Chapter I

Introduction
Literature has remained an integral part of human life from thousands of years. As it is a projection of human ideas, opinions and feelings it can undoubtedly be called a mirror of human life and society. The traditions and customs have been portrayed through literature by many authors. Among various forms of literature, novel is a significant medium for representation of writer’s feelings and viewpoint. For last many years, novel has been effectively used by the writers for literary communication. The novel is often identified as fiction as it portrays a fictions account of events through imaginary characters.

Indian Writing in English has a recent history. It is hardly old than one and a half century. India was ruled through British Empire for 150 years and during this period India remained in close contact with England through trade, defense and political affairs. India got the English language as the prime legacy of British rule in India. Looking back into its history, Indian English Literature has made a remarkable journey from different phases like Indo-Anglian literature, Indo-English writing, Indian Writing in English and the latest Indian English literature.

Having the diversity in geography, culture, religions and races, Indian English literature has effectively produced large amount of literature that can be claimed as standard and qualitative literature. Because of the literary value, Indian English Literature has acclaimed a national and an international reputation. It not only acquired large numbers of readers but also received appreciation and positive response from the literary critics.

The title ‘Indian Writing in English’ denotes much broad sense. It represents those writers whose mother tongue is primarily any one from multilingual India. K. R. S. Iyengar writes about three types of Indian English writers; namely one group who have achieved their complete education in English high schools and universities. The second group is made up of those writers who have immigrated to foreign countries but have remained in constant touch with their homeland and are mentally and emotionally attached to it. Indian writers who have learnt English as a second language fall into the third category. In this way many Indian writers have attempted to bring forth a real portrait of Indian culture and Indian people before the western readers.
Many Indian authors adopted English for the literary expression and produced some of the finest works of literature. Toru Dutt, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Sri Aurobindo, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sarojini Naidu are some of the well known names who enriched the Indian English Literature with their creative writing. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Nissim Ezekiel, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra and others are remembered for creating an authentic picture of India through their literature. Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Deshpande, and other Indian authors like Chetan Bhagat, Arundhati Roy, Arvind Adiga, Kiran Desai etc have successfully presented the Indian issues through their works which have received international acclaim.

A real portrait of Indian culture and spirit is apparently seen in the writings of the above mentioned writers. Indian writers have rightly followed Raja Rao’s remark presented in Kanthapura. In this masterpiece, he rightly says that a writer should represent his or her feelings in a second language in such a way that his or her real spirit gets exhibited before the readers. The Indian English Literature has effectively depicted Indian people’s opinions, tendency, culture, tradition etc ‘Indianness’ is evident in almost every piece of literature produced in English by Indian writers. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar correctly mentions:

What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature and not just a ramshackle outhouse of English literature is the quality of its ‘Indianness’ in the choice of its subjects, in the texture of thought and play of sentiment, in the organization of material and in the creative use of language. (11)

As per Meenakshi Mukherjee’s opinion, a novel written by an Indian writer is directly involved with values and experiences the writer underwent through and which is acceptable as per the Indian context. Indian writing in English exhibits an effective representation of tradition, social differences and cultural heritage. Early authors who wrote in English experimented to provide Indian experience to the readers as they primarily focused on Indian readers.

The writers tried to inculcate the feel of ‘Indianness’ in their writings. As Thomas Hardy’s Wessex is an imaginary creation that is used as background for
many of his novels, in the same way R. K. Narayan has created Malgudi which depicts the typical south Indian life. R. K. Narayan’s creative art made it popular among the readers. It can be noted here that the imaginative Malgudi became that much famous that it was adapted into a television program called Malgudi Days and was telecast successfully before several years.

Nirad C. Chaudhary has written The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian in 1951 which is also considered a major work of literature. These authors commented about the major issues of Indian society like illiteracy, poverty, caste and superstitions which were prevalent during that time. Salman Rushdie is one of the prominent Indian writers who has a significant literary contribution in Indian writing in English. The prestigious Booker Prize he achieved for his famous novel Midnight’s Children which was published in 1980. Shashi Tharoor has also received readers’ attention through his eminent work The Great Indian Novel which came out in 1989.

Like Manju Kapur, Bharati Mukherjee also dealt with the issues of women’s identity. Jasmine, that was published by Mukherjee in 1989, turned out as a popular novel among the readers. A Suitable Boy (1994) is a major literary creation by Vikram Sheth. Other noticeable authors who registered their art through the literary works are Amitav Ghosh, Bharati Kirchner, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Khushwant Singh, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Jhumpa Lahiri, C. R. Krishnan, Vikas Swarup, Chetan Bhagat, Mnaju Kapu, Arvind Adiga, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and others. Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines is about multicultural background with immigrant experience. It tells about post colonial cosmopolitan culture. Dr. Anju Bala Agarwal writes:

Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines opens up space for a multicultural world and gives water to the plant of hybridity. It illustrates how diasporic displacement is not merely a loss, but a source of creativity as well, through the regeneration of a new polyglot and cosmopolitan culture that takes place as a result of it. The unnamed narrator of The Shadow Lines comes in contact with different, often contradictory versions of cultural identity through the main characters in the novel-his grandmother, Tha’mmma, his cousin, Ila and his uncles Tridib and Robi. Growing up in an upwardly mobile middle class professional family in
Calcutta, the narrator acquires the sensibility of a metropolitan, bilingual, English speaking, postcolonial subject; his interaction with his cousin and uncles whose fathers are globetrotting diplomats, and his own stint in London for research work make his attitude and approach to issues of nation and culture more cosmopolitan. One of the most powerful influences in his life as a child is his grandmother a fiercely independent, militantly nationalist woman. Tha‘mma is an embodiment of the cultural identity constructed by the dominant state ideology, which in turn is propped up by the accepted national historiography. Her austerity and rigid work ethic form an essential part of her idea of the modernity and progress of the country. (n.p.)

Indian Writing in English has passed through much criticism and tests. It has been argued over and over that English literature written by Indian writers lack in real portrayal of Indian issues. It is often blamed for being shallow and unauthentic. It is accused of representing superficial and imitative ideas and themes. It is also many times compared with other Indian literature produced in other Indian languages and claimed of being inferior. However, the young writers of present time have challenged these notions. Through production of literary works of international repute, many Indian writers have proved that Indian Literature in English is in no way inferior to any other literature and it has acquired the international recognition among the readers of different background and different countries. The new generation of Indian writers has experimented on variety of themes and has succeeded in attracting the variety of readers.

