

## **The New Educated Woman in Rama Mehta’s “Inside The Haveli” And ManjuKapur’s “Difficult Daughters”.**

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### **Abstract:**

The Nineteenth century stood as a Renaissance for women education and emancipation. In the wake of this broad step many women rose spiritually and psychologically. Indian women writings in English focus the birth of the new woman empowered with education. Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli* is neither the triumph nor the thrashing, however of agreement and understanding between the two opposing thoughts of modernization and tradition. Mehta depicts an educated woman, Geeta’s journey from modernity to the conventional world behind the shroud; where she is endowed with the obligation of continuance of its conventions. Manju Kapur, in her debut novel *Difficult Daughters*, presents a realm of educated women combating the clutches of patriarchy, love and marriage. In the backdrop of political and intellectual movements few succeeded as self sufficient new women. Kapur’s Virmati is a portrait of the “New woman” steeped in the dogmas of silence.

**Key words: Women Education, Patriarchy, Love, Marriage, New-Woman, Emancipation, Tradition, Modernity.**

The nineteenth century witnessed the introduction of education and modernization in India. It is aptly called the age of renaissance as the impact of western ideas inflicted the notions of women education, liberation and emancipation. In England “The Woman Question” raised by Mary Wollstonecraft in “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792) influenced the other feminists like, Olive Schreiner, Harriet Martineau and Sarah Grand who urged women to obtain proper education and financial independence. The Indian counterparts like Raja Rammohun Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Kesab Chandra Sen and Sayed Ahmed Khan made deliberate effort towards women education and acted against social prejudice related to women. Women education was virtually non-existent and despised in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Sarah Grand coined the term New Woman in “The new aspect of the Women Question” in 1894. An ideal woman was the wife who was the shadow of husband, a silent loving and affectionate homemaker. On the other hand New Woman defies playing this subordinate role in the walls of a home. She delves into her inner world of strength and liberation and craves a niche for herself.

Ellen .E. Jordan observes: The English feminists endowed the new women with her hostility to men ,her questioning of marriage, her determination to escape from the restrictions of home life and her belief that education could make a woman capable of leading a financially self- sufficient, single and yet fulfilling life. (Qtd in K.Meerabai(16))

The introduction of Women Education Act 1835 acted as a catalyst for the New Woman ideology. Through education, the New Woman could realize her place and position in family and society. She became aware of her individuality and asserted her equality with men and rights as a human being. Although traditional India followed a rigid stereotype of Sati, Child Marriage, Purdah and Female Infanticide, the societal changes were set in with the British conquest of India and the English education introduced by the western liberals.

Dr. Anne Besant rightly mentions; “there cannot be educated people without educated women” (Qtd in K.Meerabai. (18))

Among the earliest women from the nineteenth century, Rassundara Devi with a passionate eagerness to learn taught herself to read by stealing precious moments from her housework and

the responsibilities of caring twelve children. Radhakanta Deba the secretary of Calcutta school society joined hands with Miss Mary Anne Cooke and the church missionary society and opened thirty schools for respectable Hindu girls. The church missionary society was more successful in south India (1821). By 1840, the Scottish church society could claim six schools with a clientele of 200 Hindu girls. The Hindu Balika Vidyalaya opened in 1849 in Calcutta by J.E. Drinkwater Bethune, the legal member of the Governor-General Council and President of the Council Education. By 1854, female education gained support first by the Brahmo samaj, the Prathana samaj, Arya samaj and The Theosophical society. The movement gained momentum with the establishment of Bethune's school sponsored by reformist religious institutions. In 1884 Zennanas were started where Christian ladies were sent to teach girls of Hindu families. However it was cumbersome and expensive.

