CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Variation in the themes in the Indian English Novels:

The Indian novel in English in the post-independence period moved from its early slavish posture to the contemporary themes and styles. The novel became modern both in its form and content. The novelists with modern consciousness of individualism, reason and scientific temper tried to liberate the Indian novel from the clutches of traditional assumptions and views. With the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* in 1981, there was a paradigm shift. The Indian novel in English became increasingly post-modern in form and content. The most spectacular change took place in the worldview and techniques of Indian women novelists.

5.2 Contribution of Indian Women Novelists:

Modern Indian women novelists like Kamala Markandaya ushered in many unconventional ideas through their novels but the ideas were expressed in still very restrained and palatable manner. But the women novelists like Shobha De have completely transformed the genre of novel and have introduced several postmodern techniques and themes in fearless and uncompromising way. The present study is a moderate attempt to explore the ways in which De’s selected novels reflect the postmodern features. This chapter offers major observations about the postmodern features that characterize the selected novels.
It has been observed that after the Second World War the Indian women novelists flourished in the real sense. There were many women writers that came up with a new approach to women’s problem and predicament in Indian fiction writing in English. The interests of these women novelists “moved from public to the private sphere”. (Pathak, R.S. 1999: 11) During this period novelists like Nayantara Sehgal, Kamla Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabala, Anita Desai, and many others contributed to the development of Indian fiction in English. Shobha De, born in Maharashtra in 1948, emerged on the literary scene in 1988 with her best seller *Socialite Evenings* followed by *Starry Nights*, *Sisters, Strange Obsession*, *Second Thoughts*, *Sultry Days*, and *Snapshots*. With these outstanding works of fiction De is claimed to be “among the first to explore the world of the urban woman in India”. (Surendran, C.P.:1992)

5.3 De’s Concern for Indian Women:

The present research study attempts to show that Shobha De through her novels always tried to present the issues related to the modern woman. Most of the novels written by De became the best-sellers. The reason for this could be that she always tried to present the urban part of India in her works. De has written racy thrillers which are set in urban India. The research also shows that though De has a competition with other contemporary writers she could keep her own identity through the use of old language and bold themes. Her novels are found cramped with love and sex episodes. De has always been controversial whether she is model, columnist or novelist. Due to such image some reviewers are contemptuous of her work. She regularly flays men for being sexiest and chauvinist. She initially gained the recognition as a rebel. Her writings currently sound matronly and even somewhat prudish. She often criticizes with dissatisfaction the
behaviour and morals of the current generation. She is often held responsible for speeding up of the pace and promotion of the sexual revolution in India with her sensuous novels and Western outlook.

5.4 Image of Modern Indian Woman in De’s Novels:

Right from her first novel to the latest one and even through her writings as columnist, De is found to be the part of westernization and modernization. Her novels show that many of the female characters are from the modern part of India and having a greater impact of western culture. De’s work also shows the traditional woman subscribe to the traditional norms. Though traditional woman is representative of goddess, but the modern woman, as presented by De and also other post modern Indian novelists is more conscious about her human rights. The modern women do not simply want to be the better-halves of their male counterparts; rather they are conscious of their own individual identity and recognition in society. Shobha De's women like Karuna and Anjali in Socialite Evenings, Aasha Rani in Starry Nights, Mikki and Alisha in Sisters, Amrita and Meenakshi in Strange Obsession, Aparna, Swati, Reema, Surekha, Rashmi and Noor in Snapshots and Maya in Second Thoughts are certainly the representatives of new women in both modern and Western perspectives.

5.5 De’s Concept of New Woman:

Shobha De takes much interest in the presentation of various aspects of womanhood in different perspectives. She seems to be reactionary in the presentation of her concept of new woman. Her presentation has a sense of contradiction and she seems to bestow everything on women which may be the part of men. She is of the view that if a man can
marry thrice why not a woman. If man has so many beloveds, a woman must not be restricted to only one. If a man flirts with many women, a woman must be allowed to do the same thing. It is this sense of reaction which figures too much in her novels.