Having diverse and rich background, Indian English novel made considerable advancement in the post-independence era when it developed and acquired a noticeable place in Indian literature. Novels have been written in India in other regional languages too. It is during pre-independence era that many writers attempted over translation of Indian scripts into English and gradually after independence the emergence of prominent writers registered their presence through literacy representation. Then onwards English novels appeared in large numbers with passing of every decade after independence.
The English novels that were written by Indian writers primarily focused on social realism. The initial decades of post independence era witnessed a gradual increase in the production of English novels. Social evils, caste system, plight of the downtrodden, colonized mindset, poverty were the major themes of the novels during this time. Major writers who contributed to Indian English fiction during this era were Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. These eminent writers are well identified as three pillars of Indian English novel. As mentioned earlier, social realism was primarily highlighted during the initial decades after independence. We hardly find any writer who made an effort to focus on women's issues. Women characters appeared in many novels during this time but they were submissive and settled with patriarchy. A revolting woman is not found in earlier fictions.

The novelists primarily followed aged - old traditions of Indian culture. Apart from social themes, the writers of post independence era concentrated on psychological and sociological disorder in their works. Writers like Khushwant Singh, Kamala Markanday Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Shashi Deshpande and many others contributed significantly to fiction up to 1980s.

The last decade of twentieth century has marked an important development of Indian English novel. The decade marks the emergence of some of the remarkable piece of literature. The narratives of this era marked the themes like loneliness, search for identity, famine conflicts, and alienation. On the one hand where Anita Desai talked about the distressed middle class, on the other hand Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur portrayed the personal and domestic conflicts of Indian women. The theme of alienation was well analyzed by Arun Joshi through his outstanding novels like The Foreigner which was published in 1968 and The Strange Case of Billy Biswas that appeared in 1971.

English novels of Indian writers got international recognition when in 2000 Jhumpa Lahiri was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for her wonderful novel Interpreter of Maladies. The next year in 2001, Indian writer V. S. Naipaul was respected with the most known Nobel Prize for Literature. These two significant events caught the attention of international class of readers and critics and established the reputation of Indian English Literature at the international level.
The novels in this period appeared with a focus on globalization as well as urbanization. Writers like Vikram Sheth, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rusdie, Shashi Tharur and Upmanyu Chatterjee are noted for praiseworthy contribution in development of Indian fiction in English. With the development and spread of education a new educated middle class emerged that showed strong inclination towards English novels. As the writers portrayed the social reality in simple and lucid style, Indian English novel attracted more and more readers. With the beginning of 21st century, Indian society witnessed major changes in the social, cultural and familial values.

The women now no longer had remained within the four walls of house. They stepped out and made effort to search out new roles for them in a society that was based for long years on the sound tracks of patriarchy. The liberalization of women occurred due to many reasons among which urbanization, emergence of city culture, decrease of joint family pattern and tendency of having small family are main. Among these reasons urbanization has played a pivotal role in raising awareness among women for their rights, identity, and search for their contentment. Swati Sharma says:

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its woman. (16)

The condition of women and society has co-relation with each other. When the respect and right status is assigned to women in the society, the people living there naturally gain prosperity and happiness as they develop a sense of responsibility and understanding towards women. Indian society is set on patriarchal frame and woman is assigned a subordinate status to man. She is never regarded as herself but always as a relative to her male counterpart. Her contribution and dedication towards her family, society and country is always neglected and is assumed as her duty. She is hardly appreciated for the roles and tasks she fulfills in the patriarchal family. Even we find the interesting remarks about man and woman in the Holy Bible. Bible says:

Therefore, God created Eve for man. And Adam said, “this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.” (28)
The above quoted lines of Bible suggest a clear direction about the male dominance and male supremacy over female. Even as per Indian holy scriptures like *Manu-Smriti*, women have been compared with slaves and *shudras*. Thus, Indian patriarchal influence has been effective since *Vedas, Upanishads* and *Puranas*. But in modern era this is not the case with women. They have acquired a significant position in almost all areas where previously only men dominated. In literature also Indian women writers have contributed remarkably well since several decades. The issues which are highlighted in women writers’ fictions are child marriage, female servitude, female conflicts due to patriarchy etc.

Patriarchy has remained as a major theme in many fictions written by women. Because of the male dominant culture women have suffered in many walks of life. Consideration of woman as a weaker gender and a subordinate to man was the traditional accepted notion. Madhuri V. Brahmane writes:

The patriarchal society prevalent in India had jeopardized and crippled the Indian mind to such an extent that men thought that no woman was found worthy of education. Men considered themselves independent, superior and even almighty. A man was invariably the breadwinner whereas the woman was supposed only to share what the man had earned with his sweat and blood. It looked as though, a man’s world would continue even without a woman. Traits are visible, that in ancient India, women though having an enormous potential, were being unutilized and underutilized. (33)

Commenting on unjust and partial treatment towards women in society she beautifully elaborates and takes her stand. She says:

Customarily women were treated as *abala* which means a weakling, dependent on men and confined to the four walls. Thanks to some courageous and daring women, today the table is being turned upside down. As the civilization changes, the societies go through transformation, Indian women too are on a crossroad not to prove themselves but to get out of the shadows of men. Today, women dare to walk shoulder to shoulder with men. They are ready to expose the
splendor and beauty of the world in which they live have a better role to play than remaining mere spectators within the four walls of the house. The men who thought they were superior to women have now recognized the potentialities of women; women are not just spectators but partners and coworkers. Women are not inferior to man in rank or performance in anyway. This is true in the field of literature too. (33)

Gradually near the end of 20th century the issues related to women's life, their problems, their pain and sufferings and the plight they underwent appeared as prominent themes of Indian English fiction. The major novelists who presented women's issues through their narratives are Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Gita Hariharan, Shobha De, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Jumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur and others. These novelists essentially focused on the female issues and many of their characters are portrayed as rebels against male hegemony. Their novels targeted on women's efforts for liberalization from patriarchal social structure.