Annie Besant (1847-1933) the leader of theosophical society asserted that in ancient times Hindu women were educated and moved freely in society. She urged to return to the golden age. (G.Forbes. (43))

Pandita Ramabai (1852-1922) is a glaring example of the New Woman. She was awarded the title 'Pandita' for her appreciation of her great learning. She joined the Arya Mahila Samaj for the cause of women education. Later she established Sharada Sadan, a school for widows in Bombay. Indian women's encounter with the western education and ideals resulted as a reaction to the age old stereotypes. The new woman challenged patriarchy as she desired to live as an independent human being, not as a subjugated and submissive woman. She accentuated her rights and equality and asserted her voyage from subordination to self-affirmation and empowerment. The Women question loomed large in the nineteenth century hence many religious reformers joined together and brought reforms against social evils related to women. Their efforts bore fruits in the shape of Act against Sati (1829), Introduction of Women Education (1835), Widow Remarriage Act (1856) and The Age of consent Act for Marriage (1891). However, the reform movement could not readily eradicate the age old mind set of the traditional society but gradually and eventually women gained voice to affirm their rights.

"The first generation of women found voice: they wrote about their lives and about conditions of women. The second generation acted. They articulated the needs of women, critiqued their society and the foreign rulers, and developed their own institutions". (G.Forbes. (61))

Indian English fiction portray the New Woman's struggle for individuality and identity. The impact of national movements and the extent of modern education is so enormous that the image of woman in the Indian novels shows a palpable shift towards a feminist undercurrent with a woman protagonist who defies the prevalent social setup.

“The New Woman voices a note of dissent to this and resents to be stifled under the oppressive restrictions. she has her own changed notions of life. It is true, woman education, her rights of citizenship and other legal rights and above all her gainful employment and economic independence have tremendously influenced her outlook and conjugal relationship and attitude towards marriage”.(Promilla Kapur(194))

This rising of the New Woman makes progress towards her identity yet at the same time she needs to depend for emotional support on her family. It seems that Rama Mehta's “*Inside the Haveli*” and Manju Kapur's “*Difficult Daughters*” are written under the sweeping influence of the notions of new womanhood. The novels explore the journey of the protagonists which overcomes their search for identity at the mental, social and physical level in the cross-cultural content. Both the protagonists are modern, educated, young women, who are crushed under the weight of patriarchal dominations and tradition-bound society.

Rama Mehta occupies a noteworthy place among the contemporary women novelists. The problems of women and their quest for identity are the main concerns of her novels. Her central character is modern, educated young woman. She is crushed under the load of a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. *Inside the Haveli* (1977) presents the saga of Geeta, a girl born and brought up in Bombay. She had studied in co-educational college and had an exposure to metropolitan life. She comes to Udaipur as the nineteen-year-old bride of Ajay Singh, a professor of science. Ajay's ancestors were the ministers of the Ranas of Udaipur and their haveli, Jeevan Niwas, was one of the chief and the most prominent haveli of Udaipur.

It is an utter distress for a spontaneous, spirited and educated girl like Geeta to adjust and adapt to the rigorous and conventional ways of the haveli, in which women kept purdah. Geeta finds herself suddenly entrapped and engaged in a vast haveli where she is all the time encircled by women. From a nuclear and educated family she has come to find a crowd of maids, their children and women from other havelis who keep visiting one another on the slightest excuse.

“In Bombay, Geeta enjoys full freedom but in Udaipur she has to abide by the form and the etiquette of the haveli” (*Inside the Haveli*, 29). Now she is condemned to a life of self-denial, isolation and utter distress. Neglecting her freedom and will, owing to the customs and fault finding of her mother-in-law and other women in the haveli she snatches moments of pleasure whenever she was alone. She often feels nostalgic about her past, as being modern, she feels herself as an outsider, unable to adjust herself in peace with the taboos and norms of traditionally webbed culture around her.

“Two years ago when she left her parents’ home in Bombay, she did not know that she was leaving behind a way of life in which there was a free mingling of men and women” (15).

