INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINES OF THE CHAPTERS

The aim of the thesis, consisting of six chapters, is to search for the particular trends in Indian art, especially those of printmaking. These trends developed due to the Western influences and interactions that took place during the British rule. The British cultural policy was directed to serve their goals and printmaking was a medium used for printing their materials such as newsletters, booklets, illustrations, instructions, posters and other purposes such as versions of the Bible for the propaganda of Christianity. This situation started to acquire some significant changes when Ganganendranath Tagore started his lithographic satires between 1917-1919.

The turning point of printmaking as a medium used for self-expression came to take place few years after the establishment of Kala Bhavan in 1920. However, during this time some Indian artists started to go abroad to acquire the proper know-how of printmaking techniques. They acquired the maximum of these techniques from the West and Western experts during their training periods in England, USA or some other European countries. Indian artists also got much benefit from those Western teachers and instructors, who were among the teaching staff of Kala Bhavan, especially during the period from 1925-1930.

This kind of communication and interactions created some kind of deep impact of Western printmaking on the Indian printmaking scene. In fact, the Far East has also had its influences on Indian printmaking, but these influences were limited and in no way can be compared with those from the West. The colour woodcut of the Far East was very complicated and yet conventional. But the simpler technique for woodcut adopted by communist China did have a lot of impact on a few Indian printmakers, such as Chitta Prasad and some others.
The major goal of the thesis is to trace and analyze the various characteristics in the
development of Indian printmaking in the three major centres of printmaking activities, namely,
Calcutta and Santiniketan as one unit and Delhi as the second unit and Baroda as the third unit.
The three units the form the auspicious triangle.

The objective of the thesis is implied in the nomenclature of the title ‘Trends and
Innovations in Contemporary Indian Printmaking.’ We will do our best to achieve these goals
through the required processes and research tools. We will examine the various factors,
characteristics, influences and trends in the movement of Indian printmaking, tracing its
development and progress through the years before and after Independence. We will select the
great events and prominent printmakers and also those who partly did printmaking during the
glorious years.

Reaching this juncture will create the need to state the outlines of the chapters of the
thesis. It will also be helpful if we specify the field of the study, as we already explained
earlier, the so called auspicious triangle, when we wrote our acknowledgements. There
is a kind of interaction and exchange of knowledge and experience between the three major
centres of our study, viz., Delhi, Baroda, Calcutta and Santiniketan and these activities helped
much in the renaissance of painting and printmaking in Delhi. Names like Somnath Hore,
Krishna Reddy, Jaya Appasamy, D.R. Kowshik and from the younger generation Dhiraj
Choudhury, Kavita Nayar and Jayasri Burman, all of them are the product of Calcutta or
Santiniketan. They migrated to New Delhi to establish their art making activities.

From Baroda to New Delhi also, we see some other names such as Shanti Dave, Vivan
Sundaram, D. Devraj, Dattatray Apte and Jayant Gajera. All of them are the product of Baroda
and based in Delhi. There is also cooperation and intimate communication between Baroda and
Santiniketan. K.G. Subramanayan was and still is at the helm of this friendly process. There
are also some younger printmakers trained at Baroda, now based at Calcutta, such as Siddhartha
Ghose and at Santiniketan Nirmalendu Das and Suranjan Basu, to name a few.

The period of study begins broadly with the 1930s and the 1940s of this century. We
will be eager to pick up all these interesting, tragic, distinguished and striking expressions,
which might convey to the reader the special characteristics of those great names that played
the most significant role in the contemporary Indian printmaking. The thesis will further stress
on the post-Independence period, when only a few and elite artists acquired proper skills to
handle the technical processes of printmaking on their own or from the expertise of advanced processes and know-how of the West. Other regions got the initial steps, but Calcutta and Santiniketan had a different story. Herein West Bengal, the renaissance of printmaking acquired its progressive stature much early due to some particular reasons, as chapter-I will reveal all about them.

We will be on the crossroads when reaching the 60s, because we come to the broad areas of printmaking activities, looking at these great achievements, especially in New Delhi and Baroda. The great upheaval and the tremendous turning point took place in the 70s. The expertise of printmakers spread in all the major centres of printmaking through the country from Madras to Chandigarh and from Santiniketan to Bombay. All this advancement took place in the 80s along side the other kind of cultural and technical developments. The atmosphere became ripe for more publications on printmaking, art criticism, competitions, graphic studios, seminars, workshops, group and solo exhibitions, printmakers' gathering in groups and formation of graphic departments in several art schools in the country. Tools and material were available from the local markets. Individual studios emerged and galleries started playing a significant role between the printmakers and the art lovers. This particular decade of the 90s yielded ripe fruits of the trees that were planted in the previous decades. During this period, India has already participated in more national and international competitions and some of the Indian printmakers have claimed universal recognition.

