

CHAPTER – I
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‘Self search’ has been an eternal theme in all the great works of literature. Great literature has been seeking significance of life in futile or meaningless conditions. Man’s existence from the very beginning has been remained an endless quest for success and fulfillment. For him the universe is too ambiguous to understand or to know it completely. Since the earlier time, heroes and heroines of literature have been facing this dilemma. Literature, being a mirror to the life of man, reflects this eternal quest. This never-ending quest for understanding the world and its inhabitants goes on. It is an evolving, complex and lifelong process in which an individual develops a sense of self and forms an identity.

An answer of the question “Who am I?” or “Who are we” has not been very stable from the historical times. At the birth of Western philosophy, Socratis questioned about the existence of man. At the beginning of the Christian era St. Augustine voiced the same anguish. He stated that, “I have become a question to myself (*questio mihi factus sum*)”. (Baral 13)

“The roots of the word ‘identity’ come from (late) Latin *identitas*. ‘Identity’ represents the idea of ‘sameness’ (from *idem*), parallel with the ideas ‘likeness’ (*similitas*) and of unity (*unitas*)”. (Giselle 12-13) The term, *idem* means the ‘same,’ which “. . . implies the state of being or remaining the same under varying aspects or conditions-the condition of being oneself or itself and not another”. (Baral 113)

Quest for identity is a universal phenomenon. The question of identity is being raised for all the time. It is a problem for which human

beings are searching answer over a hundred thousand years. It has a close association with many things like socio-cultural contexts, human development or progress etc. It always changes in various contexts of time, is always different and of a new type than past. “Who am I?” or “who are we?” is very closely related question to human identity which leads to self-recognition and self-awareness. This self-awareness or inner sense comes from errors and difficulties. Both these activities are related to the mind or thought, an intellectual activity which has great significance in human development.

Questions such as Who am I? Who am I becoming? Where do I come from? Who am I in relationship to other people in my life? etc., are at the core of identity formation. Such questions change over time, make commitments and explore choices. They are based on the cultural and historical contexts of the self. Identity formation provides a sense of uniqueness and sameness. It links an individual to the past, present, and future. It is a fluid and dynamic process which changes with developmental stages of an individual. It gets affected by the information an individual receives regarding his or her environment and culture.

Conceptions about identity and its formation are different within different academic fields. Aspects such as personal beliefs and values, sex role identification, decisions about profession, sexual orientation, partner, marriage, family, etc. include in the concept of identity. Whether one communicates and develops closeness with others is also include in it. Identity is interpreted in both in relation and a context. One’s identity is formed through one’s identifications with others. If values, beliefs and characteristics of others are harmless one aspires to it. Otherwise, one wishes to dissociate from these characteristics. Every individual belongs

to distinctive characteristics which can be shared by all the members of a particular group.

In literature the protagonist develops himself or herself while searching for love, connections, place and a philosophy of life in the society. While defining oneself an individual asks a question, that is how much fulfilled he or she is? This thinking brings one to the meaning of life and happiness. While playing different roles throughout the life an individual develops different interdependent identities. These are relational identity, sexual identity, academic identity, occupational identity, cultural identity, religious identity, moral identity, personal identity, role- based identity, collective identity, social identity, etc. *Equilibrium point* is a status where all identities can find meaning.

Eric Erickson, a new Freudian psychologist, has given importance to the stable identity. According to him, “. . . “Identity” is a person’s sense of placement within the world, the meaning that one attaches to one self in the broader context of life”. (James W. W. 359) While defining the term identity in exact Erickson says:

[It] means a sense of being at one with oneself as one grows and develops; and it means, at the same time, a sense of affinity with a community’s sense of being with its future as well as its history or mythology. (1975, 27-28)

Quest for identity is a state of psychological distress. It occurs especially in adolescence, when one seeks a clearer sense of self and an acceptable role in the society. It is a period of uncertainty about ‘who’ or ‘what’ one is. In it person’s sense of identity becomes insecure, due to a change in their expected aims or roles in the society. In this state, there is confusion in the mind of a person, regarding the goals or priorities. It teaches him awareness about his identity and nationhood. It broadens and

opens him new horizons. One becomes hopeful about it and looks forward in life. One re-claims the past and re-creates new experiences.