Geeta the independent new woman struggles to maintain her modern individuality in a traditional world of the Haveli. “She yearned to talk with someone who could tell her what was happening in the world” (21). Social structure and method propose an inside or outside contradiction on gender basis. In *Inside the Haveli*, this ‘Inside’ is dispensed only to women, as women have no space in ‘Outside’ society. They are passive sufferers; unable to remove the conservative, conventional and traditional rules and taboos of the haveli. Geeta has been differently brought up as she has studied in college with boys. Now she has to learn to live in the tapered ambience of a world of deep-seated traditions of Purdah.

“The moment Geeta landed in the platform of Udaipur she was immediately encircled by women singing but their faces were covered. One of them came forward, pulled her sari over her face and exclaimed in horror, ‘Where do you come from that you show your face to the world?’ Geeta, bewildered, frightened managed to get in to the car without talking to the women who followed her, singing as loud as they could” (17).

Even when she was introduced to different Haveli’s of her in laws, she was not allowed to pull back her veil to see them, “No, no, you cannot do that,” Pari had snapped, pulling back the sari over her face. ‘In Udaipur we keep Purdah. Strange eyes must not see your beautiful face.’ (17) Before the Muslim conquest of India Purdah was not observed by the women or nominally observed as a sign of respect towards the elders especially in rural areas. The rigid practice of Purdah came to India with the beginning of Muslim rule in India. Gradually the practice of

Purdah became strict and got associated with social status and prestige. Purdah is the oldest form of colonization, of domination and of control. Followed by these norms the Haveli of Udaipur was regulated, here covering one's face was a symbol of prestige and respect for the elders. The individuality of a woman is lost behind the veil. "She had lost much of her girlish impetuosity; her temper was more subdued. She had gradually forgotten her own carefree girlhood, in which there had been uninhibited laughter and freedom" (87). Geeta an educated and independent girl was a victim of these patriarchal customs, her journey of life moves from modernity to tradition.

Geeta who has acquired education from a co-education college and belongs to a society where men and women worked together, who was never restricted behind the walls of home feels caged and suffocated in the tradition bound Haveli. The Haveli have different apartments for the males and females. The servants have their separate quarters. The upper class women observe strict Purdah and do not communicate with their men folk during the day. The males conduct their business from their own separate apartments and their visits are announced in advance. No such rules are applicable to the maids and servants. They mingle freely and do their jobs:

"In their courtyard there is no dividing wall, the maids are free to talk to their husbands; they don't have to wait till the darkness of night settles over the Haveli to share their thoughts with them". (6)

She longed to live a free life, a life without veil, to breathe fresh air and express her thoughts openly. Sometimes it becomes difficult for her to identify who is who because, with their heads bent and their faces covered, everyone looks alike, she hates this Purdah taboo. Geeta, has had no direct interaction with her husband's grandfather and father, and has lived secluded from the men. Even after two years her father-in-law and his father were strangers to her. She had never spoken a word to them. Geeta and Ajay are equally bound to this rule. Ajay comprehends her need and occasionally comes upstairs on some excuse or the other. Once Ajay wanted to take Geeta out for a drive, but she denied, "No, I am not going out alone with you; the whole of Udaipur will be talking the minute we are out of gate" (166).

Though the novel actually appears to be all women novel and dominated by them, yet, in reality, it is the patriarch of the house whose will is command and not even a leaf can stir without his permission. Although the Haveli was loaded with women they were always undercover, veiled and subdued. They never expressed an opinion and never revealed their feelings. "Their large

eyes full of yearning and longing looked dreamily on the world beyond from behind their veils” (87). Geeta the educated young girl is expected to forgo all her independence and adhere to the age old norms of the Haveli. In the very first day the women of haveli remarked, “She will never adjust. She is not one of us”. (29) Geeta’s mother-in-law declares I wanted to show them that even an educated girl can be moulded. (30). Indian social structure forms and reforms the meaning of gender both biologically and ideologically. Gender depicts the difference between the superior and inferior. Indian woman whose badge has been silent-suffering and who is an upholder of Indian culture is oft-repeated type in Indian English fiction.