This is in brief the period of the study, devoted to cover the early years of Kala Bhavan till the mid-90s with little hints of the current year of 1998. In fact, we can not make boundaries between all these decades of printmaking activities. Hence, the printmaking movement was in the gradually progressive process and the researcher could only follow the major events and the prominent delineations, particularly, those striking and innovative prints, which might be the landmarks in the history of Indian Printmaking. These landmarks are the culmination of the last three decades with some hints from still earlier decades.

When we inspect the thesis, we see that there is an intimate relationship between all the chapters. And when we go through the chapters, we will discover some kind of interaction, which reveals some of inquiries that were raised up during the process of reading. For instance, the selected artists in some cases come to play double or even triple role in more than one chapter. We have to clarify all about such eventualities, sometimes directly and sometimes
indirectly. The indirect approach always gives the reader an opportunity to practice his own intellectual evolution to search for the intentions when he reads in between the lines and also when he approaches the text in an open-minded attitude.

Let us refer to Nandalal Bose as a pioneering artist in the field of printing as well as printmaking. He was also a serious and inspiring teacher very much aware of the intricacies in the process of art education. He was a renaissance builder and an exceptional person. Under his guidance, printmaking acquired a significant role as a medium of self-expression, and under R.N. Chakravarty printmaking became a vogue in the School of Art at Calcutta. Since there were an interconnection between Calcutta and Santiniketan, the study will cover these dynamic centres of printmaking activities in Eastern India during these crucial years of the 30s and the 40s. The 40s in particular are a crucial decade for many reasons. The World War II was fiercely going on in Europe, while in India, the Bengal famine of 1943 took place. The communal riots started in 1946 and the inhuman situation spread all over India. Corpses of innocent victims of the criminal massacres were strewn everywhere. Emigrants rushed to other states or fled from their own properties to the neighboring countries during the process of the creation of Pakistan and the independent India.

Soon some of the up-to-date tendencies began their formative stage, with the happenings in the socio-political and cultural fields, especially in the process of art expression. Our stress will be concentrated on printmaking as a medium and as a message. We will examine the artworks and all round the process of art making, the process of self-satisfaction and also the fulfillment of printmaking career. The relation between the artist as a creator and the viewer as a receiver, the trends, tendencies, influences, contradictions and the controversial artworks will be discussed and re-examined and may be revalued.

The study, therefore, has focussed the spotlight on Delhi as the capital of printmaking. Delhi acquired this advanced position around the mid-50s, when Delhi became the haven of Indian printmakers, and emerged as a dynamic centre of creative and up-to-date printmaking. Here, we can pick up some significant aspects and some striking achievements. We can also put our hands on some special characteristics and go after some analytical approaches in order to grasp the reflected effects of these prints, seeking to reach the core of the artworks to reveal the real directions and the significant trends in the Indian printmaking; particularly in the region of our study. The axis that goes through New Delhi and Baroda of course has different criteria
for its progressive traits. However, both of the cities willingly made great advancement and each strode forward to ascend the summit of printmaking.

The thesis consists of six chapters. The study will start in the area of East Bengal, Calcutta and Santiniketan, and we will stay there to trace all the required information about printmaking and the progressive movement as a new medium of self-expression. The Bengal region will cover the first three chapters of the thesis. Two chapters are devoted to Delhi and Baroda and the sixth chapter documents three selective women printmakers.

The stress will be on the journey of printmaking as a new Western technique, how it comes to India, and how it becomes an Indian tool in the hands of Indian printmakers. There were many fields for the use of this medium, viz., in the fields of commercial purposes, the fields of conventional art expression and in the fields of creative and innovative printmaking. The last one is the most striking attitude. The research will take care of such kind of artworks. In order to achieve this goal, we have to go through the earlier attempts of these pioneers, both the amateurs as well as the mature printmakers. They might be meticulous at that time, but not necessarily innovators, because they used the medium in the same way they draw or paint. They were still far away from the graphic nature as an independent language of expression. We should bear in mind to use this comprehension and whatever we talk about as a trend or a special characteristic of printmaking, in the rest of the chapters of this thesis.

