Concluding Chapter is an effort to analyse the traditional role of the Indian woman on the basis of preceding five chapters. In addition, it includes a comparative study, based on the themes and techniques of Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan and Manju Kapur. It brings out Indian woman’s development and feminism in Indian Fiction in English. Beginning from traditional phase, roaming to transitional stage and finally attaining modernity is studied critically with references from the novels by Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. A woman seeks her goals in the ordinary tasks of womanhood, of serving her family members. She often does not find what she strives for. The ancient consciousness of a woman, charged with suffering and sensibility, seems in her to have brimmed and overflowed, and utter a demand for emancipation.

The concept of equal rights for a woman is not new, The Greek philosopher, Plato advocated for equality between the sexes in his book, Republic. In modern era, women are getting their legal rights which were routinely applied only to a man. An actual equality in society has dragged far behind legal liberty. Time is changing and the woman has come out of her household to spread her wings for flying into the sky of achievements. She presents herself in those fields which were strictly considered a male citadel, where a woman could never stake. Today, new women have emerged potentially in adopting a professional career along with the duties of a house wife. Now, they lives with dignity and raise their head in rebellion. In his article, Problematizing Feminism, Jaidev explains feminism in such words:

Feminism is a global and revolutionary ideology and as such calls for a definite stance, a set of firm, exacting attitudes. The ideology is political because it is concerned with the question of all questions, the question of power; it is revolutionary because it is against the status quo. Predictably enough, feminism is viewed as a threat (once it becomes something more than a laughing matter or gossip theme) by forces which have stakes and interest in the status quo. These forces are not only chauvinist but can include economic, political, religious, racist, neo-colonial, and even multinational ones. Connections stop nowhere, and a feminist, rather than staying
naive, would be considered paranoiac a la the unnamed heroine of Atwood’s Surfacing. There cannot be a significant feminist gain without the entire system registering tremors and taking steps either to absorb the shock or else neutralize it. The system-preserving forces can be daring and ruthless in their attempts to curb revolutionary tendencies, but these forces can also be very imaginative and innovative. They can manufacture an imitation feminism to counter the genuine one. They can also try to corrupt the latter from within.¹

Some of the Indian English women novelists describe a society in which women are not only ill-treated but also abused and exploited. In the novels of some women writers other than the writers chosen for the present study, the protagonists presented are mostly women characters, desolated and isolated by an entirely hypocritical and insensitive male dominating society. They have tried their best to free the female mentality from the age-long control of male domination. There are various Indian English novels that deal with woman’s problems. These novels end up with glorifying virtues of the Indian woman, like patience and devotion whatever is she faced.

A female writer has to be very attentive while she writes any novel; it is not easy for her to interpret her ideas without any fear. Social boundaries and victorian ideas of morality proved their tyrannically treated condition. Men have freedom to cross the boundaries of society, but for a woman, society always has a different attitude for social norms. A woman writer has to be very strong to present the hidden aspect of a woman’s life, due to it, she is treated very badly in this patriarchal society. There are number of human experiences that are very important to present before society because that become the cause of female exploitation. After having creative talent, she did not have freedom of expression. But in the contemporary world, women writers explore their experiences with boldness, and enjoy a great measure of freedom. Sushila Singh presents the recent trends in Feminism:

The situation can be countered when women turn their world into a subject and a cultural ideological source. The study of what constitutes women’s world, its culture and values, they feel, should be a major area of feminist
studies. Women have a fundamental respect for the liable order, for the environmental context, for the concrete, everyday world. They willingly adopt a passive mode of accepting the diversity of environmental voices and the validity of their realities. Women appear less willing to wrench that context apart or to impose upon its alien abstractions or to use implements that subdue it intellectually or physically.²

In this male dominated and tradition bound Indian society, a woman is a worst sufferer. Indian women novelists have been encouraged to a certain extent by their historical and cultural context, consistently treat the feministic phenomenon in their fictional works, thus describing an Indian woman whose fate has been to silently suffer for ages at the hands of the establishment. In view of their high intellectual accomplishments and a masterly grasp of modern sciences, including especially psychology, these novelists amply put the suffering of their characters in sharp focus and their private worlds and the social constraints in perspective. Their feminine sensibility conveys to their observation a humane touch and a psychological depth in their novels. G.D. Barche portrays the predicament of an Indian woman in his article Facets of Feminism in English Fiction-

