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# Research Chronicler

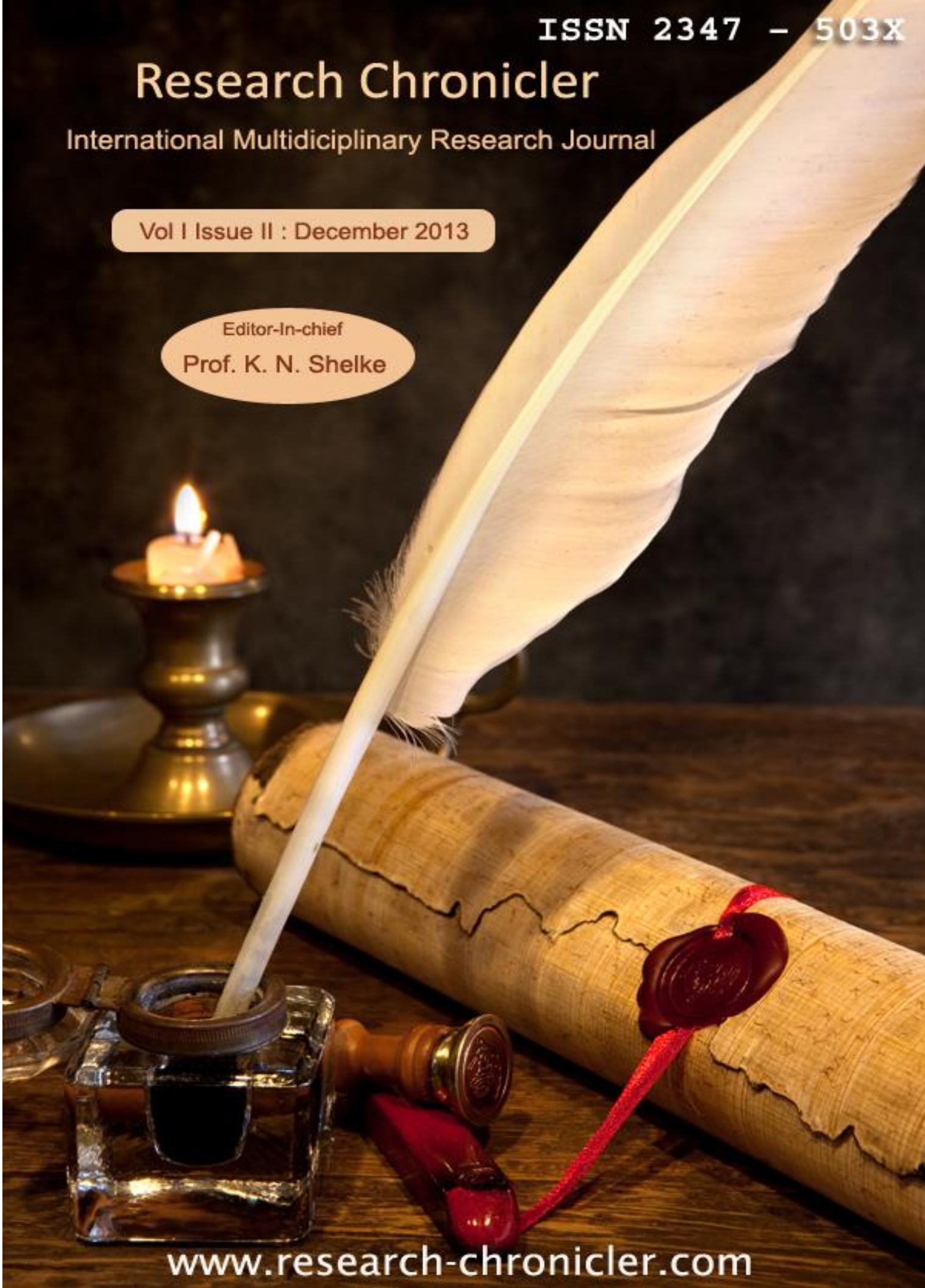
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# Research Chronicler

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## Feminine Sensibility vs. Sexuality: A New Dimension

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### ABSTRACT

The expression ‘sensibility’ expresses people’s aptitude to be affected by the world around them. It also frankly associates their poignant capabilities with their ethical growth. A high honorable standard should result in apposite touching retort. What was well thought-out “suitable” was dissimilar for men and women, nevertheless? Community thought that susceptibility led men to acquaintance, whereas apt feminine sensibility resulted in superior manners. This research paper centers around two women Sapna R. Mittal and Mansi taken from two different Hindi films, and they both belong to different class, culture and psyche. Though they are different but somewhere there is a similarity. The theory we are basing this research is of Manifest and latent functions which are social scientific concepts first clarified for Sociology by Robert K. Merton. Women have their own feelings and desires. If the society is bold and incorporating enough to allow men to gratify their sexual urges than why does it designs different set of rules for women. Why has morality been an ornament fit enough for women? Why not men? But provided the threshold of sanctity is not crossed.

