PREFACE

Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan are the pharos novelists on the contemporary literary scene who portray the new woman of contemporary society who is now not ready to compromise for her identity and reputation in the name of tradition and culture. These female novelists inspire us to take a serious study of their works from every angle of their characterization, themes and narrative techniques. The main intention of this thesis is an attempt to study some of the women writers who form a body of Indian literature that is committed to feminist and social issues. Roy, Kapur and Hariharan have earned highly regarded status among the modern Indian English women novelists. Their novels exemplify how the woman of modern age in India is torn between ceremonious orthodox traditions and emancipation in trying to shape her life in her own ways. These are those women novelists on whom the suffering of assertive woman has left a noteworthy impact. Their protagonists want to assert their individuality, carry their responsibilities on their own and prove their existence in a culture where individualism and protest have often remained foreign ideas, and marital bliss and a woman’s role at home is the central focus. These female novelists display mature understanding of the female psyche in portraying the inner subtlety of a woman’s mind, as they have described the different states of woman’s mind in altered circumstances. The concept of the new woman in Indian society comes from the west; therefore, the characterization in the novels of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Hariharan is based on a ground reality.

The present study aims to make an impartial and deep examination of the novels of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. The works of these novelist have been examined in the light of Hegelian theory of thesis, antithesis and synthesis with special reference to female consciousness.

The first chapter Introduction introduces the life, formative influences 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. This chapter focuses on various themes, dealt with Indian English
writers in general. It also gives a brief introduction to the life and works of the writers whose novels have been selected for the analysis of female consciousness.

Second chapter *Female Consciousness: A Critique* focuses on *Thesis, antithesis and synthesis*, a formula of German philosopher Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel for the explanation of change. This formula moves around three progressive stages of development. Thesis is an intellectual proposition, antithesis is simply the negation of thesis, a reaction to the proposition. Synthesis solves the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truth and forming a new thesis. Many critics have interpreted his theory of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. But no single author has given even one accurate example of a sequential Hegelian dialectic.

We can find any true solution neither in thesis nor in antithesis, but in an emerging synthesis which evaluate the both. Hegelian dialectic is said to revolve around three progressive stages of development: (1) a thesis, which is an idea or concept, (2) an antithesis, an optional idea that contradicts the thesis, and (3) a synthesis, a climactic idea that somehow combines the thesis and the antithesis, or the best parts of them, into a sort of compromise, reconciliation, or previously unperceived identity.

In this chapter feminism can be taken as a thesis, the antifeminist 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 the theory of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis to clarify their stand of female consciousness.

The third chapter *Class Consciousness and female awareness* focuses on a system of ordering society where people are divided into sets based on perceived social, economic and political status. It is also taken as a category of things having some property or attribute in common and differentiate it from others by kind, type and quality. In this chapter, female consciousness is perceived in terms of class-consciousness. Due to expense of feminist consciousness, women become aware of their rights and take firm steps to stand against the forces of discrimination. The main focus in this chapter is to trace the stages of female
awareness and class consciousness in the novels of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan.

Fourth chapter *Binaural issues* deals with explanation of the theory of thesis, antithesis and synthesis of feminine sensibility in the novels of Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. This chapter focuses on two different and opposite factors that are working together on single issue which create problem in maintaining relationships. There are number of issues like gender, caste, poverty, and culture that come under the compass of binaural issues.

Chapter five *Social Consciousness* specifically focuses on the awareness of people on a number of social issues as identity crisis, patriarchal domination, exploitation and infidelity. For the welfare of society, novelists choose writing as a weapon to present the evils of society with a solution how to make it perfect. Here Manju Kapur’s *Immigrant* and Githa Hariharan’s *The Fugitive History* and *When Dreams Travel* examine the new aspects of feminism.

Chapter six *Linguistic Competence* is the analysis of research methodologies and various other practice tools and devices or techniques as the use of magic realism, myths, use of irony, Indian syntax and historiographic meta-fiction. This chapter is specifically meant for analysis of the totality of linguistic and symbolic use of that which brings forth the social and cultural view of the authors. Language also includes grammaticality of writing which the thesis will analyze.

Chapter seven *Conclusion* is an effort to analyse the traditional role of the Indian woman discussed in the preceding five chapters. The whole study is based on the themes and techniques of Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Githa Hariharan. To sum up the journey of trouble of woman’s equality with man is made in the concluding chapter. Their all female protagonists fight endless battles to survive in the society and establish their own identity. It is noteworthy that all the three female writers express their deep concern about the problems, being faced by a woman in male-dominated domain. Their educated female protagonists try to raise their voice and assert their own individual identity. Intentionally,
Roy, Kapur and Hariharan emphasise on the changing images of woman, from traditional into modern.

Finally, this thesis is a deep analysis of the problems of Indian woman in male dominated society. Protagonists of the novels of Roy, Kapur and Hariharan are the representative of all women who face the problem of exploitation. These writers not only present the ugly face of society, but also provide a suitable solution of this problem. Their writing is a very powerful source to present the problems of every woman. Their writings firmly argue for the values like freedom of thought and expression, liberation from oppression and marginalization, and equality as a quest for dignity are the primary requirement of their imagination and creativity.