The position of the woman in general and Indian woman in particular has been paradoxical. That is she has been the key person, the master figure in the family and yet she has lived the life of slavery, subjugation, suffering and suppression. However now she has started becoming conscious of her rights and responsibilities distress and destination. Accordingly she has waged her war, too. Of course this war is not going to be easy and short lived, as it is against human elements like ego, greed, ambition, selfishness, sadism, etc. presently the period she is passing through is a transitional one and she has miles to go before the goal is reached.³

The three novelists are chosen for an evaluation of the journey of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis of female consciousness. This study has highlighted the problems that are faced by women in family. There are various family or social responsibilities taken by her in her hand as the burden of family honour, attempts made to hold the family from
breaking away and struggle to make her own individual identity in the family. These novelists have tried to establish woman for an individual identity with the changed social scenario of the modern times. Shubha Tiwari rightly comments:

Indian women novelists can be said to be highly conscious of the woman’s liberation movement. By and large they have portrayed woman and her stories with consciousness of the injustice being meted out to woman by society. These novels have a feminist undercurrent. Usually these novels have a woman as the central character. If we look at these fictional female characters, a large number of them rebel against the existing social set up. They discard the idea of being submissive, suffering and sacrificing. Rebellion is no easy process. It demands determination and a will to stand by the cause of rebellion at any cost. These heroines in the novels of Indian women novelists have often come up to paying the prize of their rebellion rather than submitting and dying through suffocation.4

Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan sketch the picture of new women with greater self-consciousness and a deeper sense of involvement. Earlier writers had praised women’s sufferings but now the writers of the postmodern era have presented their suffering with much greater realism to regain their real honourable position. Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan have presented various modes of opposition to patriarchal norms. Various themes like love and marriage, demands of motherhood and women’s bonding have been successfully reinterpreted and redefined in the light of individual identity.

The image of Indian woman in the writings of postmodern Indian women novelists is a burning issue. It is a fact in India society that the exploitation of women is mostly based on caste, class and patriarchal domination. The issue of Indian woman’s exploitation is not new in India but she has suffered since ancient times. In every period, there was protest of gender discrimination by some contemporary social activists and reformers. The image of Indian women is depicted by both, Indian men and women writers. Their writings are based on realistic and naturalistic perspectives. They revolt against the prejudiced
images of women portrayed by myth, mythology and religious books of Indian origin. They present the picture of practical women who suffer from day to day realities of their life as a result of false beliefs and social taboos.

The present study, “A journey of thesis, antithesis and synthesis in female consciousness: a study of the novels of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan” is an analysis of the image of Indian women projected in the writings of above three women writers. This whole thesis is an analysis of the socio-economic perspectives of India society and its relationship with the women’s exploitation and their predicaments in society and family.

Indian English novelists have a very honourable position among the great novelists of the world. Meanwhile, Indian English women novelists have provided a new direction to Indian English literature. These women novelists describe the whole world of women sensationally. Their writings explore those hidden aspects of female psyche, which were not accessible before society. So, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan’s novels have been taken for the present research work. All the three writers are prominent postcolonial women novelists writing in English. Arundhati Roy has written a full length novel ‘The God of Small Things’ on womanhood. Manju Kapur has presented the contemporary scenario of womanhood in her novels Difficult Daughters, The Immigrant and Custody. And Githa Hariharan presents an ideal picture of womanhood with the mythological touch in her novels Thousand Faces of Night, When Dreams Travel, In Times of Siege and Fugitive History. The present study examines the novels of these female writers with images of women reflecting on them. Their female protagonists fight for their rights in a patriarchal society. Their women protagonists are stricken between tradition and modernity. This study explains their ability to explore the psyche of the present day educated middle-class women. They have portrayed memorable women characters. Their novels consist a variety of women characters. Their women characters present the various shades of the lives of women. Through their women characters, they show a mirror to the society about the condition of middle class women in a patriarchal society. The main focus of Indian women novelists is on social reformation. The second phase of Indian women novelist is more focused on the challenges and
predicaments of women. Among many leading Indian feminist women writers writing in English, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan have created absolutely different pattern of female characters. In the changed cultural circumstances, women characters do not largely become the victims of their male counterparts of patriarchal society but they are shown with their own new problems as new responsibilities, availability of equal opportunity, social limitations and new freedom etc.