Connolly says that, "My identity is what I am and how I am recognized rather than what I choose, want, or consent to". (64) Freundlich says,

In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage, to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning; no matter what our attainments in life, there is the most disquieting loneliness. (3)

In the words of M. Blumer,

. . . [identity is] a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past and cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements which define the group's identity, such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or physical appearance. (qtd. in Thorbole 66)

According to *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*, a concept of identity can be defined ". . . as the search for self and its relationship to social contexts and realities". (Gates 270) In the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Psychological Terms* identity formation is defined as,

From the standpoint of social psychology, before a person forms a recognizable personality, diverse influences of the common culture and experiences have been integrated in it as one whole. In short, adult personality integration is called identity formation. (Banerjee 124)

In the same book Identity theory is called as, “. . . the Double aspect Theory . . . the term which emphasizes the underlying unity of mind and body, ignoring the difference in methods of observation”. (124)

Weinreich says,

A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future. (56)

The identity of an individual changes even within a minute is a fact. In a different context, people vary in their personalities. One is entirely different person than every passed moment. For human beings identity is the most fundamental belief while living life and interacting with people. It reflects directly in the perspectives of their mind and personality. Thus, one's identity can be called as 'change' in the brain while responding to the surrounding situation. The first person perspective of identity is 'how others see you'. 'How one sees oneself' is different from how others see one. An individual does not reveal all the elements of his or her personality to everyone. That is the reason behind the difference between first and third person perspectives.

Identity quest leads to identity crisis between an individual and society where there is not easy reconciliation. In the crisis of cultural identity, a person struggles in search of ontological identity. One faces the problem of ethnic identity and finds deep identification with race and gender. Sometimes dual or hybrid identities are formed. One reclaims the sense of history and tries to balance between two cultures.

In various situations self of an individual gets wounded. Sometimes there is a cultural clash or communication gap between

people. Outdated set of rules is imposed on an individual. Sometimes one becomes suspicious regarding materialism, commercialization and tradition. It results into negative feelings such as alienation, loneliness, meaninglessness, despair, disdain, humiliation, senselessness, etc. This emotional stress stands in the way of compromise between a person and society. In such situation, one becomes aware of one's weaknesses and limitations.

Identity is always a lived reality of one's experiences. One has to stumble through the intricate mesh of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Complex situation gives new strength to identity. It is a tool in the pursuit of social justice. There are fierce wars for different types of identity in the world, such as racial, religious, national, ethnic and other types of identity. Though these outer elements do not determine what one is, it is not possible to ignore it.

In literature characters who quest for identity are unable to free themselves from the conflict between what they are supposed to be and who they are. There is conflict between a person and another person, or a person and a group, society, culture, tragic situation etc. In a tragedy, identity crisis is closely tied to the character's confusion. Emotionally they suffer a lot and are unable to overcome the crisis. This conflict leads them to self-awareness, self-actualization and an ultimate achievement.

In literature concepts of identity and identity formation are often linked to the Eric Erikson's (1902-1994) significant writing on the "eight stages of man". Erikson for the first time focused popular and scientific attention on the meaning of 'identity' as a psychological development. Erikson's eight developmental stages of human contribute to the development of man's self-esteem. They occur throughout the lifespan of an individual. In the psyche of a human being, there is a crisis between

these eight stages. These are trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame or doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego versus despair.

In these phases human beings ask some existential questions, such as Who am I and What can I be? What is my sexual identity? What role am I supposed to play, etc. People while passing through these phases at certain times of their life confront various new challenges. They have to resolve a crisis culminated at each stage before they move to the next stage. Only then they get a foundational experience of identity formation.

