CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Writing about identity always reveals one’s own pursuit of self-identity at the moment of writing - Anonymous.

Cross cultural encounters generate a composite culture all the while affecting both the community identity as well as individual identity claims. It always allows for formation, deformation and reformation processes in relation to identities and these processes take on different intricacies if the influencing culture/s and the native culture do have a hierarchical relation between them. Cultural diversity imparts both social change and creative evolution of a culture and cultural sociologist Madan T. N. has said it results in “a culture of development; a culture which would imitate, promote and sustain development socially as well as economically” (27). The repercussions of cultural diversity on personal and social identity are of various kinds and the mentionable ones are the increased ‘self-awareness’; a greater cognizance of the distinct elements of native culture under extinction and ‘renewal’; inspiring qualitative changes resulting in improved versions. Rajendra Chenni (47) for instance, attributes the creation of a supple and vigorous poetic idiom in the native Kannada poetic tradition in twentieth century to the influence of British poetic tradition. Restructuring of the native cultural resources during interaction with other culture/s follows the stages of encounter, interaction, imitation, followed by rejection or assimilation before new cultural texture is evolved. Inherent resilience of a culture always prevents getting over run by the other/s however dominant it/they may be. The inherent resilience also acts as a filter against the amorphous and abstract aspects not assimilatable of other culture/s. All these
processes happening at the larger space of culture is expressed as tangible experiences in individuals’ consciousness in the form of evolved sensibility. Therefore, the inheritors of a culture have a very responsible role to play in retention of the valuable and distinct components of her/his native culture through capacity for self-esteem or not involving in hero worshipping of other/s. Tendencies of self-imposed amnesia or lack of cultural memories is as much dangerous. Instead, recourse to objectivity of approach or critical selectivity of the best amongst varied cultures is advocated as a more responsible attitude. Both the social change and resultant creative evolution of a culture affects personal and social identity of an individual variously and the present study aims to explore the same. Or in other words the study discusses the notion of identity and its changing implications due to cross-cultural encounters and the same become the guidelines to analyse the identity conflicts in S. L. Bhyrappa and Joshi’s novels.

Indian culture as a lived culture till today expresses inherent weakness in certain fronts (in the form of social evils which social reformation movement tried to resist) but shows intense strength in many other frontages. Therefore, in the course of cultural interactions a judicious amalgamation of the ‘self’ and the ‘other/s’ is said to be the best recourse for the country. The process of “acculturation” described as “The process of cultural change which occurs when two people with different cultures come into long and intimate contact” (Hatch 5), needs to be judiciously accomplished with right perspective and rationale. The process of acculturation involving acceptance and adaptation is said to provide scope for both the retention of selected elements from the native cultural heritage and adaptation and assimilation of new elements from other culture. Sociologist D. N. Mujumdar claims that “mutual respect and understanding” (Madan T. N. 25) between cultures make
cultural adjustment smooth and easy. The intricacy of cultural encounters in India is expressed by Fred Dallmayr thus:

When you take a ‘tour de force’ through India from the time of the Aryan civilization and to the Vedas and to the present – India has travelled a long way since those early eras. She has accepted and discarded, through the passage of time, ideas, ethics and manners. Whatever the political reality of the moment, at each moment, India implied a massive geographical expanse and embracing of populations with different ethnic roots, all the while intricately mingling of such roots (18).

Interaction with western culture which began with British colonization has continued into the present due to globalization phenomenon. In the book between tradition and modernity what Fred Dallmayr and G. N. Devy describe as to the impact of globalization is similar to the kind of impact India experienced during colonization period.

Occasionally deflected and sometimes nearly eclipsed by the din of armed struggle, this strand has the earmarking of relentless and near-providential force: seemingly disconnected events or episodes appear to coalesce almost mysteriously or fortuitously into a larger design. Although powerfully pervasive, however, this trend is not entirely self-propelled or akin to a natural force majeure: overtly or covertly its movement is backed up by political and economic strategies as well as intellectual trajectories of long standing. Most prominent among these strategies and directions are industrialization, market capitalism, and the ascendancy of science and
technology – features pre-eminently connected with modern Western culture (20).

The repercussions of cultural encounters are best expressed both in the socio-cultural changes and in the identity conflicts of the individuals and the communities. It allowed for both genuine learning experience and allowed a renewed engagement with one’s own cultural life and better understanding of the complex historical tapestry of the country.

Earlier invasions including Muslim invasion did not inspire much noticeable or marked changes in Indian culture mainly because of the prevalence of certain common traditions between the invading cultures. P. Sorokin’s words traces the similarities in these cultures mainly in the – “the ideational traits of culture with specific aesthetic, moral and social values and systems and with common notions of truth, knowledge, self and ultimate reality (Mukerji 2).

Even the religious outbursts of the Muslim period were described as genuine attempt at synthesis or acculturation. Tagore meant the same when he said “The Muslim rulers did not go back to Turkistan or to Afghanistan after serving India for a statutory period. In this context, true acculturation could and did take place” (Mukerji 14). Thus the bed of Indian culture remained what it was, only the stream was fuller and richer. Or we can say that the background of Indian society remained Hindu even as the Indian society absorbed the new and made it its own. The easy synthesis or acculturation between the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Muslim was also because of some shared faiths between them, something not found between the English and the Indians. Both Hindus and Muslims believed strongly in a ‘world view’ in which, ‘the fact of being was of lasting significance’. The general notion of
these cultures was primarily mystical and ethical disapproving the opinion that mysticism is a typical Indian product or the Indian view alone. But one cannot deny that the influence of mystics; celebrating essential elements of passivity, ineffability and beatitude (all acts of depersonalization) on Indian society is greater than elsewhere. The Hindu, the Buddhist and the Muslim world-view was all mystical; indifference to the transient and the sensate and preoccupation with the process in which the little self was subordinated to and ultimately to be dissolved in supreme reality. Proper observance of customs and rituals controlling one’s inner life, those values alone that led to spiritual realization and those persons alone were leaders, whose supreme engagement and attainment in life was spiritual culture, bliss and benefits – these events alone were considered positive. In other words, “the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Muslim had together evolved a Weltanschauung in which the fact of ‘Being’ was of lasting significance” (Mukerji 15). Before the impact of western commerce, it was the ruling view in India. After the British rule, the impact of which is of different order, the Indian society ceased to remain a closed one and its culture and its ideational system were countered.

British rule meant commercial and economic imperialism along with cultural imperialism always providing alternative to native economic, political and cultural systems. The British rule and maneuverings was more on the front of social economy. D. P. Mukerji implies criticism in the British influence on India thus:

They (British) destroyed indigenous merchant capital and rural economy, pushed through a land settlement based on alien concepts of profit and property and established a socially useless education system. Such opportunities failed to be advantageous for ‘they cut across India’s tradition’
and because the methods of their impositions spoilt the substance of her need for new life (Mukerji 46).

Westernization activated market driven impulses or ideology of narrow utilization in all walks of life; education, human relationship, value structure or institution of the people. D. P. Mukerji has conveyed the changes thus:

The coordinates of thought are altered; manners and modes of behavior have assured a quantitatively different complexion. The devastating effect of these shifts is the progressive obliteration of social memory. No rosemary for remembrance will help (37).

Easy synthesis or acculturation with western culture was difficult because of the differences in the ‘world view’ or shared faiths. The Hindus believed in the ‘world view’ in which ‘the fact of being was of lasting significance’. Hindu culture was primarily mystical and ethical and expressed indifference to the transient and the sensate all the while giving importance to the attainment of the ultimate reality. Or in other words ‘fact of being’ was of lasting significance than ‘becoming’. Stress was laid on proper observance of customs and rituals controlling one’s inner life and those values alone that led to spiritual realization. After the British rule, India’s ideational system was countered. The changes induced by westernization proved a threat to the indigenous cultural identity hitherto formulated by traditional India. Further science and technology induced scientific outlook co-existing with traditional thought patterns and belief systems have also intensely promoted an ambience of conflict in the cultural space of India. Of the many changes induced by westernization, migration and emergence of cultural Diasporas’ is important along with the influences these modern forces wielded on identities; personal and social in
all walks of life and at all levels of culture; local, regional and national. Yogendra Singh describes one of the impact modernisation induced on the suppressed class identity thus: “The resurgence of the consciousness of identity among ethnic groups, minorities and weaker sections of the society” (17). The liberal humanist world view, new education, forces of technology and east west cultural encounter are held as mainly responsible for the emergence of new ethos or transmutation in Indian sensibility. Both positive and negative repercussions have been thought of due to British rule in India. If Fred Dallmayr’s opinion “A new dynamism or social vigour capable of breaking open congealed or ossified customs . . .” (46) implied progress, G. N. Devy meant regressive influence when he said “Traumatic agonies of identity crisis, identity confusion and the related stress and strains” (48).