The introductory chapter focuses on the life and contribution of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan to Indian English Fiction. This chapter is an effort to survey the various stages and development of Indian English Fiction with especial reference to feministic aspects. It shows the predicament and status of a woman in the society. It focuses on various themes, dealt with Indian English writers in general and Indian English women writers in particular. It also gives a brief introduction to the life and works of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kpaur and Githa Hariharan whose novels have been selected for the analysis of female consciousness. It also introduces the themes of the novels, taken for analysis in brief. It evaluates the status and position of a woman in the society and the family. A section of this chapter focuses on various themes, dealt with Indian English writers in general and Indian English women writers in particular. There is also a brief introduction of the works of the Roy, Kapur and Hariharan whose novels are selected for analysis. There is also the analysis of the condition of woman’s equality with man for various reasons, through the selected novels that introduce the theme of the novel.

Second Chapter is an analysis of female consciousness in the light of German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s theory of Thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Thesis is an intellectual proposition. Antithesis is simply the negation of the thesis, a reaction to the proposition. And synthesis solves the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truths and forming a new thesis. This theory is a Hegelian dialectics revolving around three progressive stages of development. Hegel interpreters have more than a superficial understanding of what a thesis, antithesis and synthesis dialectic is. It is a formula for the explanation of change. There is no true solution either in thesis or in anti-thesis, but in an emerging synthesis which evaluate the both. This chapter observes feminine sensibility in terms of Hegelian theory of thesis,
antithesis and synthesis and finds out how the three novelists selected for study use Hegelian formula consciously or unconsciously. Through different female characters of middle class society, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan examine despair and sorrow that emerge out of female exploitation. Here feminism can be taken as a thesis, the antifeminism forces can be interpreted as antithesis, and the reconciliation between the two can be seen in terms of synthesis.

Roy, Kapur and Hariharan have constructed the plots of their novels revolving around female consciousness. As a matter of fact, a woman can better understand female psyche than male. Female exploitation can be observed and explain realistically by the sex which has closely witnessed the social system. Patriarchal system in social set up in Indian society is introduced for maintaining a harmony in day to day life. Woman was also given much more importance in some spheres of life. Male and female were considered important pillars of social change. In medieval times, woman was exploited by the governing class and treated just like a tool in the hands of patriarchal society. After the disintegration of Mughal empire, British took over the reign of the country and exploited the people of India and even they looted the whole country. A large number of problems were seen by government and the people in free atmosphere. The government and social reformers tried their level best to uproot evil practices faced by people. Some of these malpractices like Dowry, child marriage, illiteracy were taken into consideration by the government as well as social reformer. Female writers played pivotal roles for emancipation of the suffering woman. The trio has focused on the dilemma of feminine sensibility and tried to such an amicable solution of the problems of women.

Chapter III, Class Consciousness and female awareness examines Class consciousness which is a system of systematizing society where people are divided into sets based on perceived social, economic and political status. In this chapter, feminine consciousness is perceived in terms of class-consciousness. Feminine consciousness has made women aware for their rights and take firm steps to stand against the dominating forces. In ancient times, women were always given higher status in Indian society. Human beings were categorized neither on the basis of their birth in high or low caste nor on economic, political and other parameters but on the basis of their karmas in this life.
This chapter throws light on the diverse patterns in the structure as well as the relationships in the family. It has analyzed crack in parental and filial relationship. Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* shows the complete breakdown of familial bonding. Through the character Pappachi, Roy has created an ill – honoured, selfish bully who believes in male supremacy. Mammachi, his wife is a silent sufferer who accepts the brutal treatment of her husband without protest. She possesses a kind of inner strength which helps her to endure patriarchal dominance. In the house of her parents, Ammu gets harsh treatment from her father and indifference from her mother than love and concern. On account of the disharmonious relationship between her parents, she grows as a malcontent daughter.

