Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Preliminaries

The present study aims at understanding the representation of women in the post-independence Indian English novels with sense of sex, caste and class. This study requires to a vast survey of socio-cultural perspectives in the depiction of feminine life conditions and regulations laid down by the age old Indian society for ages in the narrative texts. This work has been the amalgamation of all the strains and tensions laden on the female faculty of humanities in India. The status of women in patriarchal society is always inferior. Indian women are always playing a secondary role and placed dependent. After the Independence, Indians have been thoughtfully trying to change the approaches of society in general and towards the gender in particular. A social revolution for equalities is not possible without Enlightenment and ‘Aesthetics’ is an element of Enlightenment. Therefore, literature can bridge the gap of Enlightenment essential for social change (Patil, 1988).

1.2. Perspectives on Socialization

Socialization is the process through which individuals learn about cultural norms and acquire the necessary behaviours and skills. Literature is a dynamic presentation of contemporary human society. Sometimes, it guides and helps to the society to change attitudes and approaches. Therefore, discourse studies of novels will give the ideas about trends and dynamics of such changes.

Recently, our society is passing through a crucial stage due to artificial high pre-birth mortality of girl child. Sudden reduction in number of girl child birth and extremities of exploitations of women at most of the places are very serious problems. The women discrimination has been deeply rooted in the religious and cultural aspects of the society (Choudhary, 2011). Gender inequality is perpetual and vested problem in India. Improved access to the technologies is necessary to control the fertility to achieve personal goals of individual welfare and happiness and essential demographic balance at the country and global levels (Potts, 1997). Women can be free when they have freedom to choose the pregnancy instead of being forced access to her fertility.
‘Sex’ is a biological term fixed at birth of the person, but the socio-cultural aspect decides ‘gender’ after birth. The biological differences between women and men, boys and girls, are limited to the differences in their sexual and reproductive organs and functions. The term ‘gender’ describes a set of qualities and behaviours expected from men and women. The differential expectations of the individual - girls and boys are not born knowing how they should look, dress-up, speak, behave, think or react. Thus, male and female identities are culturally determined as masculinity and femininity (Deal and Beal, 2004). This differential approach towards women can promote for sex-determination and selective abortion. The demand for women’s right and access to safe abortion (Johnston, 2002), issue of sex-determination and sex selective abortion as well as right of birth are complex and the top priority issues in India (Mallik, 2003). Gendered equality is not only linked to multi-sector development, political decision and power, economic and social demands, health and sustainability (Unterhalter, 2006) but also to process of gendered socialization.

Traditionally, education mainly for female, legal rights and economic participations, etc. are widely suggested for gender equality. However, 1) decline in number of girl child in India, 2) exploitations of women at workplace, in family, social places, etc. and 3) inferior quality life, desertification, prostitution, etc. all prove inequalities. The status of contemporary women presented in the novel reflects their role in contemporary society. The latest novelists like Kamala Markandaya (1924-2004), Anita Desai (b. 1934), Shashi Deshpande (b. 1938), Bharati Mukherjee (b. 1940), Salman Rushdie (b. 1947), Shobha De (b. 1948), Manju Kapur (b. 1948), Meena Alexander (b. 1951), Vikram Seth (b. 1952), Rohinton Mistry (b. 1952), Amitav Ghosh (b. 1956), Vikram Chandra (b. 1961), Arundhati Roy (b. 1961) and other Indian novelists have presented women’s world and their psychology in the context of traditions, conventions and social changes. Arundhati Roy deals with mental aspects of displacement whereas Mukherjee and Syal focused on its physical aspects (Bedjaoui, 2009). Singh and Singh (2012) have reported that Anita Desai and other modern women novelists raised a voice for feminine sensibility. Kamala Markandaya is familiar with the interaction of Eastern and Western cultures for identity crisis (Singh and Singh, 2012, Rani, 2010). Their novels deal with the life of an Indian woman rethinking and reconstructing her identity. Thus, the feministic analyses of the novels can be useful to understand the trends of changes in personal attitudes and
gendered socialization. Therefore, this study focused on the representation of women in the post-independence Indian English novels by applying the feministic approach.

• **Feminism**

Religious approach to the origin of the nature coincided with philosophical idealism and idealism claims that world is not cognisable (Sen, 1998, Prasad, 2011). Therefore, the religious idealism is supporting to ignore the slaves, *shudra* as well as women. Patriotic religious thinkers believe that there are only finite human lives of those who recognize freedom to be a difficult task under one sky and on one shared earth (Matustik, 2002). For instance, Hawkesworth (2004) pointed the dwarfed approach of fascist philosopher which believes that ‘God’ assists ‘Man’ to protect from a dangerous feminist body.

On the other hand, the materialism is the philosophy built based on the reading of human surroundings i.e. the sun, moon, mountains, rivers, plants, animals as well as human beings with life, spirit, truth or reality. Materialism believes that physical reality is the only reality. Nowka (2007) reported that Mary Hays (1760-1843) used materialism and necessitarianism in her ‘Memoirs of Emma Courtney’ to examine the character of Emma, the protagonist with feministic theories. Kajiwara (1968) reported the materialistic approach of Virginia Woolf presented in her writings. Historical materialism views historical change as the result of the actions of human being within the material world and not as the hands of God or some other extra-human or spiritual force (Deal and Beal, 2004). Further, George Orwell (1903-1950) has compared the ideologies i.e. 1) idealism, 2) materialism, 3) realism, and 4) socialism to understand the problems created by capitalists and conflict between idealism and materialism through his novels (Prasad, 2011). Thus, materialistic philosophers are concerned not only with the spirit but with the body (Kajiwara, 1968). The philosophy claims the human is element of the great world and the world is cognisable. Therefore, the inferior status of women in family and human society is cognisable. This cognitive nature gives birth to feminism (Kajiwara, 1968, Nowka, 2007).

Feminist research is that research by, about and for women. However, it is not true that all research by or about women is feminist but, the research conducted by and about men may be feminist (Cosgrove and McHugh, 2000, Hans, 2013). This kind of research includes women’s lives, equalities, empowerment, socialization and improved status (Ghosh, 2007). Cosgrove and McHugh (2000) suggested feminist research for 1) giving voice to women’s experience, 2)
moving away from dichotomous thinking, 3) incorporating reflexivity, 4) adopting a collaborative approach, and 5) using research as a tool for emancipation. Campbell and Wasco (2000) characterized the process of feminist research into four primary groups i.e. 1) expanding methodologies to include both quantitative and qualitative methods, 2) connecting women for group-level data collection, 3) reducing the hierarchical relationship between researchers and their participants to facilitate trust and disclosure, and 4) recognizing and reflecting upon the emotionality of women’s lives. Feminist action research includes action of feminist practitioners and researchers across modernity, post-modernity and possibly post-modernity to democratic transformations for girls and women experiences (Weiner, 2004). Zalewski and Runyan (2013) have explored questions about feminism and violence to constructively complicate understandings about relationship. Feminism is conventionally positioned as oppositional to direct and structural violence (Turksma, 2001). They have attracted attention to militarized violence, global economic violence, neo-colonial violence, discursive violence: masculinise violence and violence among/of women. Feminism exposes violence: gender, sex, identity, domestic violence of love and the everyday violence of tolerance.

Feminist philosophers are engaged to project two significant areas of concern i.e. historical exclusion and negative characterization of women (Witt, 2004). Philosophical interpretation of feminist criticism includes (a) the explicit misogyny of great philosophers (b) gendered interpretations of theoretical concepts, and (c) synoptic interpretations (Witt, 2004). Hemmings (2005) has highlighted the restricted nature of feminism to figure and their histories and secondly ongoing contests and relationships. The feminism strongly connected to Western feminist theory which emerges as singular and bonsai. The women were considered as a subject and object of feminist knowledge. However, Hemmings (2007) denied the views of Wittig, Foucault and Butler as refigure sexuality as both pleasure and constraint. Feminist writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor (b. 1956), Upamanyu Chatterjee (b. 1959), Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (1927-2013), Manju Kapur and Amitav Ghosh have reject the Western feminist theory including values, ideologies, beliefs and norms of living (Dar, 2013).