Shobha De is very critical of the role of new women in modern society. She is of the view that independence should not come for the sake of loss of moral values, cultural outlook and ethical sense of human life. She ironically exposes those women who would like to get freedom in their private lives by surrendering themselves morally and intentionally. L. Sonia Ningthoujam remarks on such women's extra-marital relationship in these words:

> The wild adventures of these modern society women clearly reflect the tendency in the new women exposed to affluence and extra-marital relationships and their impact on their family life and children. It is a clear warning to both the wife and the husband to bear in mind the possible influence of their wild aspirations on their children and the society.

(Ningthoujam: 2006: 27)

The above mentioned criticism is quite appropriate in the cases of man-woman relationships depicted in *Socialite Evenings* apart from husband-wife relationship. For instance, Karuna and Anjali are not happy after being divorced from their respective husbands. A relationship between a man and a woman is a relationship between two emotions, two souls, two hearts and two bodies. It is not merely sex and passion that matter in relationship.
5.6 Conflict between Tradition and Modernity:

It has been also pointed out that De has intentionally presented the conflict between tradition and modernity in most of her novels. *Starry Nights* is the best example of it. In this novel, De has shown the behaviour of mother in the character of Amma who is the mother of Aasha Rani. In India, mother is a symbol of sacrifice and she does everything for the moral uplift, cultural development and welfare of her children. The role of mother in the shaping of child is extremely important for many reasons. There is a great tradition of motherhood in India. In *Starry Nights*, De has shown how the mother role’s is exactly opposite to the traditional and cultural demands of the time. In the form of Amma, De has also criticized the other face of woman who is such an immoral woman that even she does not hesitate to use her daughter’s personality for earning money. On the top of that she very boldly talks about the virginity of her daughter for earning good money as well as name and fame. De has also used her own experience from the field of media and shows how immoral activities take place in film industry. Amma, Asha Rani’s mother introduces her own daughter to several producers, directors and other rich people of the society for their sexual gratification. In her, we can see a modern woman who for the sake of money changes herself with the changing time. Amma is not able to save the character of her own daughter because for her, there is no scope of moral values in human life. For her, morality is the aspect of the past and money is the matter of the present. De in the same novel portrays a daughter against her mother who too, like her mother succeeds in climbing the ladders of success by using her body as a tool. She becomes successful in film industry not on the basis of her talent but the charm of her body. Every now and then she wears discotheque dresses and tries to get the attention of
producers, actors and directors. Only through her mother, she gets the lesson about how to attract men and also learns that a beautiful woman is the real weakness of a man.

The reading of De’s novels also reveals that apart from portraying the outward personality of her female characters, she also depicts the socio-psychological conflict of intellectual liberation. *Sisters* is considered as a touchy and sensitive novel by Shobha De. It is known for its “Pacy narrative quality” and its “ostensibly intimate view of glitzy side” (Ramchandran, 26) of Bombay life. The conflict chains even the most educated and independent women from giving up people and relationships which they are bound to. It is the story of a woman’s struggle for self-identity in the male dominated society. The present study analyses how *Sister*, attempts to present the anguish of the woman in the patriarchal set up. The deep reading of the novel shows that almost every male treats a woman as an object and is also subjected to animalism.

The research also puts forward that De, through her writings always attempts to raise a voice against the ill-treatment of woman in the society. In *Sisters*, De shows her anger against the patriarchal setup of society in which masculinity is considered as a power to misuse and abuse the feminine. It is a wonderful combination of modernity and conventionality. It shows that no amount of sophistication and self-grooming results in demanding or even expecting a fair play for the woman in the society. The writings of De raise lot many questions about the utility of education for women to secure a superior or respectful position for woman, about the love and commitment that women can get in return their love, and the financial and economic independence guarantee individuality and identity to women.
5.7 Reader Response:

The novel ends on the age old tradition of leaving her readers on a happy and positive note with an extended epilogue, which marks the positive and poetic ending of *Sisters*. The readers feel optimistic at the end of the novel as they are hopeful that there will be a color and music in the life of Mikki and Alisha. They look on these sisters as representatives of women in general. The variable experiences of Mikki and Alisha, the trials in their life and their final decision to live life on their terms turn them into ideals. While in the hospital Mikki is diagnosed to be suffering from T. B. Alisha, a drug addict. Both decide to take on a journey to London. Their journey from one place to another is showcased as a move from the past to the future; it is a kind of salvation from the evils of corrupt business world into a new world. It is for a complete change and a new beginning. In the lounge, Mikki and Alisha, now symbols of life and brightness are going to London by the same flight. They have buried the bygones and what has to come is more than welcomed as they have a fresh realization of their inner strength and combined caliber.

5.8 Blending of Tradition and Modernity:

The findings of the present research show that the works of De have almost all the elements of postmodern novel. Rather she very beautifully blends the elements of tradition and modernity into a unique representation of the ideology of the modern world. Postmodernists speak out against the constraints of religious morals and material longings. The narrative of the novel symbolically draws the picture of a typical modern society in which there' is no place for morality. People consider it outdated to cling to old values just for the sake of modernity. For the postmodernist writers, morality is a
personal code of conduct. Believing strongly that ethics is a relatively outdated principle of living and postmodernist’s subject morality to personal opinion. They define morality as each person’s private code of ethics without the need to follow traditional values and rules. Mostly these characters are embodiment of rebellious nature and showcase round characters as they exhibit growth throughout the novel.

5.9 Degradation of Morality among the Female Characters:

The detailed analysis of De’s novels reveals that her women characters move in circular form. When the novel opens, the women characters are shown as independent and conscious about their success in life but gradually these characters degrade themselves morally as well as physically in search of success and eventually experience nothing but failure and abuse. The reason for their failure is mostly their relationships with many men. Finally these characters grow tremendously when they break the constraints and walk out into life with new vigor.

Following the tag theme, De’s novel Second Thoughts too carries forward her legacy of presenting dreamy woman, fiery decisions and redefining phenomena of living. The central character of the novel, Maya, finds herself in a tangled marital agony as her only flaw being over ambitiousness. The present research work attempts to present the dilemma in the Indian society during the postmodern period as far as marriage system is concerned. Second Thoughts, at one point seem to be the rigid commentary on hollowness of Indian Marriages, but soon explicate the mature debate on the role and duties of the spouses.
It’s a juxtaposition of the age old male ego and the changing emotions and expectations of modern woman amidst the overbearing interference of the people around, the over-protective mother-in-law, the social pretense and public facades in Second Thoughts.

Strange Obsession, as its title suggests, is a typical novel in which the male-domination has been challenged by providing many alternatives to the man-woman relationships. Since, it is the era of strong individuality and identity women are no more in position to endure the rough and cruel behavior of men especially in the establishment of sexual relationships.

De always attempted the themes out of box and the issues related to the contemporary life. Due to her bold themes, she was often criticized by the Indian society. The traditional Indian society does not believe in homosexuality or lesbian relationship. Such kind of relationship is considered as a crime in the religious Indian society.

Women now ponder on the desire for more freedom, more autonomy and more directness in their lives. In the West, we come across many occurrences of lesbianism, but in India it is obscure. But currently the number of lesbian relationship is increasing in numerous ways. Modern women do not hinge on men for their sexual accomplishment. They find more comfort, more pleasure and more fascination in establishing relationship with other women. There is a demand for the constitutional endorsement of such relationship though such cases are very few in number.
5.10 Fusion of Human Relationship:

Shobha De's popular and praised novel *Snapshots* is a beautiful representation of human relationships. The highlight of the novel is the six characters namely Aparna, Rashmi, Reema, Noor, Swati and Surekha and their different and varied experiences of life. All six woman are in their mature ages not very young not too old, and have been involved in a variety of relationships. Each one’s life is colored differently and the multi-shades give the background to the *Snapshot* of the novel. Apart from the common images and happenings of the relationship between husband and wife, Shobha De, also adds the extra spices to these character’s rendezvous with extra-marital relationships which has emerged as a key feature of modern society. In this novel, six women get together to share intimate experiences. It is in the form of a personal narration of their lives. When the six women meet they leave behind everything. Time, relations, fears and apprehensions, doubts and expectations and all barriers dissolve into the mold of friendship. It’s like sharing one’s reflection with the image of the other. As they speak out their hearts, there remain no secrets. It turns out as if it is an open heart to heart talk, where one wants to confess the acts and guilt. Each one unfurls her experience and experiment as a flower which exposes its shades by unfurling each petal. We come across a wide and wild talk of sex, love, romance, sensuality, sensationalism and confessions.

As we have seen and read about the critic’s opinion about the novelist, Shobha De. It is very lucidly clear that she abhors the orthodox preeminence apportioned to the male folks. The husband typically believes that his wife knows nothing of the world; he assigns her the role of an ignorant and expects her to depend in total entity on him for looking at the world. She will see what he saw and if he saw nothing, she was expected to
see nothing. But this type of stereotypical mentality is now being challenged. The new woman has her own vision of life and things. Today, a woman is not only in total control of her life but is also exerting reversal of roles. She wants to be the holder of the light now. She is ready to direct the man and if she shows nothing a man is supposed to see nothing.

5.11 De as a Spokesperson of the Problems of Indian Woman:

The present research work shows that even though De has presented the problem of Indian women in her novels, she never actually provides concrete solutions to such problems. Her heroines always struggle to follow the proper path and find themselves fraught with frustration, mental break-down and disasters. The image of modern Indian woman and problems related to her are mostly found in her works. The modern woman from the urban Indian society has been presented as a bold woman. De not only presents the problems and struggle of Indian women but also through some women characters shows that the Indian culture and tradition have been violated by them by getting themselves involved in extra-marital affairs. It has been also pointed out that De in her novels shows that in the cosmopolitan Indian culture there is a new emerging morality in which there is a greater scope for wealth and power. Through her novels, she has revealed the culture of metropolitan cities of India during the postmodern era. She attempted to present the man-woman relationship in a very sensitive way. While revealing such relationships she adopts the modern techniques. De presents not only the social and political problems as far as Indian women are concerned but also the psychological problems by probing into the inner parts of her women characters. For this purpose, she has used psychoanalytical technique for revealing the inner happenings of
her characters. Many of the critics did not approve her way of writing and her novels were not considered up to the mark. But the readers do appreciate her writings and rank Shobha De among the outstanding novelists of the time.

5.12 Plight of Woman in Modern Social Setup:

Shobha De’s novels also reveal that in the name of love and commitment, most of the time woman faces loss and deceit. She undergoes a long and unending period of abuse and violence. The physical pain can be seen and measured and healed but the emotional pain which is hidden behind silent cries is never seen or measured. Physical pain is eased with remedies but emotional pain can be fought only with self-determination. *Sultry Days* is an example of this fight for freedom and liberation. *Sultry Days* symbolizes the voice of the modern woman. The voice has been rendered the strength to vocalize the hidden, suppressed and safely vaulted emotions of womanhood. It is a cry for freedom from the invisible clutches of the patriarchal society which holds the woman completely.

5.13 Exposure to Elite Life:

Shobha De has penned almost fourteen novels till date and has been applauded by a section for her boldness in choosing the themes for her novels. She is praised by a few for her convincing openness and a few find her to be repetitive and conniving as they are of the opinion that she mints the upper socialite society and most of the time her characters are exaggeration of her imagination. Every novel of Shobha De, be it the *Socialite Evening*, or *Sisters, or even the less popular Starry Nights*, is viewed as a pornographic rendition of social life. Exception to it, *Sultry Days* comes out to be more than a narration of the elite social class and lifestyle. It is an exception in the sense that it is an attempt to
expose the elites and not about trapping men for sex and life. In this novel De silences her critics with the sensational narrative of the main-stream new woman; Nisha, a new woman, is the narrator, in the novel. Portrayed as a round character, Nisha presents the modern style of neo-rich people. A noted critic Indira Bhatt in her Comparative Study of Shobha De's Sultry Days and Gita Mehata's A River Sutra concluded that both the themes run on the theme of post-modernism but A River Sutra unwraps orientalism whereas Shobha De explores neo-modern lifestyle and living.