Through the three different generations of the female of the novel *The God of Small Things*, Roy tries to show the miserable condition of the women in Indian society. She presents physical and mental violence against female in male dominated society. Roy also criticizes the social authorities like family, marriage, religion and police which made for the welfare of human beings but they play a different role in the marginalization of woman.

Manju Kapur, in her novel *Difficult Daughters*, tries to discover a new territory where woman always thinks for freedom. Her female characters strongly handle man dominated society. They never hesitate to go beyond the traditional systems or customs to visualize their hopes and aspirations. On account of her significant contribution to Indian Woman Writing by portraying the struggle of woman in the patriarchal society, Manju kapur has occupied a very important position in Indian Writing in English. She comes before the readers as an Indian English writer and highlights the problems of woman in various roles like wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, etc.

Virmati is the vital character of the novel *Difficult Daughter*. She is the perfect exponent of Kapur’s feminism in this novel. She is a sensitive girl who seems to struggle against the whims of patriarchal structure of society. The novel faces Virmati’s quest for freedom and identity. Manju Kapur insists that the world she portraits in her novels, stands from intellectual experiences of her academic life. Virmati challenges oppressive social restrictions which do not allow her to take higher studies. She is also the victim of double standard of society. This novel is the compassionate tale of three generations-Kasturi-
Virmati-Ida. Through this novel, Kapur tries to show the pathetic position of woman in the male dominated society.

Kapur’s novel is feminist discourse not because she is a woman writing about women but because she is able to understand the problems related to women. In this regard Jai Dev writes:

Manju Kapur has understood a woman both as a person pressurized by all kinds on visible and invisible context.5

Hariharan presents in her novel Thousand Faces of Night the position of women in Indian society. Women struggle against the barriers of caste and class. It presents the picture of woman as insecure individual craving for love and understanding. She presents Devi, the protagonist of the novel as the representator of new woman. In this novel, Hariharan describes woman as insecure individual craving for love and understanding. Devi, in this novel survives in her law house and continuously experiences humiliation and disillusionment in her matrimonial relationship. Hariharan comes out heavily against dowry because it never certified a good fate for any girl after marriage. Devi always expects charm and excitement in her marital life. Thousand Faces of Night seems to be story of the agonies and sufferings of a wife.

The main aim of this chapter is to search female problems discussed in the novels of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. Women are living under the patriarchal pressure and control. The struggle under oppressive mechanism of closed society is very much reflected in the writings of these writers. It can be observed in their novels that women are not mere puppets in the hands of male dominated forces. Their writings reflect the experiences of women in real world. They write about personal experiences, problems, spaces and identity crises. By putting various issues in their novels, they extend their own views regarding sensitive feminine issues. They try to fill the spaces of traditional and modernist ethos of women trying to grapple with it to find their identity. Their writings argue for the values like liberty of thoughts and expressions, liberation from marginalization, and equality as a quest for dignity which are the primary requirements of
their imagination and creativity. The picture of woman in Indian English fiction is the silent sufferer and upholder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society.

The next Chapter highlights binaural issues which can be explained in term of thesis and antithesis of feminine sensibility. Number of issues like caste system, migration, illiteracy, economic imbalances create problems and lead to undesirable consequences. Manju Kapur’s Custody presents the picture of female exploitation against the exploitative social customs of male domination. Manju kapur discloses the hollowness of the life of modern human beings. She portrays the conflicting picture of the parents for the possession of their children. In this particular novel, Kapur presents the pain, sorrows and consolation of two female characters, Shagun and Ishita, and their efforts to fulfil their desires. Shagun, the protagonist of the novel is beautiful, strong and courageous to choose an epicurean lifestyle in order to create her own place in the world.

