Shobha De is one of those Indian English writers who occupy a distinctive place as a journalist as well as novelist in the literary world of India. Her popularity as a novelist rests with her ability to portray sensitive aspects of human life, social and sexual relationship and women's psychology with a touch of open-heartedness. Shobha De has fascinated her readers not only in India but also abroad. On the account of her wide readership, she has been chosen as a writer deserving of detailed studies in academic institutions. Her novels have been selected as course materials for graduate studies in Oriental and African Institutes, London.

In most of her novels, De personifies the dilemma that has dogged many Indian women writers. She is always one of those modern day women authors who are now expressing themselves freely and boldly creating a new image of the woman. De endeavours to present the new woman who is daring, ambitious and aspiring and is obsessed with realizing her dreams and forcing them upon the male dominated world with a view to obtaining a due recognition of her identity. Her novels indicate the arrival of a new Indian woman who goes all out to exploit her potential, both physical and intellectual. She has also talked about sex, men and eroticism in no uncertain terms. It appears that Shobha De's woman exploits her physical potential more daringly and confronts her male counterpart in every field of activity where the latter had been enjoying unquestioned supremacy and domination through centuries.

The emphasis of the present work is on cultural feminist ideas which have incidentally escaped the eye of the researchers who talked about feminism no doubt but ignored the spirit behind Shobha De's feminist idea. The present work examines Shobha De's women characters in the light of cultural feminist theory as practised in India. The entire work has been classified into six chapters and each chapter enables me to assess and evaluate De's genius as well as failure as a novelist.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with a brief historical survey of the novels from the year 1970 to 2000 with special concern for the feminist stance of the novelists of this era. In the same chapter, I have dealt with the shaping influence, life and works of Shobha De. This throws light on the development of her literary sensibility and others opinions of her as a writer. The next chapter deals with cultural feminist theory of the west and theorists like Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Margaret Fuller and Alice Echols who lay stress on the emotional intuitive side of knowledge, non-violence, caring and cooperation and express an organic world view. The chapter also focuses on
the Indian Cultural Feminist view which has been in the conformity with Indian cultural tradition.

The third chapter deals with the elements of sexism and sexuality in the selected novels of Shobha De. This chapter is devoted to emphasizing the erotic/sexual element in De's novels and the presentation of creating a new kind of morality in pursuing the goal of becoming rich and famous.

The fourth chapter brings out a stark contrast between the tradition and modernity as shown by Shobha De in her novels. De's women whom she calls 'new woman' strives to get total freedom from man, if she finds any kind of hindrance or obstacles in achieving their desired goals in life, while carrying on this kind of struggle to achieve this goal, she recklessly overthrows traditionally established rules and societal norms.

The fifth chapter analyses how far this aspiring 'new woman' portrayed by Shobha De is in accordance with Indian culture under 'Culture Vs Aspirations'. Her 'new woman' is highly ambitious, frank and aspiring to create legitimate and respectable space for herself in the society. She even uses her body as an important means to promote her ends caring little about anything else. Sometimes she appears staggering and unbelievable when she shatters traditionally established intuitions such as marriage, interpersonal relationships and the sanctity of family etc.

The last and concluding chapter evaluates the cultural feminist stance in De's novels and analyses how she differs other literary writers desiring to arouse the consciousness of the modern women in society. In this chapter, I have tried to project a critical assessment of Shobha De's talent as a writer with both merits and shortcomings. It weighs pros and cons of Shobha De's writing capability and what impression she has been able to create on her readers.