5.14 Struggle for the Identity as a Self-sufficient:

The postmodern urban woman is independent in choosing her life partner and career options. Nisha goes against all expected norms and takes up a job with a mediocre ad agency after completing her graduation with English honors. She trespasses the limits imposed by her family. At the agency, Shobha De introduces new characters; this is Kawla, who resembles a crow. Kawla again is a manifestation of an understated character, he is hated by everybody. People approve that he is talented but never expresses it in open. They try to belittle Kawla. But Nisha turns an exception. Even though they have no common language, they struggle on – Nisha in broken Marathi and Kawla in fractured English. Kawla is a sensible man he senses the fishy nature of Deb, and disapproves him, who often bursts in on them and laughs openly at their exchanges. Another character which is active is the receptionist Anu who always scrutinizes the phone calls and letters of Nisha which causes discontentment between them. As Nisha shares everything and talks about everyone with Deb she also mentions about Anu’s unusual behavior and their discord. Nisha is taken aback by Deb’s comment on Anu’s scrupulous behavior, ‘Anu is a frustrated woman and she needs a screw’. For a moment
she disregards Deb’s irrational comment, but obsessed with Deb she simply takes it as a comment and ignores it.

5.15 Focus on Relationship:

In the presentation of human relationships in her novels, Shobha De has made an attempt to study the human behaviour in the context of fast-growing and fast-changing Indian society. In India, human relationships such as husband-wife relationships, lover-beloved relationships, mother-son relationships, mother-daughter relationships, man to man relationships and woman to woman relationships are seen and observed in pious perspectives. There are more roles of devotion, love, affection, mutual understanding, and respect for each other and less role of materialism in the formation of these relationships. But, Shobha De has portrayed in different perspectives by showing that the basics and values of morality and social norms are changing everyday and everywhere. Her characters like Karuna, Meenakshi, Amrita, Mikki, Alisha, Maya, Swati, Aparna, Reema, Rashmi, Surekha, Noor, Nisha, Ritu, etc., on the one hand and on the other hand Prern, Ravi, Navin, Ranbir, Balbir, Nawaz, Yashwantbhai, Ranjan, Nikhil, Binny, etc., are not able to achieve the sublime heights of human relationships. They fail in the real freedom of their lives because they have no faith in the piousness of their relationships. Further, Shobha De has discussed many burning issues—the role of new women, the existence of new women, freedom of women and above all, women in our ‘new’ society by portraying different kinds of human relationship.
5.16 True Picture of Male Domination:

De by exploiting the theme of ill-treatment of women discards all the conventional themes. The study also shows that in order to show the true picture of male dominated Indian society De, deviates herself from the traditional thematic pattern in which a woman is shown as just inferior to man and made for the kids and kitchen. In De’s works, we find the bold and revolting picture of a woman of the postmodern era. The study also points out that she wrote not just for the sake of entertainment but reflecting the contemporary problem of Indian society. The women from her works are not the traditional one who just sit and wait for their husbands to return from the work, rather her women characters can work abreast with the male counters and are ready to shuffle the chains of conventional traditions. Her portrayal of women is neither traditional nor moral and it is totally free from any kind of cultural, moral and ethical loads. She is not interested in writing about the 'marginalized' women. Shobha De portrays women full of vigour and vitality and a unique source of attention and attraction. Unlike her contemporaries Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai who show women as sufferers at the hands of men. Modern woman is not ready to accept anything silently and blindly. She wants to project her beauty, maintain her dignity and above all retain her individuality. K. Mirabai rightly supports the portrayal of modern writers:

Women who conform to the existing moral ethics and code and social norms, especially with regard to their relationship with men and reactions to familial frictions are certainly traditionalist. Those who defy traditions and opt for modernity are non-conformists. Conformity to a pattern does not mean dumb acceptance of all that is thrust on them. It takes for granted
a certain degree of willingness and whole-hearted acceptance. Conformists hold on to the set of traditional values; sometimes, even at the cost of individual happiness. A tradition-abiding woman even sacrifices her happiness for the well being of the family, but at the same time retains her individuality. (K, Mirabai: 1991: 11)

5.17 Feminism of Shobha De:

The research work also presents the point of view that apart from being a revolutionary novelist, De also believes in the fact that men and women should be treated equally by the society and there should not be double standards in the treatment of women. She always criticizes the age old and traditional values which defy the role of women in the orthodox Indian society. She hates to put the words like scarifies, fidelity, chastity and virginity labeled to women. On the contrary she always portrays women characters that are ready to maintain their dignity as well as retain individuality by going beyond the traditional living. L. Sonia Ningthoujam appreciates the views of Shobha De in these words:

The modern woman does not find any sense in being acquiescent. She is not ready to suffer and sacrifice as the traditional Indian woman does. She wants to project her image as an individual, free from all kinds of conservative thinking which she seeks to overthrow. She is ready to fight her way against all odds coming in her way in fulfilling her aspirations. She rebels against the existing moral codes and social norms which either in theory or in practice tends to relegate the woman to a secondary place in society. Her rebellious
craving for individuality and happiness cannot but result in the break up of family and relationships within the family. (Ningthoujam: 2006: 12)

Shobha De's women in her novels are the women of strong individuality, strong likes and dislikes in the true modern sense. Certainly Karuna in Socialite Evenings, Aasha Rani, Sudha Rani and their mother Amma in Starry Nights, Mikki and Alisha in Sisters, Meenakshi and Amrita in Strange Obsession, Nisha and Pramila in Sultry Days, Swati, Aparna, Rashmi, Reema, Surekha in Snapshots and Maya in Second Thoughts are the modern women and for them there is no meaning of sacrifice, motherhood and sublime nature of womanhood. They want to buy comforts, happiness and emotional fulfillment at the cost of moral and cultural deterioration. But they cannot be blamed for 'this deviation.' Men like Abe Tyabji, Kumar, Jamie Phillips, Ravi, Binny Malhotra, Mr. Iyengar, Prem, Randhir Roy, Deb, Kishenbhai, Ranjan, Nikhil are also not the prototypes of 'Ram' and they lack any kind of ideal virtue associated with traditional cultural and moral values. They consider women as tools providing physical pleasure. If women feel the same, there is no harm in it as Shobha De believes.

Shobha De believes in the fact that nobody likes to look backward and think about such things which would harm the free development of human personality in the age of modernity. Traditional and cultural values have become the matter of individual beliefs and individual thinking. It has been observed that a particular set of values is appreciable in aristocratic society but at the same time it is beyond the thinking of lower-middle or middle-classes. People set and follow different social, moral and cultural values at different places in different times. In their case, they are not the victims of such things; rather they alter and mould these things according to their comfort, status and situation.
Shobha De, being a shrewd observer of social, moral and cultural changes which are occurring rapidly in our society, has not given much importance to the traditional and cultural aspects of the human life. She believes that everything is in the state of transformation and it is impossible for people living in modernity to stick to set doctrines and dogmas. For instance, her portrayal of mothers lacks the motherhood and her portrayal of wives does not have moral virtues associated with wifehood. Aroma in *Starry Nights* does not hesitate to serve her daughter Aasha Rani to different directors, producers, actors, financers, etc., in order to earn money, name and fame. It is beyond the beliefs of the traditional and cultural society. The wives like Karuna, Aasha Rani, Amrita, Nisha, Mikki, Alisha, Aparna, Rashmi, Reema, Surekha, Maya, etc., do not hesitate to enjoy in the arms of different people from time to time. They do not care cultural, traditional and moral virtues associated with the wifely devotion. Thus, in Shobha De's portrayal of woman, we find an inevitable conflict between tradition and modernity and her characters’ disrespect for traditional and cultural framework of society is quite apparent. Her women have a sense of little importance towards men in their lives. In this context, these words of L. Sonia Ningthoujam are apt:

> Women of this new hyper-modern group care little for men. They consider men only a means to get to their desired ends. Unlike the traditional women who worship their men as their lords and masters, these new women drink, attend late night parties like men and refuse to remain at their mercy; rather they are out to teach men a lesson. The new woman is all set to turn the table upside down, and all notions of respectability and morality are sent crashing down the drain. (Ibid: 21)
**5.18 De’s Realistic Approach:**

In the presentation of the conflict between tradition and modernity in the novels of Shobha De, anyone cannot find a sense of hyperbole. She seems to be realistic in her approach because whatever she has presented, all things are happening in our society from time to time. Since Indian society is becoming more and more urban oriented and we find that there are so many Karunas, Aasha Ranis, Meenakshis, Nishas and Mayas. Critics often discard Shobha De because of her filmy approach but it is not the reality. She is the real spokesperson of cosmopolitan woman who is not inferior to her male counterpart in terms of anything. Shobha De is of the view that such traditional and cultural values must be modified and there should be equality and liberty in the lives of women as we find in the lives of men.

**5.19 Difference in Narration of Shobha De and Other Novelists:**

There is a great tradition of Indian novelists who are wonderful in the presentation of various kinds of human relationships in their novels. R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao are perhaps the classics in terms of presenting human relationships in their novels. Among them, R.K. Narayan is supreme. In his novels, we find the portrayal of mother-son, father-son, husband-wife, man to man and above all lover-beloved relationship in detail manner. In fact, R.K. Narayan's presentation of human relationship is always characterized by his traditional and cultural approach. He is of the view that human relationships in India can last only if there is a sense of devotion, mutual understanding, respect for each other and sacrifice for each other. His presentation of relations is normal when the characters show respect for traditional and cultural values.
Their lives become abnormal when they violate the tradition, cultural and moral aspects of life. His presentation of relationship between Swami and his friends in *Swami and Friends*; Chandran and his father in the *Bachelor of Arts*; Balu and Marggaya in *The Financial Expert*; Tim and Nagraj in *The World of Nag raj; Jag an* and his son in *The Vendor of Sweets*; Ramani and Savitri in *The Dark Room*; Krishna and Sushila in *The English Teacher*; Marco and Rosie in *The Guide*; Ramani and Shantabai in *The Dark Room*; Shanti and Sampat in *Mr. Sampat*; Sriram and Bharati in *Waiting for the Mahatma*; Raman and Daisy in *The Painter of Signs* and Raju and Rosie in *The Guide* are wonderful portrayal of human relationships belonging to different categories. In the portrayal of all these relationships R.K. Narayan displays his strong sense of traditional, cultural and moral approval. On the other hand, Shobha De's presentation of human relationship is quite different from the earlier writers. She presents the great role of materialism, lust and sex in the formation of man-woman relationship. She is very critical of existing traditional and moral values and thinks that these social, cultural and moral values are made to benefit man and minimize the importance of woman. Her feminist stance is clear in her presentation of various shades of man-woman relationships.