Going forward to approach the second chapter. Here, we will find the need to stop a little to bring to focus one of the pioneering painters of undivided India, he is, A.R. Chughtai, 1897-1975. We can consider Chughtai as a doyen in the field of Plastic Art; he is in fact, the doyen of undivided India. Though he is a great master of painting, yet he is an active and forerunner printmaker. I think it is a privilege to enrich our second chapter with such outstanding painter-printmaker. In fact, there are two other painter-printmakers, who have a place in this chapter. They are the distinguished students of Nandalal Bose, viz., Benode B. Mukherjee and Ramkinker Baij. We were able to pick up some of their interesting prints for analytic study and some other intentions.

The second section of this chapter comes to be engaged with two full-fledged printmakers, viz., Haren Das and Safiuddin Ahmed. Unlike the above-mentioned artists, these two printmakers are full-time graphic artists; they are the real forerunners because they went further to explore the medium of printmaking but in different ways. Haren Das bound himself
with the conventional delineations and pictorial graphic art, while his colleague completely parted with his early style of the 40s and strode forward for an innovative delineation, he was able to do a good number of striking prints and go beyond the main stream conventions.

Back to Haren Das to say that he is one of the significant builders of printmaking in Calcutta, he spent his lifetime career from 1940-1990 in his printmaking workshop in Government College of Art, Calcutta. Many prominent printmakers of India today are the products of his department. They studied under his guidance, viz., Lalu Prasad Shaw, Amitabha Benerjee, Shyamal Datta Ray, Samat Kar and Arun Bose. In fact, Das is the matchless master of meticulous printmaking. However, innovative attitude has another story far from the reach of Haren Das.

The third chapter somehow is different from any other chapters in the thesis, due to the dramatic events of the Bengal famine of 1943. Though Zainul Abedin did only a few prints, yet he did hundreds of classical sketches using matchless delineations of the magic movement of his brush and ink. They could strikingly convey the core of the inhuman practices. He came to be the pioneer artist of the day in this field. Many artists of these days acquired deep influences from his expressive depictions. However, their real and deep response and their ripe printmaking came a little late - around the mid-50s.

The prominent artists, who brought out significant prints to express their feelings towards this famine, are Chitta Prasad and his younger colleague Somnath Hore. Somnath adopted this theme for the rest of his life. In fact, he is the most humanist and patriotic printmaker I ever met during my stay in India since 1990. This man has a sharp intuitive aptitude, besides he is also a very warm human being and has a very lovely personality. The famine of 1943 had a seminal influence on him. The concerns and fetishes that the famine created in him, relive today in his latest works. We shall dwell more on this later. Ramkinkar Baij also did some expressive and interesting paintings, sketches and prints that deeply depicted the tragic atmosphere of this famine.

The impact of this great famine extended even to the post-independence years. Artists became involved in issues of socio-political importance, particularly, veteran painters such as M.F. Husain, P.T. Reddy, Paritosh Sen, K.G. Subramanyan and Jeram Patel. Jeram did a striking drawing entitled ‘Vietnam,’ 1970, while Krishan Khanna did ‘Preparation for the

The major theme of the younger artist Nikhil Biswas was the metaphorical images of the Bengal famine, such as the brutality of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A few others, who also have taken up socio-political subjects, are Doraiswamy, A. Ramchandran, Tyeb Mehta, Himmat Shah. It is fair enough to mention those of the new generation such as, Anupam Sud, Nalin Malani, Arpana Caur, Madhu and Walter D’Souza. Such impressive artworks added a new dimension for the contemporary Indian art scene and widened the horizon of this field.

Approximately the three decades that followed the great Bengal famine were years of confrontation and rebellion against old conventions and narrow-minded approaches. The artists in this period were striving for a new situation and seeking the better future. However, this era is considered the turning point in contemporary Indian art. From now on a new attitude and also a new handling of the image-making has taken place. The artist became one of the actual people. The old subject matters such as myths and imaginative worlds no more attracted him. The artist acquired advanced qualities such as sharp intuitive aptitude. He began searching for another direction for new areas to discover and new horizons to explore. Now he felt free to do whatever he liked, believed or sought for. From now on the new trends emerged, the individual characteristics of each artist are vigorously noticed; conventional attitudes and approaches all come to their dead end. From now on everything started looking different. It is a new world with new canons and norms that needs different handling and needs the search for the suitable tools to cope with; conventional subject matter became a part of history. The artist now seems to be able to change the whole world, no one can rule over him.