Feministic movements can be described into three waves: 1) The First Wave Feminism (Weiner, 2004), 2) The Second Wave Feminism, and 3) The Third Wave Feminism (Rockler, 2006). The first wave feminism focused on women’s emancipation and equality for participation in public life which adopted the male ways of knowing and doing (Weiner, 2004). The second
and third wave feminists have debated the negotiation of individual empowerment versus collective action. The Second wave feminism concentrated on the cultural features of female oppression and structural, social and psychological transformations for women’s liberation. Rockler (2006) has defined the third wave feminism as: a) the representation of female empowerment as individual transformation, (b) the simplistic resolution of systemic women’s economic problems, and (c) the portrayal of political issues. Thus, the third wave feminism focused on individual empowerment through gender, education and policies discourses (Weiner, 2004).

Feminism can broadly outlined into liberal, welfare, socialist, Marxist, individual, career, existential, cultural, global, radical, lesbian, postmodern, literary, black, dalit, eco-feminism, womanism, and psychoanalysis. There is wide scope for the feminist studies mainly in struggle for women necessities like food, fuel, water, etc., health and reproductive freedom, education, employment opportunities, equal pay and safe working environment, women rights and many of personal, social and cultural problems. As stated above literature is sketch of contemporary society including women status and issues. The writers like Bhattacharya (1910-1988), Kamala Markandaya, Manju Kapur, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, etc. portray such issues in feministic manner and some of the research working in the field of literary and social studies have explained the methods, techniques and findings of their feminist representations of women. Therefore, feministic analysis of novels can give insights of about women life in contemporary social setup with their dynamics. The concept, history, wide areas and scope of feminism is explained in the next chapter.

*Women in Indian English literature*

Indian English literature has been begun with poetry in 1930s and fictions of Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), R. K. Narayan (1906-2001) and Raja Rao (1908-2006) (Paranjape, 1998). They have raised the sociological, nationalistic and philosophical issues. Whereas, Bhabani, Abbas and others have focused on secular India free from old superstitions, exploitations and Western dominance. Rabindranath Tagore has disrupted conservative notions about female
gender, sexuality and social position through Bengoli dance-drama in 1930s (Chaudhuri, 2010). The women novelists i.e. Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal deal with humanism and social justice in 1950s. Some of the writers covered the issues like political problems, metaphysical explorations as well as hilarious, energetic and stylistic exhilaration. In this background, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Shashi Deshpande have depicted the Indian middle-class women in their novels. R. K. Narayan has presented active but unreliable, hard-hearted and selfish women in his Malgudi with contrast ineffective, foolish, incompetent but successful men. The foreign fiction market guided to Indian elite writers for narrative writings and criticism. The focus was given on quest for an identity through autobiography, problems of partition, minorities, etc. in 1980s and 1990s. Khushwant Singh presented the love and sacrifice in the time of partition in his ‘Train to Pakistan’ (Sehrawat, 2013). Therefore, post-independence Indian English fictions have focused on women lives but issues were related to middle and upper class women. However, Arundhati Roy has covered the violated relationships between the higher and lower castes. Here, she tries to project the crises of the society when woman is from upper caste and untouchable man. Manju Kapur presents three generation through Kasturi, Virmati and Ida to present three stages of the Indian freedom movement i.e. pre-independence, struggle for freedom, post-independence period in her ‘Difficult Daughters’ (1998). Kasturi accepts forces of patriarchy, Virmati rebels and fight against unconventionality and Ida establishes her independent status as a divorced woman (Nandal, 2014). Therefore, Indian English literature was confined to urban, middle-class and largely Westernized issues and society (Singh and Singh, 2012). Whereas, rural experience was absent and Dalit literature was at very meagre side (Datar, 1999). The similar approach was remarked by Saulnier (2000) that white feminists are not working for black and woman at the same time. However, Rani (2010) describes the identity crises of lower caste village woman i.e. Rukmani in Kamala Markandaya’s ‘Nectar in a Sieve’. Rukmani is the universal mother figure beyond the love and domestic harmony (Patel, 2011). Thus, Indian novels (Bedjaoui, 2009) have intentioned to deliberate: 1) rethinking and reconstructing women identity, 2) quest for the establishment of woman cultural authority, 3) revalorizing marginalized cultural women identities, 4) construction of fixed identities by socio-cultural norms, and 5) mental displacement of woman.

Women exploitation in religious caste based hierarchal Indian society is horizontal (man-woman in family or caste) as well as vertical (inter-caste most probably from upper side).
Women are double marginalized - first by bourgeois class and then by men (Chaudhury, 2013). Marxist ideology distorted expression of the material interests of the dominant class (Hawkesworth, 2004). Therefore, Marxist analyses have presented the vertical nature of exploitation in class society (Patil, 2010). However, Indian economical classes are distributed into castes. The caste is coincided to class for gender discriminations. Women of depressed castes are exploited by male from same caste, family, class and from upper caste and class. The level of exploitation increased as declining the level of caste and class resulting exploitation doubled, tripled...... Thus, only Marxist ideology is exploring women exploitations from contemporary dominant classes in India is not fit for feminist analysis, clearly (Hawkesworth, 2004). The issues and problems of women discrimination presented in post-independent fictions were mostly horizontal in nature. Therefore, these fictions could be examined critically for the understanding the women representation with the sense of sex, caste and class. Majumdar (2009) has reported the feminist concerns of oppression, representation and resistance in the form of gender, race or class with plight of women in the capitalist world. Therefore, the present study is devoted to feministic analysis of Indian novels written in post-independence period to get understand the women status in contemporary society.

1.3. Selected Novels

Fifteen novels of Indian men-women writers have analysed to learn the representation of women with contemporary socio-cultural environment in Indian English novels after independence. The selected novels are broadly grouped into three phases: A) The First Phase (1950-1975), B) The Second Phase (1976-2000) and C) The Present Phase (2000-until this date). These novels of both men and women Indian writers living in Indian and abroad have been selected to analyse the representation of women with feminist perspectives.

A. The First Phase (1950-1975)

Six novels i.e. ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ (1954) by Kamala Markandaya, ‘Train to Pakistan’ (1956) by Khushwant Singh, ‘Cry, the Peacock’ (1963) by Anita Desai, ‘The Foreigner’ (1968) by Arun Joshi, ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’ (1971) and ‘Wife’ (1975) by Bharati Mukherjee have analysed to understand the feminist representation of women in Indian English novels after independence. Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee portray the issues of Indian women with feminist views whereas Khushwant Singh writes about the communal
issues in villages nearby the border between India and Pakistan before and after the partition and Arun Joshi explores the multicultural transformations in India and abroad.

1) ‘Nectar in a Sieve’ by Kamala Markandaya

The writings of Kamala Markandaya have influence of Gandhian philosophy. She wrote about the crises between the traditional village economies and newly established big company in ‘Nectar in a sieve’ (1954) with the eco-feministic aspects (Mount 2011). Markandaya deals with the village life of South Indian people including fear, hunger, despair, poverty and blackness, dominance, social forces as custom and conventions, political issues, religious rites and rituals, culture, traditions, women problems, theme of urban economy and exploitation. She explores the feminine views about different predicaments of women identity with psycho-analysis. She portrays the role of Indian woman as a daughter, wife and mother with her duties and responsibilities towards the family and society (Rukmani). Her women protagonists are not ready to sacrifice for their husbands. She highlights man-woman relationships like love, marriage, family and social conventions. Markandaya explores the Indian common family structure and tries to reveal the problems of two or three generations living together. The family members face the problems as lack of privacy, inadequate resources, family disputes, and dependence on less fertile land. She presents typical women problems through Rukmani and Ira. Markandaya depicts the problems of traditional marriage system, dowry, failure of marriage and son essentiality. For instance, childless Ira’s husband sent her back to parent’s home.

The activities of her woman protagonist, Rukmani shows intimate relationship with nature i.e. the land. Rukmani presents the ambivalence behaviour towards nature and spaces (Kaur, 2012). She explores the tradition and modernity at equal level through Rukmani and Dr. Kenny. The beginning of tannery in the village signs a period of transition for Rukmani and other villager’s lives. Markandaya highlights the clashes of village economy with industrialization and urbanization. Rukmani is strongly opposed to the construction of tannery in the village and its effects on natural environment and villagers. Markandaya presents negative impact of industrialization on the prices of goods and increasing gaps between different classes i.e. landowners, moneylenders and peasants.