Githa Hariharan’s novel In Times of Siege deals with the number of social problems as politics of caste-division and intolerance. There is also the crises of demolition that occurs in the life of Shivamurthy, an innocent history professor of fifty two years old at the Kasturba Gandhi University. Hariharan is a personality of a very creative mind through which she has set to cause a silent revolution or change in the attitude of modern Indian woman. Since she writes in English, her readership may have been limited to the upper and upper middle class educated women, but her involvement in different groups, her conscious attempt to question the gender bias proves that she is a woman of substance and a true citizen with awareness of her rights.

The next chapter deals with social consciousness which scrutinized the new aspects of feminism in Manju Kapur’s Immigrant and Githa Hariharan’s The Fugitive History and When Dreams Travel. Hariharan presents the picture of an India, with all its religious and social contradictions in her novels. In When Dreams Travel, and Fugitive Histories, Hariharan depicts the political situation. When dreams travels draws attention to Arabian Knights Tales. Through this novel, Hariharan makes clear the position of woman inside local patriarchies and the extent of the psychological damage inflicted on them as second rate citizens of a repressive social order.
With the passing time, matrimonial harmony is fading, as a woman has become aware of her rights. She resists to submit to the traditional role of a wife and demands for equal rights in social order and protests when she feels marginalized. In her novels, The Immigrant Kapur expresses the resentment of a woman who is caught in an arranged marriage and is expected to perform her duties as a traditional wife. Because of the lack of companionship, a woman feels spiritually and emotionally alone which leads her to protest.

The Immigrant is a narration of an immigrant wife’s experiences. Nina goes from Indian to Canada with extreme compassion. Her traumas, as a marginalized individual in a foreign country, are pathetically presented by the writer. Nina is a professor in college of Delhi but she leaves for Canada due to her marriage with a Ananad who has settled in Canada. Now she has to depend on her husband for her identity in Canada. She feels disgraced when Ananda comments that everybody accepts her so swiftly because she is his wife. Throughout the novel, Kapur presents the feeling of rootlessness with great sensitivity in a new country. As a result of this, Nina walks out of her marriage to prove her own existence in Canada. Simonede Beauvoir observes—

A woman supported by a man-wife or courtesan, is not emancipated from the male because she has a vote; if custom imposes less constraint upon her than formerly, the negative freedom implied has not profoundly modified her situation; she remains bound in her condition of vassalage. It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice. Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator.

Thus, the raising voice of modern educated young woman against years of slavery and suffering is a serious one. Her sufferings from certain flaws and complexes have been very honestly highlighted by the novelist through Nina’s extra marital affairs.

In When Dreams Travel, Hariharan attempts to examine the new aspects of feminism and gives new dimensions to the ancient myth. In the original myth, Shahrzad narrates continuous series of stories for thousand and one nights for bringing Shahryar to
regret the continuous killings of more than thousand virgins; whereas Dunyazad in When Dreams Travel suggests a poetic justice for his sins by killing Shahryar. When Shahzaman makes darkness, his enemy Dunyazad after discovers his wife sleeping with a dark skinned slave in the darkness of night. He murders people because of his false suspicions. Dunyazad kills him and becomes the saviour of the city. Dunyazad also helps Shahryar’s son, Umar to execute his plan of chastising him for the killings.

Dunyazad raises her voice as a new woman, who refuses to surrender or compromise against the dominance and violence, and fights the battle to accomplish freedom. She differs from others in the sense that she hopes and attempts to be true to herself. She strictly rebels against discrimination, questions the double standards, refuses the dual morality, and continues her struggle fearlessly. She is the woman who demands respect for herself, and hence registers a loud protest against humiliation. She refuses to be cowed down and crushed.

To depict the new woman’s quest for knowledge and power, a new character Dilshad, a slave girl, is presented in the story. Hariharan describes the war of the sexes that has been ceaselessly continuing for a long time. Dunyazad replaces Shahrzad of the ancient story in When Dreams Travel. Shahrzad stands to compromise for the sake of harmony, but Dunyazad rebels against injustice. Shahrzad, though an intelligent woman, represents the traditional woman while on the other side Dunyazad symbolizes the modern woman. Shahryar and Shahzaman are the patriarchal agents, who kill woman for no fault of her own.