**Key words:** sensibility, sexuality, dysfunction, desire.

The expression ‘sensibility’ expresses people’s aptitude to be affected by the world around them. It also frankly associates their poignant capabilities with their ethical growth. A high honorable standard should result in apposite touching retort. What was well thought-out “suitable” was dissimilar for men and women, nevertheless? Community thought that susceptibility led men to acquaintance, whereas apt feminine sensibility resulted in superior manners.

Virtue is defined as “A particular moral excellence; a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct” (OED). According to a few definitions, then, sensibility is the exhibit of virtue—at least; such was the case for women in the nineteenth century. Since perceptions such as devoutness, humility, and submission defined the ethical standard for women, feminine sensibility required women to display such qualities in their

behavior. However, feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, argued that true virtue could not exist without well-developed knowledge. Therefore, unless women were properly educated, they were merely mimicking good behavior with no moral backing. Furthermore, women were encouraged to use their cunningness to show fine behavior in order to get what they wanted from their husbands. Rousseau, for instance, suggested that, obedience only needed to be an “outward” display. Feminists saw this traditional feminine sensibility as calculating, fake glaze, which damaged true virtue.

Women can experience from sexual ennui just like men. We know - this is a hard one to consider. After all – in a way many experts on relationships and feminine sexuality carry an opinion that - if a woman is feeling psychologically connected and cherished - she is turned on evermore and ever! It is the men - those beasts - who need sexual assortment!

Sexuality is a crude, usual, bodily, and poignant purpose of human life. And women are capable of sexual purpose and gratification right through their entire lives. It's pragmatic and entirely doable to fashion the sex life of your dreams, one that includes fostering, closeness, adoration and fervor.

Huffington Post has deciphered five myths based on the discipline of desire. Firstly, the fact that women have lower sexual desire than men does not hold true. Research has found that women and men are equally likely to be the partner less desirous of sex. Myth two - sexual response involves desire, then stimulation, and then

orgasm. Desire doesn't have to come before arousal. Another myth is that 43 percent of women suffer from sexual dysfunction.

The still frequently-cited statistic from a study by Laumann and colleagues conducted in 1999 that 43 percent of women suffer from sexual dysfunction is, simply stated, inaccurate. It is based on a yes/no response option, where participants were asked whether they had experienced any of seven problems for two months over the past year. If the women answered ‘yes’ to any of the problems, they were categorized in that 43 percent statistic. This question didn't give any context to the reason around the experienced problems (such problems included lack of desire for sex, anxiety about sexual performance and difficulty with lubrication).

There are a lot of reasons other than ‘dysfunction’ that may account for those types of problems, such as health concerns, relationship issues or cultural expectations. It's not known how many people suffer from sexual dysfunction. Fourthly, women with high sexual desire are anomalies. A study on what were called ‘highly sexual women’ was recently published by Wentland and colleagues. Based on the responses of 932 women to their online questionnaire, they found that 52 percent of their sample could be classified as “highly sexual.” Lastly, women are vastly different from men when it comes to sexual desire.

This research paper centers around two women Sapna R. Mittal and Mansi taken from two different Hindi films, and they both belong to different class, culture and psyche. Though they are different but

somewhere there is a similarity. The theory we are basing this research is of Manifest and latent functions which are social scientific concepts first clarified for Sociology by Robert K. Merton. Merton appeared interested in sharpening the conceptual tools to be employed in a functional analysis. Manifest functions and dysfunctions are conscious and deliberate, the latent ones the unconscious and unintended. While functions are intended (manifest) or unintended (latent), and have a positive effect on society, dysfunctions are unintended or unrecognized (latent) and have a negative effect on society. Sapna R. Mittal and Mansi both are exemplary paradigm of Latent and Manifest Dysfunction; which can be gathered from the following chart of Anomie given by Robert K Merton:

Merton's typology of individual adaptations to environmental pressures

Type of Adaptation	Cultural Goal	Institutionalized Means
I. Conformity	+	+
II. Innovation	+	-
III. Ritualism	-	+
IV. Retreatism	-	-
V. Rebellion	+/-	+/-

Note: + signifies acceptance, - signifies rejection, and +/- signifies rejection of prevailing goal or means and substitution of new goal or means.

Taking the study made by Robert K Merton we put Sapna R. Mittal and Mansi in to the category of Rebellion; as both are negating the cultural goals and institutional means set by the society.