The impact on cultural identity was expressed both at individual and community level in various reactionary stances. Nostalgia for the past and opposition of any attempt to disown cultural memories is one among them. The other impact discerned was indiscriminate borrowing from the west (anti-intellectual tendency) and such tendencies for cultural self-surrender is best described by the term “cultural abnegation” (11) used by Ashis Nandy. British presence in India meant both political imperialism and cultural imperialism. Political imperialism had a counter evolution in India’s freedom but more fearsome was the ‘cultural imperialism’ as it shapes the very consciousness of the individuals and leads to blind imitation of the ‘other’.

The introduction of phenomenon of modernization in India associated with British rule does express some features of western modernity movement like disillusionment with idealism of any kind, disbelief in traditional value system and
skepticism about the ability of any kind of societal ideologies to sustain the individual identity. A greater realization of the diminution of the individual by the societal forces was actually felt. Such changing perception in turn created existential angst which often was expressed in the contemporary writings. Loneliness, alienation, loss of roots had become the permanent features of the modern temperament. Thus expressions of feelings of angst and alienation in a situation of cross-cultural conflict are often the favorite subject with many contemporary Indian writers. Existential angst modernity induced in T. S. Eliot is described thus:

In a puritanical mind like that of Eliot it could only produce a feeling of revulsion and guilt. The shock of being born in technocratic civilization under the grip of the sensitive individuals to visualize his own world in metaphors of hell, sickness and impotence, the individual as an ‘outsider, the world as a ‘castle’ or a plague- stricken city the European civilization as a ‘waste land . . . (Chenni 13).

Many Indians did feel similarly with varying degrees of sensitivity but some of the positive influence of western modernity on Indian mind included the induction of rationality and broad minded thinking which were best used to resist many social evils in India. The implosion which had taken place with the advent of western education and technological changes had altered Indian society radically. Some of the changes included the reversal of power roles between the dominant and submissive caste and classes, change in community structure and its units like the family system, institution of kinship and marriage, cognizance of the idea of egalitarian society, nation building activities, emergence of middle class and their contribution to the development of different sectors etc.
The British rule and the process of modernization it induced is described as progressive but there is lot of difference between the Indian idea of ‘progress’ and that of the West. The liberal outlook, notions of equality though is progressive, the other nuances of progress is mainly concerned with technological revolution and gaining of more and more material wealth. Many Indians have taken this meaning seriously and are completely oblivious to the Indian idea of ‘progress’ encoded in the spiritual well-being of an individual. This meaning of progress in India is more influenced by the religion and philosophy of the country. Progress when interpreted as per the values imbibed through tradition is more a matter of inner wellbeing than any kind of extraneous improvement and this meaning holds true even when western tool of reason is employed. As per this meaning anything progressive should work in such a way that the inner personality of man may get the opportunity for development. Progress traditionally was thought of as a journey towards realization of ultimate fundamental values - Shantam, Shivam, Adhvitam, meaning a journey towards the attainment of harmony, welfare and unity. Or in other words ‘progress’ ultimately depended on the development of a personality by a conscious realization of the principle of harmony, welfare and unity. Probably due to such incompatibilities between Indian philosophical and traditional notion of progress as ‘spiritual and mystical’ and its difference with western tradition of progress, highly empirical, that India is a mysterious enigma to West.

Cultural diversity in any society affects both the larger society as well as the individuals mainly because of the ambience of dualities/contraries it generates. To choose between things of ‘self’ and the ‘other/s’, with that of past (tradition) and the new (modernity) often confuses individuals especially in contexts where both different cultures and past and the present co-exist. In circumstances where neither
the new values are ascertained completely nor that of the old are yet indispensable, the conflicts suffered by people become more composite and pronounced. Attempts to perceive the changes along with efforts to amalgamate dualities and struggles to reject selectively all happen simultaneously in the consciousness of the individuals. Undue appreciation or judgmental reactions towards one at the cost of the other followed up with feelings of regret or contentment is common as well in such societies. To the above mentioned dualities are added the other oppositions like difference between personal faith and societal beliefs, between instincts/impulse etc. Sometimes any threat or imminence of change in the interiorized faith is unwelcome issuing out into varied kinds of behavioral nuances. In all the above discussed skirmishes the capacity for enlightened stance and rationalizing abilities of the individuals play an important role to outgrow or resolve the conflicts positively. But many a reaction, emotional and less logical, results in indecision affecting the psychic disposition of the individuals. How individuals react or resolve conflicts between dualities to attain stability of identity and the related feeling of tranquility amidst all dualities in a transcultural or multi-cultural ambience is indeed interesting. The present study is not concerned with recounting of all the historical and socio-political details of India’s encounter with west, instead the focus is on its effect on identity matters.

‘Identity’, ‘experience’, ‘gender’, ‘nature’ and ‘truth’ are fundamental notions much discussed in modern times. These notions when interpreted from local and global point of view do take on interesting and variegated meanings. In relation to cultures of different countries these concepts take on diverse and intricate interpretations. It means one word and different points of view. The present study is mainly concerned with the notion of ‘identity’ and it’s changing implications as
expressed by individuals in an ambience of cultural diversity and the contraries it generates.

In contemporary times identity debates are paramount in the public mind, from academia to streets and civil organizations especially in parts of the world; Arab, India, Sri Lanka, Africa, Mexico, USA and is quite often manifested in politics and political processes of these countries. The subject of identity and the politics related to it have become the main concern especially of the marginal, the conservative and religious social groups in all most all countries. Aziz Al-Azmeh’s saying while discussing identity issues in the Arab world confirms the same- “Today culture and politics is over determined by identity, so the declamations of identity, discursive as well as symbolic, have come to be seen as somehow containing the world” (50).

Every individual do express a congregation of multiple identities and any discussion of them indeed inspires a dialogue of highly complex kind. Along with the ‘self’ within each of an individual there are multiple other identities slapped on to him/her by the class, clan, caste, ethnicity and race etc. to which he/she belongs to. Added to these are the identities individuals create for themselves through action and conversation they carry on with their ‘self’ and ‘other/s’. There are also identities one does carry by the kind of reading she/he does; philosophical, literary or just detective novel, if not the daily newspaper. Thus every individual carry several identities within their families or outside with their friends or enemies. TRS Sharma’s words significantly convey the complications of identity expressions thus:

We are also involved continuously in a process of individuation in order to escape from our social identity, then ‘personality’ we have acquired, the
‘prosopopeia’ we invent for ourselves which appears before the public, that is, the ‘public’ identity a person carries more or less like an endeared burden!

In short, in the same person there can be a longing to create for himself an identity or several of them, and also in the same degree a longing to escape from the set identity. And how about those caught up in the diaspora grappling with their ever fluid identities? The problem becomes much more complex then! (270).

In multicultural societies more than in homogeneous societies the problem related to identities occupies the centre stage of socio-cultural controversies. Many violent events and atrocities have happened regarding identity claims in such societies the world over in the last few years creating terrible confusion and conflict. Just as the concept of gender has become an object of controversy due to the later day problematic like transgender, homosexuality along with usual causes of women, so also against the issues of colonialism, transculturalism, transnationalism and multiculturalism, identity has taken on new dimensions of interpretations. The compositeness of the notion of identity is briefed in Nadia Tazi’s words thus: “identity is frequently misunderstood and subjected to frequent contemporary debates very much like the term gender” (VIII). Its intricacy is further proved in the different nuances of meaning related to it, best expressed in the following phrases; ‘identity theft’, ‘identity losses’, ‘the identity game’ and many more. ‘Identity theft’ is a clear context of impersonation where the singular identities of an individual or individual identities are at stake or stolen. Or in other words by ‘identity theft’ means “the illegal use by one individual of another individual’s recognized indicators of personhood” (Hollinger 28). In 2000, National television of America reported an incident of a criminal impersonating as American Golf Champion Tiger
Woods and misappropriating thousands of dollars of credit card purchases. In the case of Tiger Woods, the personal identities, the ones registered like the social security number, a driver’s license, an e-mail password and other means by which a single self’s control over property are defined is misrepresented. ‘Identity theft’ is by far the most rapidly increasing crime in today’s information age; especially it dominates the internet screens. In incidents of trauma – induced amnesia or other similar situations loss of memory of bits of information related to Individual identity results in ‘identity losses’. Commercial advertisers do play ‘the identity game’ where advertisement slogans call costumers to identify with their respective brand as a proof of virtue: like sophistication, intelligence, ingenuity, enlightenment, status etc. All these contexts only prove the primacy of identity and its related issues have these days.