With the change of time and situation women find themselves altogether in a new world; a world where ratio of women education is increasing and the traditional social customs seem tiresome and binding rather than pleasant and fruitful. Kamala Markanday’s women characters are traditional in look and independent in their opinions and ideas. R. P. Jhabvala notices a vast difference in mentality of Indian and European women.

Nayantara Sahgal narrates the feminine issues and familial conflicts in women’s lives. Raji Narsimhan describes independent and educated women through her narratives who live without any restrictions. She has produced some of the fine works of literature. Her The Heart of Standing is You Cannot Fly appeared in 1973 and the next one Forever Free came out in 1979.

Shwet Kamal Raghubanshi rightly says:

The earlier fiction writings by Indian women writers project the traditional image of women. But as times changed, the portrayal became realistic with a thrust on her sense of frustration and alienation.
The characters created by them, like their creators, were torn apart by
the conflicting forces of value adaptation and attachment with family
and home pulled them as under. The plight of the working women was
still worse, aggravated by her problems of marital adjustment and
quest for her identity. The predicament of new Indian women has been
taken up for fuller treatment by novelists like Anita Desai and
Nayantara Sahgal. These novelists, however have generally
concentrated on the plights and problems of educated women mostly
with an urban base. The self-avowed aim of writing fiction in the case
of Indian novelist like Shobha De and Namita Gokhale has been to
portray the challenges which educated "socialite' women with an urban
base and sensibility have to face. Shashi Despande occupies a unique
position among contemporary Indian novelists in English. (5-6)

He further clarifies:

Shashi Despande deals with the middle-class Indian women who
represent the overwhelming majority of Indian women and are found
struggling to adjust in the society rather than getting themselves free
from the traditional world. In both her novels and short stories, the
depiction and delineation of woman is very accurate and realistic. (5-6)

The characteristic feature of Anita Desai’s fictions is psychological account of
her women characters. Desai’s characters are lonesome and sensitive. The major
issues and difficulties of modern middle class Indian women are vividly presented by
Shashi Deshpande. The major characters of Deshpande are career-focused, smart and
receptive. Bharati Mukherjee is the writer who settled down in the U.S.A. and
presented some interesting novels. Due to her personal experience of immigration, her
narratives present the immigrant themes like racial discrimination, gender bias and
social evils.

Before Manju Kapur, the Indian female writer who achieved the
Commonwealth Writer’s Prize was Gita Hariharan. She received it for her debut
novel The Thousand Faces of Night which appeared in 1992. Gita Hariharan’s The
Her other major works include *In Times of Siege* and *Fugitive Histories*. Patriarchal influence is seen in her novels as the women characters face social and familial conflicts with men and society.

P. Suganya rightly exposes the patriarchal exploitation in Gita Hariharan’s *The Thousand Faces of Night*:

Gita Hariharan represents the true picture of Indian patriarchal society. According to her Devi’s mother, marriage was the only purpose behind her education. Everything gets over for Devi, when she comes to know that her mother has sent her for higher education just to get her married to an educated boy. Gita Hariharan shows us that how a girl is emotionally blackmailed by the family to sacrifice her dreams and ambitions under the pressure of patriarchy. Devi doesn’t want to marry, but the emotional pressure by her mother forced her to change her decision. Devi agreed for marriage out of the love for her mother. Devi’s suitors behave like modern educated boys, but in reality, they are in search of an educated housewife who can follow their instructions like a puppet. (970)

Gita Hariharan narrates women’s position and role in Indian family. Even if the woman is educated, she is meant to comply with familial expectations. In *The Thousand Faces of Night* when Srinivasan meets Devi, she says:

So, they were looking for an accomplished bride, a young woman who would talk intelligently to her scientist husband’s friends, but who would also be, as all the matrimonial ads in the Sunday papers demanded, fair, beautiful, home-loving and prepared to adjust. *(The Thousand Faces of Night 17)*

Uma Vasudev is another writer who is also a stern advocate of freedom for women. In her novels her women characters are not worried about middle class conventional attitude. Her *The Song of Anasuya* (1978) presents the protagonist who is no more submissive to the age-old customs and notions. Uma Vasudev’s female characters are the modern women who are the social and familial rebels against patriarchy. They are much conscious about their equality and independence. Another
contemporary writer writing about women’s issues is Jai Nimbar. His three novels are known for literary significance. They are Temporary Answers (1974), A Joint Venture (1988) and Come Rain (1993). Nimbar’s fictions represent a true picture of contemporary women’s lives.

Among the leading novelists who have written about women's issues, Manju Kapur stands in the front row. Manju Kapur is the author who has earned name and prestige as an efficient and competent writer during last several decades through production of her best seller novels and short stories. She is mostly remembered in the literary circle for the exposure of issues of modern women through her narratives.

She was honored through her very first novel Difficult Daughter as it won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize which is believed a precious one for any writer to win. She has enriched the fictions with depth of narration and richness of characterization. The characters that are created by Manju Kapur are so well-built and life-like that the readers are puzzled sometimes whether they are reading about fabricated or the real ones.

Manju Kapur who was born and brought up in Amritsar, Punjab belongs to a middle class Punjabi family. She graduated from Miranda House, Delhi and post graduated in Arts from Dalhousie University. Halifax, Canada. She also earned M.Phil. degree later on from Delhi University. Finishing the post graduation, Manju Kapur began her career from Miranda House as a professor in English literature. She was at forty when she published her debut novel Difficult Daughters. She has a keen interest in English literature as well as a genuine intense desire to learn and study literature in general. Her keen interest in literature and her creative talent led her to be a writer and she well proved herself through production of popular and best-selling novels. Presently she is associated with Miranda House as a professor of English literature and living in Delhi she is actively involved in writing.

Manju Kapur has written six novels and two short stores till now. In 1998 her debut novel Difficult Daughters appeared which earned her prestigious Commonwealth Writer’s Prize. Kapur proved her talent from the first novel and the novel received equal admiration from readers and critics all over the world for effective presentation of modern woman's plight and struggle in patriarchal society.
After *Difficult Daughters*, Kapur’s next narrative *A Married Woman* registers its presence in 2003. The second novel too conveyed the message regarding the problematic issues of modern woman in India. It also recognized an instant success and the readers welcomed it with great affection. The third novel that Manju Kapur has written is *Home* which came out in 2006. It is the manifestation of Indian society that is highlighted in the novel and the prime focus is given to representation of feminine issues. *Home* also attained similar appreciation like earlier novels as it is closely dealt with the contemporary issues of Indian society.