She is shown to be enacting the various roles –of a mother, a wife, a daughter and a sister-a cog in the family machine but never as an individual claiming her life to be her own, wherein she could seek personal gratification and self-fulfillment. This is mainly due to the prevailing patriarchal society where the authority emanates from the eldest male of the family. K.Meera Bai (16)

“In the haveli men were regarded with awe as if they were Gods. They were the masters and their slightest wish was a command; women kept in their shadow and followed their instructions with meticulous care.” (21)

Patriarchal influence and gender discrimination is found throughout the novel. Geeta was neither allowed any freedom with her husband nor could she fondle and caress her own child in the presence of her parents-in-law. The existence of authority feels everywhere. Nothing is done without consulting her grand father-in-law and father-in-law. It is according to their wish that the whole schedule of the house revolved.

Geeta couldn't help thinking that the ladies of the haveli were waiting for the day when they would be liberated from their confinement. In any case, at first glance they demonstrated no disappointment. Geeta finds Ajay a supportive husband but like Geeta, He is also fearful and flaccid deep-rooted in life-long customs and standards, and not able to break traditions. He was not ready to do anything to confront his father's authority that he admired and respected. Geeta, though an educated but being an idealized Indian wife, was unable to reveal her opposition to her husband's idea, remains mum and

“The dream of leaving Udaipur died in her heart. She realized that her husband was too rooted in the traditions of Udaipur .At last she was sure that her life was to be in the haveli” (54). Geeta had become more and more involved in the routine of the house hold; she accepted the discipline of the haveli without protest. But there were many times when she felt the crushing weight of the walls that shut off the outside of the walls(88).

For the first time, she breaks her silence and raises her voice, crushing the walls of tradition when she demands education for Sita, the daughter of maid Lakshmi and servant Gangaram. Geeta sat up erect as if she no longer could contain her thoughts and said with quiet authority, “Pariji, Sita must go to school” (98). After winning permission for classes from Bhagwat Singh ji, she thought that she had taken the wrong decision. But her decision won appraisal from the women of the haveli later on as Sita being educated, got suitable match for her marriage. Manju, her Bua sa appreciates: “I am glad you are bringing new ideas into the haveli” (115).

Even her husband, Ajay appreciated her stand and said “you did the right thing;I am proud of you.It’s time for new ideas to enter the Haveli”(137)

She didn't care for the rigid system, yet what infuriated her more than anything was the badly defined nature of her role in the family. She couldn't turn into one of the haveli women nor would she have liked to. But she felt extraordinary delight during her classes. She likewise began sewing classes and drew in ladies to show them to cut and weave. She rebelled against her mother-in-law when there was a discussion about Vijay's marriage. She at once says: “Bhabhi, whatever happens; Vijay can't get engaged at this age,” blurted out Geeta. Bhagwat Singhji's wife looked up surprised. This was the first time that Geeta had spoken in a raised voice to her”. (205). Suddenly the new woman in Geeta evolved out of the cocooned self asserting the right which she could not fetch for herself but for her child and she regrets on her decision to stay back in the haveli.

“What a mistake I made to stay on here; I could have easily persuaded Ajay to leave. This had to come sooner or later. Now I am really trapped and cannot escape. But on



this point I will never give in whatever happens. If I have ruined my life, the children are not going to ruin theirs”. (205–206).

Geeta could achieve the right of the girl for education and right of the mother to have a say in deciding the marriage of her daughter. Although Geeta gradually gets used to the conventional life style, in the process she also delicately changes the atmosphere and the mindset of the people in Haveli. Subtle and gradual revolution in the haveli confirms that an educated woman can play a momentous role in the modernization of those segments of the society in which women still live under stereotyped and rigid principles.