In the West discussions on identity has a long drawn history but it is not the same in India though is characterised by multiple identities. Identity as a matter of everyday life has been regulated and negotiated very much for ages and has been more practically oriented for a very long time in India yet it has seldom been discussed as a concept. That is identity has not been a matter of intellectual analysis in India and most Indian languages have no word to convey exactly the idea of identity. In the light of the increasing scholarly concern with the idea of identity, most of these languages have adopted the Sanskritic root Asmita meaning ‘identity’. In the West the discussions related to identity dates back to the beginning of the Christian era. St. Augustine voiced existential anguish by stating “I” have become a question to myself (questio mihi factus sum) – an anguish triggered by his exposure to the multiple perspectives of the Hellenistic period; Stoicism, Platonism, and many others. Socratic questioning and Platonic thaumazein (wondering) all mean identity
questions. But only few rare, sensitive minds feel such existential anguish while the
great majority of peoples tend to live their lives with a sense of definiteness of
personal and cultural identity being embedded in relatively stable social customs and
traditions. With the onset of Western modernity influenced by the ‘Protestant
Reformation’ and ‘European Enlightenment’ that focused on ‘inwardness’,
questioning of existing social conventions that were seen as alien or recalcitrant to a
properly authentic and examined life started. Later the French revolution sought to
draw a clear boundary between modern human autonomy or self-determination and
conventionalism of the past influenced identity issues variously. For instance, the
trajectory of western modernisation along with its social and economic revolutions
projected Europe or the West into a privileged cultural-political identity known as
Eurocentricism. This encouraged the modern West to ascribe itself a universal
political and cultural task - a mission civilisatrice (civilizing mission) with the
instruments of imperialism and colonialism. With these and the closely affiliated
strategy of Orientalism; assigned to Western academics and intellectuals the
privilege of analysing, categorizing and knowing the Orient, without any need for
reciprocity or reciprocal learning, the West established itself as the promontory or
advanced head of the world over all the underdeveloped or developing societies. For
the sake of their own advancement the West also engrossed in acts of disrupting,
transforming or erasing the customs and traditional identities of the lesser countries.

The stakes of development or advancement raised by the relentless process
of globalization today holds the entire world in its grip. The distinction between
developed and underdeveloped of Western modernity context now takes on the new
distinction of globalizer (carrying forward a universal global agenda) and the
globalized. In this encounter between the two; globalizer and the globalized, human
identity and identity politics clearly play a crucial role and has occupied the center stage of discussion. Cross-cultural encounters due to globalization and the changing demographic scenario of cultures are affecting identity issues variously. The constant movement of population from location to location has made the question of identity both tricky and controversial. Globalization has not only unsettled people and cultures but has created new identities and affiliations and also conflicts and collaborations of varied kinds. In the dialectic clash and dialogic interpenetration of interests between the local and the global a new kind of consciousness has developed about the relative merits and weaknesses of both the identities. Sometimes what appears to be specific and local acquires the object of global desires and what appears to be global circulates freely in the local market. In this kind of situation in which the local and the global seem to overlap and crisscross, the discursive articulation of the difference of identities has become more intense. While living amidst the conundrum of identities—especially of essential global and essential particular/local identities, the basic question often asked is: whose and what kind of identity should be cultivated by whom? Any talk of universal sameness or non-identity is futile as it is non-existent or as Dallmayr assumes the claim of non-identity only serves as a camouflage for hegemonic privilege (24). Weather it is in the stable environment of pre-colonisation or pre-globalisation times or the instability of later colonisation and globalisation times, both for personal and socio-cultural reasons, identity and its formation is influenced variously. In a stable environment, identity formation, whether individual, cultural or national, is a process involving sifting through diverse and often conflicting influences. In unstable environments, the difficulty of the process is compounded. But the matter of concern in whatsoever situation is the need to forego unthinking and
indiscriminate acceptance of either imported or the domestic identities while engrossed in the process of identity formulation.

Even Identity politics with reference to social identities; caste, class, race, gender, religion, sexuality and ethnicity work similarly and the propensity for hybrid identity in a multicultural context doesn’t provide an escape from the ugly embrace of identity politics. Only in modern categories of group identity like profession (occupation), nationality, sex orientation one always has liberty to choose and avoid ascription. But group identities of cultural heritage/of the past are difficult to shun or outgrow. Freedom of choice of self–identification or personal identification is always discouraged in relation to traditional and historical social identities. Whenever self–identification is at odds with the pre-imposed identification principles then that identity is always dismissed as counterintuitive identities. For the country is full of people who are quite ready to tell others what their identity is or is not (in relation to traditional group identities), no matter what the other person’s preferences might be. One has to accept modern (of recent times) multiple identities only after acceptance of descent community identity; caste, religion, language, region etc., with Indians. Even in countries like America with high civilizational claims and assertion of upholding of democratic principle of equality there is no escape from the practices of ‘identity – ascription’, as socially ascribed identities are too deeply rooted in social consciousness and in the context of the most developed country like America it is the ethno racial identity that is mainly foregrounded. Therefore, majority do lack ‘unified identity’ or ‘stable identity’, where inner thoughts and outer acts are concurrent in the parlance of psychologists. Psychologists always stress the importance of individuals with ‘unified self’ or ‘stable identity’ for the society. ‘Unified self’ is said to be of great service to the
society for it symbolises a ‘positive self’ with feelings of his/her own personal value or worth. Unified identity thus in an individual is the pivotal consideration that his whole moral life rests upon. An individual without a positive image of himself, will neither be able to give his life a good form nor imbue moral values in his action towards others. Axel Honneth as quoted by Emmanuel Renault speaking on the value of - “the positive relation with the self” (109) has described “stable identity as the very basis of any ethical and moral normalcy” (109). Honneth further claims that it is only through successful socialization that an individual can manage to construct a positive self-image (or stable identity) and overcome the sense of importance of his own existence. He further describes the way the positive self-image can be established in three kinds of positive relations with the self: “self-confidence, based on relationships connected with amicable family and affectionate relationships with others; self-respect, based on legally and morally regulated relationships with others; and self-esteem, which consists of the perception of our existence in so far as it is endowed with a social value, or it contributes in deed for the good of all” (Renault 110). On applying Honneth’s claim that successful socialization produces the background ethical knowledge and guarantees personal integrity we realize the reasons for identity conflict in modern individuals mainly Indians. But when identity conflicts become inevitable for whatsoever reasons or the crisis ridden ambience ultimately will also always induce effort towards individuation or “Identity formation” (Renault 111). “Identity formation/individuation”, is the development of the distinct personality of an individual based on a set of accepted identities. Identity formation capacity and the needful effort suppress all confusions as to the choice that is to be made from the plethora of contradicting identities. Identity formation moments thus signify the resolution of identity conflicts and attaining of what
psychologists’ regard as ‘stable identity’ – ‘where inner personality traits and outer personality traits are one and the same’. Sudhir Kakar has recognized acquisition of identity stability as an important step towards attaining “psychological maturity” (119) or “Healthy adulthood” (119)-best expressed in “the ability to tolerate anxiety without being crippled” (119). Kakar mentions Freud’s meaning of ‘psychological maturity’ thus: “where id was, there shall ego be” or “to make the unconscious, conscious” (119). Identity stability thus formed at times may be against the expectations of the societal norms but essentially coincides well with the individual’s earnest desire to live life as per his/her personal choice. Independent evolving of an identity of personal choice should always be guided by one’s voice of reason or enlightened consciousness. Not all are capable of enlightened awareness to resolve identity conflicts raging within. Unresolved identity confusions in fact have become a grave sociological problem in modern globalised world characterised by transnational cultural confrontations and the related ambience of dualities/multiplicities. Loss of identity, experiences of rootlessness and alienation signifying of crisis are perceived everywhere in modern society. Even claims of cosmopolitan or global self are more a myth for it doesn’t mean complete absence of conflicts between the self and the other. In Indian context identity conflicts arise not only for transnational cultural confrontations but also for other reasons of multi-linguistic intricacies, north-south discrepancies, marga-desi cultural dichotomy and so on. Though capacity of Indian culture to amalgamate exotic cultural elements is much appreciated yet an individual always experiences lot of psychic upheavals in such dichotomous ambience. Interestingly in contexts of cross-cultural confrontations it is said that a sense of crisis is never experienced by someone capable of strong faith in one’s native culture. In Kamala Markandaya’s novel
Nowhere Man Srinivasa’s wife, Vasanta, has no crisis like Srinivasa because she remains an Indian all along in everything. But usually many in multi-cultural contexts experience an acute sense of being torn between variable sets of values, indicative of identity crisis.