The next novel that appeared after *Home* is *The Immigrant*. It tells the story of a woman whose life turns unhappy because of her being unmarried and become comparatively worse after the marriage. Fifth novel written by Manju Kapur is *Custody*. As per the title the narrative is about custody of Roohi, Raman and Shagun’s infant daughter, that is to be decided by the court. *Custody* was published in 2011 and the novel is well adapted into a television program named *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* by producer Ekta Kapur. Both the novel and the television adaptation received equal popularity from the viewers and readers. The program *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* turned out as a grand success on Star Plus Channel.

The latest novel that has been presented by the writer is *Brothers*. It came out in 2016. As her previous novels, the depiction of rural, urban, domestic and public locations is skillfully represented in *Brothers*. Starting from Second World War it spans to eight decades and mentions the time period up to twenty first century. Along with six novels, two short stories are also registered in Manju Kapur's literary account. They are *Chocolate* and *The Necklace* which were published in 2005.

Manju Kapur has effectively represented the psychological account of famine issues in male dominant Indian society. The female servitude is well presented through various characters in her novels. The suppressed woman finally raises her voice against patriarchal dominance and set out a new path for herself. Marriage, household duties, concept of second sex, revolt and rebellion against the male dominance are the principal issues in Kapur's Novels.

Moreover, Manju Kapur's novels offer a real picturization of Indian society and typical Indian life. Indian society is primarily established on age - old traditions
Religion, tradition, customs and social conventions have remained significant factors in Indian society where we come across a clear familial structure into which males generally dominate and take decisions. The females are generally supposed to comply with the pre-set traditions and functions for them.

If the woman follows these norms and customs she is adorned like a devi or an ideal woman in society. But whenever she dares to claim right over her life and rejects the set norms, she is acknowledged as a rebel and many times her character is questioned to if she is engaged with other men against her family's wish. Whenever she resists the marriage decisions taken by her family or after marriage when she shows her reluctance to limit herself to the household duties, she has to face stern objection from the males of the family. The duties of women have been kept limited to home only from thousands of years. To get married as per the decision of family elders, taking care of her husband, doing the house hold work, to produce the children, to bring them up and to feed the family are among the common functions that are expected from a woman in India.

In this system hardly she finds any time for herself. The above duties of woman and the roles assigned to her can be justified only when she gets the proper value, respect, admiration and attention by family members. She deserves intensified love, affection and honor in the family in exchange of fulfilling these duties. But with the advancement of time, social values and familial concerns have decreased. The increase of urbanization, progress of science and technology and increasing education have affected the social structure and family life a lot.

The changed scenario has failed to supply the respect and attention women deserve for their roles in family and society. Hence, a void and feeling of being neglected has risen among women in the present ear. Additionally, patriarchal subjugation of women created a dilemma among them for their own existence and identity. Therefore, women began to throw the age-old traditions and customs which tied them unnecessarily and deprived them of their human rights and independence. The major role in this awakening is played by education. Educated women have better known this position and have started asserting their independence and rights whereas there are thousands of other women too in society who are still prey to the male dominance because they are uneducated and sometimes helpless to raise their voice.
Manju Kapur's women characters show an aspiring passion for education and independence. The modern woman that emerges in Manju Kapur's novels is the woman of new era and belongs to a nation which is independent and has allotted equal rights of education and independence to both men and women through the implementation of Indian constitution in 1952. Thus, Kapur's women are free and always aspired to live an independent life. They consider equal weight-age for their wishes and desires as they consider for their male counterpart.

Kapur's women no longer want to be trapped in traditions and customs. But truly speaking they do not show any inclination towards social traditions at the cost of their freedom and identity. They are modern women with their independent opinions, concerns and emotions. In short the modern woman as depicted in Manju Kapur's novels are much conscious about their identity which should not be decided by men but by themselves.

It is revealed from her novels that they crave for equality in the real sense. They no longer feel inferior to men and so they proved it through their participation and involvement in almost all tasks like education, business, service, politics, defense, science, technology and research where previously only men enjoyed monopoly. Through the advancement in almost all fields, women have successfully registered their presence and indirectly or directly challenged the male dominance applied over them. And even law has protected them and assigned equal status with men in society.

Consequently, Indian women have attained a feel of liberation. But in spite of protection from the law, the society wherein they live continues to harass them through different bondages of caste, religion, marriage and many more. Actually, the set customs and traditions have been decided solely by men and they have considered women always the second sex and predefined her duties and roles without any consideration of their approval or disapproval. They have been denied freedom and independence.

Here it seems necessary to understand the significant generations of women that have evolved in our society. The first generation woman was completely submissive to the set duties for women. They happily accepted their roles and functions in society and family that was almost limited to home and family. In the
absence of advancement of science, technology and education in India, women were not much aware or inclined towards their rights and freedom. For example, Kasturi in Difficult Daughters stands for the first generation woman.

She seems happy with her role and insists her daughter too to follow the traditional customs set for women whereas her daughter Virmati symbolizes the second generation of women who find herself in altogether a changing world, a world where women education is promoted by the prominent leaders of the country. Virmati feels dilemma between tradition and modernity, between submission and independence. So being in this position the second generation women seem hesitant in opposing the traditions bluntly. They appear confused and alienated since they do not follow the customs completely and can’t live the independent life as well.

The third generation women are totally engulfed with the modern thinking and way of life. They actually feel independent and free from familial and social bondages. They hardly face male dominant notions in their life. Ida, in Difficult Daughters, is such kind of girl. She experiences full freedom in life as her parents have already fought the feminine servitude and no longer apply the cultural and social bondages over their child. Thus during course of writing the novels Manju Kapur has presented the modern form of woman. The advancement of education, science and technology has tremendously affected the traditional notions of the society and a liberal tendency has emerged in the present era. Media has played a significant role in this modification. Particularly television, internet and invention of smart phone have contributed magnificently in development of modern way of thinking and liberalization.