Around the mid-50s, Delhi became the capital of printmaking as well. By this time, printmaking almost says farewell to Santiniketan and Calcutta, while Baroda was waiting to assume its role as a major centre of printmaking. Here, in this chapter, we will talk all about the rise of printmaking in Delhi, considering this approach as the fourth chapter. Here, we will show some kind of special interest willing to cope with the importance of the capital of the country. The chapter will search out the most significant achievements of printmaking movements and bring to focus some of those masters and leading artists to highlight their efforts and to examine their points of view along with their different approaches towards graphic art.
The era of our research may exceed the last 40 years, which means that we will have to go back around those early days of the mid-50s, when the epic of the veterans such as Kanwal and Devyani Krishna and Laxman Pai, who had just returned back from Paris. We move on to the other emigrant genius of printmaking techniques Krishna Reddy. He had held an outstanding printmaking exhibition in Delhi, displaying his amazing viscosity prints. For the first time, the art lovers in India were able to see such kind of advanced prints, such magical colours, such attractive handling of the language of printmaking. Reddy captured the hearts of the visitors and the art lovers in Delhi. This upheaval in fact, is a very significant landmark in the history of Indian printmaking.

The period from 1950 to 1960 shows a good number of printmaking activities. The atmosphere was suitable for fine arts to stride forward; Ukil School, Kulkarni's Studio, AIFACS, Silpi Chakra, Triveni Kala Sangam, Lalit Kala Akademi, Sailoz's exhibitions, the advent of artists from Bombay to Delhi, all these elements played a role in the formation of the Delhi sensibility.

These events took place in Delhi around 1958. Somnath Hore was in Delhi to start his printmaking phase as a teacher of printmaking. Later on, we see other figures come to take place inside the frame of the picture. It is interesting to know that the Indian artists, who did graphic art in the decade of the 50s, are those whose names we have mentioned in the thesis, but here, we will add some other names such as Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, Ram Kumar and M.F. Husain. Kunika Gallery held significant exhibition of their graphics in Delhi in December 1961. All the above-mentioned names have been picked up from the catalogue of the exhibition. From Baroda, there were Jyoti Bhatt, Nasreen Mohammedi and Vinodray Patel and from Delhi, Laxman Pai, Kanwal Krishna, Devyani Krishna, Somnath Hore and Jagmohan Chopra.

It is relevant to mention here the ‘8 Indian Lithographs’ exhibition, which was produced by Shilalekh-Bombay in 1958. M.F. Husain, Ram Kumar, V.S. Gaitonde and Tyeb Mehta were the participants each of the mentioned artists presented two lithographs. This exhibition also should be considered as a pioneering achievement, since it comes very early before the spreading of the great number of rushed exhibitions everywhere.

On the other hand, we can quote the younger generation, such as Anupam Sud, Jai Krishna, Paramjeet Singh and the rest of the members of the ‘Group 8,’ founded by the efforts
of Jagmohan Chopra in 1968, just after Somnath Hore turned his back to the world of Delhi in 1967, seeking new horizons and eager to find an appropriate destination and peaceful haven for his creative career. In fact, this group has put Delhi on the map of printmaking in India.

Printmakers such as Jai Zharotia, Dattatraya Apte and their colleagues are the second generation. They received influence from the older veterans and at the same time, inspired the younger and the subsequent generations. The activities of Garhi Studios, along with the graphic art competitions and activities will be well within our purview. We will bring to the focus all the significant artistic events, achievements, innovations, in order to study and examine the output of the worthy printmakers. According to our own interpretation, Indian Printmakers' Guild deserves a close approach and special interest. There are also some other relevant factors that justify their importance to be covered in the scope of our discussion.

By the end of chapter IV, we will have already gone through a good number of prominent printmakers and highlighted some selected activities, which enrich our research and help to reach the required goal. The discussion of the trends and the searching for innovations give them the due prominence in the thesis, the viewer can easily put his hand on them and examine their special characteristics. The reader may imagine some other qualities and read between the lines to discover some hidden meanings, which we were eager to interpose here or there, so we come to use the metaphorical symbols or indications to convey our invisible intentions. This attitude may be more obvious in the rest of the chapters, especially the second and the sixth. Lastly, we can say Delhi has exceptional facilities and matchless attraction.