Scientific and industrial achievement that developed as the part of modernization process and as an essential reality of the present globalization era has been judged as very promising with immense assurance of happiness and comforts. But the same is attributed with lot of new evils and is described as an aid to human propensity for evil all the while precipitating new kinds of problems. Especially the primacy it has attributed to material comforts has been adjudged as the root cause for the dwindling of all civilisational virtues. The virtues of traditional Indian society co-existing with modern values and the perennial fundamental dualities of life impress Indians with a sense of instability and uncertainty resulting in identity conflicts followed with feelings of anxieties and existential angst. Notions of tradition and modernity have generated Labyrinthine ways of life making the choice very difficult for individuals. After discussing the imminence of identity conflicts and its varied intricacies in brief which would be discussed elaborately in the next chapter, S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi is introduced.

S. L. Bhyrappa’s personas are affected by dualities of varied kinds characteristic of the pluricultural context of India and also fundamental dichotomies of nature/culture, ideal/real, impulse/reason, individual/community so on and so forth. Or in other words his writings express dialogue of highly complex kind carried on between the different identities the individuals partake from that of the multi-cultural society and the needs of the ‘self’. S. Ramaswamy in his preface to a
work of criticism on Bhyrappa’s writing has said that his novels “give a wholesome vision of life-intermingling historical, social and philosophical viewpoints” (IX). He calls Bhyrappa’s novels an authentication of Tainian’s, “Man, Milieu and the moment” (IX). Dr. K. L. Gopalakrishnaiah appreciates the cultural and the anthropological relevance of Bhyrappa’s writing and also their “Historical relevance” (7).

Bhyrappa’s characters express inherent vulnerability for identity conflicts as they are all highly sensitive beings with an ever alert conscience and inquiring mind. All the four novels picked up for studying the intricacies of identity conflicts are set exclusively in India. They all belong to the modern post-independent Indian society, where binaries of opposing nature; east-west, oriental-occidental, tradition-modernity, regional-national, marga-desi, multi-linguistic and north-south discrepancies etc. galore affecting the value system of the individuals. Caught amidst such contraries the personas of Bhyrappa’s fiction do express a highly intricate consciousness often suffering from lack of quietude and peace of mind. The inherited traditional roots always conflict with the changing socio-cultural practices causing lot of stress and strain in day to day experiences. The social contexts of different life styles and different kinds of ethos either become bane of headache or the source for relief. Probably because of this obsession with sociocultural aspects there are critics who complain that his works suffer as an art piece but is more endearing as a social documentation which Bhyrappa retaliates in a literary gathering organized by Hubli Art Circle and Hangal Literary Foundation thus:

A novel need not be written just for the art sake and when you are speaking about history, the language need not be emotional. And moreover, there are no strict rules for the novel form (Hindu June 5, 2007).
In the above words Bhyrappa is insisting on the historical relevance of novel or any art for that matter. Even Manu Chakravarthi in an article published in ‘Friday Review’ of The Hindu echoes Bhyrappa’s views when he said that his “works were negotiations with Indian culture/Hindu way of life…a ‘Historical’ seeking to unravel the masked truth of history”. U. R. Ananthamurthy criticises Bhyrappa’s biased stance in the interpretation of Indian history, when he said that Bhyrappa gives a “reductionist rightest views of history” or a “narrow Hindu position” . To critics who argue that Bhyrappa is a “traditionalist running Hindutva propaganda” or a “promoter of Brahmanism” , (Hindu Jan 28, 2005) Lakshminarayana Bhatta responds in negation by quoting the example of a mean Brahmin Venkataramana in Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane to prove he is objective in his approach and “spared no effort to portray reality” of whatsoever kind. Sumatheendra Nadig appreciates Bhyrappa and his sincere effort to “awaken moral responsibility in a person instead of sermonizing” (XIII) through his writings. The present study aims not to discuss the controversies that surround Bhyrappa and his ideologies as a writer. Instead the study is original in trying to apply the Western parlance of identity and identity conflicts and the related crisis to his select fiction in English translation.

Bhyrappa’s characters do live in a transitional society rift with dualities of contradictory kind and therefore the conflicts experienced by them are too pronounced and composite. It’s an ambience where neither the new values are ascertained completely nor have the old become dispensable. Along with personal liabilities for identity conflicts difference between personal faith and societal beliefs, between natural impulses and cultural norms generate clashes. Acculturation or cultural exchange though is appreciated as providing ample scope for both the retention of selected elements of traditional cultural heritage and also the adaptation
and assimilation of new elements from the ‘other/s’ cultures, the same is appreciated for suppressing identity conflicts, acculturation in individuals is imbued with lots of struggle and psychic upheavals. Hence identity conflicts as it affects the individuals caught in the throes of change as portrayed in the select fiction is studied in the different chapters of the present study.

In the novels of Arun Joshi it is the multicultural context of America and India both which serve as a background against which his men suffer identity conflicts. Both post-independent India and America propose labyrinths of life modes precipitating in modern man acute dilemmas while engrossed in his search to attain honour, riches, power, fame etc. and it is in this sense it is the crisis of the present. For many living in the metropolitan ambiance of America all modern day problems related to industrialization, urbanization, inter-generational tensions, economic pressures due to the rising market economy and cross-cultural dilemmas induce identity confusions. Majority of them belong to the Indian diaspora in America except for Ratan Rathor of *The Apprentice* all others move between India and America. Hence Joshi’s men suffer both the intricacies of an ambience of cultural diversity along with the fundamental dualities of nature/culture, ideal/real, impulse/reason, individual/community etc. Loss of identities and experiences of rootlessness resulting in alienation and isolation are to be perceived everywhere in such a context and the same is expressed by Joshi’s men. Interestingly it is not the ordinary mass that is shown as caught up in identity conflict in Joshi’s writing instead the most successful; education wise, career/profession wise and wealth wise, are affected the most. It is the affluent, the luxurious, the most successful and the overfed who feel the identity angst, a clear indication that the real happiness of man lies not in material success but elsewhere. It is not the traditional vices of poverty,
caste, religious bigotry and the sham practices that affect them but the most modern of the vices torment them. A fine proof of the acute sensitivity of Joshi’s men is noticed in the fact that amidst all worldly successes his men are vulnerable to existential angst. Having reached the extreme of accomplishments which men have often craved for they suffer from purposelessness. Thus the alienation causatives are not just the modern sociological and psychological conditions but also the existential haunting man since time immemorial. Or in other words feelings of social alienation and the related condition of isolation are followed up with self-alienation that generates feeling of nihilism. G. S. Amur makes the following observation on this matter, “Joshi’s vision of the modern world and man’s place in it is Manichean and his heroes though rooted in the industrial civilization have always been at odds with it” (68). The angst or psychological rifts causing reasons in Joshi’s works range from the post-independent corrupt ambience of India to the sham pretentions of egalitarian claims of developed countries (mainly America) along with the personal liability for such feelings. In summation the crisis of identity in Joshi’s novels is explored at various levels; national, international, individual, interpersonal, industrial and business relationships. Joshi’s novels have not much to convey at the level of the plot but are thought provoking at the psychological and existential level of meaning and in understanding the socio-cultural causatives of the same.