The novel *Difficult Daughters* revolves around women of three generations confronting with the awakening of a country for freedom. Under the pressure of patriarchy and partitions there rose the values of revolutionary and feminine freedom, empowerment and emancipation. In her novels Kapur portrays the injustice done to the women in the name of taboos, religion, honesty, morality and God-where marriage is a security and education a bare nomenclature. The novel focuses on the protagonist Virmati the eldest daughter of a jeweler family. Her mother gave birth to eleven children “breeding like cats and dogs” (*Difficult Daughters*, 7) for whom Virmati was a second-mother.

The entire household work and care of her siblings was her prime responsibility for which she was believed to be eligible for marriage. Hence, her marriage was fixed with a canal engineer Inderjeet in contrast she wanted to pursue her education. Much of her time was occupied doing household chores and taking care of her siblings hence she could hardly spare time for her education. Even after the whole day humdrum she was abused by Kasturi for no apparent reasons. “The language of feeling had never flowed between them, and this threat was meant to express all her thwart yearnings” (12).

Virmati was in the threshold of marriage just as she completes her F.A. exams but it was postponed for the death in the groom’s family. This delay in the marriage opened new vista for Virmati’s higher education. Virmati’s desire to study is attributed to her cousin “Shakuntala’s influence. She took her as a role Model who was a successful teacher, modern in her thoughts, independent by nature and believed her responsibilities lies beyond husband and children.

“ I want to be like you Pehnji (17) “She was keen to study Baper!” (5).

The anxiety in Virmati to taste the wine of freedom to break free from the chains of conservative family and proclaiming her worth only led her to travails of sufferings. With quest for education she stepped forward for higher education and joined college. She fell in love with Oxonian Professor Harish Chandra. He was their neighbor, already married and blessed with a daughter and stays along with his wife, mother & sister.

At house Virmati was a fish out of water, suffocated and harassed with the boring homely duties and longing for love and affection of her mother was enticed by the wooing of the professor. The Professor has a gentle but illiterate wife who could not satiate his intellectual gratification hence, Virmati served the best substitute to it. “Care, love and more importantly education far here too studies are very important” (39)

Virmati the typical Indian girl was in a quandary of being an ideal daughter and saving the prestige of her family on the other hand her desire to study and the trap of illicit affair. Her commitment to education and family was out stripped by her commitment to her love with Professor.

“My mother keeps saying that all my education has achieved is the destruction of my family” (93).

The educated Virmati could not elevate herself to an independent soul and was forced to adhere to patriarchal norms. The novel being named difficult daughters is much about difficult mothers who are solely responsible for the downfall of their daughters. Like a genetic transformation Kasturi from her Grandmother to her mother and now to her daughter passed on the tradition of girls being the prestige of the family who seeks her privilege in managing the household. Though smitten with the concept of modernity and autonomy, values and craze for education Virmati still fell into the trap of professor’s lust. Virmati’s decision of not marrying and being independent stands as a betrayal for Kasturi. She thinks Virmati’s freedom as the symbol of selfishness and ingratitude.

Initially Virmati felt she and professor’s wife Ganga both were deceived by him but later she was convinced by the bond and binding clutches of professor, who comprehended his sad story of getting married at the age of three to an uneducated girl who has filled his life with intellectual void in contrast Virmati pervades his life with intellectual bliss. Virmati trapped in professor instigations never got an inkling of insecure future, even when professor said

“I need the companionship of an educated, thinking whereas nor that I feel lonely and desolate among all who care for me” (94)

Further, when she was caged to the store-room she got the news of Ganga’s pregnancy and was thus jolted, shattered and lost her faith over him. But professor quiet eloquently tried to regain her confidence expressing his helplessness for restoring the family peace.

“He does what he can do to bring back domestic harmony. He feels quality about ignoring the suffering of one who is in a way balance less. An act was performed mechanically, with what assault you have already seen” (106).