Fugitive Histories is an analysis of the disastrous result of religious and cultural chauvinism. There are some important issues of culture and identity discussed in this novel. It evaluates the current social and psychological approaches of people about the process of prejudice. Hariharan reveals the disastrous effects of Gujarat riots, the most brutal event in the history of Independent India. Number of innocent people became the victim of fanaticism. Through the life descriptions of three female characters, Hariharan presents the effect of riots on female; Mala, her daughter Sara, and Yasmin. On three female characters feel crises of identity after Gujrat riots. Mala desires to find meaning in life without her husband Asad. Sara is too confused if she should stay at her job or go off to Ahmedabad with her roommate Nina, and writes the script for her documentary about
the victims of the 2002 Gujarat riots. Being the daughter of a Hindu mother Mala and a Muslim Father Asad she understands what it means to be a half-Hindu and half Muslim in modern India. Yasmin wants to be what she was before this disaster struck in Gujarat.

The novelist clears the violence of Gujrat riots in her novel. The writer surveys the incidents of murder and molestation during Gujarat riots in 2002, to emphasize the tragedy of the victims. Hariharan writes-

It means our men were killed, it means our mothers and sisters and daughters were raped. It means we saw it happening. Our people were grilled like meat. I saw it with my own eyes. The bodies piled up. Everything was over in a flash.  

The next chapter of this thesis scrutinizes linguistic competence of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. Arundhati Roy represents two aspects of human psyche. She uses different patterns of language which is based on the number of literary terms as symbols, metaphors, imagery and oxymoron for controlling the varied groups of human relationships. In The God of Small Things the plot of the novel begins with the future and ends with the past. In the beginning, Rahel comes to her maternal uncle’s place in Ayemenem after twenty-three years. Both Estha and Rahel relive what they went through in childhood. The story has been narrated from the point of view of Rahel along with Estha.

Manju Kapur chooses a feminist style in her novels as she herself admits that she wrote in a female voice. She has stated that she has evolved her own style to suit her subject- matter and temperament. Her novels deal with man-woman relationship, gender discrimination, human desire and protest. She raises the voice to the voiceless through her novels. Her novels not only deal with women’s issues but also various other social issues like Freedom Movement and Partition. Through her novels, she has raised the voice of neglected section of the society such as women in male dominated society. Quest for identity is the main issue of society and it is also the theme of Kapur’s novels.

Narrative is a story that can be conveyed through picture, songs, poetry, fiction and non-fiction as well. Githa Hariharan’s When Dreams Travel is a retelling, an intertext of The Thousand and One Nights while The Thousand Faces of Night is a linear realistic
story of an Indian girl, Devi, which opens out to embrace a magic realistic tale of storytellers and storytelling. The first novel, on the surface of the story of Devi- a young educated girl fighting with a failed marriage and a failed relationship, struggling to find her identity from the confusion of identities and roles imposed on her, is a mixture of ‘stories’, old and new, mythical and scriptural, however remaining constant. Githa Hariharan focuses on the life and dreams of different classes. Myths help us to locate certain “irrational” parts of our existence. She always seems to contain some elements which leak into the straight forward moral stories in unexpected and revealing ways.

In short, the portrayal of woman in literature helps women writers as it provides them with their role models drawn from the sufferings of the women, harassed by the male dominated society. Their thematic concerns and ideological preoccupations paved way to establish the descriptive and historic developments and continuity in the construction of the subjectivity of woman. Roy, Kapur and Hariharan present the picture of women who battle for their self-identity in male dominated society. The woman protagonists are the representatives of the present day intellectual women. At the end, they feel that they have temporary existence. Their characters are not only interested to read, but are thought provoking. Through their female characters, Roy, Kapur and Hariharan show how women are treated in male dominated society and struggle for herself identity. Their protagonists are brave and have love for risk. Intentionally, these female writers emphasizes on the changing images of woman, from traditional into modern and progressive.
References