Ever caught within the multifarious ambience the personas of Bhyrappa and Joshi’s fiction do express a highly intricate consciousness all the while experiencing lack of quietude and peace of mind significant of identity crisis. Other than the common socio-cultural context against which men of Joshi and Bhyrappa strive there is lot of similarities in their temperament or mental disposition. The causatives of identity conflicts in both Arun Joshi and Bhyrappa’s work range from the post-
independent corrupt ambience of India, to the coexistence of dualities along with the personal liability of individuals for such experiences. Or in other words the sensitive characters caught up in maze of the related vices of contemporary times, social ambiguities and personal vulnerability experience identity confusions. In both Bhyrappa and Joshi novels there always exist distinctive towering personalities amidst plethora of minor ones with various degrees of liability for identity conflicts. Only major characters will be picked up for analysis to prove the intricacies of the identity conflicts. In each novel selected for study there is always a distinctive towering personality with abundance of capacity for identity stability that comes from abundance of faith and sense of self-respect. They even are disposed with powerful voice of reason or enlightened consciousness to choose amongst the plethora of identities and remain steadfast to the same. But the agency of the self is thwarted by the outside forces and thus execution of the self is resisted and this results in feeling of conflicts and crisis. The clash finally ends in resolution of some kind or the other as per the personal faith of the individuals and their strength of conviction to oppose or accept the countering forces. The conflict is sometimes between two persons of varying identity faiths and sometimes it is the dual voice within the individual’s consciousness itself. Some do resolve the conflict successfully taking decisive steps to attain identity stability and enjoy the related feelings of tranquility but with some the conflict is ever raging and unresolved ending in disastrous effects for the individual concerned. But none of the characters live social identities obliviously as majority of the people often do as they all are highly sensitive and acutely conscious of intricacies within. Though the capacity of Indian culture to amalgamate exotic cultural elements is much appreciated at larger societal level but synthesis or acculturation in individuals is attained not before lot
of psychic upheavals are experienced. The kinds of resolution they reach at also have common points for comparison and the study of the differences are as much interesting. Interestingly in contexts of cultural diversity it is said that a sense of crisis is never experienced by someone capable of strong faith in one’s native culture. But flexibility in faith always is advantageous to become accommodative of the best and to reject the useless of the existing cultures. Without capacity for resilience any threat or imminence of change in the interiorized faith is unwelcome issuing out into varied kinds of behavioral nuances characteristic of identity conflicts. In all such moments of internal skirmishes enlightened stance and rationalizing abilities of the individuals play an important role to outgrow or resolve the conflicts positively. Irrespective of the country their characters are shown as undergoing sociological, psychological and existential maladjustments significant of identity crisis. They do suffer from acute feelings of depression followed by moods of alienation and isolation. Identity conflicts in Joshi’s characters quite often are caused for socio-cultural reasons but at times impress us as having greater depths and meaning. The conflicts more than for social reasons seem to belong to the inner recesses of the self or to use Joshi’s own words in “that mysterious underworld which is the human soul” (52). Hence the readers always have the impression that his characters do suffer less from social dilemmas but more from metaphysical or existential dilemmas. But the reality is that the social dilemmas cause existential angst and the tendency for existential feelings make the social identities meaningless. It means that there is always a reciprocal relationship between social and existential meanings. For the same reason the identity dilemmas represented in their novels impress as too grave and serious as if questioning the very meaning of human existence all the while contesting social identities. Thus identity conflicts in
both Joshi and Bhyrappa’s fiction have sources both in social issues and in existential meanings of life. The ‘I-self’ or the private self and its needs collide with the community ways or the ‘we-self’ ensuing in conflicts. The decision to heed the needs of the ‘I-self’ will be reached only after suffering lots of anguish and the resolve made may look abnormal as per the parameters of societal norms. It also means becoming aware of “Universal principles of morality” (Roland 27) instead of limiting oneself to the cultural imperatives of any one nation alone. They aim to refurbish civilisation with better meaning than its present meaning of material and technological progress. How individuals react or resolve in the face of identity conflicts and attain identity stability and what are the contexts that cause identity stability is an interesting and curious concern of many scholarly studies and the present study has similar concerns with reference to the select fiction of Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa.

The purpose of my study is not to trace and discuss S. L. Bhyrappa’s place in the Kannada literary tradition. Neither is the study interested in understanding him against the literary tradition of Kannada literature nor interested in bringing him into the ambit of literary tradition of Indian Writing in English. The study is a conceptual approach. That is the study aims to analyse four of his novels translated into English against the intricacies involved in debates of identity in the modern parlance. The same approach will be made with the novels of Arun Joshi as well. A subtle briefing on the intricacies of cross-cultural encounters and its nuances were made mainly because they help us to study identity conflicts in the select fiction of Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa as both of the writers write in the ambience of cultural diversity. Both belong to the post-independent Indian society and it is against the intricacies of the present contemporaneous society that their works open up for the study of
identity conflicts and the related crisis. Therefore, after making a brief introduction of S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi and their fictions selected for study the second chapter presents an elaborate study of identity concept and its composite nature in the ambience of cultural diversity of modern society. The study mainly aims to discuss their writings against the intricacies related to the notion of identity. Therefore, a detailed study of the complexities of Identity and the related nuances in the modern knowledge parlance is made in the second chapter.

Santeshivara Lingannaiah Bhyrappa was born in a poor family at Santeshivara, a village in the Channarayapattana taluk of Hassan district known as ‘the coconut region’ of Karnataka. He learnt Hindustani classical music and is also a connoisseur of Western classical music. He is one of the most widely travelled Kannada writers and has travelled several times to the United Kingdom, United States of America, Israel, Europe, Asia, and South America. He is not just an academic and a writer but has athletic interests as well. He has climbed Mount Fuji in Japan, the Alps in Europe, the Andes in South America and naturally, the Himalayas in India. Having worked in various places in India like Gujarat and Delhi, he is a polyglot and speaks Gujarati and Hindi as fluently as he speaks Kannada, his mother tongue. As a retired professor of Philosophy, Bhyrappa lives quietly in Mysore, devoting his entire time to creative writing. He was awarded a doctorate for his thesis, Truth and Beauty, from Baroda University. Two of his novels- Vamshavriksha and Mathadana- were published in 1965. In 1967, Vamshavriksha received the State Sahitya Academy Award. Next came his novel Jalapatha (1967) and his work of literary criticism, Sahitya Mattu Pratika. Two novels Nayi Neralu and Tabbaliyu Neenade Magane- were published in 1968. His Tabbali was made into a film. The next four years saw four novels - Grihabhanga
(1970), *Nirakarana* (1971), *Grahana* (1972), and *Datu* (1973), which won the Central Sahitya Academy Award. In 1976 came *Anveshana*. Perhaps his greatest novel in *Parva* (1979), his thirteenth novel which has been described as an epic novel. *Parva* is rethinking of the Mahabharata, in modern terms. He wrote an interesting piece of literary criticism, *Naaneke Bareyttene*? which can be translated as ‘Why do I write?’ *Sakshi* came out in 1986 and it received the Karnataka State Sahitya Academy Award and the ‘Grand Lok’ Award. *Anchu* was published in 1990 and his more recent novels are *Tantu* (1993) and *Sartha* (1998). His latest novel *Mandra* is about music and art. He has himself said in his autobiography: “the form of the Hindustani classical music which I have listened to and admired has influenced the conceptual form of my novels” (Bhyrappa 377). Since it is a *Kunstlerroman*, the entire structure of the novel and the technical terminology is based on music. Bhyrappa’s interest in music has never been marginal. He is a connoisseur who is deeply committed to music, listening regularly to Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar, Bhimsen Joshi, Hariprasad Chaurasiya, Amir Khan, Gangubhai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur, the Dagar brothers, Bismillah Khan, Pandit Jasraj, Vilayat Khan, and Kumara Gandhary. This is the context in which the protagonist of *Mandra* moves. In order to research thoroughly into the main character, Bhyrappa travelled extensively in North India, and at great expense, with the purpose of meeting with the practicing artists. A part of the novel *Mandra* takes place in California, again a place he is thoroughly acquainted with. *Mandra* was released in the month of August 2002 and within three weeks of its publication, 2000 copies were sold and the publishers reprinted immediately. All most all his novels have gone into several reprints, some even seven or eight times. This is a significant record. Bhyrappa is exceptional writer who has achieved both popularity and
eminence. Bhyrappa’s popularity is not based on middle-level readers only; judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, advocates and scientists of international standing, distinguished scholars, and social scientists are among his readers. It is well known that he is the most widely read Kannada writer by Kannadigas abroad. S. L. Bhyrappa was unanimously elected the President of the All India Kannada Sahitya Sammelan held in 1999 at Kanakapura near Bangalore. His fascinating autobiography, *Bhitti*, which has seen three editions, has been translated into Hindi, Marathi, and English. It was first published in 1996 and is one of the source-books for his life history as well as the origin of some of his novels. Bhyrappa’s has seen a life of struggle, endurance, survival, uncompromising honesty, and great courage. In his award-receiving statement at the Central Sahitya Academy, Bhyrappa’s statement as quoted in the introduction to Caravan reads thus:

> I have through my novels begun an exploration; I have tried to deeply examine some of the problems which were confronting me and the areas of my experience. This process has resulted in my own soul searching. My personal experiences became deeper and broader. Each of my novels takes me a step nearer to a mysterious centre of experience, and has enabled me to understand and appreciate the complexity of life and its meaning. It has brought to me a satisfaction more meaningful than any scholastic study of any theory. It has brought to the fore several problems which were lying hidden in my subconscious mind (XXXVI).