Markandaya highlights the problems of third world women like birth-right and land-ownership in her novel. Rukmani is facing the various disasters across the novel with poverty,
famine, divorce of a barren daughter, death of her sons, disintegration of family and husband’s
death. Her daughter (Ira) is helpless and forced into prostitution. Patel (2011) has reported that
Rukmani represents the universal mother figure bound by eternal love and home. Hunger is a
major theme relates to the head of the family i.e. Nathan’s death due to starvation. Markandaya
has focused on the contemporary social and cultural realism in her novel, ‘Nectar in a Sieve’.

2) ‘Train to Pakistan’ by Khushwant Singh

Mano Majra is a small village presented in ‘Train to Pakistan’ (1956) by Khushwant
Singh. People of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim religions live together, happily. There are only three
bricks buildings, one of moneylender, Lala Ram Lal and others two of Sikh temple and the
Mosque. Mano Majra situated at the bank of River Sutlej in Punjab and known for the railway
station. There is close association between people, nature, religion and train. The day begins
with crows, bats, Mullah, Sikh priest and arrival of mail train early in the morning and ends with
passing goods train at night. Men works in the fields and women are at home. The people in this
village pray for blessings from divine power to all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Pseudo-
Christians.

The novel, ‘Train to Pakistan’ is the realistic picture of Mano Majra before and after
partition of India and Pakistan (Dar, 2013). Khushwant Singh portrays multiculturalism, political
idealism, communal violence, pain, agony, trauma of partition, humour, bribery, hypocrisy,
drunkenness, unfair police, bureaucratic functioning and customs, love and sacrifice (Gawain,
1998, Menoti, 2011, Sehrawat, 2013). The masses of different religions are freely looted, killed
and women and girls raped (Thakur, 2014). Tank (2011) has reported that this is a politically
dramatic novel presents the grossness, ghastliness and total insanity of the two nation theory.
These countries are ruined their people, social relations, morality, economies, lands, properties,
cattle, administration systems, securities but also millions displaced from their homes (Dar,
2013). Jajja (2012) has critically analyzed this novel in the light of postcolonial theory and
compared with ‘Ice Candy Man’ (1988) by Bapsi Sidhwa. He compared the Muslim and Sikh
women characters in ‘Train to Pakistan’. However, people like Juggut Singh sacrifice his life in
an attempt to save the lives of migrating Muslims for the sake of love with Nooran (Sehrawat,
2013). The novel reflects the impact of violence as physical torture and psychological inner
world of the characters. The common men and women are baffled and victimised in the partition (Nanjappa, 2012).

Purohit (2012) has pointed that Singh portrays patriarchal representation, victimization of the partition violence, misses women characters in his ‘Train to Pakistan’. Women in this novel are engaged in routine menial domestic work, victimized, less important, silent, submissive and co-existed.

3) ‘Cry, The Peacock’ by Anita Desai

Anita Desai represents her personal experience of life in her writings. Her writings are influenced by feminist writers like James Joyce (1882-1941), Virginia Woof (1882-1941) and D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930). She is a daughter of Bengali father and German mother, born in 1937 in Mussorie and spent early life in Delhi. She has completed her education at Delhi and has been a fellow of Royal Society of Literature and taught English at Gitton College, Cambridge and Professor of English at Mount Holyoke College, USA, etc. Therefore, she has wide life experiences of multi-religious and -cultural background of family and society in India and America. With these backgrounds, she depicts the feminine sensibility of Indian middle-class women through her female characters and their strained relationships in her novel ‘Cry, The Peacock’ (1963). Her protagonist, Maya represents the psyche of Indian woman as emotional, imaginative, passionate, sensitive, sensuous, negligence and loneliness (Anand and Prasad, 2009, Sharma, 2013). Maya revolt against the male dominance for self-identity.

Anita Desai explores the women life in countryside and city in her ‘Cry, the Peacock’ with metropolitan fostered essential rootlessness like her contemporaries Kamala Markandaya, Arun Joshi, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Nayantara Sahgal (Shresth, 2011). Maya presents the victim of the tension between glory of the city and desire of innocence and purity (Shresth, 2011). Jadhao (2012) has noted that Desai’s women characters try to escape from harsh reality of life. Desai depicts the pessimism between husband-wife relationships (Vashisth, 2012), the spirit of Indian culture with traditional values and mind setup (Acharya, 2013). This novel explores the problems of an alienated woman (Arora, 2012) and female predicaments (Sharma, 2013).

4) ‘The Foreigner’ by Arun Joshi
Arun Joshi is Indo-English novelist presents hybrid culture of India, America and Kenya in his novel, ‘The Foreigner’ (1968). He is existentialist depicts largely personal experiences at Kenya and India to portrait existential philosophy (Venugopal, 2012). The existentialism is insistence actual existence of the individual as the basic and important fact instead of reliance on the theories of abstractions (Sharma and Raizada, 2013). He projects the hypocrisy and artificiality in American modern society (Dhawan, 1986). The novel shows relationships, growth, decay, defeat and destruction. The story deals with childhood, adulterous relationships and adventures (Gadhavi, 2012). This novel passes through the sensitivity, assessment and declarations about life. It is negotiating masculinity alongside experiences of diaspora and exile (Helff, 2014).

Malshette and Shete (2012) have reported that the ruthless, compassionate, shocking and sometimes brutal are themes of the novel. The novel examines the effects of alienation on sensitive Indians of mixed heritage shares with three cultures. Joshi has used man-woman relations and its various aspects in his writings. He tries to present the inner world of the protagonist as psychological analysis. It includes sincerity, fidelity, ruthless, loneliness, separation, feelings of anguish and anxiety and absence of individuality (Venugopal, 2012, Joshi, 2014) in contemporary socio-political reality. Joshi focuses more on class based social structure including caste, religion and race. However, Tomar (2013) has reported that Joshi fully believed on passion and sexuality instead of God and religion. The young hero suffers from existential predicament for different reasons with experience of life and love in America and came back to Delhi. Men were deeply concerned with imagining and narrating the agony of loneliness and alienation in an increasingly globalised world (Helff, 2014). Joshi narrates masculinity, sexuality and trans-cultural existentialist identity formation in this novel.

The novel deals with love story, rootlessness, artistic triumphs, unifies feelings and ideas, characters and events, the prose and passions, painful experiences, impact of corruption on social framework, explosion of population turns into poverty, hunger and disease and denial of human rights (Jha, 1986). Sindi Oberoi, the male protagonist is always in search of self-identity and meaning of his life unto the last (Nawale, 2010). There are other characters like June, Mr. Babu Khemka and Mr. Khemka also in search of self-identity. The novel is a bin of characters from cultural combos. Sindi is a son of English mother and a Kenyan-Indian father. Whereas, June Blyth is American girl, Mr. Khemka, his son Babu and daughter Sheila are Indians, Frank
Sinatra is a Japanese girl, Anna is a minor artist and Kathy is an English housewife. There are inter-continental migrations. The protagonist Sindi migrating from Kenya to London, Boston and New Delhi on the way he meets different female characters. They were born and grown up in their own culture and fly to wide cultural space.

The patriarchy is a solid foundation of culture in all these countries. It is most frequently associated with a material and ideological control of women’s sexuality and labour at home and workplace. The Indian women are discriminated, exploited, treated as mad, weak, dependent, subjective, etc. at some extent. However, the Western culture is come out with liberal attitude and approaches towards women. There are few feminist activities, arts and writings lead their education, legal rights, social services, etc.

5) ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’ by Bharati Mukherjee


Mukherjee depicts the cultural transformation and complexities of Indian immigrants in North America in her ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’ (1971). She deals with the problems of nationality, location, identity and historical memory. Her protagonist, Tara shows unbearable experiences of immigrant that force her to make an effort towards the process of economic, social and cultural adjustment. Mukherjee shows emotional attachments of immigrants with the mother land which they looking back with pain and nostalgia. However, they fight with new situations and try to adjust with new culture in an alien land. Further, Mukherjee describes women as the most sufferers in cultural dislocation by carrying the burden of cultural values of mother land to new country in this novel (Mehra, 2014). Her protagonists fight with cultural clashes take place in search of self identity.
6) ‘Wife’ by Bharati Mukherjee

‘Wife’ (1975) is another important novel of Bharati Mukherjee depicts the cultural crisis of the immigrant in America with the issues of foreignness, clashes of life styles and cultural differences, conflicts of assimilation, ties between generations, etc. (Hossain, 2012, Bijawar, 2014). She skilfully plotted the process of the transformation of Indian women in Western culture with the plight and personal experiences. Similarly, Manju Kapur deals with the plight of Indian women and experiences of Indian immigrants in Western countries (Srivastava, 2014). Mukherjee’s protagonist, Dimple caught in a gulf between illusion and depression and finally reaches to tragic decision of killing her husband (Mythili, 2013). This novel presents the psychology, madness and monstrosity as a survival strategies and escapes from problems (Raducanu, 2011). Mythili (2013) reports the difference between the premarital dreams and the marital realities. She also reported the faddism of enjoying the cosy life which aborts the baby. Mukherjee put strategies to improve identity and see themselves as part of a changing community (Bhatt, 2013). She focuses on gender discriminations i.e. daughters are mostly considered a ‘curse’ and ‘evils’. However, Mukherjee’s protagonist, Dimple in ‘Wife’ grows, matures, rebels against conventions, kills her husband and finally dies.


This is transition phase that corresponds to the previous conventionalities and the further improvements. ‘The Shadow Lines’ (1988) by Amitav Ghosh, ‘That Long Silence’ (1988) by Shashi Deshpande, ‘The God of Small Things’ (1997) by Arundhati Roy and ‘Difficult Daughters’ (1998) by Manju Kapur are the selected novels for analyses of Indian English novels in this phase. Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Manju Kapur are well known feminist writers deal with women problems concern to social, cultural, political, economic setup whereas Amitav Ghosh rejects the Western ideas of culture, belief and lifestyle and writes for freedom and peace in globalization.

1) ‘The Shadow Lines’ by Amitav Ghosh

(Chenniappan and Suresh, 2011). He is an anthropologist visited alien lands and wrote about historical nationalist issues like diaspora, migration, refugees, colonial hegemony, dying of human relationships, blending of facts and fantasy, socio-economic and cultural issues including east-west encounter, caste and class, search for love and security, etc. (Malathi, 2013, Chenniappan and Suresh, 2011). ‘The Shadow Lines’ (1988) reports the boundaries between the nations as the source of violence. Amitav Ghosh interprets the world inhabited by a common global humanity and not by nations (Khan, 2013). Ghosh portrays the struggle with silence for peace (Sharma, 2013). He shows cultural amalgamation through the use of various languages with conflict between illusion and reality (Ahlawat, 2014). He rejects Western values, beliefs, ideas, culture and norms of the life (Dar, 2013). Tridib, May, Nice Prince are the major characters used to show friendship between East and West with trace given on globalization then nationalism.

2) ‘That Long Silence’ by Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande is a prominent feminist writer deals with man-woman relations, love, marriage mythology with gynocentric vision in reference to culture, traditions, modernity and socio-economic transformations. Her feminism is more humanistic and optimistic with women consciousness. Deshpande mainly focused on women rights, desires, struggles and victories (Nayak, 2011). However, her women characters are confined to educated middle-class families of urban areas. She portrays the problems of women in middle-class Brahmin family in Mumbai which has attachment with native place.

Deshpande believes in equal relationship between man and woman. Her protagonist, Jaya in ‘That Long Silence’ (1988) struggles for self-identity and freedom from social and cultural conventions in patriarchy based society. The society expect the qualities of married woman that she should be submissive, faithful and have higher level of tolerance and lack of protest. Therefore, Deshpande portrays the psyche and plight of a housewife in male-dominated society in this novel (Usha, 2013). Motherhood is prime identity of woman which Deshpande’s protagonist, Jaya rejects by aborting the third child without permission of her husband. Further, Deshpande explores the issues and plight of childless woman and widows. Thus, she presents the
silence of woman in middle-class family with conflict between traditions and modernity in real life experiences.

3) ‘The God of Small Things’ by Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy (b. 1961) is daughter of Rajib Roy, the tea plantation manager a Bengali Hindu from Calcutta and Mary Roy, women’s rights activist, a Malvali Syrian Christian from Kerala. She moved with her divorced mother and brother to maternal grandfather’s home in Kerala. With this background, Arundhati Roy become a political activist and feminist writer who presents marginalized and oppressive status of women but try to bring change through their resistance both local and global inequalities in her ‘The God of Small Things’ (1997) (Pawar, 2014). She tries to demolish the structures of caste, class and gender through their personal involvement in different issues, implicitly and explicitly. Women in this novel are challenge to the customs, laws, and values of social and cultural boundaries. Ammu and Margaret Kochamma are the women who break these conventional bounds and rebel against patriarchal control. Roy has presented the two types of relationship between brothers and sisters i.e. Ammu and Chacko have hatred relations and Rahel and Estha have sensual relationship (Abirami and Mahalakshmi, 2012). Roy has presented caste based social conflicts occurred due to relation between man of lower caste and woman (divorcee mother of two children) from upper caste (Chandran and Sujatha, 2012). Further, she explores the exploitation of lower caste man, Velutha by socially, economically and physically upper class. The women characters in this novel protest against male dominance and control which lead them victimized. She presents intercommunity (Christian man and English woman, Christian woman and Bengali man) relations through love marriages of Ammu and Bengali man and Chacko and Margaret Kochamma. Her women are hard worker but some of them are sentimental, submissive and suppressive i.e. Mammachi in ‘The God of Small Things’.

4) ‘Difficult Daughters’ by Manju Kapur

Manju Kapur is born in Amritsar and studied in Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, for her post-graduation in English. She wrote her first novel ‘Difficult Daughters’ (1998) when she was teacher of English literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. It is a story of young woman caught between sentimental attachment with family, urge for education and deep love.
Manju Kapur explores the three steps of Indian movement for freedom through three generations i.e. Kasturi, Virmati and Ida from upper middle-class urban Arya Samaj Punjabi family in Amritsar to present the situations of pre-independence empirical power and tolerance, struggle for freedom and after-independence. Kapur writes about the Indian women in joint families under patriarchal control through her own autobiographical experiences. Her protagonist, Virmati is in search of self-identity with individual consciousness in given social circumstances. She rejects the arranged marriage and rebel against the social conventions. She married with Professor Harish who has wife and a son. The writer shows the way of healthy man-woman relations for personal and social welfare. Kapur presents the women’s status before and after marriage, self-identity and struggle for survival. Shakuntala, Swarna Lata and Ida are ‘modern women’ conscious, introspective, educated, emancipated, struggling for autonomy and separate identity whereas Kasturi, and Lajwanti are traditional women follow patriarchal norms. Kapur’s novel shows man-woman relations, desire, gender discrimination, marginalization and protest. Virmati shows difficulties of women rejected by all especially from maternal family, in-laws and society.

C. The Present Phase (2000- until this date)


1) ‘Moving On’ by Shashi Deshpande

‘Moving on’ (2004) is a story of widow, Manjari and her plight. Deshpande crucially casted Manjari’s life experiences with past memories in her father’s diary to present the three generations with kaleidoscope of relationships. Deshpande does not uproot the woman from social background but tries to shape her for revolve against subordinate position and controlled sexuality. The protagonist, Manjari married with Shyam against her parents which became widow with son (Arjun) at early age, twenty-one and returned to maternal home. The lonely
widow struggles for survival and fights with number of problems. She portrays a complex man-woman as well as family relations. Sachi is the daughter of Manjari’s husband, Shyam from her younger sister, Malu in premarital pregnancy. Malu died after Sachi’s birth within three months and Manjari became a mother of ‘Sachi’. Sachi’s grandfather gives home to Sachi as a gift instead of his daughter, Manjari. Sachi is not aware about these secret relations. Deshpande presents the pre-marital and extra-marital relations through Manjari and Raman, Malu and Manjari’s husband Shyam.

