Importance and Justification of the study:

‘It is often said that the level of any society is judged by the level of its women. It is certainly true that the country’s progress is measured by the progress of its women folk….Men will not know their true selves until and unless they allow women to develop their true self.’

---Indira Gandhi, 1975

The above statement by Indira Gandhi, Ex. Prime Minister of India, states the importance of women in society. In the present era of Indian society, condition of women is not changed much from the past.

‘Indian Government in 1974 published a report, ‘Towards Equality’, that puts status of women forcefully on the national agenda by arguing that the position of Indian women had declined, not improved, since 1911(Committee on the Status of Women 1974). As a result development and progress became gender issues. Data on gender discrimination in employment, education, land distribution, inheritance, nutrition and health became impossible to overlook.’

Gender discrimination against girl child and female foetocide resulting imbalance in sex ratio of nation is found in many of states in India. ‘The 2011 Census year reports average sex ratio as 940 female per 1000 male’ which is very dangerous as far as the future of India is concerned. Prime Minister Manmohan Sing, in his Independence Day speech on 15 August 2009, said: ‘It is very sad that in our society, the girl child is being killed even before being born. This is shame on our society.’

This statement proves that in 21st century also, woman community is the victim of ancient social taboos and patriarchal structure of Indian society. Child Marriage, dowry system, plight of widowhood, discrimination in family and society, power politics and subjugation etc are the prevalent predicaments of Indian women.

Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Kamala Markandaya, as women, have made deep insight into the women sensibility and expressed their predicaments from their emotional responses. Their works can be used as a tool to find out the root causes of sufferings of Indian women. Most of their works have women as a protagonist and they are first person narratives.
These women characters suffer from the dilemma of tradition and modernity, they feel themselves completely alienated from the family and society.

These women novelists mainly present three types of characters in their novel: First the mothers of heroines who follow the Sita image and feel happy in serving their husband and family by following the norms imposed upon them by patriarchal society. Second types of women, who follow radical beliefs, do not like to confine themselves in Sita image and this attitude makes themselves free from the clutches of societal norms. Third types of women characters are those who oscillate between the above two. They firstly rebel against the power politics of male dominated society and then through introspection and self-discovery return to family. Thus, the works of these three women novelists are worthwhile to understand the female psyche, their sufferings and to find out the root causes of their suffering.

Present attempt of research would prove very beneficial in understanding the history and the status of women in Indian society. Examination of predicaments and their root causes would help in creating awareness about it among the members of society. The research would be beneficial for the further studies in changing roles, changing sensibilities and many other issues related to the lives of Indian women. Overall, present research would prove useful for the emancipation of entire community of women living in Indian society.