To create the quality based research work and to spare sufficient time to each novel, the first five fictions of Manju Kapur are selected by the researcher for the presented study, wherein the researcher has made a modest effort to evaluate the presence of ‘New Woman’ with the novel approach of modern world in the selected novels. Here a brief synopsis has been presented to introduce the selected novels.

To begin with, Difficult Daughters is the debut novel of Manju Kapur which was published in 1998 and turned out as a trendsetter. The novel tells the story of an innocent Punjabi girl, Virmati who struggles hard against familial traditions and
customs. She prioritizes education and her independence over familial and social conventions. She fights for her rights and wishes to achieve them at any cost. Born and brought up in pre-partitioned Punjab, she is the eldest among eleven children of Kasturi.

She lives in such a time in such a family that even thinking of women’s independence and women’s education was next to impossible. Being the eldest, she is expected and compelled to marry the selected *samaj* boy whom she has never met and known. In her house Virmati’s major task is taking care of her ten siblings. At a time when she yearns for affection, she is rejected and avoided by her mother, Kasturi. Neglected and ignored Virmati comes in contact with Harish, a professor who comes to live in Virmati’s neighborhood. Their familiarity gradually develops into love which was the utmost need of this young girl; which she desired from her parents but unfortunately never received. Shrewd and clever professor makes physical advancement with beautiful Virmati. The Professor, who is already married and has a son, cheats Virmati by presenting false excuse that he got married with Ganga in childhood and they don’t have any matching in ideas, feelings and opinions.

Aspired for freedom and lost in Harish’s love, Virmati eventually denies marriage with the selected *samaj* boy and presents her desire for further education. Later on Virmati succeeds in pursuit of education but in the process of being independent she has to sacrifice her parental relations as her family members break the relations with Virmati after her marriage with the Professor and boycott her completely. Thus, due to rejecting marriage as per her family's settlements, she turns out isolated from her own family.

On the other hand, the person whom she trusts and believes her true life partner, does not accept her publicly even after her marriage. Professor Harish brings Virmati to his house where she lives with his legitimate wife Ganga, his mother Kishori Devi and his children. Harish keeps Virmati in the house without giving her a status at licit wife. Virmati is helpless to live with Harish's family as an unwanted guest. Many times she hears the worst addresses for her like *Gandi* and wicked.

Thus, in pursuit of freedom and identity what Virmati gets is only isolation, alienation and self-humiliation. In this process she loses her own family and she can't
be an integral part of Harish’s family either. Thus the cost that she pays to be a rebel against tradition is much more which finally leads her to sorrow and misery only. The legacy that she leaves behind for her daughter Ida is disastrous too. Manju Kapur paradoxically mentions the issue of Indian partition and Indian independence in the novel which indicates that women’s servitude continues even after independence. The real independence, particularly famine independence, is yet to fight for; the fight must be for freedom against social injustice to women. The novelist signalizes the freedom against patriarchy and the freedom for equality of men and women.

Manju Kapur’s second novel *A Married Woman* (2002) too received a remarkable response from the readers. It is a story of Astha, a young woman living in Delhi under the patriarchal family background. She is an educated woman who belongs to middle class. Like an ordinary school girl she engages into affairs. After completion of her education, her marriage is decided with educated Hemant. After her marriage, she is determined to work which is opposed by her parents as well as her in-laws.

Asthia faces the gender bias at various occasions in her life. She is denied to work only because she is a married woman who is supposed to care her family and be convenient to her in-laws. Her husband also undermines her profession. During one event Astha comes in contact with a woman named Pipeelika. Astha is informed that Pipeelika is a widow and she has been pursuing a lonely life after the death of her husband Aijaz. Astha sympathizes Pipeelika for leading a sad life. In absence of a partner, a widow is generally observed living a lonely life. Astha and Pipeelika develop physical intimacy and a strong relationship. Since the lesbian relations are not socially accepted in India, they secretly maintain the relation. But gradually the intimacy of Astha and Pipeelika is objected by her family members and had Pipeelika not moved to a foreign country, Astha’s marriage would have destroyed.

Here the issue of gender dominance is aptly highlighted. Pipeelika, being a woman, experiences strong hold of male dominance in society. If a man engages in relations with other man or woman, he is not that much condemned or punished in the society whereas a woman is not assigned this liberty. If any woman engages in extra marital affairs, she is severely criticized and in many cases she is totally boycotted from family and society. Sometimes she is violently assaulted for such actions.
Actually as per law extra marital affair is a punishable crime for both men and women. But society and family condemns much more and do not tolerate in case of a woman whereas in case of man he is not that much criticized and harmed. This partiality and double-standard are highlighted in Kapur's fictions. Thus, a point of social justice also arises in case of women. When they are given equal status legally then they need to be given social equality too setting aside the gender differences.

The third novel *Home* (2006) presents a story of a cloth merchant family which moves to Delhi after partition of India and Pakistan. The family reestablishes their business in Delhi. It is a story of Banwari Lal family where Lala Banwari Lal is the eldest in the family and lives with his two sons, Yashpal and Pyare Lal who help him in cloth business. The fiction revolves around the life of Nisha, Yahspal’s daughter. During the course of the events the reader comes across the issue of child abuse. Molestation that generally occurs with girls is aptly highlighted by the novelist. Nisha faces the event of child abuse but in place of proper action to the culprit, the matter is subsided by the family.

The incident symbolizes the sexual harassment of girls in a society where the culprits are not punished many times. Gradually Nisha overcomes this terrifying incident and emerges out as the third generation woman. She begins her life as an entrepreneur and starts her own business. Apart from being economically independent she wants to prove herself as a working woman. Her parental home does not approve her working status but somehow she manages to convince the family members and they allow her thinking that till her marriage she can continue working and after the marriage she may willingly leave it.

Many times in her house she is told about the female duties towards the family. After marriage Nisha willingly leaves her desired project and attempts to set herself in the role of an obedient daughter-in-law. There is always an expectation from a woman to sacrifice her desires for the sake of family. Family is always believed the first priority for woman whereas that is not the case with man. For them earning bread for the family is normally considered the first priority.

The fourth novel *The Immigrant* (2008) tells the story of Nina and Anand. The novel deals with several issues like alienation and search for identity,
transformation of the individual who moves out to a foreign country. It also highlights the dislocation from one's own culture. The fiction represents an account of inner conflict and the loneliness that ultimately questions the personal identity of the characters.