Gradually, Delhi came to acquire its renaissance in this field due to a lot of considerations like being the capital of the country, where the migrant printmakers came to stay for good. Foreign printmaking exhibitions, graphic workshops, competitions and sponsored activities, together with a great number of galleries, museums, high standard of facilities; all together have created the conducive atmosphere for the advanced processes of printmaking techniques to thrive. Many styles and trends, many technical experiments have been widely practiced and the process of trial and error often used to open ways for creative expression by many artists. There were no limitations for their innovations.

While the power of Delhi's forward-looking movement comes from some outside factors, Baroda found itself far away from any similar facilities. But here in Baroda, we see the first university in India to have a faculty for fine arts, in 1950. N.S. Bendre, Sankho Chaudhari
and K.G. Subramanyan came to the city and contributed a lot. According to Jyoti Bhatt, “More than 50 per cent of important artists of the country have studied at Baroda, though Baroda has some of the best artists, most ‘public art’ in the city is awful. The faculty has sown the seed for a lot of art and culture related activities in the city. Baroda hosts a large artist community, which is directly or indirectly contributing to the fine arts faculty. Its location between two major cities like Bombay and Delhi also helps. However, the above mentioned role of Baroda has come from within.

The revolution of Baroda has been more genuine and deeply rooted to the soil of this youthful city. Baroda has an amazing attraction. Chapter 5 would reveal some facets of its outstanding qualities. Here is the peaceful haven for the dynamic, but serene artists, who are genuine, but dislike the limelight. There is no distance between the artists’ communities; faces are familiar. There are no curtains to hide the fake art; everything has to be true and for the sake of art. There is no room for games such as masquerading, gimmick and juggling. There is no greed for selling. Art lovers come here to meet the artists requesting them to hold exhibitions in Bombay or Delhi, but in fact, this process is not sufficient for many reasons. There are also some unfair aspects concerning this matter.

Baroda had to strive very hard to acquire its place under the sun. This city has been always playing its significant role in the up-to-date printmaking movement. It was during the late sixties, when the faculty started its post-graduate courses in printmaking techniques that Baroda has opened a new chapter in this field. As we know, printmaking was there, but not taught at specialized level. However, some good and talented printmakers were there in the mid-60s. Laxma Goud, the outstanding printmaker, did some interesting drawings and etchings. P.D. Dhumal and his colleague Bhawani Shankar Sharma, were the two students, who did their (MAF) graphics as the first batch in the year 1971. We will discuss the events of Baroda’s advanced developments through the years and approach Baroda as an exceptional city for creative printmaking.

Baroda has also some of intellectual art critics and art historians. We relied much on their writings, activities and teaching processes, guidance and instruction. They are artists by nature and they have lovely approaches. Group work, here, is more successful than at any other place. You will easily find helping hand, no place for boasting or selfishness. Here, the foreign student as well as the foreign artist easily finds the intimate approach facilitated by faithful and
fruitful communication. Expert hands are available to extend help or to reveal all about printmaking secrets. It is quite a privilege to be in such atmosphere.

Since we are still in Baroda, we have to approach the theme of sexuality in artworks. Some of Baroda artists have approached this significant subject matter; some created metaphoric images to express some particular needs for their total compositions. Some cover these themes with the blanket of socio-politic attitude, such as Jeram Patel, K.G. Subramanyan and to some extent, Naina Dalal and as a new 'tantrik' approach for Jyoti Bhatt. And as overt-hide and seek - for P.D. Dhumal, and as folksy overtones with high mastery of technique, powerful rendering and fantasy for Laxma Goud, the product of Baroda. Laxma, in fact, is one of the greatest etchers of India, so we can not give him but a tiny space, he deserves a prominent section here in this chapter. Fortunately, we have met him several times in the last few years and we collected much material on his outstanding etchings, especially when I further visited him at Hyderabad. So we were able to create an interesting discussion on his prints enhanced by striking photographs of his etchings.

Homosexuality has also been handled in Baroda. The doyen of homosexuality in this city is Bhupen Khakhar. This artist also approached the vernacular middle class status and those common people on the streets or in their humble places resting or selling 'pan' and tea and sometimes practicing homosexual intimacies. V.R. Patel presented mixed action images - voluptuous and yet expressive, he soon changed the build up of these images around the early 70s and embarked on his grotesque, yet innovative compositions in black and white linocut. Rekha Rodwittiya has an interest in issues of identity, the resurrection of the female spirit, the metaphor of the raped woman, ripped open and smudged - are deliberately chosen to be stark and schematized, repelling the masculine claims over the female body as an object. The nudity and sexuality in her images was precarious, as the uncertain situation of the experience itself, where the sensuous pleasurable could turn out to become an issue.