As a lonely widow, Manjari is struggling to 1) have hold over home, 2) family survival, 3) solve the complex between need and desire of her mind and body, etc. She sent her son, Anand and daughter, Sachi abroad for their education and tries to learn different skills like computer operations, driving, typing, etc. for her survival. Deshpande also covers issues of widower and his desires and practices through Raja. Thus, Deshpande explores the issues like widowhood, widower, remarriages, inter-caste marriages, multiculturalism, women rebel, man-woman relationships, extra-marital relations, psychoanalysis, etc. in this novel. However, she presents the women as silent sufferer through Manjari as a widow.

2) ‘A Married Woman’ by Manju Kapur

Manju Kapur portrays the women world in her novel, ‘A Married Woman’ (2006) with feministic approach as she is a feminist writer. This novel concerns with issues of emerging urban middle-class women. Her women are from middle-class, educated families in metropolitan cities and hard worker, creative, enthusiastic and actively participate in political and social movements. Astha, the protagonist is middle-class and educated woman in Delhi has children, a dutiful loving husband and all comforts. She protests against male dominance, subjugation, control over and marginalization. Manju Kapur depicts the lesbian relationship between Astha and Pipeelika (widow) which ends with women’s sexuality within the framework i.e. relationship within marriage and with opposite sex.

She presents complexities between traditional way of living and modernity. Astha’s mother prays regularly to have good, educated and rich husband for Astha whereas her father offers way of education to achieve the target. Deshpande shows the women negligence and subjugation in property rights. Astha’s mother sold her property and gives all money to Astha’s husband Hemant instead of Astha.
Kapur presents the communal conflict i.e. Ramjanmabhumi and Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya and its impact on women life through cruel burning alive of Aijaz and Pipeelika’s tragedy. Astha and Pipeelika participate in secular movements in this crucial issue. The critic about Deshpande’s this novel is that she focused more on feministic presentation rather than this important communal issue.

3) ‘In the Country of Deceit’ by Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande deals with the issues of man-woman relationship, mythology, desire, love and deceit in her novel, ‘In the Country of Deceit’ (2008) (Bhardwaj, 2014). It is a story of middle-class family from small town, Rajnur. She explores desire, struggle for survival, rebel against customs and traditions of single unmarried woman, the protagonist Devayani. Devayani translates books, conduct tuitions and Yoga for her survival. Deshpande presents the extra-marital, premarital and inter-religious man-woman relations. She depicts the premarital sexual relation of Devayani with much older married man, Ashok Chinappa, District Superintendent of Police. However, in the view of society and Ashok, Devayani is a ‘mistress’ and her status is not equally treated as a married woman. Other important issues like failure of marriages and remarriages also covered in this novel. The novel covers the essence of patriarchal relations like brother, husband, father and son for women security and survival. In conventional society, marriage becomes very essential for woman.

Deshpande gives importance to women, matriarchy and gynaecracy in her novel. The children of Chitpavan Brahmin father and Roman Catholic mother brought up as Roman Catholics which are known as mother-root but not father-root as Chitpavan Brahmin. She presents the women sufferers i.e. Sindhu suffers from breast cancer, Pushpa from epilepsy and lung problem and Ashok’s mother died during child-birth.

4) ‘The 3 Mistakes of My Life’ by Chetan Bhagat

Chetan Bhagat writes about the 21st century issues of Indian youth i.e. adventure, romance, music, social and political and education systems in his novels: ‘Five Point Someone’ (2004), ‘The 3 Mistakes of My Life’ (2008), ‘One Night @ the Call Centre’ (2005), ‘Two States of my Marriage Life’ (2009), ‘Revolution 2020’ (2011) and ‘Half Girlfriend’ (2014). He explores social problems like Hindu-Muslim riots broke the peace of India through Govind, Ishaan and Omi in the novel ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’ (Baskaran and Indu, 2012). The
novel deals with Indian youth and cricket mania. His novels are based on friendship from early childhood with different communities i.e. Hindu, Muslim and Gujarati (Govind, Ishaan and Omi).

Chetan Bhagat portrays the lives and passions of the best friends, Govind, Ishaan and Omi in Ahmedabad city. Bhagat shows Govind’s ambition of to be a businessman and open the cricket shop but failed into pursuit the financial setup. The novel deals with the theme of Godhra riots, religious politics and Gujarat earthquake. He also portrays the Australian characters like Fred Li, bowler and Australia cricket team. In this background, he presents his women characters are quite bold and have premarital relations. He depicts love and sex of Govind with Ishaan’s sister, Vidya with romance. Here, it is notable that Vidya leads and eager to establish relation with Govind. Therefore, his women are bolder than men but it becomes a disaster in friendship of genuine friends, Govind and Ishaan from different community. The writer explores the need, feelings and desire of young girls and boys through this novel with multiculturalism.

5) **‘Revolution 2020’ by Chetan Bhagat**

Chetan Bhagat highlights the theme of love, deceit, corruption, moral perversion, success, defeat and sacrifice through Gopal’s love with Arati in ‘Revolution 2020’ (2011) (Arshi, 2014). The novel passes on the background of city life at Varanasi and Ganga Tech College. It is story of the three friends Gopal, Raghav and Arati from their early childhood. They struggle for love, happiness and success in their life at Varanasi. Gopal is motherless and try to struggle for survival whereas Raghav is from economically well established middle-class family. Arati is a daughter of IAS officer and granddaughter of ex-politician. Her ambition is to be a high professional like airhostess or journalist, but unsuccessful. Bhagat shows love triangle through friendship between Arati, Gopal and Raghav. The writer presents the corruption and deceit through issues of family property, personal ambitions, love, politics and institutions of Gopal whereas Raghav fight against such corruptions. Bhagat shows the liberal relationships between girls and boys through premarital physical relations of Arati and Gopal. However, Arati goes with Raghav for his honesty. Bhagat rejects the old age Indian customs which provides prison to woman in masculine patriarchy. Mishra, (2013) remarked that his writings are ‘more feminine than masculine’.

1.4. **Statement of Problem**
In patriarchy, man holds power through ‘fatherhood’ and ‘symbolic power’ of father as sense within conscious, sub-conscious, culture and institutions. It performs physical and ideological control over women’s sexuality and labour. The society, eminent philosophers, literature, etc. believe in lacking of women abilities. Women are discriminated, exploited, treated as mad, weak, dependant, subjective, etc. Therefore, feminists struggle for women health, education, legal services, communication, sexual options, reproductive rights, against violence, lesbian relations with justice, equality and liberty. ‘Aesthetics’ is one of the elements of enlightenment essential for social change towards feministic equalities. Indian English novelists present women world and their mind setup with traditions, conventions and social changes. Therefore, analyses of selected novels written in post-independence period give insight about women world with social, cultural, political and economical situations.

1.5. Objectives

The present study aims to make a survey of the representation of women in Indian English novels after the Independence to find out the trends and dynamics of the changes in gendered attitude of the Indians. The objectives of the study are as follows,

1. To make a survey of the representation of women in post-independence Indian English novels.
2. To analyze the socio-cultural environmental descriptions in the selected novels.
3. To validate the representation of women in selected novels with contemporary social situations.

1.6. Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that the representation of women in novel is validated with the contemporary social situations created in the world of the novel through the elements of a novel such as characters, setting or situations, dialogues, point of view and so on as delineated and depicted as a mirror image of the contemporary socio-cultural setup of the society.

1.7. Methodology

Descriptive and analytical approaches are used for the present study. It passed through three stages i.e. 1) selection of novels, 2) rigorous study of selected novels to find the women
representation and contemporary socio-cultural setup (Lachover, 2013) and, 3) these descriptions to explain the relationships.

1. The novels chosen for the study are selected on the basis of their chronological order. The contemporary socio-cultural situations were used on the background for analysis the fictional world of the novels.

2. The gradual changes in the depiction of women life in the novels are considered as the markers of socio-cultural alterations and reformation due to the socio-temporal aspects.

3. The socio-political affairs and the characters are compared to verify the validity and reliability of the issues raised by the writers in the selected texts.

The feministic approach is the prime way of analyses in the present study. The feministic readings recorded in the review of these novels are tested in the contemporary cultural background. The analyses in the present study are preferred materialistic approach and compared with idealistic descriptions.

