve their self.

The subject of the selected novels shows that culture plays a significant role in one's life. Culture also helps an individual to identify his own self. The cultural changes create crisis and many people feel difficult to overcome it. The changes have their own pros and

cons. Usha's characters suffer mostly due to cultural changes. Usha sets her story in Bangalore city and shows how the city is affected by globalization and the difficulties of the people in the city in identifying their real self. The rural areas are not much influenced by the western ideologies than the urban areas. The people who have grown up in urban places feel difficult to survive in rural area. The rural people are far away from these changes.

In *Sojourn*, Neeraja is born and brought up in Bangalore city. She is modern and does not have the experience of the traditional life. She moves to a small town Amrutapura to accompany her husband. At first she finds that the lifestyle of the town people is different from hers'. The culture and behaviour of the people in Amrutapura differs from what she has experienced. This strangeness creates inner conflicts and she is not able to lead a peaceful life. She feels that she has lost her real self in an unknown place. In *The Chosen*, Nagaratna who is grown up in a village suddenly shifts to Bangalore city. The city life is totally different from hers and it creates conflict in her. The changes in the environment and the culture shatter her and lead her to identity crisis. Neela in *Monkey-man* is also affected due to the cultural changes. She does not adapt herself to the changes in the modern world which make her feel inferior and create crisis in her. Identity crisis occurs when the changes occur suddenly or when unexpected things happen in one's life. Usha's protagonists Neeraja, Nagaratna and Neela suffer identity crisis because of cultural hybridity.

It is proven from Usha's selected novles that the changes, new challenges and difficulties help people to be strong. They make people analyze about themselves. They try to face the issues bravely, try to overcome the problems and then they find the way to attain their selfhood. In *Sojourn*, Neeraja finds difficult to stay in Amrutapura but she does not give up instead she stays there and dose her best. She involves herself with people to overcome her crisis and she actively participates with them to define herself.

Nagaratna in *The Chosen* also struggles due to obstacles. She is not matured enough to face the crisis so she tries to commit suicide but she is saved by her family. She feels guilty for her stupid decision and has a clear view that the changes and difficulties in one's life are the important factors which transform the normal person into an ideal man. The rough rock will not suddenly transform into an ideal sculpture. It has to undergo lots of pain. Likewise, Nagaratna considers her difficulties which she comes across are good lessons to her and she starts her journey to identify herself and finally attains selfhood.

In *Monkey-man* Neela is affected by inferiority complex which creates jealousy towards her colleagues and she deceives them. But soon she realizes that the changes should take place in her and not from others. She realizes her mistakes and her own self. She sets her path to the bright future. Usha shows that people have to undergo a lot of challenges to define their real self. The difficulties and struggles make them stable. The stable mind would give a clear picture of their own self and make them to realize their individuality which would therefore lead them to a peaceful and purposeful life. Usha portrays Pushpa Rani as an ideal example to modern women. Pushpa Rani knows the path of life is not smooth like rose petals. The struggles people undergo lead them to know their purpose of their survival. Pushpa Rani faces all the obstacles with courage and establishes her identity.

Changes are inevitable for people and they are put in a position to adapt to the changes which are necessary. If they do not agree to understand it, they have to undergo a lot of sufferings. In *Monkey-man*, Shrinivas Moorthy never accepts the changes and he feels hard to survive. Those who fail to accept the changes would face a tough situation like Shrinivas Moorthy. Neela does not like the changes but she realizes that if she does not change, she would be defeated. So, she gives up her attitude towards the changes and starts her journey to attain selfhood.

The western culture influences Indian culture. It brings a lot of changes among the people of India. They follow a hybrid culture and it is seen that the westernization has affected the country in all aspects of the contemporary society. There are a lot of changes found in culture, food, education and work. Hybridity also brings goodness to the people. The hybrid culture carries the fame of India to each and every corner of the world. It has changed the role of women and has made women empowered in India. One can make use of the changes for the development of the country and has to avoid the unwanted changes to protect their own tradition and culture. If the changes lead towards the betterment of the society it should be welcomed and accepted.

In this globalized world women play a dual role. They have to face a lot of consequences both at home and at the work place. The pressure and stress they face create anxiety, alienation, loss of identity and meaninglessness in life. Most of them fail to balance the life because they fail to understand that life is a mixture of sorrows and happiness. Alienation helps the people to define themselves. The people who isolate themselves from the society have enough time to think about their selves. The loneliness makes them to understand the happenings around them and it gives clear idea of their real self. Alienation makes the people to turn inward and talk to themselves. It gives answers to their doubts and helps them to attain their self. Usha's women characters Nagaratna in *The Chosen*, Neeraja in *Sojourn* and Neela in *Monkey-man* face alienation and it makes them to analyse their own ability and their role of individuality in this world.

People should have belief in themselves. Only then they would achieve their selfhood. It would make them to realize the purpose of living and lead them to a correct direction in life. Family and society also play a significant role in the journey of attaining selfhood. Society makes them to distinguish the ways in which they are different and alike. It assists the people to enhance their personal integration and stability. Motivational level should be in

high esteem because it would help them to improve their personality and have a smooth or healthy contact with the public. People with low esteem feel anxious and incomplete in life.

Usha K.R. deals with the middle class life and she shows how her protagonists struggle to overcome their problems. Even though she talks about the crisis she does not end the stories with a negative note. She fills her protagonists with hope and makes them realize their own self. All her women characters realize their own potential and finally attain selfhood. They have learned positive things through their experiences and set their path towards future. If one understands her individuality and how she is unique from others she can set her path according to it and she would attain her selfhood.

Man depends upon his culture and environment and these two play a major role in one's life. The changes in culture would cause crisis but one should accept the changes if it leads him to a bright future. The changes should be welcomed with open hands but one should not let the changes diminish his own culture.

Each and every person should have the quest for their self. The selfhood is important to a person because through the lens of the self, one person can view his own world and make his life purposeful. The person who knows his individuality can lead a pleasant life. If the person realizes his self it would show in which way he is different from others. The person who has attained selfhood would have a clear mind about his role in this society and he can move forward to achieve his goal.

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