

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

domestic life but increasingly to be found in the business and in the professions.

In the early twentieth century the new woman represents the self and struggles for her personal autonomy and independent womanhood in the society. She discards the limitations set by the patriarchal society. The personal liberty has been the finest achievement of the new woman. She is the amazing combination of wisdom and youthfulness. She has of course become self-supporting and independent, after having enthusiasm and zest of life.

The new woman rejects the natural life of love, marriage and children. She becomes sour and shrewd through a life of political agitation. She is essentially a practical person and revolts against the passivity of the middle and upper class female life. The new woman advocates a realistic view of woman's capacities, for education and work. She can select the leader or becomes the politician at her level base. She has been more responsible day by day. According to the new trends of medical field, she becomes frail and ill due to enforced idleness and repeated childbearing, that's why the new woman advocates the exercise and wants the reformation in her present position.

Inadequate education and the conventional social attitudes keep a woman poor, but the new woman proposes the financial independence. Today the new woman has the right of vote, so she thinks individually. The right of vote has given her both, her personal rights and the responsibilities of citizenship. The new woman insists on standard of clear thinking and opposes the

feminine emotions. She can act as individual. There are many opportunities for woman in each field. So, she can get its advantage. Today's new woman has the awareness of the difficulties which are being faced by her in both a public and personal level. She has become courageous and bold. She can travel around the world without a chaperon. She smokes cigarettes, rides horseback, becomes a pilot, a doctor and an engineer. Even she gets the highest position in politics as well as in business. She dresses with a general carelessness; remains single as well as childless and handles her own business affairs even after her marriage. She can support her family and travels alone everywhere. She is the most responsible adult as well as works to her capacity, makes her own decisions and participates fully and responsibly in the life of society. The new woman has been taking the education today, through which she can discover her qualities, capacities, logic and her own philosophy. She recognizes her potential as a human being. If she has to succeed in male-dominated professions, she must compete with her logic and intellectual power. She must not appeal her emotions and physical frailty as well as false modesty as her shield. As the author Duncan says,

They must submit themselves to the logical outcome of their independence; they must no longer appeal to physical frailty, false modesty, and emotionalism as shields against the aggressive competition that characterizes life outside the home.(Dean 62)

The new woman realizes that, when she enters in the competitive world of money-making, she must not have a place for feminine weakness and modesty, emotions and inability. These aspects are

not valuable in her practical life. In the political and social field, woman should need all her moral superiority. She must not accept the defects of her character as her strengths. But like man, she must accept the responsibility for her actions. She should strive to eradicate such aspects which are marred her personality. Today the new woman wants an independent existence in political, legal, educational and marital rights.

The new woman is the portrayal of a new kind of heroine who is searching her pride in society. She does not insult her pride at any cost. She secures it as her valuable ornaments. She is competitive and bold. So, she can overcome her emotions easily. She is very active and interested in philosophy as well as in science. The new woman is career minded. She herself can choose her career. In some proportion, she can sacrifice her pleasure and happiness to fulfil her aim and adjust her life.

The new woman has a strong antipathy and detestation towards marriage. She thinks that the marriage is degrading and horrible especially for career minded woman to whom life may mean something else. She does not give it much importance because it is one kind of restriction for her career. She rejects its commonplaceness and the eternal routine. She likes to be a single woman and refuses to take support of some others. She holds the liberal views of life. According the new woman, she can live her life independently if she has firmness and daring to do something excellent. She is always enthusiastic in her life and demands the self-respect and self-existence. The new woman is very conscious about her personality, dress making, appearance and style etc. Now she accepts the fashionable style of living as the time changes. She

obtains the struggle and hardworking in her whole life to keep her impression in society.

The new woman thinks over the social problems like poverty, exploitation, money, divorce, second marriage, intrigues, jealousies, etc. She can fight against the tyranny and exploitation which is going on today in the society. She always tries to be unconventional and straight forward and faces the difficulties courageously. She seeks opportunities to take education in medical sciences and technical fields. Nowadays many clubs are founded by intellectual women, who are engaged in reforming the position of woman.

The new woman is the inspiration to the women who are not yet changed individually. She is not a painted pivot of merry-go-round in the patriarchal society but she is an independent thinking woman who has awareness of the social conventions that limit her actions. Therefore she struggles for challenging those conventions now.

According Ketan Pithadia,

In the main part of the 19th century in Britain, the great majority women were content with subordinate place in the home and in society. Towards the end of the century numerous women were expressing in various ways, they're discontent with an inferior status and were agitating for equality with men. This unrest become known as "The Women Question" and anyone who declare her right to be given an

independent place in the community was called a "New Woman"(2011).

Any woman, who questions traditional female roles, is tagged a "New Woman". They are independent in spirit, self-confident and clear headed, morally courageous and emotionally well controlled. The new woman at that time reluctant to marry; she prefers to take up a business or professional carrier. She does not believe in marriage and motherhood to be her proper duty and life work. (2011)

The "New Woman" first emerged in the late nineteenth century. She has greater freedom to pursue public roles and even flaunt her "sex appeal". A term is coined in the 1920s and links with the emergence of the new woman. She challenges conventional gender roles and meets with hostility from men and women, who objects to women's public presence and supposed decline in morality. Expressing autonomy and individuality, the new woman represents the tendency of young women at the turn of the century to reject their mother's ways in favour of new, modern choices (2011). What is the meaning of "new" about women in the early twentieth century? The most prominent change is their increased presence in the public arena whereas the lives of most nineteenth century women-especially middle-class women but also domestic servants and slaves tend to revolve around home life. Modern women ventured into jobs, politics and culture outside the domestic realm. They did not do so, however, on equal terms with men; women remain economically and politically subordinate to men in the early twentieth century. They struggled with conservative forces in society. Others who supported change, such as

Progressive Era reformers and suffragists, were also criticized the new woman for her disinterest in politics and careers in favour of the world of commercial entertainment.

Although many women have participated in expanding women's public roles, women have accepted and pressed for change in varying degrees. The symbol of the new woman was a conglomeration of aspects of many different women from across the nation who had lived between the 1890s and the 1920s. Among them there were glamorous performers, female athletes, "working girls" employ in city factories and rural textile mills, middle-class daughters are entering higher education and professions formerly closed to women. The reformers are involved in women's clubs, settlement houses, trade unions and suffrage.

We find a new spirit in women. They talk to men without any hesitation and discuss business matters openly as men do. The new woman is advanced by her demands for an end of chaperones. In the society she wants the rights like employment and independent accommodation. She is striving to discriminate the tendency of society, of giving the place to men and women according their sex. Therefore she asks for the equality of men and women in social, political and economic fields. In the 21st century the new woman has made her own status and identity in the society. According the new tradition, she has the new habits of dress and living. Gail Finney in his 'Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Aabler*, *The New Woman*' describes the new woman,

The New woman values typically self-fulfilment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine

ideal and sexual equality with marriage; is more open about her sexuality than the 'Old woman'; is well-educated and reads a great deal; has a job; is athletic or otherwise physically vigorous and, accordingly, prefers comfortable clothes (sometimes male attire) to traditional female garb.

The new woman is taking higher education in each field. By getting the higher education, she attempts to discard the principles of patriarchal society. Being qualified, self-supporting and independent, she rejects the tradition of marriage and childbearing. Today she has acquired the rights of vote as well as the sense of clear thinking. She is now courageous and practical on every step of her life.

She opposes the feminine emotions and discovers her own qualities, capacities and philosophy of life. She has turned as the competitor of man in each field. She claims for the political, legal, educational and marital rights and likes to be a single woman. The advanced education aids her to think over the social problems.