Nina is a spinster who receives a marriage proposal from Ananda, a dentist in Halifax, Canada. The identity of the proposed son-in-law as being an NRI itself attracts Nina’s mother and her quest for a suitable match for her daughter ends with Ananda. They get married and leave for Canada. Nina's journey as an immigrant begins and she tries very hard to adapt the Canadian culture, way of living, life style etc. But in the process she turns out alienated and rootless.

The novel depicts well Nina's life as an immigrant where she is interfered by her husband even in her dressing style, eating, life style and her wish about children too. Gradually her romance of arranged marriage diminishes and a space develops between the couple. In her adjustment and efforts of putting aside the traditional norms she encounters patriarchy that leads her to loneliness and frustration later on. She is engulfed with the feeling of being rootless.

To mingle up in a foreign country is not easy for the migrants and in case of a woman it turns out tougher when she is childless. Then she comes to know about Anand’s infidelity which breaks her down. Her hope to be a mother seems impossible which shatters her dreams. During her interactions with Anand she often feels the patriarchal tone as he wants her to be fully westernized. Finally parsing away of her mother and her husband's infidelity compels her to rethink about life. Thus, in The Immigrant Manju Kapur has effectively combined two themes, the feminine plight and alienation of immigrants.

The next novel Custody (2011) revolves around the struggle for freedom and emergence of modern woman. It is a story of Shagun, Raman, Ishita and Ashok. Among these characters the predicament of modern woman is finely presented by the novelist through the characters of Shagun and Ishita. Both the women are living in modern era, but the ideology is much different. Shagun stands for a woman who is not submissive to patriarchal values and does everything to fulfill her desires and dreams
even engages in extra-marital affair with Ashok, her husband Raman's boss. She is a modern woman who lives life on her own terms.

On the other hand Ishita is another character who is portrayed as a domestic woman and suffers due to set conventional customs. Her husband Suryakant divorces her because of her infertility. Through her character the novelist has tried to bring the attention towards the issue of infertility of women. Inability to produce a child proves disastrous for Indian women and it can lead her to divorce, as it happens in case of Ishita. She is innocent and a perfect example of a good housewife. But only because she can’t give a baby to Suryakant, she is compelled leave her husband.

This is one of the worst facets of society and family relations. Only a woman is punished for such a thing for which she is not at fault. This type of biological issue is natural and accidental for which a human being, whether man or woman, can never be blamed or claimed responsible. The partiality appears in case of man. Whenever any man is found infertile, family always stands with him and the wife hardly divorces on this ground.

After the initial period of Shagun and Raman's marriage, the marital romance between the couple diminishes gradually and Shagun feels the absence of charm as Raman gets more engaged in the business. The void and negligence from the husband directs Shagun towards extra-marital relationship with handsome and caring Ashok. Raman exhibits the conventional attitude of a husband towards Shagun. For him meaningfulness of his wife lies in being fit perfectly as a housewife, caring her husband and his family.

On the country, Shagun's viewpoint is completely different from that of her husband’s. She thinks liberally and rejects women's confinement in household works. She is a modern woman having free temperature. Her inclination towards freedom and Raman's conventional approach clashes with each other and she demands divorce. Shagun engages in physical relations with Ashok, files a petition for divorce and custody of her two children, Arjun and Roohi, in the court.

Raman rejects the divorce as well as custody of the children. Mean- while, the divorced Ishita comes closer to Raman and his family. She takes much care of Raman's children. In absence of Shagun, Raman develops intimacy with Ishita and
with passing of time he gets divorce from Shagun and marries Ishita. Ishita who is deeply attached with all family members of Raman proves a successful wife. Her void of not being a mother disappears when she gets closer to Roohi. She treats Roohi as her own child. Eventually as per court's order Roohi's custody is given to Ishita and Shagun settles down with Ashok in U.S.A. But finally in absence of her children Shagun does not feel contented. Thus, familial values are exposed in the novel and the reader apparently informed that when a woman is separated from her own family, hardly she gets any solace in her life. Conflicts, particularly in case of woman, appear more traumatic and it is always she who is questioned and targeted in the patriarchal society because she is always expected to be submissive and obedient.

Manju Kapur’s sixth and latest novel *Brothers* (2016) presents the familial conflict between two brothers Himmat Singh Giana and Mangal Singh. Along with presentation of feminine issues the novelist here has shown political rivalry of Himmat Singh and Mangal. The novel has been written in the background of a real incident of fratricide. In 2006 BJP prime leader of Maharashtra Shri Pramod Mahajan was assassinated by his own younger brother because of a conflict between the two.

The same type of fratricide is narrated in *Brothers*. Himmat Singh Giana, Chief Minister of Rajasthan, is murdered brutally by younger brother Mangal Singh in a public meet. The novel opens with this brutal event and then the novelist brings the readers back in history, presenting the responsible circumstances that led the act of murder. The novel starts narrating the events of Second World War and narrates the story up to the first decade of twenty first century. The reader comes to know about older generations of Giana family. Dhanpal, Himmat Singh and Mangal’s father, lived with his brother Virpal in Lalbanga village near Ajmer. *Jats* by caste they live happily in the ancestral village before independence.

Then onwards the elder Virpal comes to city and joins Gandhian movement for independence whereas Dhanpal joins Indian British army and is sent to the war front during Second World War. Eventually, Virpal is actively involved in politics after independence and calls Himmat to join him. Himmat willingly engages in political activities and within no time becomes a major political leader of the state. On the other side, Mangal can't settle down in politics and lives in village with his wife Tapti. Tapti is none other but the girl who was selected by Himmat for his younger
brother Mangal. Because of Himmat’s political status and name Tapti’s family had happily agreed the marriage proposal.

Tension arises when Mangal can’t attain economical stability, status and prosperity as his brother had achieved. He demands many times financial and other help from brother and occasionally Himmat fulfils these demands too. But Mangal is never satisfied and starts being jealous of Himmat’s position, luxury and power. Moreover, he comes to know about the secret liaison between his wife Tapti and Himmat Singh. This situation becomes unbearable for cynic Mangal and he finally murders Himmat. At the end, lives of both the brothers are destroyed; as one is murdered and other is jailed.