James Marcia, Canadian developmental psychologist's *Identity Status Theory* focuses on the development of an adolescent. According to it identity is made from various domains including religion, vocation, relational choices, gender, role, etc. It depends on the choices and commitments of an individual. It is affected by his personal and social traits. In this process, values and choices of a person are re-examined. Marcia's model of 'identity development' called *Identity Status Paradigm* has posed four identity statuses.

In a lowest status called 'Identity Diffusion' a person has no choice and commitment to anything due to lack of support or a role model. In 'Identity Foreclosure' status, a person has a willingness to commit to an identity and achieve a sense of it. 'Identity Moratorium' is a current crisis. Here the individual is ready to make choices and experiments with different identity options. In the final or highest status, an 'Identity Achievement', an individual passes through different stages of identity crisis. He resolves the crisis through exploration of different alternatives and experimentation and then commits to a particular identity.

Jean Phinney's '*Three Stage Progression*' model describes the formation of race and ethnic identity achievement. In the first stage 'Unexamined Ethnic Identity' an individual does not expose to ethnic identity issues and aligns with the dominant culture. In second stage 'Ethnic Identity Search' status, an individual tries to understand his ethnicity, involves into own culture, and appreciates and understands it deeply. He explores own identity and rejects the views and values of the dominant culture.

Third stage of Phinney's '*Three Stage Progression*' model is 'Ethnic Identity Achievement' stage in which an individual is clear and confident regarding his or her ethnicity. Phinney's progression of each status is relevant to the identity formation of the biracial individual who makes a choice about in which culture to immerse. An individual who involves only in these activities which are specific to that culture achieves ethnic identity formation. According to Rotherman and Phinney ethnic identity is "... one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership". (13)

William E. Cross' '*Ethnic Identity Model*' or theory for African Americans is termed as 'Cycles of Nigrescence'. It means 'the process of becoming Black' in French. It has five stages of ethnic identity development to explore race and ethnic identity formation. In the first stage 'pre-encounter', the individual does immersion in the dominant culture and internalizes group stereotypes. During the second stage, 'encounter', conflict and tension arise about whether to accept own or the dominant culture.

In Cross's third stage of 'immersion-emersion', the biracial individual identifies with his or her culture and chooses to immerse into

the customs, values, and traditions of the dominant culture. He adopts behaviors and cultural beliefs of one of the two cultures and looks for role models that confirm his or her ethnic preference. In 'internalization stage' an individual functions as bicultural and incorporates beliefs and behaviors of both the cultures into his or her lifestyle. In the final stage 'internalization-commitment' an individual balances comforts of both, his own as well as others' racial and ethnic identity. In this stage, individuals internalize their new identities but make a distinction between those who discontinue their involvement in the social change, and those who continue.

Helm J. E.'s model of '*White Racial Identity*' is significant to biracial identity formation. It is related to the people of colour and has six statuses. In the first 'Contact status' the individual is unable to perceive the adverse effects of negative racial socialization. In the 'Dissonance status' the individual is unaware about his or her group and race. The third status called 'Immersion status' the individual idealizes and has a commitment to his or her group. In 'Internalization status' an individual begins to respond objectively to his or her group's dominant racial issues and assumes a positive commitment to his culture. In the final 'Integrative awareness status', an individual empathizes with oppressed groups.

Poston's '*Multiracial Identity Model*' has four stages. In the first stage 'Personal Identity', an individual is not yet developed regarding group. In the second stage 'Choice of Group Categorization' an individual develops a sense of belonging. One is influenced by parents and his or her physical appearances. In 'Enmeshment' or denial stage there is confusion and feeling of guilt about choosing reference group. Here, a person appreciates multiple identities. 'Integration' is the final

stage in which an individual develops self-concept. An individual senses wholeness and values his or her diverse identities. Thus, identity formation is a dynamic process. It changes in relation to the individual's developmental stage, which helps to answer the question, "Who am I?"

According to Jane Kroger's approach, identity formation falls into two categories, 'linear' or 'non-stage' or 'non-developmental' and 'non-linear' or 'stage' or 'developmental'. According to Kroger's 'linear' view, identity formation changes quantitatively in nature, and divides people into various types in which "... something which exists early in life becomes merely bigger or more pronounced through time". (8) On the other hand, 'Developmental' or 'Non-linear' model is a series of different stages. Each stage is built differently on previous one.