1.8. Review of Literature – Feministic analyses of Indian English Literature

The approach of the society towards the women taken into account is prime issue in their writings of Jane Austen (1775-1817), Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), G. B. Shaw (1856-1950), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), etc. G. B. Shaw gives respect to women in his writings like ‘Candida’ (1955). Approaches towards love and marriage were presented in ‘Pride and Prejudice’ (1975) by Jane Austen. Henrik Ibsen, a dramatist presented some personal and social problems, problems in family and society and its trends. In plays like ‘Brands’ (1866) and ‘Peer Gynt’ (1867) he offered questions like men superiority and his lack of humanity. John Stuart Mill (1869), Fredric Engels (1884) and Kate Millet (1970) covered the issues like family structure, subjection of women and sexual politics in their literature. They have mainly focused on equality in economic and external issues.

The Indian writers like Bankim Chandra Chatarjee and Raja Rao deal with real social and cultural problems in their novels i.e. ‘Raj Mohan’s Wife’ (1964) and ‘Kanthapura’ (1938). Raja Rao is Indo-English writer portrays the conflicts between East and West through inter-racial and inter-cultural relationships like sex, love, and marriage in his ‘The Serpent and the Rope’ (Aithal and Aithal, 1980). Rabindranath Tagore pointed out in his ‘Tapasya’ that union of man and
woman is the marriage of true minds, its journey from the sensual to the spiritual. Mahashweta Devi (1981) forwarded radical approach in ‘Draupadi’ through dialogues of Dopdi, the heroin like ‘tortures are not males, and true males never insult a woman’.

Paranjape (1998) adopts historical approach to portray the trend of changes in literary types, issues, views and approaches in Post-independence Indian English literature. Indian writers were confined to cultivate the issues and approaches related to nationalism as India was supposed to get freedom from British Empire. In post-independence, the writers were modified their approaches towards cultural and social issues i.e. village economy (1954) including Gandhian village co-operative and Nehruvian heavy industry (1966), feudal orders in ‘The Princess’ (1963) and contemporary political issues. Prasad (2013) and Kumar (2011) deal with freedom concern with social, political, economical and cultural issues with personal experiences portrayed in the novels of Bhabani Bhattacharya. His novels deal with the themes like hunger, poverty, disease, tradition, modernity, etc. However, Kumar (2011) shows that Bhattacharya’s writings are under influence of Western writers i.e. Romain Rolland, Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw and Indian writers i.e. Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Prasad (2013) has noted that Bhattacharya has given prominence to the women characters and are not treated as inferior to men. However, his women characters victimized in certain conditions like poverty and hunger and force to sell her body. Women of Bhattacharya are relatively passive in ‘So Many Hungers!’ ready to accept the customs, conventions and traditions in contemporary society unquestioningly but they change to rebellious in ‘He Who Rides a Tiger’. Further, social and cultural realism are crucially portrayed through common social element, hunger in novels i.e. ‘Nectar in a Sieve’, ‘Possession’ and ‘A Handful of Rice’ by Kamala Markandaya (Balan, 2013). Balamurugan et al. (2013) have compared the writings of Manohar Malgonkar with his contemporaries Khushwant Singh, Kamala Markandaya and Mulk Raj Anand elaborate conflict between Indians and the imperial power.

Some of the writers were focused on metaphysical explorations. At this background, the writers like Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Arun Joshi have started to write effectively about lives of middle-class women. The English literature have emphasized greater on the experiences and subjectivity of minorities, women, Anglo-Indians, Parsis, others who cannot see themselves as a part of the national ‘mainstream’. Malathi (2013) reported that Amitav Ghosh focused on freedom from political colonialism with historical nationalist issues
like diaspora, migration, refugees, colonial hegemony, socio-economic and cultural problems including east-west encounter, caste and class, etc. in his novel, ‘The Shadow Lines’ (Singh, 2010). This novel identifies the boundaries of nation as the source of violence and therefore, he interprets the world inhabited by a common humanity and not by nations (Khan, 2013). Khan (2013) outlines the limitations of Amitav Ghosh’s fantastic dream of peace as global humanity. Sharma B. (2013) shows the concept of space and time in this novel. Baskaran and Indu (2012) have compared the issues handled by Amitav Ghosh with Chetan Bhagat’s ‘The Three Mistakes of My Life’. They cover the role of religion and friendship in national integration of India. The literature characteristics are usually urban, middle-class, English educated people and Westernized. However, post-modernist novelists like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Amitav Ghosh have rejected the Western values, ideologies, beliefs, as well as norms of living (Dar, 2013).

Aditya (2011) reviewed the feministic views of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in his writings and legal documents. He remarked that ‘Manusmriti’ is inculcating discriminating views in our society in last few centuries. He has invested his energy to cultivate man-woman equalities in different castes. Anand (1999) recognized that the democratic languages are ever accessible to masses. The Sanskrit was never a ‘mother tongue’, it was always father tongue’. It was not accessible to women as well as Shudras or ati-shudras. In modern Indian society, the English literature is also belongs to elite classes mainly ‘Brahmins’ which presented in Indian English fiction. It is ideologically discriminating culture and issues handled are belongs to middle and upper classes. However, the man-woman inequalities have strongly rooted in the social system. Therefore, the relation of man from lower caste with woman from upper caste is not accepted by the society shown in Roy’s novel, ‘The God of Small Things’ (Chandran and Sujatha, 2012).

Women have central importance in formation of feminist theory in novel. Bhola (2009) shows feminism depicted in fictions of women writers i.e. Anita Desai, Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur. He identifies the problems of middle-class women in their writings i.e. suffering from neurosis, struggle for survival, generation crises, sacrifice for family, traditions and culture, sentimental problems, contradictions and crises between modernity and traditions, gender discriminations (Ranvirkar, 2012, Chatterjee, 2013). Nayantara Sahgal concerned with the man-woman relationship, the problems of marital incompatibility and view of morality imposed on women, whereas Anita Desai stated that femaleness leads them to
suicide or murder or withdrawal from the society. They focused large on emotional space and that too within marriage. Bharati Mukherjee shows the contrast women characters to Desai. Shashi Deshpande explained the male dominance in joint families. She discussed about women struggle for basic rights like education, job work, decision of child birth, self-fulfilment, suffering in silence, etc. The writers have presented women characters revolutionary and tragic. Manju Kapur has presented contradictions between political views and provisions in Indian Law i.e. Hindu Code Bill. Bhat (2014) reported that Mukherjee and Kapur present the individual consciousness and social reality in their novels.

The writers like Jhabvala, Mukherjee, Arun Joshi, Kapur, etc. have presented the issues of multicultural adjustments and problems of immigrants. Jhabvala portrays the struggle to adjust and disappointment, failure of European immigrants in India (Singh, 2013) whereas, Mukherjee, Arun Joshi and Kapur have focused on issues of immigrants in Western countries. Bijawar (2014) compared Mukherjee’s novels, ‘Wife’ and ‘Jasmine’ with Jhumpa Lahiri’s ‘The Namesake’ to understand the cultural clashes and associates with alienation and identity crisis (Bhatt, 2013). They pointed the cultural roots and their deviations, but cultural assimilation highlighted than resistance (Babu and Kumar, 2013). Bhatt (2013) has noted that Mukherjee deals with the aspects and issues of gender and marriage. Further, she shows inborn duties to obey for women in patriarchal system as a daughter before marriage and wife after marriage. Mukherjee concerns to delineate the problems of cross cultural conflicts faced by Indian women immigrants through Tara Banerjee in ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’, Dimple in ‘Wife’, Jyoti in ‘Jasmine’ and Devi in ‘Leave it to me’, three sisters-Padma, Parvati and Tara in ‘Desirable Daughters’ and Tara in ‘The Tree Bride’ (Babu and Kumar, 2013, Smaranda, 2013, Ravichandran and Deivasigamani, 2013, Ramesh and Phaniraja, 2013). Mukherjee explores that the women are the most sufferer in cultural dislocation because they carry the burden of cultural values of their native land to new country as immigrants in her ‘The Tiger’s Daughter’. Therefore, it is more difficult and problematic for them to adjust in new place (Mehra, 2014).