**5.20 Uncertainty in Husband-Wife Relationship:**

In Shobha De's novels, there is the presentation of husband-wife relationship or lover-beloved relationship in abundance. The husband-wife relationship has been presented in the relationship between Karuna and her husband in *Socialite Evenings*, Aasha Rani and Jamie Phillips in *Starry Nights*, Mkki and Binny Malhotra in *Sisters*, Nisha and Deb in *Sultry Days*, Amrita and her husband in *Strange Obsession*, Aparna and Prem, Reema and Ravi, Swati and Balbir in *Snapshots*, and Maya and Ranjan in *Second Thoughts*. In
above mentioned relationships the lack of mutual understanding is noticed, respect for each other, devotion to each other, sacrifice for each other and there is no sense of sublime nature of husband-wife relationship. Their models are not Sita and Ram or Savitri and Satyavan. They believe in enjoying with other male and female partners and they go beyond the morality in establishing physical relationship with others apart from their husbands and wives. In such condition of suspicion their relationship is bound to fail. After sometime, they get divorce from each other. For them, their pump and show, their individuality, their freedom and liberty are more important than moral, social and cultural values. But what is seen that their lives are full of pain and suffering, depression and dejection because there is no peace and harmony in their relationships. Such husband-wife relationship does not last which lacks the sense of cultural and moral framework.

5.21 Immorality in Relationship:

Essentially in her two novels *Starry Nights* and *Strange Obsession*, Shobha De has presented the relationship between man and woman or woman and woman in entirely new manner. In *Starry Nights* the relationship between Amma and Aasha Rani who are the mother and the daughter is extremely painful and contrary to the expectations. Amma forces her own daughter in the world of sex, lust and infidelity. It is a strange kind of relationship between mother and daughter in which mother lacks the sublime nature of compassion and sympathy associated with motherhood. In *Strange Obsession*, the relationship between Meenakshi and his father Mr. Iyenger is quite strange. Meenakshi, the daughter of Mr. Iyengar wants to fulfill the sexual needs of her own father and wants to become the substitute of her mother. It is a strange kind of relationship in which both
father and daughter cross the limits of piousness of father-daughter relationship. Meenakshi’s father Mr. Iyengar, in spite of providing paternal roof to her daughter, uses her body for his sexual compulsion. It is beyond the common ethical thinking. But such things are visible somewhere in sometime. Shobha De writes about the reality of the fast-changing scenario of Indian social life in which humanity and morality have become the things of past and are substituted by money, sex and lust which are the symbols of cultural deterioration and moral degradation.

5.22 Changing Marriage Institution in Modern India:

The presentation of the institution of marriage has been kept with high sanctity and position. As compared to other cultures, the marriage system in Indian culture is worshiped very highly and so the relationship between husband and wife. It is not considered as the means of fulfillment of sexual desires and as a biological need. Rather it is considered as union of souls, and of two families. Marriage is indispensable for the wellbeing of human society. In India, marriage is regarded as major part of the sacraments which is a lasting commitment of wife and husband. It is a union not of one birth, but a union of eternity and will last forever. It is a door which opens up all the pleasures of earthly life, evolution, success and foster future generation. It is one such relationship which influences all the other relationships in the society. The institution of marriage is of unparalleled importance. The wedlock through its lock holds two personalities as well as souls together. In the Indian male dominated society though woman is considered as having secondary position still she enjoys it and remains loyal to her husband. But De through her works breaks all the chains of morality and culture. Her women characters dare to go beyond the bonds of culture and do not hesitate to have
extra-marital relationships with many men. Few of her heroines scarify the sanctity of her body for the sake of earning money. Very rarely a woman is treated equal to a man. From centuries she has been considered inferior to man. But Shobha De through her works tries to show that with the changing time and changing perspectives woman has changed her attitude towards life as well as marriage system and society. Shobha De’s novels expose the moral and spiritual breakdown of modern society’s marriage system and marital relations.

5.23 **Scope for the Further Exploration:**

The output of the present study will add valuable information to the present knowledge available about Shobha De’s novels by giving scope to the further research. Though a lot of research has been carried out on the works of De, the present study is carried out with reference to the characteristics of postmodern writings. The major emphasis is also given on her treatment to the handling of the issues related to the Indian women. The most outstanding feature that has been found while carrying this research work is that even though critics criticized her for her bold themes and language. Her novels have been considered as the best sellers. In each of her novels, she has tried to do something different that has not been attempted by her in the earlier works. The present research shows that through her outstanding treatment of language and themes, she could create her own place in the field of Indian English fiction.
WORK CITED:


__________. Interview to News Line Magazine.