Each of his novels stands as a testimony to this statement. The novel *Vamshavriksha* was published in the year 1945 and was translated into English as *The Uprooted* by the most gifted poet and an outstanding translator K. Raghavendra Rao. The Kannada version of the novel bagged the coveted literary award of the
Karnataka State Academy of letters in 1967. The Kannada film based on this novel won the prestigious ‘Golden Lotus Award’ of the Government of India in 1972. Acclaimed by discerning critics as a modern Indian classic, this novel has been translated into several Indian languages – a testimony to it’s being truly a great Indian novel.

The novel *The uprooted* is mainly concerned with the conflicts that characterize a transitional society and their effect on individuals rooted in social structures; its prevailing norms and the matrix of value systems. The novel is a highly absorbing social novel depicting poignantly the human story of a young widow torn between her love and her child. It is a creative and artistic presentation of the psychological and philosophical dimensions of the genealogy as the preserver and the transmitter of cultural values and norms. In the novel Katyayani is the widow torn between her love and her child and Srinivasa Shrothri is the one obsessed with the traditional idea of genealogy. The novel mainly concentrates on two families. Srinivasa Shrothri and his wife Bhagirathamma and their daughter-in-law Katyayani and grandson Cheeni and their servant maid Lakshmi is one family and Sadashivarayaru, and his two wives Nagalakshmi and Karunaratne, and his brother Raja Rao is the other family. All these characters are caught up in changing trends of the society and family life. Each individual’s conflict is different as it is much controlled by degree of sensitivity, personal faith and the circumstances of their life. The plot of the novel is as follows. Srinivasa Shrothri and his wife Bhagirathamma have a son Nanjunda Shrothri who is married to Katyayini and they have a son named Cheeni. On the accidental death of Nanjunda Shrothri, the widowed Katyayini resumes her studies and is attracted to her English professor Raja Rao but their marriage is resisted by Srinivasa Shrothri as it was against the
dictates of dharma shastras. But Katyayini is adamant and marries him. But when she is issueless she decides to bring back her son from first marriage but her plans are thwarted again by Srinivasa Shrothri as it is quite against the dictates of dharma shastras. Later her grown up son is not ready to acknowledge her as his mother. The personal tragedies of life make Katyayini suffer from acute sense of sin and unable to suppress her guilt succumbs to death. Then there is the persona of history Professor Sadasivarayaru who though already married accepts matrimony with his student research scholar Karunaratne and together they accomplish the task of writing an elaborate study on Indian history in five volumes. But Sadasivarayaru is driven by guilt of flouting his marital duties to his first wife and finally is happily united with his first wife. Thus the novel is ripe with identity conflicts mainly in the life of Srinivasa Shrothri, Katyayini and Sadasivarayaru.

The novel Saksi translated as The Witness was published in 1986. It is an original translation by S.L. Bhyrappa himself edited and recasted by Dr. Sharon Norris, who had worked as a journalist for BBC and teacher at University of Glasgow. The novel The Witness is set in South Indian village of Bilikere of Tumkur district where lives the family of Parameshwaraih which includes his wife Janakamma and their three children Ramakrishna, the elder most and his two daughters Seetha and Savitri. It is a family disposed for satvik gunas (sublimity). Parameshwaraih’s elder daughter Sita is married to Satyanarayana, a Gandhian. She dies during delivery living Satyanarayana a widower. Ramakrishna is married to Sukanya, Nagappa’s daughter and does have a son called Ganesha. Savithri is married to Manjaiah against the wishes of the family members and this marriage becomes the bane of headache for the whole family. Manjaiah kills a coconut thief Kanchi and ropes in Parameshwaraih to be a witness to save himself in the court.
Failure in his duty to the community and hope of saving his daughter Savitri’s marriage life makes Parameshwariah to be a witness but later he cannot bear the pain of uttering a lie and so commits suicide and is blessed by Lord Yama to return to earth in the form of invisible soul to be a witness to the varied activities of his Kith and Kin. Manjaiah is a womaniser who has tremendous ego based on his material successes and his sexual potency. He is engrossed in too many affairs with women and flouts all norms of propriety culture ordains in the matter and is notorious for his reckless behavior. He suffers identity turmoil in his relation with a woman named Sarojakshi who serves as his alter ego and thus his competitor. His affair with the mother daughter duo, Lakkoo and Latha proves his nemesis for he is castrated by Lakkoo for sexually abusing her daughter and dies by blood loss. Each character express varied nuances of behavior depending on the nature of identity confusion they experience. The real interest lies not in the plot of the novel but in the intricacies of identity dilemmas the characters undergo in an ambience of dualities. Two main major characters and their identity conflicts are studied in this chapter. The dilemmas and confusions are purported mainly in relation to the meaning of ‘truth’ which the novel explores in all its ambiguities.

_Datu_ published in the year 1973, focuses on the evils of the caste system and Bhyrappa won the Central Sahitya Akademi Award for this novel in the year 1975. It is translated as _Crossing Over_ by Pradhan Gurudatta and David Mowat hailed it “a novel with a progressive view and a revolutionary bias”. Datu created a new awareness on a familiar experience which the people of Indian sub-continent are very familiar with namely caste practices. One of the translator Pradhan Gurudatta describes the experience the novel provides thus:
It was their own society, their own environment, their own familiar characters and their own problems which they had little understood and analysed, till Bhyrappa presented them so clearly and in such an artistic and impressive manner and with such a deep reflection and analysis of the various factors underlying them. It is … demystification of a social mystery that makes this novel unusually absorbing (X).

Bhyrappa has analysed the caste faith in India from various angles and deeply too. Set predominantly in rural Karnataka it is a gripping and passionate novel which centres on Satyabhama, the educated and independent daughter of Venkataramanayya. Satyabhama doesn’t believe in caste practice and has an ardent desire to free the country from this social evil. She initiates the process of eradicating caste faith by deciding to marry Srinivasa, a boy from Sudra community but the caste prejudices of both the families doesn’t allow the marriage to happen. Srinivasa like Satyabhama doesn’t believe in caste but lacks the will power to resist the taboo in the society against inter-caste marriages. Satya undergoes lot of social humiliation and shame because of her decision to follow inter-caste marriage. Venkataramanayya is flabbergasted by the way his daughter suffered while the partaker in the act Srinivasa was happily married and settled. He is also caught in the intense debate of belief and nonbelief regarding caste practices. Though his conscience dictated that caste practices were unjust yet the fact that religious scriptures prescribed caste faith confuses him. Caught in the turmoil of confusion he is unable to rationalize the whole affair like his educated daughter Satyabhama. He goes mad, loses all his faith in god and religion and when humiliated in public by a Dalit boy Mohandasa, he commits suicide. Satya continues her caste resistant activities but fails to bring about any changes in peoples’ faith in caste practices. She
joins Mohandasa, and shares his concern to destroy the caste evil. She tries to convince Mohandasa not to resort to violence to oppose caste practices but to follow moderate path of transformation. But Mohandasa doesn’t follow her words and he believes so much in violence and bloodshed as the only means to resist caste practices that in a moment of acute feeling of vengeance he explodes the village reservoir resulting in the flood like situation submerging the whole lot of villages in and around. He gets drowned in the whirl wind of the water. Satyabhama thus becomes a witness to the difficulty of destroying caste faith in Indian society due to the varied attitudes and approaches people made of this age old practice. She sadly realizes that how the varied reactionary stance in the matter destroyed the dream of India becoming a unified society with people enjoying a harmonious life without caste belief. The events of the death of Mohandasa and the failures of intercaste marriages in the novel is interpreted by many critics that Bhyrappa wants the society to be static and stagnant. Bhyrappa has tried to ward off this opinion by saying that his real concern is to underline the right perspectives to be cherished with reference to the characteristics and transformation of the society. He also stresses the fact that progressive ideas are to be practiced and uncharitable attitudes, from whichever quarter they may emerge, are to be condemned. It is these hard truths depicted in this novel that make it a significant contribution to Indian literature.