Feminist writers have recognized that the contradictions between man and woman were not reduced even after 65 years of independent Republic of India (Renganathan, 2009, Azhar and Ali, 2012). They have started discussions on sexual problems of women and questioned about the gender role in society. Shashi Deshpande is a feminist writer mainly focused on coalition of rights, desires, agendas, struggles and victories for all the women (Nayak, 2011,
Hans, 2013). She projects the image of woman who gets the support from the male as father and husband but not free for self identity, decision i.e. choice of marriage in outside community, sense of physical and mental fulfilsments (Ranvirkar, 2012). However, at maternal home, she felt relief in old shelter but this is not permanent relief from their sufferings. Deshpande justified the extra-marital relationships in the condition of sexual dissatisfaction of women, affecting marital life. Gove (2010) reported thoughtful account of women’s world and psyche on the background, crucible of traditions, conventions and social changes presented by Indo-English novelists. He concluded feminine sensibility, human relationships, human bonds and bondages in long review of ‘A Matter of Time’ by Shashi Deshpande. He mainly focused on issues like marriage, sex and sexuality, mother-daughter relationship, womanhood, trauma of a deserted wife, injustice in matters of property ownership, marginalisation, etc. of women in middle-class family. Further, Narayan (1998) has depicted the ideology of domesticity of middle-class women at home with sanctioned economic exploitation, women slaves and working-class women problems. Thus, Deshpande deals with the issues related to women i.e. man-woman relationship, love and mythology in her novels (Bhardwaj, 2014). Further, Renganathan (2009) has described various strengths of novels written by Shashi Deshpande: 1) the Indian feminism depicted in her fictions is unique one, 2) women experiences with gynocentric vision, 3) writes about the culture and societies simply and mundane, 4) the women identical contradictories between the traditions and modernity, family and profession, culture and nature, 5) her feminism is humanistic and optimistic, and 6) awakening of women consciousness (Ranvirkar, 2012).

Manju Kapur emphasized on women transformations in three steps, surrendered and victimized (Kasturi) in patriarchal forces, rebel against social conventions (Virmati) and independent divorced widow (Ida) passes through three generations in her ‘Difficult Daughters’ (Samuel and Hephzibah, 2013) whereas women in ‘A Married Woman’ are struggling for (Parween, 2014) autonomy and empowerment in patriarchal family setup.

Mahmood (2010) stated that Ram Mohan Roy and Macaulay have recommended English Language education in India. Fiction is the most suitable literary term to express our experiences and ideas in our time. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Bhabani Bhattacharya were contemporary novelists. Shashi Deshpande has a unique place in Indian English writing. She focused on marital relations, man-made patriarchal traditions and rebellious heroines. She presented social reality as it experienced by women. She has also write about girl child’s
position in society, self-identity, modernity, tradition as well as plight, fear, dilemmas, contradictions, ambitions and rebel against congested way of life (Ramachandran, 2011, Ranvirkar, 2012). She presented realistic, authentic and credible women characters in her writings. The writer has suggested small adjustment for idealism and pragmatism even though she is financially independent and educated for bridging gaps and better family environment. Bedjaoui (2009) has noted the women writers’ perception of Indian woman identity i.e. cross-cultural under currents give new vision of Indian women which pleasing to Western mind and feelings with their Indianness. Here, Ramachandran (2011) remarked that Shashi Deshpande’s protagonists are stronger than other contemporary writers. They struggle against the inner conflicts as well as problems in patriarchal setup of the society and families.

Patriarchy controls over the girl’s sexuality, needs, desires and actions, and matrimony and motherhood which become the major goals and destiny for women (Parweeen, 2014). Thangaraj and Mohamed (2014) and Pawar (2014) have reviewed the wife beating, subjugation, marginalization and oppression of women in ‘The God of Small Things’ of Arundhati Roy and ‘The Inheritance of Loss’ of Kiran Desai. Varma and Lal (2012) used realistic approach to study the social, cultural and economic aspects of discrimination of Indian women. They referred directions given in the ‘Manusmriti’ i.e. ‘A woman is never fit for independence!’ to explain the nature of dependency in male centric patriarchal society. Parmar (2012) noted the exploitation of teenagers presented by Mulk Raj Anand in his novels, ‘Untouchable’ and ‘Coolie’ through protagonists Bakha and Munoo, respectively. Further, Sharma P. (2012) noted the commitment of Mulk Raj Anand to expose social injustice, economic exploitation and the plight of suppressed castes and classes in India in his ‘Two Leaves and a Bud’.

Danielle Steel is American romantic novelist deals with strong and devoted relationship among the brothers and sisters and they would all sacrifice their own lives for each other in her novel, ‘No Greater Love’ but Roy presents contrast relationship between them i.e. hatred (Ammu and Chacko) and sexual relationship (Rahel and Estha) in her ‘The God of Small Things’ (Abirami and Mahalakshmi, 2012).

Nayantara Sahgal is Indo-English writer influenced by Gandhian ideology of freedom and non-violence (Rajamuniyammal, 2013). Biswas and Roy (2011) attempted to see the points of divergence and convergence in Nayantara Sahgal’s ‘Storm in Chandigarh’ and Shashi
Deshpande’s ‘That Long Silence’ with feministic perspective. The issues handled in these novels are marital discord, silence, lack of communication, quest for identity, etc. These writers have similar views on marriage that marriage enslaves women and forces them to loss their identity. On the other hand, presented male characters are helping to woman for their self-identity.

Azhar and Ali (2012) analysed the issues related to middle-class and upper middle-class women in ‘Difficult Daughters’, ‘A Married Woman’ and ‘Home’ by Manju Kapur. They have discussed about the status of woman in her family and society. Chaudhary and Sharma (2012) compared the fictions of Manju Kapur with contemporary conceptualized feminism in India. They reviewed the concept of feminism in India, Indian patriarchy and curtailed rights. Manju Kapur’s writing reflects man-woman relationships, human desire, longing body, gender discrimination, marginalization, rebel and protests. She presented socio-cultural life in modern urban post-colonial India as well as lesbian relationships. The middle-class women are searching for place of shelter and securities. She recognized the healthy sexual relationship for personal, social as well as family securities. Azhar and Ali (2012) have recognized different issues portrayed by Manju Kapur: 1) women status before and after marriage, 2) self-identity, and 3) struggle for survival against traditions. In the traditional society, women treated as an object even they have contributed in fight for national freedom, political issues, literature, economic sectors, etc.

Al-Quaderi and Islam (2011) showed the transgression of the caste, class and religious boundaries of women in Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’. She presented the outcasted woman from marital and maternal home with twin because of lacunae of kin womanhood even though her maternal was elite leftist in their religious past. They noted that limitations of co-existence of ‘untouchable’ and ‘touchable’. The writer tries to feminist reconceptualization of politics. Ammu was lower class woman exploited from upper class in ‘class society’ i.e. her Bengali Hindu husband wanted to prostitute her in order to please his white boss.

Purushottam (2011) used gyno-critical strategy to examine three novels by contemporary Indian women novelists, namely, Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’, Kiran Desai’s ‘The Inheritance of Loss’ and Manju Kapur’s ‘Difficult Daughters’. He got together traditional views with modernity like globalization, materialism, consumerism and feminism. The writer covers different issues in their writings with innovative style, depicting social realities, advocacy
of the emancipation of women and feminine sensibilities in man-woman relationships. Mishra (2011) has noted Jane Austen’s practical views about love and marriage. Jane Austen never treated love as personal affair but marriage is a social institution and therefore, love and marriage should be considered in the social perspective.

Khan (2009) compared the psychoanalytical portrayal of the women characters in fictions by Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai. Basically, they are influenced by the modern psychological interpretation of their behaviour, actions, reactions and responses under given circumstances. They handled the issues like love and marriage, subjugation of women, social injustice, psychological torture, sense of self-centeredness and helping nature, ideology and religiousness, discrimination and struggle for freedom, etc. Yazdani and Royanian (2012) noticed that Margaret Atwood shows the world of feminist protest through her novel ‘The Handmaid’s Tale.’ She has presented sexism and anti-feminism in contemporary society. She explains physical and psychological suppression of women, problems of discrimination, subjugation and denial of human rights in patriarchal society.

