Preface

Education has always been a tool for social, political and economic changes in any/our country, especially with regard to change in women's social position. Education is a stepping-stone for alertness, readiness, confidence and independence, to mention only a few. I have chosen Hindu characters who are educated formally right from primary education to the doctoral level. I do not include women who are not educated formally because the task will be unwieldy. One can "argue that life itself/personal experiences of a woman can be considered "education". But my focus in this project is only on women obtaining a formal education and how they respond to real life situations and alter their life styles according to their own choices. The basic problem is that most educated people fail to understand that education is linked with real life. Education is not an end in itself. In other words, I have not chosen uneducated women who appear in the novels. My observation is only about educated women from a Hindu background. What are the problems of these educated women? Educated women are supposed to be different from uneducated women. They are supposed to be doing something different from uneducated women.

I think I have narrowed down my topic to make my thesis feasible. For instance, in the broader category of Indian Writing in English or Indian English Literature, I have chosen fiction as the genre. Further it is fiction written originally in English by women. The translated novels from various Indian languages into English do not find a place for analysis in my dissertation. Furthermore, most of the novels that I have chosen are mostly canonical though there are a few exceptions. The period that I have taken is from the Post-Independence era, from 1947 to 1999. The novels that are published from 2000 onwards are not taken into account. I must also mention that it has not been possible for me to consider every novel.
written by Indian English women novelists from 1950s to 1990s. I may have omitted some either because of their unavailability or because they are not immediately relevant to my study.

The next question that I ask myself is why I have chosen this particular topic. The reasons are as follows: I have been observing women who are educated. Some of them get educated in order to get a qualified husband. Some of them get educated to achieve something in their lives. Quite a lot are helpless even if they want to educate themselves as their parents may not allow them to do so either due to financial constraints or due to the fear that men may not marry highly qualified women. Some of them get educated in order to fall in love with a boy and marry him. These are some of the observations I have made about educated women. However, the main person who made me think of educated women is none other than my only sister. She happens to be next to me in my family of six brothers and one sister. Her life is a starting point for this research. Later on, I began observing my own wife. And the observation continues in real life as well as in characters in Indian English women's fiction. This area has been giving me utmost satisfaction, as I find the educated women dealing with the issues of "marriage", "career" and "divorce". It is interesting to deal with educated women characters in the novels that I have chosen. At the same time it is very difficult to make a list of all the educated women, keeping in mind their qualifications. However, it has been done as a part of my research. First of all, I have read all the novels of the period and short-listed those novels that have educated women characters. My concern in this thesis is only with educated women and how they change themselves or try to change other educated or uneducated women. The women they try to change may be their own sisters, cousins, mothers, daughters, nieces, friends or neighbours.

On the other hand, there is a reason why I have chosen to look at the issue of "marriage" first, followed by "career" and "divorce". One of the main problems for educated women is marriage. Most of their problems are related to marriage. When the woman is a school going or college going girl, the parents always worry
about the daughter. They wish their daughters would not be victims of eve-
teasing, violence, black-mailing etc. They wish their daughters would not choose
boy friends and sleep with guys before marriage. They wish that their girls do not
come home late. They wish that their girls do not go to pubs and restaurants with
friends without informing them. Many educated women who are married thirJc
about a career. But whether they should continue their career/job is determined by
the bridegroom or the in-laws. If women are consulted then this problem does not
arise. Of course of late some of the bridegrooms or in-laws want women to be
employed so that the income of the family may increase. If the women are not
consulted and do not have a role in the decision-making, then problems will arise.
Women feel that questions of career should be left to them. In some cases, there
are no problems until a child is born. Once the child enters the family there are
chances of conflict. These conflicts may lead to divorce. I am not suggesting this
is the only reason for divorce. There may be different reasons why divorce takes
place.

We have to understand clearly the difference between job/employment and career.
A woman having a job is not necessarily a career-oriented woman. She may have
a job to earn some/extra money. The money may be useful to her family. One
man’s income may not be sufficient for a family in the corporate, liberalised and
privatised scenario. She may be doing the job not for her own satisfaction but for
the needs that have to be met in the materialistic life. As long as the women/wives
work and earn money there is no problem for the husband. There may still be
petty problems that need to be resolved. At the same time, the problem may arise
if the woman/wife is career-oriented. A career-oriented woman has some goal to
achieve in her life. For this woman, earning money is secondary. A sense of self-
fulfillment, achievement, name and fame are of primary importance. Once she is
established in her career automatically money also comes in. Moreover, a career
woman can become a workaholic. If the career woman becomes a workaholic,
there may be objections either from her husband or from her in-laws or from both
sides. If the husband is mature enough and broadminded, then she has no
My dissertation may not address all the following questions but they are relevant nevertheless. I have raised these questions only about women. However these questions may be applied to men too. But my interest in this study is only about educated women not about men. The study of men is altogether a different topic. Let me raise the questions:

- Is marriage necessary for educated women?
- How does society look at an educated unmarried woman?
- Do educated women believe in chastity?
- What is the right age for marriage?
- Do educated women have choice in their marriage?
- If women make a choice of their own, are such marriages successful?
- How do we look at educated women who rely on their parents' consent for their life partners?
- What marriage would educated women like to have- arranged or love or love-cum-arranged marriage?
- Would educated women like a joint family or a nuclear family?
- Po educated women have problems either with educated in-laws or uneducated in-laws?
- How do educated women perceive pre-marital and extra-marital relationships?
- How do educated women respond to a second marriage?
- Are caste and religion barriers for women's education?
- What are the career options for educated women?
- Do educated women choose their career on their own?
- Do educated women seek opinion of a teacher, parent and friend before choosing a career?
- At what level do educated women determine their career?
- What, according to educated women, is a sustainable career?
- Are educated women forced to choose certain kinds of career such as
Is there any connection between the qualification and the career that the educated women choose?
>What is a challenging career for educated women?
>Are men and educated women treated as equals in a career?
>Is there any fixed career for educated women?
>How do we view creative writing as a career for educated women?
>Why is modelling for educated women gaining ground?
>Why do educated women go in for divorce?
>Are the husbands or in-laws responsible for divorce?
>Are divorce cases increasing as far as educated women are concerned?
>Does divorce happen due to domination of either sex?
>Does divorce take place because of extra-marital relationships?
>Love marriages are supposed to be successful marriages. Why are they not successful and why are they leading to divorce?
>Are career women in the forefront in going for divorce, especially because of their financial independence?
>Is divorce a threat/challenge to the institution of marriage?
>Under what circumstances should educated women go in for divorce?