The sense of identity is neither unconscious nor completely conscious. It is originated in the clinical context. A patient who has an identity disturbance suffers from a break in his sense of the self. It prevents him from experiencing himself as a continuous being with present, future and past. In his quest of identity process, neuroscience offers some new insights. James Martin in *The Meaning of the 21st Century* argues that, "... we shouldn't just ask what is going to happen in the future, but how we are going to shape the future". (qtd. in Greenfield IX-X) Neuroscience does not only explain why an individual is as he or she is, but helps to explore how he or she might change.

According to Ambedkar "... it is true that consciousness arises with birth and dies with death". (263) He fought against the discrimination between man and man on the basis of false ideas and the wrong beliefs based on caste and religion. Thousands of Ambedkar's followers tried to throw away old identities and tried to search new one by changing their religion. This identity quest or consciousness is

clarified by Buddha, as “. . . the coexistence or aggregation of the physical elements produces consciousness wherever there was *Rupa* or *Kaya* there was consciousness accompanying it”. (Ambedkar 263) Buddhist philosophy has thought on ‘*mana*’ or mind or consciousness of the human being differently. He has worked on the effects of good or bad on the human psyche. Lord Buddha has linked body with the mind or consciousness.

There is great similarity between Lord Buddha’s ancient thoughts and Lock’s modern philosophy about consciousness. According to Lock, a modern psychologist, human consciousness is the perception of what passes in man’s mind. He says that consciousness or reflection is a person’s noticing the ‘internal operations’ of his mind. By means of it, a person acquires the ideas of the various mental statuses. Such as the ideas of perceiving, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing, willing, etc. and learns of his mental status at a given time. In *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology* in connection with personal identity he says that “. . . [it] consists . . . in sameness of consciousness”. (Rome 458)

While interpreting personal identity on memory level further Locke states:

. . . someone now is identical to someone who existed yesterday-if any only if he remembers in a certain way (from the inside as it were) or is capable of so remembering, that person’s actions and experiences. (Rome 458)

According to Aikant, Upanishadic technique of knowing the *atman* helps to understand the concept of identity better. It is the repetition of *neti*, meaning ‘it is not this!’. In Upanishad ‘*Koham Dhyana*’ is a technique of meditation that asks, ‘who am I?’ This technique from Hinduism helps one to realize oneself. It moves from familiar world to an

outside world towards inward, “. . . to the meaning of who, and why, one is—the idea being that true awareness is realized only when we shut our internal stimuli”. (Aikant 23)

Hindu view of psycho-social development is based on the biological development of an individual. Hindu philosophy keeps ‘soul’ at the centre of identity quest or consciousness and glorifies ‘self’ at spiritual level. It considers identity as, “. . . the gross assortment of *mana* (mind), *chitta*, (intelligence) and *ahankara* (egotism) surrounding the soul”. (Ambhore 15) Whereas an opposite to it Buddhist philosophy is based on the human level which calls mind as conscious. Erik Erikson has compared his theory of ‘human life stages’ with the classical *Hindu Ashrama* scheme which expresses more about of ‘what should be’. According to Erikson identity is,

. . . the accrued (human) confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others, as evidenced in the tangible promise of a career. (1963, 261)

There is a similarity between the views of William James and Diversity critics, a section of feminist critics about the plurality of an individual. According to them, an individual belongs to particular social groups. At the same time he has more than three or four identities in the society. There is great internal diversity of the self. It divides the constituents of the self into four classes- the social self, the material self, the spiritual self and the pure ego. James puts it as, “A man has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares”. (292)

According to the twentieth century’s Existential philosophy individual, is an alienated and stranger in the society. Jean Paul Sartre, a

pioneer of existential philosophy, says that man is a vast emptiness. And he has very few chances of real development due to the absence of a regular pattern of experience and lack of a meaningful set of values. Philosophy does not have solutions for such harsh realities. For Freud identity is a manifestation of the ego, super ego and consciousness. Lacan's view of 'intersectional' is a metaphor of complex identities constituted by class, race, gender, ethnicity and social orientation.