The process of woman’s struggle for identity and the journey that she has passed through in Indian society is well explained by Chaudhary Mina. She writes that condition of woman has passed through many modifications in India. From the earlier times of Vedas and Puranas, women have been assigned the status of second gender; men being thought and accepted as first gender. Sita and Draupadi are believed role models as per the set standards of Indian patriarchal value system. Later on, woman’s status witnessed modification. Women’s liberation and feminist movement also catch significant attention of the readers as they have affected overall approach of society towards women. The freedom struggles of various countries like French Revolution, American War of Independence and many more others contributed sufficiently in generation of constitutional equality of women.

In Emergence of New Woman in Manju Kapur’s Novels G. D. Sharma writes about changing lives of modern women and the circumstances that led them towards being social rebels. Women’s lives at the end of the previous century began changing rapidly on various fronts, apparent in case of daughters of middle and upper classes. Women’s education and secondary school system developed gradually. College education was a sign of social status and it was became a channel for inspiration and women’s pursuit of independence. Attainment of higher education by a woman was a signal of being engaged in worldly affairs rather than being limited to the household chores. Women entered those domains successfully where it was believed only the monopoly of men.
G. D. Sharma explains that women began entering the formidable areas like education, job, business, politics etc. This ‘new woman’ signified a kind of vanguard of social utility and personal sovereignty—an autonomous womanhood. Currently they are conscious human beings who are ready to show their skills and talent in each and every field of life. They do not seem willing to accept their social and familial status in any way inferior to men.

This new advancement in her approach to life may bring some unwanted incidents and social and familial modification in her life. It depends on the society and particularly on the males of society that how much they accept this kind of independence from their female counterparts. It will definitely create some social and familial disasters due to the revolting approach of women and it may affect the lives of men and women in great deal. But this changed scenario, in case of women, has to be accepted by men and some adjustment needs to be done to accommodate the free status of women in society.

Dr. Neena in the article, “Transforming Images of Women in Manju Kapur’s Difficult Daughters” explains the major themes of Manju Kapur’s novels. As per her opinion Kapur’s fictions are focused on gender discrimination, sex, man–woman relationship, human desires, exploitation and marginalization. Her novels also present women’s conflicts in the family and social life. As per Dr. Neena’s opinion the fiction highlights difficult daughters and difficult mothers. The symbolized difficult mother, Kasturi, does not recognize the want of affection of her young daughter whereas Virmati is also sarcastically indicated difficult because she is determined not to sacrifice her life for the sake of marriage and custom.

In a research article titled, “A Feminist Study of Manju Kapur’s Difficult Daughters” Bijender Singh mentions the universal appeal that Manju Kapur’s novels exhibit through well developed characters like Virmati and Kasturi. As per his opinion in this fiction women are seen marginal in Indian society. It not only represents a family or state but the issue that is discussed in the narrative affects to almost all families in society. Virmati’s character stands for Indian woman’s attitude which seeks social approval of family and society. In her search for independence and identity what Virmati gets in exchange is social and familial boycott which turns her life only pathetic.
Evaluating Virmati’s struggle for her identity and freedom, Dr. Arpita Ghosh writes:

The search for one’s identity, to control one’s destiny, is surely the key theme of *Difficult Daughters*. ….. This independence is fraught with heavy price and fragmentation of the individual in the process. The fragmented and devastated soul is none other than Virmati’s, elder daughter of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash, belonging to the Lala Diwan Chand family. (97)

The independence of a nation and of a girl is metaphorically depicted by the novelist in *Difficult Daughters*. As the partition wretches out India with the bloody communal riots, so the life of the protagonist Virmati is destroyed in her struggle for independence. The writer has consciously narrated the tale of Virmati with that of Indian independence struggle. The indirect question that arises before the reader is that is this the freedom of a woman for which a woman fights for in *Difficult Daughters*. Is it possible for a woman to live without male dominance? This question needs to be answered because the pursuit of freedom of the protagonist in the fiction has led her only to doom. Dr. Arpita Ghosh meaningfully writes:

Virmati’s self-realization of her “splitting into two socially unacceptable pieces” is in par with the novel’s backdrop of the Partition saga that fragmented India into two. In this struggle for freedom and autonomy India loses thousands of innocent lives in the rage of communal riot and hatred, while Virmati loses a part of herself and retreats into depression and bitter temperament which is why Ida perceives her mother only as a bad-tempered person throwing tantrums at the slightest occasion. Thus the vision of independence instead of signifying the dawn of a new era ironically turns out to be a sad and sordid tale of misery. Virmati perceives and identifies her plight, her dislocated partitioned self not only through her life’s experiences but also through her fragmented nation. Manju Kapur subtly and seamlessly weaves the saga of Virmati’s desolate life with that of the partitioned nation, each mirroring the image of the other. (105-106)
In “Existential Dilemma and Search for Self in Manju Kapur’s Novels” Sulohita Negi talks about existential elements in Manju Kapur’s novels. She writes that the writer succeeds in creating a reflection of Indian women’s dilemma. The women are seen torn apart between domestic duties and aspirations to live an independent life. As these women appear and feel bound by the age-old traditions, a mental conflict arise in their lives and many of them pass their lives defying the set customs and struggling to begin a new life that is independent and free. This struggle transforms in existential drive as they find too difficult to live stereotype monotonous life. Existential dilemma finds its just expression in Kapur’s fictions as they find and search out reasons to live. They fully contradict with the notion that their lives are meant only if they live as per the conventions. And in the process of finding the reasons for survival, they experience that they too are assigned equal rights to live independent life as men have.

Variation in Kapur’s women characters is well presented by Sridevi M. in “From Oppression to Empowerment – A Study of Women in Novels of Manju Kapur” She talks about different women characters in Kapur’s novels who belong to different generations. Some women are submissive. They do not show any protest against male dominance. They readily accept the set norms for women in the society. On the other hand there are some rebels too, like Virmati in Difficult Daughters, who challenge the traditions and prefer to live and think differently.