On the other hand, P.D. Dhumal has often represented heavily erotic imagery tending to acquire surrealistic overtones with curious phallus-lizards charging on or hovering around vaginal crevices of mountains, beasts and mushrooming trees. To aid our imagination and to acquire the proper base for understanding the sexuality in Indian art as a rooted subject matter, let us refer to Paritosh Sen, who once said, "Indian artists found a source of eternal fascination in contrasting the slender middle region of the female body with the richness and exuberance of
big breasts above and fully rounded thighs and jar-shaped buttocks below. The female body can undergo tremendous formalization and still preserve some tremor of its first impact.”

Such kind of heritage and this quality of high standard of beauty have had influence on the Indian artist. Indian genius represented the female physique in its boldest and most free attitudes. They recognized the dynamic aspect of feminine suppleness that is never tired of the subject rendered in every conceivable modulation of analogous and complementary poses. The human body has, indeed, been an object upon which the eye loved to dwell with pleasure.

What about the women artists? They also have carried out extensive printmaking. The sixth chapter will be devoted to them. We examined about ten women painter-printmakers and lastly, we selected only three names, viz., Anupam Sud, Naina Dalal and Rini Dhumal. Sud is a Delhi-based printmaker. The other two were raised up here in Baroda to assume a significant role in the renaissance of printmaking in Baroda. Naina Dalal, the well-known printmaker, did printmaking since 1960 and Rini Dhumal, who also started about two decades ago, is younger, with quite a different approach to printmaking. All of them are versatile artists and have done a lot of modernistic prints, some of which are innovative and have won high standard awards. The chapter will try to evolve an analytical approach to their graphic artworks, examine carefully more than 100 prints of their works during the last 30 or even 35 years; especially for Anupam Sud and Naina Dalal. We will take note of the recent outstanding works of Anupam Sud and Rini Dhumal. There are revolutionary prints going on, so let us try to unravel the hidden qualities of these outstanding creations and try to go beyond the artists’ intentions.

The feminine art being made in India today can not be neatly categorized. Each artist-printmaker follows her own muse. Each has a passionate desire to make prints. Some are concerned about theoretical post-modern constructs in present-day free India; others are acute observers of their interior world, viz., Naina Dalal, Lalitha Lajmi, Anupam Sud and Nilima Sheikh. Some are driven to strip bare the political hypocrisy of attitudes towards women and the underprivileged, viz., Rekha Rodwittiya, Anupam Sud and Arpana Caur. Some have carefully constructed ambiguous and veiled personal iconography that tease the viewer into working at understanding, viz., Kanchan Chander, Arpita Singh, Anupam Sud. Many are working in the conceptual mode, investigating materials, space and time, and they recognize the interactive relevance of inclusion. The concept of ‘woman’ has been worshipped in India
since time immemorial - the feminine principle of the universe. Today, woman is the manifestation of the contemporary Mother Goddess. As such, she is the creator and nurturer.

We will try to show our sense of equality and save our research from being anti-feminine. Let us present our friendly approach, but at the same time, we will not forget our severe criticism; this effective tool should be used in some cases. Some of our criticism may look like whip slashes against some of their prints. But in all cases, we will eschew sadistic attitude. However, approaching women's art is not easy, because women always have magic-like appeal.

It is a matter of fact that in some particular cases we find the very unique perception and essence reflected in the prints of women artists. These prints are deeply dealt with the feminine concerns. In this chapter, we have attempted to understand and then penetrate the very core of their creative persona and intentions as depicted in their graphic artworks. These eminent women printmakers have an innovative mind mixed with intellectual approach to the medium of printmaking. They may lend a new, original dimension to it, but each artist has a distinct individual style and creative temperament that sets her apart from others. And this is what precisely commands the attention of art critics and art lovers as well.