Sapna R. Mittal lives with her husband Shawar in Dubai. She's a typical bored housewife, whose husband won't let her work. She hangs out at malls all day, and when she's really bored, goes home with casual men on the road. Of course, when we say casual, we don't mean completely casual - they do have to be above-average lecherous. Ajay Rastogi is one such lecher who takes her home and shows her his paintings of naked women. She is thoroughly stunned and disgusted, but in a fine way. So they meet again, and this time he gives her the grand tour of his apartment till they end up in his bedroom. Honestly, we didn't see that coming. Sapna R. Mittal didn't either, and she's very surprised when she learns that this man wishes to have sex with her. But she doesn't want to humiliate him or anything, so she goes along with it. Since her husband is an oblivious workaholic, Sapna R. Mittal doesn't get caught romping on the side. She does feel very guilty, though, and no matter what she's doing, whether it's being painted in the nude or fooling around in a public washroom, in her heart she's very sad and disturbed. Eventually Shawar catches on, and he sets a private detective on his wife. The detective produces incriminating snaps, but the man is still not satisfied - he wants to catch the lovers red-handed. But he gets to the spot a little too late and has to contend with just killing his wife's lover. *Hawas* is an adaptation of the American film *Unfaithful*.

The movie's storyline thus opens with Indian Nationals, Raj Mittal and his beautiful wife, Sapna, residing in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where Raj works for

a British firm. Raj plans to accumulate enough money so that he and Sapna can relocate to the United States, buy their own property and live the good life. In order to make money, he works day and night, leaving Sapna alone, without any company. Sapna usually ends up going shopping on her own or having coffee with some girlfriends (Rita & Ramona). One day Sapna meets with an accident, a kindly passerby, Ajay Rastogi, offers help, even lends her a book. Attracted by Ajay, Sapna meets him again, and soon finds herself getting intimate with him. When Raj hints that he knows something is going on behind his back, Sapna immediately calls off the affair. Raj gets suspicious so much so that he hires a private detective to trail Sapna. Then both Raj's and Sapna's lives are turned upside down when the police find Ajay's dead body, and assign Inspector Rashid and Constable Hassan from Bushera Police Station to investigate his death. Watch as events unfold with this investigation, with the climax centering on the killer and the breakdown of the marriage of the Mittals. Things are finally set right when Raj decides against divorcing Sapna and they start their life afresh with no grudges and lots of love.

*Hawas* earned the label of semi-porn even before it was released. Don't be taken in by that. There's nothing pornographic about *Hawas*, although it does show a lot of skin. But skin does not equal sex. If that were the case, sumo wrestlers would be the hottest beings on earth.

The problem with this salacious stab at the theme of adultery is so deep-rooted that you don't know whether it is good to frame

the housewife as a wanton lust seeker and victim. *Hawas* copies not just the basic idea of the movie *Unfaithful* but also individual sequences, including that notorious chunk of cheesy voyeurism where the adulterous wife, while in a cafe with her friends, takes a break from coffee for a bit of raunchy sex with her toy-boy in the loo. Once the lover is eliminated by the husband - exactly like Richard Gere in *Unfaithful* but this lady adorns herself in a black sari to do a full-blown martyr's act; acting chaste as if she never relished the forbidden fruits of her extra marital affair.

On the other hand Bhattacharya's script exposes the rickety nature of middle-class morality, susceptible to calls of the consumerist economy while also pointing to the existence of forces within the same individuals that may still redeem it. Mansi is the typical middle-class housewife, constantly having to juggle chores and make difficult choices, with an eye firmly fixed on things out of her reach. Amar, her husband, is the philosophic lecturer, who serves to temper Mansi's desires with reason. But she finds it difficult to counter the facile reasoning of Reena, who believes that dreams are to be attained, and that the ends justify the means. She takes Mansi on a trip of debauchery, luring her with big money. Guilt inevitably follows in Mansi, but the easy money is a touch difficult to resist. This continues till confession comes along right at the end. How does Amar take it? It isn't much of a surprise if the way that his character unfolds is any indication. There are numerous discussions on morals and morality between Amar and his students, with points of reference drawn from rural

India as well as from the West - their films, their scandals et al. These could have easily turned out to be childish, but Bhattacharya does a tremendous job of investing Amar with exceptional reasoning capacity that simply doesn't reinforce the black-and-white distinctions that already exist.

Needless to say, Rekha and Om Puri unlike Sapna R. Mittal and Sharwar are completely at ease with their roles, bringing all their restraint and experience to the portrayals. It is a film which has been in the news for its sensitive handling of an adult theme. Basu Bhattacharya has directed the film with an off-beat script very well. Not a very convincing subject for the masses. Om Puri and Rekha is a normal, middle-class couple and have mutual faith in each other. All is placid till Rekha bumps into a procuress at a social gathering. The procuress diverts the simpleton's mind and draws her into a hip prostitution ring. On one hand Rekha enjoys the fact that she is able to lure the men into her charms and make a fast buck. On the other, she feels guilty of cheating her husband. But after learning his wife's indiscretions, the husband discusses it with his wife and both of them decide to start life afresh.