According to Kant, the term 'self' is empirical. Identity means to understand about individual's 'self' or his real being. Its formation does not cease when an individual reaches maturity. It is a 'production' which never gets accomplished. Self or ". . . personal identity consists in psychological continuity and connectedness . . . what is really important to us is not the identity perse but rather the psychological relationship that are (normally) constitutive of it". (Rome 459)

Search of an identity or self is an ongoing process which grows up naturally. Individual tries to link himself with inner self, consciousness and social reality. This consciousness relates with fundamental aspects of human beings like sensing, feeling, curiosity etc. It helps them to achieve a 'dynamic self'. Thus, psychological continuity plays very important role in the development of an individual. In this regard Ambhore says, that "Imitation leads to conscious learning, conscious efforts help in the development of self-concept and self-concept results into a particular person or personality". (17)

Whitesell, Mitchell, Kaufman, and Spicer define 'self' as "a unique entity" and personal identity as, ". . . aspects of the self that are differentiated from others and motivated toward self-interest and individual goals". (1488) Identity is one's brain and mind. Intellectual activity is the central element of it. With the help of it so many things are

understood including one's “. . . “mental”-thoughts, feelings, emotions, perceptions, sensations, moods, dispositions . . .”. (Rome 394) So David Hume, a famous philosopher has said that, “. . . “the mind” or “self” is nothing but a bundle . . . of different perceptions”. (Rome 394) It is always impacted by the instability and insecurity present in the environment of every era.

Human beings always define themselves paradoxically, as individuals as well as how similar they are to others. Being a part of a group affects one's sense of identity. Identity of an individual depends on the assumptions such as attitudes, tastes and priorities. Classifications like birth, race, gender, and age are more important while determining individual sense of identity. At some times individual terms like nationality, age, and gender become irrelevant. And collective persona is the only factor to count how one sees oneself. Most of the people have public and private identities. When this flexibility no longer occurs, collective identity is everything.

In the sense of collective identity, one feels an affinity with a group to share some values and outlook. When 'one' in shared community becomes 'we', then one's identity becomes cloudy. In the modern situation, there are a number of channels to connect personal identity to collective identity. Daily newspapers represent collective identity of a particular society. Every individual learns a lot of things from society. Even children and teenagers of today try to search their identity. They socialize themselves making use of modern technical objects like T.V., mobile and internet. In a society, one may able to know who one is. So it is true as Shinn says that, “. . . every person is a sample of the whole human race”. (2)

Erikson's notion of 'collective sense of identity' characterizes "... the individual's significant social groups-his caste, class, nation or culture-gets transmitted to the infant's earliest bodily experience, entering the very core of his ego and thus becomes inextricably intertwined with his personal sense of identity which emerges from and is yet more than a sum of his earlier accrued identifications". (Kakar, x)

In this regard Eric Fromm, a great psychologist writes that, "Men generally are part of people with a shared history, shared customs, shared goals, and shared symbols". (Shinn 2) It is also real when he further says that, "One becomes a self only within a group or people". (3) When one develops one's self-personality in association with other people, then one recognizes his or her place in the society. In the same book further it is stated that being a member of society an individual is a member of several groups like family, vocational or organizational groups, religious or national and ethnic groups. All these groups have some character, some self-consciousness.