Virmati was guilty learning of his responsibilities towards his family, where she has completely neglected herself and her family for him. After the prolonged confinement it was time to fly out from the cage with the commitment to her education. She was sent to Lahore for studies, where Shakuntala works as a teacher. Virmati had two exemplars of modern liberated women. Shakuntala a student, a teacher, active participated in political Gandhian Movement and Swarnalata, an ultra-committed activist, who indulge in conferences, who is an orator and quite sure of what she wanted in her life. She wished to be one like Swarna –herideas, feelings, opinions come from inside herself and she was so committed and articulate young woman. Still there were under fore of absurdity she was confused to choose between lone or life. Professor’s frequent visits to Lahore aired the extinct of their relationship and lone bloomed like anything. In her voyage within she wished to be one of these ladies but she pondered:

“Would the Professor want her to be like Swarna? She didn’t want to do anything that would alter the professor’s undying love for her. May be she could be like Swarna from the inside, secretly” (135).

An Indian woman, desirous to take the genuine and purposeful voyage of self discovery fails and chooses a road through the chasm towards her own defeat. Virmati, learnt nothing being in association with these conscious ladies. When the whole nation was engaged in strikes, war, peace, upliftment, academic freedom, rallies and freedom fight , for Virmati it was the her love of Harish and the satisfaction she gained from the association. She behaved like a typical Indian woman for whom her love, her husband is her world.

Education, travelling, encounter with eminent ladies, her longing for self-autonomy, her fight against patriarchy, step against arranged marriage and decision for further studies could teach her nothing. Time and again she was entrapped in the passionate, misleading and mismatching relationship and stopped towards self abasement. Now she stood lifeless and trapped in her unwed motherhood. Confused by her lot, she repents on her actions. She finds herself sinful against Ganga and her own family.

“This was the very thing men were afraid of, even the mothers. Education led to Independence and loose conduct” (155)

“Men do take advantage of woman” (149). She was warned and advised by Swarna. “Marriage is not only thing in life, Viru ..... wake up from your stale dream(151)..... “We are lucky were living in times when women can do something else. (152)”.

It was a strong step to decide for abortion after much deliberations and confusions of killing the child of their love. Her acquaintance with Swarna had at least made her to decide of her own instead of depending and waiting for the Professor’s opinions. Virmati’s companion led Professor to intellectual and scholastic perfection. He was not at all bothered with the entreaties and yearning of Virmati. She kept on fighting to seek a place for her in his life but he always acted as escapist and opportunist to fulfill his erotic cravings in winning ways. Education enlightens the intellect and being a Professor it was his duty to impact proper education to take Virmati on the right path instead of leading her to the dark hole of pain and punishment. She was struggling for identity both outside and within. Neither was she known by her education nor as professor’s wife. She was no one and insignificant. After all her suffering and servitude she got a fabulous opportunity of principalship in Nahan. The best part of life, where she was identified and respected, for the first time she enjoyed a period of female autonomy which was snatched away by Professor, with his frequent visits which spoiled her reputation and she had to resign. Finally she achieved;

“Which she had fought and yearned for, was her’s. Virmati was not overly given to speculation, despite an intensive education, and at that moment she believed herself happy” (207).

After all the high education and experience she got at Nahan, she was satisfied with her identity of Professor's second wife, who reluctantly accepted her and the ritual. Surprisingly a girl who aspired to be a free spirit, to have her own individuality and though highly educated was fighting to play a typical role of traditional housewife. The qualities were bred in her bone hierarchically transferred from her grandmother to her mother and now to her. Her life was in continuous flux; time and again she was a victim of patriarchal dominance. Once escaped from the clutch of arranged marriage now she stepped into a disaster love marriage with a status of second wife and fight to assert her rights she felt humiliated both in and outside of the family. The twist and turns of her life left her spell bound, lost her health and stressed out, she lamented on her decision of marrying professor. Now she is disowned by her family and despised by her husband she ended up being marginalized. The inconvenient atmosphere of his home made Professor send Virmati to do her M.A in philosophy. The traces of male dominance were found even though she was educated and expected to be reasonable and decisive. She was not allowed to decide for her career. Professor who taught her about women freedom and emancipation forced her to continue with a subject which she hated.