Mansi and Amar have been married for years, and have a daughter by this marriage. Amar is employed full-time, while Mansi looks after the household chores and their daughter. Amar earns a steady income, which enables the family to live comfortably, but they cannot afford to be extravagant at all. One day while buying shoes for her daughter, Mansi realizes that shoes are really expensive, and wants to

leave the store without purchasing them. Another woman customer named Reena offers to pay for the shoes, as she feels sorry for Mansi. Mansi reluctantly accepts Reena's offer to pay for the shoes, not realizing that Reena has paid for these shoes with a secret agenda that will take Mansi to a whole new world, and change her life forever.

*Aastha*: In the Prison of Spring is a 1997 Bollywood film, produced and directed by Basu Bhattacharya. The film stars Rekha, Om Puri, Navin Nischol and Daisy Irani in the main roles. The film went on to receive both critical as well as commercial success, especially as the latter had eluded Basu in his last few films. Subsequently, tasting its success Basu was even planning to remake the film in English, though he died in June 1997, at the age 62. Its success was described as blurring to the gap between Indian art and commercial cinema, where art film makers dealing with serious issues, used a musical format to make the film more commercially appealing, reaching a wider audience. Rekha received a nomination of 1997 Star Screen Award for Best Actress.

In the movie, Rekha had a controversial role of a married woman who turns into a prostitute, which was severely criticized by the audience. About her role in the movie, Rekha said, "After 'Aastha: In the Prison of Spring' people had a lot to say about my role of a wife who moonlights as a prostitute. I don't have problems playing anything. I've reached a stage where I could do justice to any role that came my way. It



could be role of a mother, a sister-in-law; negative, positive, sensational or anything.”

The film was seen as follow up of the noted trilogy Basu Bhattacharya made around marital discord in the 1970s, with *Anubhav* (1971), *Avishkaar* (1973) and *Griha Pravesh* (1979). *Aastha* turned out to be Basu’s last movie, and is set again in the institution of marriage, although here Basu illustrates his response to the growing materialism in the 1990s and explores its impact on modern, urban marriage, as well as moral values. A bored and restless housewife, who has a young school-going daughter, awakens to her sexuality post mid-life, and in the process falls into the trap of prostitution. She wants material comforts (consumerism) and finds her professor husband’s (Om Puri) income inadequate for it. She agrees to have a liaison with another man (Navin Nischol), in exchange for gifts and money, in the absence of her husband, who is shown as being highly principled. Though later, she is unable to reconcile with the new reality, as guilt and remorse regarding her choices, soon overshadow the joys of her few found comforts and sexual escapades. The movie is remarkable for its explicit love scenes. It remains one of few films in Bollywood, which explore a woman’s sexuality outside marriage.

Women have their own feelings and desires. If the society is bold and incorporating enough to allow men to gratify their sexual urges than why does it designs different set of rules for women. Why has

morality been an ornament fit enough for women? Why not men? But provided the threshold of sanctity is not crossed.

Wife in Neethisaram (also referred to as Neeti Saara or Niti Sastra) has been defined as, “Karyeshu Dasi, Karaneshu Manthri; Bhojeshu Mata, Shayaneshu Rambha, Roopeshu lakshmi, Kshamayeshu Dharitri, Shat dharmayukta, Kuladharm Pathni.” Wifely virtues are also described in Tulasi Ramayana (Sri Ramacharitamanasa) Aranya Kanda verse 4 as advice given to Sita by Sage Atri’s wife Ansuya. As per the verse, ‘Devotion of body, speech and mind to her lord’s (husband’s) feet is the only duty, sacred vow and penance of a woman.’

But as women we don’t agree with such lecherous behavior; it doesn’t set well with the *maryada, sharam, lihaaz* i.e. the basic moral fabric every woman is designed and brought up with. Just for sexual gratification for which animals are deemed fit, how can a woman steep so low; isn’t there any difference between road side bitch on the heat and a married woman? Is the fire of sexual urge or luxury so important that a woman can go to the extent of tarnishing her marital life; the holy vows of matrimony? There is a wide gap that must be understood between feminine sensibility and the moral fabric. What we support is women empowerment and emancipation not lustful, over ambitious, luxury seeking, lecherous, animal sexual instinct for which these women Sapna R. Mittal and Mansi went ahead breaking way all the walls of moral norms of society.

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