Feminine creativity in different forms has been discussed with reference to their prints. Ups and downs will also be in the purview of our discussion. Influences, tendencies, temperamental approaches will be highlighted according to some particular facts and claims that make us believe that women printmakers often have to seek supervision of a man as a guide or teacher to acquire the essentials of printmaking. Why they do so? This is not a big matter, while in competitions they pushed themselves to the front seats that are reserved for their instructors. Sometimes, I feel that their feelings and thoughts along with their innovative approaches are different from those of men. However, they might assume an advanced position. But only a few of them have taken the proper initiative to do so. They have but a little of power within, so they can not strive very hard.

Eventually, we did examine each significant print to achieve our goal, which is signified in the title of the thesis: Trends and Innovations in Contemporary Indian Printmaking. So we have to penetrate the core of the characteristics and qualities of those prints and those printmakers who were selected to constitute the crux of our research. Innovations are not a simple thing to be discovered easily. Trends, on the other hand, are misleading phenomena
when we are not fully aware about its genuine characteristics, its roots and also its relationship with other elements.

The different points of view of the printmakers are also very important, granting they lead to fathom below the surface – to capture the hidden aspects, away from a misleading exaggeration or a redoubtable relationship or prestigious approach. We patiently and carefully examined all the piles of documents, illustrations, written material and correspondence. Interviewing an artist attuned to his own mindset and location was very significant element of our research. Again the region of our study is to encompass fringes of the auspicious triangle. We did our best to build up bridges as a concrete route of communication on the three axes; from Baroda running to Calcutta and Santiniketan, from Delhi to both Baroda in the south and Calcutta and Santiniketan in the east, enjoining all tightly together. The three angles are coalesced to give a wide angle of view. Conflict and contradictions also come to be more obvious and acquire justification. Competition is there and granting cooperation that is more needed, this situation further will be the suitable atmosphere to pick up some new understanding and definitely, this process will help much to explore some new areas. It might and also help to capture some of real tendencies and approach some significant trends.

Controversial artworks that rake up divergent views or pose a challenge to the fame of the artist and also the kind of questions that may raise charges against some prints - that may irk the artist and earn us his ire, could rather be amusing – sometimes even causing him to react. We then ought to quit swiftly to avoid what may follow further. However, artists often have nice communications.

Collecting materials is one of our deep-rooted flair since the early years of the 50’s. We do not ever look at the surfaces. We have an X-ray to beam beyond what catches the eye; our intention is to look below the carpet or reaching our hands into the artist’s cupboards then rushing to a photocopier to copy a great deal of documents, illustrations, books, magazines and catalogues. Although purchasing materials is our goal, often one can not afford to fill the bill, especially these days. In all cases, we do not rely much on the stereotype images or prestigious jugglers of some prominent artists. Our results and evaluations are out of the reach of any artist. We also have tried to avoid all the cunning traps in order to depend only on our free decision, far from the propaganda that portrays the artist more than his actual size.

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This, in brief, is the backbone of my thesis. I already know, as a foreigner, that appraising Indian art requires profound knowledge and high standard of art appreciation on one’s part to be able to penetrate the core of these works and pick up carefully the qualities, which, I hope, will enrich my research and enable me to evaluate these veritable influences and trends that I bore in mind from the very beginning as the goal of my research. Reaching this juncture means, that we are striding to the end of the thesis. However, finishing such task required some conclusive approach. We will do our best to unravel some major issues leaving the chance for the reader to put his free hand on whatever he seeks due to his own tools of comprehension and personal intention as well.

It is worthwhile to mention that some newly printed books that were published during the last two years were of great help to me in my research. Visiting the major centres of printmaking, such as Santiniketan, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Delhi and some other places were also of great help, since in all my trips, I met some of the most prominent artists, clicked their prints and interviewed them, as well as requested them to answer my questionnaire, which included about 23 questions. I sent some of these questionnaires to some leading artists in India and abroad. All these fruitful activities reflected on my way of approaching contemporary Indian printmaking.

I have done my best to add my personal accent to our thesis by handling some issues, events, approaches and even evaluations differently. However, all our efforts were devoted through these long six years, to accomplish this kind of research that bears the trends and innovations in contemporary Indian printmaking as the major goal of this thesis.

Nowadays, almost everything of interest connected with Indian art movement receives due attention. Every daily, weekly newspaper and other magazines have space for art reviews. The artists are better known than before. But misguidance of some critics and explosive self-publicized artists were creating chaos and frustration among meritorious artists. Art public, in general, needs proper direction to imbibe the love for art. The technology, on the other hand, needs to catch up with Indian genius, if they are to find ever, the right kind of print. The task should try both technology and the genius it sought to be matched with.