'Self' is a very important component in everyone's life. According to Shoemaker, a famous metaphysical thinker, the terms 'personal identity' and 'self identity' are often used interchangeably. In the formulation of the metaphysical quest, the word 'self' is more frequently used than the word 'person'. Philosophers use the term 'self' as a synonym to the word 'person'. But the term 'self-knowledge' does not mean exactly 'knowledge of a person'. One's knowledge of oneself is self-knowledge. To have 'self-knowledge' means to know who one is. So to be conscious about one's personality is most important. Calvin and Ctdardner elaborate this point:

... the self is the midpoint of personality, around which all of the systems are constelled. It holds these systems together

and provides the personality with unity, equilibrium and stability. The self is life's goal. That people constantly strive for but rarely reach. (118)

Self-esteem is used to study an aspect of personal identity. It is a positive or negative evaluation of oneself. In psychology, a person's self is treated as his "self-concept". Society plays most important role in the development of 'self-concept'. Every individual as a member of society observes other members and their certain rules, roles, symbolic expressions. He observes certain performances which reflect rules of relationship, supportive norms and values. Such interactions play a vital role in the building of self. Man knows about himself in association with other people. With the help of this knowledge of self, he understands the world. Erik H. Erikson says,

. . . identity points to an individual's link with the unique values . . . [it] expresses a mutual relations, it connects both persistent sameness within oneself (self-sameness) and a persistent sharing of same kind of essential character with others.(1960 38)

As a socio-psychologist Erikson thinks of the term identity on different levels. He links it with past, present and future. He says that identity is a coherence sense of self, sense of whole, and sense of integration. ". . . it depends upon the awareness that they are meaningful in the context in which life is lived . . . upon stable values and upon the conventions that one's actions and values are harmoniously related". (qtd. in Cayton 39)

Thus, identity stands for the uniqueness of a particular person. It means behavior, nature, and mental and physical health of a person. An individual strives continually to become a complete man. It makes him

aware about the living circumstances around him. In this process he observes, compares and contrasts. He tries to understand 'what he is' and 'what he wishes to be'. In this process identity formations 'Self-concept' and 'Self-actualization' help to know person's limitations and capabilities. According to Erikson identity formation is a process of simultaneous reflection and observation. It takes place on all levels of mental functioning to help the individual to judge himself, ". . . in the light of what he perceives to the way in which others judges him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them . . .". (1968, 22-23)

Self-concept is the way of looking at oneself. According to Basavanna it is a process in which while interacting with other people one becomes aware about self. It is an individual's attitude about the self and sense of his identity. Another important process in the formation of identity is 'Self-actualization'. Basavanna defines it:

. . . [it is] an individual's attempt to attain his ideal self or to attain a healthy, optimal forms of psychological functioning . . . a striving towards becoming a complete person . . . inborn tendency to make the most of one's possibilities as a person. (378)

Self is an entire being and character of an individual. It means special features and individuality of a person. With body thoughts, emotions and interests of a person are very important. Self-concept is a guide to inter personal relationships and behaviors. It has very important role in all activities of a person. The conducts, states, roles, norms and behaviors of an individual are controlled by cultural and socio-psychological forces. If somebody fails to follow the set values of society it creates conflict, because the role played by an individual and role

expected by society are controversial to each other. Only multifaceted personality copes up with such situation. This notion of 'self-concept' is,

. . . [it is] the image or mental picture one has of oneself . . . one's social stimulus value . . . and one's ideologies and values . . . [it] reflects one's set of roles . . . The perceived reactions of others are internalized as guide to behavior those reactions have become the part of the self-concept. (Benjamin 104)

Self-concept needs feedback from society. Many good or bad experiences affect on the development of self-concept. Concepts like self-consciousness, self-awareness and self-confidence help to survive in the society. It is a cultural and socio-political product of particular circumstances. It should be understood only on the socio-cultural framework. Thus, the notion of self is central and key aspect in the life of an individual. Hence, the concept of 'self' and 'other' define and refer each other. It is said in the *International Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry, Psychology, Psychoanalysis and Neurology* that,

. . . there are two major aspects of self: first, a set of relatively private self-regarding attitudes; and second, a set of internalized perceptions of the expectations and attitudes others have about oneself. (Benjamin 104)

According to Hornby the concept of 'self' is, ". . . a person's inner being including the mind and spirit and identity-the state of being very like or the same . . .". (789) It is an ultimate state of consciousness or mind which concerns deeply about 'who' or 'what'. One gets clear insight of 'self' and 'identity' when one finds roots of it in the life of man. Ziller, a psychologist, has said that the ". . . definition of the self necessarily involves the other and its reverse". (15)