For Virmati Ida proved to be a difficult daughter who constantly looked for “an escape route, being husbandless, childless...hovering like a pencil notation on the margins of society (279). The novel starts with Ida “The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother” (1) the same feeling Virmati had for Kasturi. Virmati is the new woman in making, who tries to overcome the cultural identity imposed by the patriarchal society.

Virmati was trained to sacrifice, compromise and adapt the patriarchal dominance unlike Ida who is an educated woman, who could fight against an unsuccessful marriage and stood single, independent and freed from the shackles of marriage, lead a much freer life than her mother. Perhaps the innate desire of Virmati flourished in her daughter Ida. The wine of freedom which she always wished to taste was tasted by Ida, the New Woman in real sense. Ida, Shakutala and Swarna are emblems of educated, empowered and emancipated women, who even after marriage continued to be independent and living their dreams as political activists. For Virmati, it was a tough struggle for education, Identity and conjugal rights. Virmati's life is a saga of quest for Identity, stand against patriarchy, where she failed for her head over the heels of love. But her heroism is comparable with a tragic flaw, opening avenues for the next generation. To write-off

her name from the list of new women would be misapprehension. She was a new woman in the making.

The women writers of modern literature brings out the suppressed desires of a woman as a human being ,who has physical and psychological needs to be accomplished apart from playing the age-old stereotypes of patriarchy. Virmati and Geeta are presented in the typical Indian background being trapped between tradition and modernity. While cleaving to their responsibilities for family their rights of own identity and liberation are terribly denied.

Simone De Beauvoir observes:

..... that since patriarchal times women have in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men, a position comparable in many respects with that of racial minorities in spite of the fact that women constitute numerically at least half of the human race, and further that the secondary standing is not imposed of necessity by natural 'feminine' characteristics but rather by strong environmental forces of educational and social tradition under the purposeful control of men. (9)

Western feminism promoted Women's Education and freedom from oppression. It also administered necessary social changes to embrace the nation of equal rights for women and equal participation in all aspects of society. Women's emancipation and education became an overbearing issue for the women and reformers as well as leaders. Western Education produced an enlightened woman, an emblem of emancipation and equality. She has ceased to be illiterate, secluded and veiled and no more liable to die on husband's funeral pyre. In *Inside the Haveli*, Geeta the educated new woman shatters the patriarchal dominations realizing that time has come to rid the Haveli from some of its outworn practices. Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), challenged women subjugation, patriarchal ideologies, gender-stereotypes and expounded that

Under the impact of sound education, women would no longer require "the regard of boys or men to feel alive" (331)

Virmati is portrayed as a progressive woman who desires for higher education, breaking the age old shackles of family, male dominations and tradition bound society and leads a self designed life. She not only stands for her individuality but also serves as a companion to her husband and satiates his intellectual gratification. The educated bourgeoisie men yearned for companionship

at personal level. Educated wives supported and accompanied them in their services. Mary Wollstonecraft in her pioneering work, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* writes:

I, therefore, will venture to assert that till women are more rationally educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks. (45)

The east-west confrontation gave way to crucial changes in the attitude and outlook of Indians. Female education and emancipation was the first step towards progress. Women stepped out of their homes demanding equal rights with men. The educated woman gained confidence and believed that she can lead a financially independent and fulfilling life. Through education women voiced their condition and needs, asserted their rights as an individual. They moved forward to empower their contemporaries building a bridge between the urban middle-class women and rural masses. The deep-rooted stereotypes like Sati, Purdah, and Child-Marriage were also questioned. The new woman stands as an educated, rationalizing, self-sufficient formidable woman-who is the maker of her own destiny.

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