Parveen (2012) stated that R. K. Narayan portrays life in Malgudi with comic point of view. He treats human as sentimental, selfish, manners and mean with sympathy and compassion. He presented orthodox middle-class life and society. It also reveals traditional and modern Indian cultural clash. The woman protagonist devotes her life for goal achievement i.e. social cause: population control. Daisy has no place for personal feelings or emotions but Laxmi has religious discourses, rites and rituals.

Jubimol (2012) explained the close association between woman and nature i.e. ‘Mother Earth,’ ‘Mother Nature,’ ‘Virgin Land,’ ‘Barren River,’ ‘Flowery Women,’ describing women as ‘chicks,’ ‘cow,’ ‘bitch’ in reference to reproduction and nurturing. However, this association allows to male as well as society for women exploitation in patriarchal, capitalist and colonialist society.

Markandaya uses stream of consciousness to explain the aspects of cultural change (Pandey, 2013). Mount (2011) and Kaur (2012) have explained the eco-feministic approach of Markandaya used in her novel, ‘Nectar in a Sieve’. They have pointed the intimate relations between women and nature with 1) rural and urban environment, and 2) human nature and social
customs ambivalence. Therefore, the feministic and ecological studies and movements have the same way to work in eco-feminism.

Singh (2012) pointed out that Sarojini Sahoo is a bilingual South Asian feminist writer. She explores female sexuality, the emotional lives of women, and the intricate fabric of human relationship, identifies women’s sexual liberation, rape, motherhood and marriage. Her women protagonists are discarded from maternal home in traditional patriarchal setup, inner crisis, poised between submission and resistance, passivity and action. She deals with social issues, conflict between social and individual values.

Mishra (2011) remarked that Jane Austen has propagated romantic approaches through her six popular novels. She preferred conversion of willing love into marriage for success. The writer tried to inculcate common sense and practical attitude towards life and find matching for the heroines. Devereux (1999) reviewed the representations of white women in anglo-colonial fictions for nation progress and empire. The fictions are underlies the reproductive duties of women and presented women as a ‘mother of race’. Sujatha (2012) has reported the racial hatred of Indian immigrant in Canada in Bharati Mukherjee’s fiction. The later writing shows optimistic views of inclusive society and culture.

Datta (2000) examined the process of gendered representations in Indian cinema and how ideological and market forces impact on this process. He referred the feministic novels for explanations of women behaviour, patriarchal control over women, family relations and lesbian relationships. The changes in traditions and activities are linked to Western world in the globalization i.e. shopping malls, food habits (Sanyal, 2011), entertainments, etc. Indian cinema guiding to women as well as men for traditional ideological setup in new way of Western forces for representing them as a glorious woman i.e. higher expense on cosmetics, fancy garments or dresses, etc. to please men.

Sanyal (2011) pointed out food faddism and faulty food habits were more common in low educated and low income group as compared to high educated, high income and middle income group of Hazaribag district of Jharkhand (India). The quality of food was recorded better for women of high income and high educated group compared to middle income, low income and low educated group. Mythili (2013) reported the faddism for enjoying the cosy life which she would get in a foreign country and ruthlessly aborts the baby reported in Mukherjee’s ‘Wife’. 
Mukherjee focuses on the psychology, madness and monstrosity as subversive survival strategies and escapes from narrow patriarchal, political, social and cultural problems in her ‘Wife’ and ‘Jasmine’ (Raducanu, 2011).


Mendes (2011) has investigated the 555 news articles published on women movements in British and American society with different approaches i.e. second wave feminism, social movements in the Media, News of Women’s Liberation - reporting feminists, framing feminists, supportive frames, opposing feminism, feminism as complex and contradictory. The author reported that out of them 101 news articles are representing complex, contradictory, particularly regarding the acceptance of equal rights, but the strong rejection of feminism.

Feminism is revolutionary ideology concerned with political power (Bhola, 2009). Bhola (2009) reported the themes in feminism and feminist theory includes patriarchy, sexual objectification and oppression (Walby, 1996). Patriarchal families engage in transactions like dowry, bride price, bride wealth and other kinds of prestige (Moghadam, 1992). The feminist writers present rebellious women in their novels. However, they are protecting their family structure in faith and honesty. In this background, Manju Kapur presents complex of women
struggle for survival and self-identity in successive generations. The earlier generations are accepting the contradictions, but next generations realizing these things due to education and awareness. Kapur elaborates importance of education to bring dignity, honour and power to women and they struggle for basic rights, identity and survival in her novels (Ghosh, 2013, Sethi and Dhillon, 2012). Nayantara Sahgal shows women mind passing through unremitting pain, suffering and sacrificing, struggle for freedom, individual identity and fulfilment (Ahlawat, 2011, Joshi, 2013). Pandey (2013) pointed that the feminism in the novels of Kamala Markandaya through Rukmani, Nalini, Ira, Mira, Roshan, Helen, Lalitha, Mohini, Usha, Valli, etc. (Dhillon and Sethi, 2012). Her feminism is influenced by the Western philosophy and suggests the science and technology to improve the material conditions, to promote progress and to establish equality among men and women (Balan, 2013). Markandaya used the themes like maternal instinct, spirituality, modernity, urban influences, east – west conflict, feminine superiority to show the feminism in her writings (Pandey, 2013). Women of the first generation are self-bounded by tradition and rituals in contemporary society but the next generations are ready to break it for self-identity and reliance. They are ready to rebel against bounds in her family. Taslima Nasrin shows the women rebel against patriarchal bound in her novel, ‘French Lover’ through Nilanjana (Sigma, 2013). However, the struggles presented in literature have not converted into rebel against cruel treatment given to women at large i.e. sex selective abortion of female child (Das Gupta et al., 2003) and exploitations at different places. Therefore, the literature can be revolutionary but not a revolution, it is not a science of revolution but inspire for revolution against the cruelty (Patil, 1988).

1.9. Arrangement of Chapters

The thesis is organised in six chapters and supported by the list studies referred in the present work. An introduction includes different concepts i.e. gendered socialization, feminism, objectives and methodology of the study, review of previous literature and details about selected novels for present study. The second chapter rigorously reviews the feministic background including history, trends and broad areas of feminism and a genre of Indian English novel with contributions of Indian women novelists. Feministic analyses of selected Indian novels grouped into three phases after independence are described in the third, fourth and fifth chapters to learn representation of women in Indian novels. The findings, conclusions, limitations and further
scope of the study reported in the sixth chapter. The acknowledgements, contents, abbreviations
and abstract are given after title page whereas and selected primary texts and references at the end of thesis.

Chapter-I  Introduction

Chapter-II  Review of Feminism and Indian English Novels

The feministic approach, concept of feminism, its history and broad areas with scope are discussed in this chapter to set theoretical background of the study. Indian English novels and writing of Indian women novelists in English are reviewed to understand the trends, approaches, views and issues of and about women.

Chapter-III  The First Phase (1950-1975)

The thematic analysis of the representative novels is preformed to highlight the features of the representation of women in India. It has been analysed to learn the feministic representation of women in Indian English novels after independence.

Chapter-IV  The Second Phase (1976-2000)

The selected novels from the second phase are analysed to indicate the transitory stage that corresponds to the previous conventionalities and the further improvements.

Chapter-V  The Present Phase (2000-until this date)

The contemporary Indian English novels and the perspectives on the present socio-political scenario depicted in the Indian English novels. It has been studied to know recent trends of representation of women in Indian English literature in the 21st century and in future.
Chapter-VI  Conclusion

The findings are drawn on the basis of observations depicted in the selected novels written in the targeted periods to mark the development and progressive stages of improvements in the lives of Indian women.

1.10. Resume

The objectives of the study, methodology and techniques used for analysis and reviews of previous literature have been discussed in this chapter. A brief introduction also made to understand the aspects of socialization processes and feminism. The present work has been designed in such a way that post-independence Indian English novels are analysed to understand the women representation with feministic approach. Fifteen novels distributed within three phases and written by men and women writers were selected with chronological order. These novels are analysed with contemporary socio-cultural situations and socio-political affairs to get insight about women status in contemporary society. Therefore, the feministic approaches with its theoretical background, progress of Indian English novels and contributions of Indian women novelists in English novel discussed in the next chapter.

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