Sometimes there are identity vacuum periods because of fears and anxieties for various reasons i.e. inventions of weapons, decay of institutions, dread of existential vacuum, etc. Erikson has defined the concept of identity confusion which denotes “. . . a person’s uncertainty about his future role in society, as well as a sense of discontinuity between his personal past and his future”. (1968, 87) Further he states,

Without some such ideological commitment, however implicit in a “way of life”, youth suffers a confusion of values . . . which on a large scale is surely dangerous to the fabric of society. (188)

The term has distinct characteristics. In this regard Baral writes that “. . . there is a specifiable difference of persons or groups from other persons or groups (and also from a universal sameness devoid of distinct features). (15) According to Epstein, “Identity . . . is essentially a concept of synthesis. It represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his various statuses and roles, as well his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self”. (101)

Baral writes that there are diverse theoretical assumptions on the nature of identity. Whether identity is dependent on physical, social and historical circumstances? or does such circumstances constitute the self, to determine an identity? are questions of argument. Some theorists are of the view that human beings are an independent and an autonomous entity. They can lead isolated and self-sufficient lives. Opposite view is that “. . . the self is socially constituted and that the social, political and cultural conditions of human existence are inseparable from the formation of a particular identity”. (Baral 65)

An individual interacts in the society to create an identity. During this period social identity gets changed or reproduced. Bruner argues that, “. . . self . . . must be treated as a construction that, so to speak, proceeds from the outside in as well as from the inside out, from culture to mind as well as from mind to culture”. (108)

According to Marlow's theory if certain basic needs of an individual are fulfilled at the right time, he progresses in the life properly. Only then man thinks of social needs, self-actualization and self-esteem. Without it one faces problems like suppression, or diffusion of personality. He has given hierarchy of human needs:

. . . psychological needs like, food, water, safety needs-security and safety, social needs-to have friends and to be accepted by others self-esteem-to have self-confidence and self-respect and self-actualization developing all one's potential. (Peter 80)

In the long history of development man has been a victim of calamities, dangers, uncertainties, and cruelties of nature. He has been under the dark shadow of a permanent fear of death. Its result in his subconscious mind either weakened him or his continuous struggle for survival and strong urge for life made him strong. He divided land, cattle, property, and slaves and has marked it as his 'Own'. His selfish, power seeking and dominating tendency to become master or control everything has given birth to monarchic, feudalistic and colonial mentality.

Political issue and identity both are inseparable. 'Survival of the fittest' is the concept synonymous to identity. In the race of struggle for survival, other things are devoured, demolished or destroyed except self. Their expression is kept unrecognized and suppressed using power. They are changed, modified and bent according to dominant standards. They

are evaluated by someone outsider's value system. Such type of behavior has divided man into different categories based on race, caste, religion, gender, color, socio-political ideologies and prejudices on the basis of birth. Man's conversion from 'self' to 'selfish' man has endangered the very establishment and existence of man.

At present number of conflicts such as international relations, internal and external security, evolution of the crime and border issues are threats to identity. Transnational migration affects individual and collective identities and creates new identities. Strong feelings of patriotism, nationalism, inferiority-superiority etc. have created many physical and psychological problems. Division, hierarchy, historical and social disorder etc. are the threats to national identity. More advancing weapons have challenged the very stability of man. Victims of such type of treatment and exploitation lose their confidence as well as identity. Numerous psychological notions like alienation, depression, anxiety, disdain, bleakness, meaninglessness, loneliness, etc. are the result of it.

From the 20th century, there is increasing awareness about self-identity. Restricted, unjustified, suppressed, dehumanized, subjugated and inactive groups and ideas have started searching meaning of their existence. For them, search for identity has become a problem not only of an individual but of 'community' or 'group' They try to renew, reshape and re-invent their identity. These confused people seek an answer to a simple question: who am I? In Post-modernism it is seen, ". . . in the ways that the commodity works to reduce culture to highly dispersed, market-based systems of semiotic exchange and their disunifying effects on the self". (Dunn 81)