_Tantu_ (1993), which can be translated as ‘fibre’ examines the fibres of contemporary post-Independence Gandhian India. It is panoramic in scope, moving as it does from Bangalore to a small village near Channarayapattana in Hassan district to Mysore, Banaras, and on to Delhi, the capital. Police brutality, goondaism at the village level, the five-star hotel culture of Delhi, the theft of art objects and smuggling them out of the country, betraying a great heritage for monetary benefit
by mercenaries — are portrayed as the novel progresses. The ubiquitous corruption, bribery and nepotism in high and low places is portrayed with such candour that the steady erosion of traditional values and rank philistinism that has enveloped present-day life is shown as eating away the very moral fibre of India today. The range of characters is astonishingly comprehensive. The true Gandhian idealist, Annaiah, who, in spite of all odds holds on to his ideals; an honest and uncompromising journalist-editor Ravindra, who, in spite of personal tragedy remains faithful to his professional ethics demonstrating that he cannot be bought, no matter what the price; the ‘liberated’ career woman Kanti who sleeps around in order to gain favours in business are some important characters. The others include an idealist Hemanth Honnatti who gives up a lucrative management career to pursue classical music with all his heart and soul, only to find himself seduced by the estranged wife of his friend-benefactor as a result of which he has to live a life of self-disgust for the rest of his life; an old man priest of the old world, totally god-fearing and selfless who lives a pure life and dies for a way of life that has disappeared in the world around him; a young man Anup who in spite of his father’s best efforts, follows in his mother’s footsteps by indulging in casual affairs and goes away to the States to follow the ‘American Dream’; who visits ‘home’ not for his mother’s funeral but to claim the inheritance. The characters are so life-like and so highly individualized that they never become stereotypes. Thus Honnatti, the virtuous man, succumbs to the all-too-human temptation and has an affair with his benefactor’s wife. Sheetal, who writes an anonymous letter about her friend Kanti ruining her reputation, comes to her rescue at the time of her death. The epic sweep of the novel takes into account the new generation of progressive young men and women in a society that is fast becoming permissive; the new intellectuals who are worse than the nouveau riche;
the present-day manifestation of the marital maladjustment in Indian society resulting in divorce; and rivalry in business interests leading to blackmail. Thus with the scope of the Russian novel and the psychological probing and self-analysis of individual characters sitting in judgement over their own actions, the novel is full of internal action too. Dialogue is kept to a minimum and monologue is employed with an absorbing narrative in a Jamesian manner. Irony and indirection are employed so obliquely that anger and satire are revealed through understatement and suggestion, rather than by denunciation. All in all, it is a fascinating novel about modern India — surveying as it does the state of the country from Mahatma Gandhi to Indira Gandhi, ending with the ‘Emergency’ in 1975. All these characters do belong to the intellectual elite category and hence their choice and action in any given context is inspired by lot of learning and thinking. The conflicts they undergo and the resolution they derive are therefore mainly individual centered and the individuals themselves are accountable to the decisions they make.

Arun Joshi (1939-93) is an Indian-English novelist of post-Independence India and is classed with writers like Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. Arun Joshi’s output in the realm of fiction is limited to five novels such as *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) and *The City and the River* (1990) along with *The Survivor*, a book of collection of his ten short stories published in 1975. There is also a work of biography entitled *Lala Sri Ram: A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management* (1975) which is more in the nature of domestic eulogy.

*The Foreigner* is a pivotal novel and has vast intercontinental area against which the action of the novel is spread. Sindi Oberoi is a Kenyan-Indian, who suffers from identity conflict and the related feeling of crisis and alienation. Nairobi,
London and Boston fail to give him any solace and he feels no respite. His working in different capacities such as those of a dish-washer and a barman and a library assistant, leads him nowhere. His interest in religion, God and mysticism under the impact of a Catholic priest in Scotland, also gives him no indication as to the crisis of his consciousness. It is in India as Manager of Khemka's factory that there is something of his becoming close to the community of workers. His relationships with various European girls such as Anna and Cathy and the American June Blythe do not stop his worldly hungers. He comes to understand himself in his contact with Sheila, Khemka’s daughter. The crisis of identity in the novel surfaces at various levels of plot and characterization. Baburao Khemka, the son of the industrialist, forgets his roots and is charmed by the promiscuity of the American life. But owing to his Indian psyche he makes no compromise with the fact that June Blythe was also in love with his Kenyan Indian friend Sindi Oberoi. The tension generated out of it is the cause of his losing balance in driving, which causes his death. The transformation of Sindi as a rootless hedonist into an individual committed to social welfare is according to M. K. Naik, “neither adequately motivated! nor prepared for earlier”, and that the ending of the novel "thus appears to be blotched up”.

Like the hero of *The Foreigner*, the eponymous hero of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, is a man of cosmopolitan education. From the very beginning there is a schism in his soul. His parents send him to the U.S.A to study engineering, but he takes up anthropology instead. In India he works as a teacher of anthropology in Delhi University but here too from the subject of study he escapes into the object of it—the tribal world. The questions of his identity always plague him. His story may also be considered to be based upon the archetype of the Gautam Buddha who left his wife and child for the perennial quest, like him Billy Biswas leaves his wife and
even his beloved and marries a tribal girl, Bilasia. In all this, “his interest in his own identity was aroused” and he asked “Who was I? Where I had come from? Where I was going?” R.K. Srivastava compares *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* with John Updike's *Rabbit Run*:

Like Billy, Harry Angstrom or “Rabbit” seems to be a victim of an all-encompassing alienation, feels terribly unhappy with his life and runs away. He comes back, is temporarily reconciled to his wife, but after the birth of a child, leaves her and runs again. In both cases there are no specific reasons but some kind of emptiness that rises in them from within and then affects their relations with others. Both Billy and Rabbit find the world horrible and decide to flee from it. Both are devoid of ambitions, and do not exploit others for their personal gains. They seem to be lost and terrified children in an unfamiliar crowd (319).

Billy's interest in the primitive had been there from his very childhood. At Bhubaneswar he visited the tribes with a driver; and the sculptures at the Konark Sun Temple urged him on to think of his own identity. The civilized society was too much for him and his interest in the occult was due to “a great force, urkraft, a primitive force” in him. The problem of the crisis of identity has its inkling in the epigraph of the novel, borrowed from line no. 41 of Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*: “It irked him to be here, he could not rest.” The fate of Billy Biswas has affinity with that of The Scholar Gipsy, who, too, had a fascination for the primitive life. Billy may have got an answer to the crisis of his identity, but the civilized world considered him to be a misguided man and on the request of Billy's old parents, the administration in its search for Billy put an end to his life owing to the mistakes of an over-zealous constable.
The Apprentice psychoanalyses the mind of Ratan Rathor, who leaves the course prescribed by his nationalist father, who followed the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi. The narrative strategy in it is that of dramatic monologue. The resulting narrative episodes read like a hymn to corruption. After his father was shot dead in the freedom struggle, Ratan Rathor seeks employment in the national capital, where after a lot of initial sufferings he is able to get into the Department of War Supplies. It is a story of Ratan Rathor's advancement in his service career; and the higher he is promoted, the greater is his moral downfall. Though he gets everything that money can buy, he wants more and more. In his moral downfall he becomes a wretched agent of unscrupulous politicians, officers and contractors and works against national honour, which causes the death of his Brigadier friend after the debacle in the Indo-China war in the North-East frontier region. Ratan does not confess his involvement in the heinous crime, but in the long last his conscience pricks him, and to atone for his guilt he wipes the shoes of the devotees visiting a temple.

Ratan in his official career becomes “a sham and a fake” and his work in the office leads him into striking several illicit deals. An expert manipulator of files, Ratan Rathor becomes in the end a shoeshine apprentice to expiate his sins. Ratan feels a terrible alienation in his soul and he is at a loss to get a meaning out of his life. His realization in the end that he has become “a whore, a master-faker, a hypocrite, a scoundrel, thick-skinned, a liar, crooked, an upstart, a spineless flunky and bogus”, confirms that there is a schism in his soul regarding his acts and achievements. He sometimes feels with the Sheikh that “life is zero” and that he is “abandoned on the planet.” The world of The Apprentice reveals that the crisis of character is dominant everywhere in the administrative world and it also engulfs Ratan Rathor, who feels emptiness within, restlessness, apathy, indifference that
cover him “like a boil, like leprosy”. The crisis of his character gives him an impression that “his friends appeared no friendlier than a streetful of strangers”. Despite all his possessions and worldly achievements, he feels that he is going mad.

The Last Labyrinth deals with Joshi's favourite theme and image in the fictional world. The novel is located in the labyrinths of Aftab’s palace in Benares, but the scene goes on shuttling between Bombay and Benaras. Som Bhaskar, the hero of the novel, “is all appetite and want. He is a type of a character who wants to become a business tycoon but he is never contented with his lot and reflects, “It is the voids of the world more than its objects that bother me”. A haunting cry within Som Bhaskar is, “I want, I want, I want”. Som Bhaskar was educated in foreign universities. At Harvard he studied not only Pascal but also Krishna and the Buddha. His scientist father researched on psychological truths and the First Cause of the universe. He is also a plastic manufacturer and after his death Som Bhaskar inherits the business. Som Bhaskar is married to Geeta, who is a chaste Hindu wife; but Som Bhaskar runs after several other ladies such as Leila Sabnis in Bombay and Anuradha in Benaras. Som Bhaskar's contact with Anuradha in Benares causes an upheaval in his life. Anuradha is a model of an antique life and is endowed with liberated views. She is a dancing girl living with Aftab who has no hesitation in allowing her to sleep with Som Bhaskar whom she tells, “You can’t marry everyone you love. So why marry anyone at all”. The Last Labyrinth is a novel having several layers of interpretation; but for our present exploration it can be interpreted “as a fascinating exploration of the turbulent inner world of a successful young Indian urban”. Besides it, the novel also “plunges into a haunting world of life, love, God and death, the greatest of all mysteries... the last labyrinth”. Moreover, “the story's spiritual and sensuous dimensions are interwoven with great finesse”.