Poonam Rathee talks about the depiction of modern woman in “Gender and Generational Conflicts in Manju Kapur’s Fiction.” Rathee’s observation regarding Astha in Kapur’s A Married Woman is worth mentioning. She writes:

Her relationship facilitates her to leave the path of continuous slavery and to assume the possibility of liberty so she fulfils her unfulfilled desires of pursuing artistic talents like poetry writing, painting, and roaming freely without any hindrance on Rath yatra, Ayodhya Yatra. She participates in processions and spends time independently without any hitches. Most of the time, it is seen that socio-political upheavals are well captured in Manju Kapur’s fiction. She presents the impact of education and aspiration in breaking the fetters of conservative society. Her revolt against traditions and the institution of marriage opens the
new vistas for women. She rejects the shield of protection made only for women to circumscribe their movement in an orbit defined by man only. Through Astha’s character, Manju Kapur makes the society aware of the modern woman’s demand for equality, her characters serve themselves as a medium to find self-expression and to expose their dilemmas. Her truthful presentation of new generation women significantly throws a challenge to Indian patriarchal society.

(174-175)

Kapur’s women characters are often identified as modern women: new women who live with self respect and present a strong inclination towards women’s independence. Poonam Rathee rightly explains Kapur’s new woman and double standards of society:

The chaos in the lives of the protagonists and their triumph over conflicts makes them trendsetters and they metamorphose as new women. Manju Kapur’s women no longer submit to the will of their male counterparts rather counter attack bravely to overcome the abject situations. They choose the option of fighting back over surrendering themselves to destiny. This incredible transformation makes them a kind of women confronting traditional social values and registers their identity significantly. Manju Kapur draws the concerns of newly emerging urban middle class to women issues and also man’s desires to shape up and mould woman according to his will. In fact, he has enslaved her mind and never desires to elevate her to a desired status. Cultural, religious and social traditions impose restrictions, and favour repression.

Manju Kapur unveils the harsh and double standards of society in which pleasure and control with regard to woman become necessary for man but on the contrary, for a woman, desire for pleasure and control over her own life becomes a sin. The dual nature of society is nakedly and crudely presented in Manju Kapur’s fiction and this has become a great strength of her works. Her protagonists enter into forbidden territories, face rejection but learn to come out successfully.
They defy patriarchal notions, reject enforced domesticity and assert their individuality. (193)

The gap in family relations and intimacy with friends is well explained by Barkha Rathore in “Female Bonding in Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* and *A Married Woman*”. Barkha says:

Kapur’s protagonists are closer to their friends, colleagues or other female characters than their mothers. The gaps between their relations lead them to their own destruction and failure. In spite of education, they could not bring real independence in their life. A major concern in Kapur’s writing has been the description of inner life and restrained interpersonal relationships. Kapur’s new woman is daring and bold but still being confined carrying the burden of inhibition and want to be liberated. To come out of their confinement the mothers have to be more understanding and supportive towards their daughters not limiting women to their traditional roles but expanding and awakening them to several other potential and awareness. (153-154)

The study of the presented articles and looking at the overview of Manju Kapur’s novels signifies one common conclusion that Kapur’s women characters exhibit modern tendency in their way of living. The articles as well as the short review of the novels reveal the modern approach of Indian women. Modernity in way of living, attitude, opinions and behavior is evidently seen in Manju Kapur's women characters. Starting from Virmati in the debut novel *Difficult Daughters* to Tapti in *Brothers*, all have one thing in common and that is the search for identity and struggle against patriarchy. Kapur's female characters are modern in their rejection of patriarchal norms, conventions, age - old traditions etc. Often they are identified as new women since they attempt to be trends-setters. In her fictions, the novelist effectively brings forth the women who attempt to set new identity through new relations. But they are never satisfied through this novel bonding. Lack of contentment and sorrowful dislocation is well portrayed by Kapur.
The term "modern" is understood as existing in the present or a recent time, or using or based on recently developed ideas, methods or styles. Merriam - Webster presents it as under.

"Of, relating to, or characteristic of the present or the immediate past".

Manju Kapur's women characters, particulars the protagonists, exhibit the modern tendency in their approach towards life. They are no longer willing to be confined in conventional norms. They seem happy to adapt the traditions and customs till the traditions do not hinder their path of freedom. The modern woman is often identified as new woman too. The modern woman has crossed the traditional threshold of patriarchy and has involved herself along with man almost in all spheres of life. Kapur's modern women no longer limit themselves to the set traditional roles like marriage, child upbringing, household works etc. Kapur's heroines are not merely child producing machines but the radiant rebels who demonstrate that they are no longer inferior to men. They are not ready to allow male supremacy if it obstructs their path of liberalization.

Virmati in Difficult Daughters presents the glimpse of a modern woman who breaks the traditional norms and chooses her own path. However, in her case she seems much more an example of a child who craves for care and affection from parents. Among Kasturi's eleven children, being the eldest, Virmati hardly gets any affection from her parents which she extremely needs being an adolescent. Consequently, it turns into search for self satisfaction and care which she readily finds in Professor Harish. Harish's views about women's education, his insistence on women's freedom and self reliance inspires young Virmati who like a modern woman fights for her rights rather than surrendering to age-old traditions.

Modern temperament in women is highlighted in Kapur’s second novel too. Education and working status of modern women, belonging to middle class, is well presented by the novelist. Evolution of conventional women into modern women during the last decade of twentieth century is well portrayed by Manju Kapur. Like other modern women Astha owns her body, mind and life. She does what she decides. She lives life as per her likes and dislikes. This is the basic identity of a modern
woman who listens to her wishes and desires. She seems in no mood of sacrificing her life for the pompous conventions.

The protagonist of novel *Home*, Nisha, exhibits the modern tendency in her outlook and lifestyle. The pre-marriage relations of women with men is rightly described through Nisha’s character. Her struggle to overcome the break-up of love affair and her emergence as a growing business entrepreneur are the indications of modern women’s pursuit of independence and identity. Like other modern women, Nisha stands equally with men in society and proves her talent. In the remaining other novels too the characteristic features of modern women are evidently mentioned by the novelist. Modernity in Kapur's heroines are highlighted in their way of thinking and their approach in dealing with the difficulties in life. Undoubtedly, patriarchy seems a challenge for most of Kapur's protagonists but they do not be submissive to the older customs and traditions. In their modern approach towards life, their effort is visible to establish their own identity and a quest for independence. They no longer seem willing to accept themselves as a weaker gender next to male. But their actions signify their claim equal to that of men.
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