The Last Labyrinth deals with both the inner and the outer world of a westernized Indian aristocrat who has lost his spiritual roots. Yet he is never at ease despite his inherited affluence and the concept of materialism acquired from the West. He remains an alienated figure till the end. In the end Som Bhaskar attempts suicide by putting the revolver casually to his temple. But meanwhile his-wife intervenes and shakes him “gently as though rousing a man from sleep”. The protagonists in Joshi's previous novels move from alienation to community but, according to Joshi himself, this hardly happens in the case of The Last Labyrinth. In his reply to V. Gopal Reddy's questionnaire through his letter dated January 8, 1981, Joshi confirms that "Alienation of my characters in my novels that I have written so far ultimately leads them back to community. I realized that in my latest novel The Last Labyrinth for the first time this does not happen". Som Bhaskar in his search for roots discovers a haunting emptiness and void which makes him “mentally shattered, morally degenerated and physically exhausted with dreams and insomnia”. Som wants to obviate these with his business, but nothing comes to his aid. Som reflects: “I looked at myself in the mirror: lean, crow-footed, graying, I could not, then see the hunger but there was the boredom and the fed-up-ness, endless depths of it...”.

In his final work of fiction, The City and the River, Joshi “continues to treat in its own ironical manner the predicament of his characters in a hostile world”. The City and the River is a novel amalgamating different modes and conventions. As a political novel it uses the form of a parable told through the mode of fantasy. Like the previous novels of Joshi, it has also an existentialist approach. Madhusudan Prasad has rightly pointed out about Joshi’s novels that “they are singularised by certain existentialist problems and the resultant anger, agony, psychic quest and the
like”. *The City and the River* is a story of endless repetition and periodic disintegration which can be prevented only if we achieve purity. The previous novels of Arun Joshi deal with the crisis of the individual which has been replaced in *The City and the River* by the “socio-political crisis of the city, which is a conglomerate of individuals and can be said to represent the whole humanity”. In this novel Joshi “poses significant questions about identity, commitment and faith”. But these questions are approached from the standpoint of politics. The novel also throws significant limelight on the meaning of life. The City in it is a nowhere city and the river also is nameless, like the Nameless-One, the great Yogeshwar's disciple. It is the great Yogeshwar who narrates the story of the city and the river to the Nameless-One.

*The City and the River* has the plot of power struggle. The Grand Master, who rules the city inherited from his forefathers, sees to it that he is crowned king, and son made his heir-apparent. He has a council of advisors which has an Astrologer as its prominent member besides having the Minister for Trade, his near relative, the Education Advisor and the Master of Rallies. There is a Police Commissioner who comes from the lower classes including the Master of Rallies. The Army is headed by General Starch. The Grand Master has befriended the brick people ignoring the boatmen who are poor people. The boatmen are deprived of their hearths and homes when the road from palace to the river-front is straightened. The boatmen headed by the woman headman rebel against the Grand Master and are not ready to owe their allegiance to him but owe their faith to the river. Bhoomiputra, popularly called Master Bhoma is a Mathematics teacher and a disciple of the Professor of Astrology. His brother and nephew are also on the side of the Grand Master. The power struggle makes the Grand Master despotic, as those
who oppose him are put into the Gold Mines, which is a prison where the inmates are subjugated to personal afflictions such as blinding of the headman and the Astrologer’s death due to Satyagraha.

The problem of identity is the core of the novel. The Grand Master and the persons associated with him want to domineer over others to make them feel their identity which is in a kind of crisis because they are ignorant of the reality of life. The boatmen and those who do not compromise with the Grand Master’s regime suffer from weariness and loneliness. In the strange sorry tale of the city, even the Master of Rallies is not happy. But this crisis of identity dominates more the characters who oppose the Grand Master. Both the Professor and his disciple Master Bhoma are weary and tired of the regime. In his wanderings in wilderness, “a sense of overwhelming futility filled him. At such times, so much so, that he saw no point in living” (67). Dharma’s father suffers from a strange kind of disease: “The three Truths Syndrome, Stasis of the Soul. Atrophy of the brain and locomotor functions” (68). It increases to such an extent that he seems to be rotting within and as his existence is “reduced to zero”, even the mirror fails to reflect his image. Even the Grand Master and his accomplices sometime or the other, think of the futility of life. The allegorical meaning of the fantasy is pointed out in the end by the great Yogeshwar to his disciple, the Nameless-One. The existential problem here takes on supernormal proportions of the endless repetition and destruction of life on the planet wrought by nemesis and retribution.

Both Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa in their novels is concerned mainly with the dilemmas modern day men do suffer due to intricacies of varied kinds characteristic of contemporary metropolitan, highly advanced societies. Human loneliness which has various manifestations in the forms of powerlessness,
meaninglessness, formlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-estrangement etc., are analysed by both the writers with great alacrity. Bhyrappa always believes in the solitary nature of all humans and in this faith he follows in the faith of essential philosopher, Heidegger. In one of his novels Nirakarana he describes his faith thus: “Man is a creature of solitude rather than community, that his authentic existence is secured in relation to himself and not essential with others”.

Identity conflicts and the resultant crisis of alienation has become the major problem in modern society and these aspects of alienation have been referred to in the article on Alienation in Encyclopedia Britannica (1977). Some of the variants of alienation expressed in behavior include three kinds of syndromes such as “recessive,” “socially disinterested” and “socially ineffective”. Elizabeth B. Hurlock in her book Personality Development writes:

In general, the alienation is marked by such unsocial behavior as teasing and bullying, making unpleasant comments, being hypercritical, intentionally annoying people, lying and being sneaky, rising alibis and projecting blame on others, and being sullen, sulky and moody. People characterized by the socially ineffective syndrome are annoying to others, while those characterized by the recessive and socially disinterested are so distasteful that others have no desire to have anything to do with them (51).

All these forms of alienation have passed into the psyche of modern man. The modern world is characterized by mechanization, urbanization, growing hostility due to changing values, depersonalization, self-misgivings, delusions, rootlessness, discontent, psychological and other maladjustments. All these taken
together have made alienation a part of the life of the contemporary man. He lives in a world plagued by several forms of crisis and thus enmeshed suffer from the crisis of identity and consciousness. The different variants of alienation, may be grouped into two:

First, with man's alienation from society which is the most prevalent kind of alienation and second, his alienation from his own self. A non-conformist is alienated from society by rebelling against it, but a conformist is alienated from his own self by not following the voice of his conscience. It is this division of self which does not let man live in peace (Srivastava 312).

All these intricacies of identity conflicts and the resultant crisis are traced in men of different mental dispositions in the fiction of S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi which the present study aims to explore. They trace the effect of the outer world on the inner labyrinth of the human soul. In an interview Arun Joshi has confessed that he is prompted into writing to explore “that mysterious underworld which is the human soul” holds good to Bhyrappa’s concern as well. They delve deep into the dark recesses of the mind which are the inscrutable region of uncertainty and enigma and the effects of identity crisis on it. As R.K. Dhawan writes,

Reading Joshi's novels is not always a smooth experience; there are moments when one is assailed by doubts and questions. There is “something” that attracts one's attention and then grips. Joshi delves into the inner recesses of human psyche where he finds instincts and impulses at work; he seeks a process of the apprehension of reality which may lead him to the world of the core of the truth of man’s life. He realizes man's uniqueness and loneliness in an indifferent and inscrutable universe (8).
The words of Dhawan hold true to S. L. Bhyrappa’s novels as well. With this introductory background against which identity conflicts and crisis and its different manifestations will be studied, the next chapter will discuss identity as a concept and its intricacies before moving on to study of its manifestations in Arun Joshi and S. L. Bhyrappa’s novels in third and fourth chapter. Fifth chapter attempts to make a comparative study of S. L. Bhyrappa and Arun Joshi. The Sixth chapter forms the summation.
Works Cited


Sharma, TRS. “Renegotiating ‘Identity’ in U. R. Ananthamurthy’s Samskara”.


