Chapter-4

Six Suspects

Contemporary Urban Society and its Complexity

*Six Suspects* is a murder mystery that exposes the corrupt urban Indian society. It is presented by investigative journalist, Arun Advani. It is a thriller that takes us on *extraordinary journey into the heart of modern urban India*. This novel is a powerful example of crime fiction, and a tale of murder and corruption of contemporary urban India. The story captures from the very first page up to last page. Hirsh Sawhney says, “The Indian literary novel may be riding high, but there is such a shortage of crime fiction set in India’s capital that Vikas Swarup can be considered a pioneer after producing whopping book. *Six Suspects* attempts to expose the contract killing and fraud that bedevils Delhi.” (Web)

The plot revolves around Vicky Rai, who is a son of the crooked Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Vicky Rai is a rich notorious playboy and he breaks the law at every step. He was criminal from his childhood. He had taken the lives of many innocent people at minor things. When he was young, he had been charged in a black buck hunting case. In all these occasions, he had managed to get away with the help of money and his father’s political influence. He had murdered the innocent bar-girl, Rubby Gill, when she refused him to give the drink. Everyone knows that Vicky was the murderer but he got full acquittal. Vicky Rai was murdered when he was celebrating the acquittal party of Rubby Gill’s murder case at his own farmhouse. There are essentially six suspects that are detained by the police as they were found carrying guns. The writer gives elaborate descriptions about all the ‘six suspects’ and their motive to kill Vicky Rai. The six suspects are: an actress, Shabnam Saxena; a tribal from Andaman; an American, Larry page; a mobile thief Munna; Vicky’s won father, Jagannath Rai; and Mohan Kumar, a former chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh. The novelist divides this novel into chapters along with giving massive details about the life stories of all the six suspects. Through the biographies of all these ‘six suspects’ the writer presents the kaleidoscopic picture of urban India. He also highlights the rampant corruption of Indian politics, the chasm between rich and poor, the begging system in India, slums problem, class and casteism, and the rotten and sleazy images of Indian cities. Vikas Swarup presents all ugly aspects which are
prevalent in all corners of Indian society. He has also modeled many incidents in the novel on reality, as the Rubby Gill murder case is modeled on Jessica Lal Murder case. So he brings forth the real picture of contemporary urban India.

Not all deaths are equal. There's a caste system even in murder. The stabbing of an impoverished rickshaw-puller is nothing more than a statistic, buried in the inside pages of the newspaper. But the murder of a celebrity instantly becomes headline news. Because the rich and famous rarely get murdered. They lead five-star lives and unless they overdose on cocaine or meet with a freak accident, generally die a five star death at a nice grey age, having augmented both lineage and lucre.

(Six Suspects 13)

Arun Advani, the investigative journalist, who investigates the murder mystery of Vicky Rai, tells us about the complexity of contemporary urban Indian society. In the opening lines of this novel the writer focuses on the difference between rich and poor and informs us about the terrorism, which is richly prevalent in Indian metropolitan cities. Murders have become very normal thing in urban society but it is difficult task to find out the culprits because the murders are done very cleverly and in filmy style. The murders of poor people are common in urban India because people are habitual of listening to such news. But the murder of celebrity becomes headlines because the rich get murdered rarely. They lead royal life and die only with overdose of cocaine and other medicines of intoxication or meet with a freak accident; generally they die with a five-star death at a nice grey age. On the other hand, poor people die with hunger, or an accident when they are sleeping on the roadside and an unknown drunkard rich man crush them, and the next day, the case settled on the little amount of money. This is the bare reality of Indian progressive metropolitan cities.

The whole story of this novel revolves around the murder of Vivek Rai. He is thirty two years old, owner of the Rai Group of Industries, and the notorious son of very crooked and corrupt Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Jagannath Rai. Vicky Rai's parents pampering had vitiated him, he drinks wine regularly and does crime after drink. Murders had become normal routine thing for him. He had murdered so many innocent people on their minor mistakes. As Jacqueline B. Helfgott asserts, "Why do people commit crime? The History of criminal justice is filled with
responses to crime based on flawed ideas about offenders and the causes of criminal behaviour. If we could only identify a single answer—bad parenting, drug and alcohol..." (10). In metropolitan cities, most of the crimes are done by the notorious boys who belong to high profile society. They involve in the criminal activities and break law everywhere, but never go to jail because their high-profile parents rescue them. Vivek Rai is one of such boys who murdered so many people, but get acquittal in every murder case.

He lives in play-boy lifestyle and breaks the law at every step, so there were many people who hated his arrogance and had become his enemies. "He built an industrial empire from scratch. And no one can build an industrial empire in India without cutting corners. Readers of this column will recall my reports detailing how Vicky Rai engaged in insider trading at the stock market, defrauded investors of their dividends bribed official and cheated on his corporate tax. Still he didn’t get caught, always managing to exploit some loophole or other to stay out of reach of the law" (Six Suspects 14). He was criminal from his childhood; he was only seventeen years old when he was hauled up in court. He got a gift of swanky new BMW the five series from his father’s friend, on his birthday:

They had a noisy and boisterous celebration at a hip pub. While driving back at three a.m. through thick fog, Vicky Rai moved down six homeless vagrants who were sleeping on a pavement. He was stopped at a police checkpoint and found to be completely sozzled. A case of rash and negligent driving was lodged against him. But by the time the case came to trail, all family members of the deceased had been purchased. No witnesses could recall seeing a BMW that night. All they could remember was a truck, with Gujarat licence plates. Vicky Rai received a lecture from the judge on the dangers of drink-driving and a full acquittal. (Six Suspects 15)

This is the bitter reality of big cities where hundreds of homeless people are crushed on the road-side by the rich in negligence in a drunkard state. Later, their family members are purchased by these rich people. The poor know that there is no benefit to
go to court, because all laws are implemented on the poor people. There is no law for the rich, they always win. This is the true image of our nation.

Three years later, Vicky Rai was charged with hunting and killing two black bucks in a wildlife sanctuary in Rajasthan. But he pretended that he didn’t know, they were a protected species:

He thought it funny that a country that could not protect brides from being burnt from being burnt from dowry and young girls from being picked up for prostitution should prosecute people for killing deer. But the law is law. So he was arrested and had to stay in jail for two weeks before he managed to obtain bail. We all know what happened next. The only eye witness, Kishore—the forest ranger who was driving the open jeep—died six months later in mysterious circumstances. The cases dragged on for a couple of years but ended, predictably, in Vicky Rai’s acquittal. (Six Suspects 15)

Through the character of Vicky Rai, the novelist presents the despotic behaviour of rich people that how they break law and commit crime again and again, and get scot-free every time. It shows that the law is made for only poor people in this country. It doesn’t effect on rich and high-profile people.

Vicky Rai was celebrating his twenty fifth birthday party where he murdered a bar-girl, Ruby gill, a doctoral student at Delhi University who worked part-time at Mango Restaurant to support her family. There were no hard reason for murder but he murdered her on minor mistake. The birthday party started at nine pm and carried on well past midnight. The imported liquor was served to guests, who were celebrities belonging to high-profile society and film industry including his current and former girlfriends. Vicky was drunk too much. At around two p.m. he staggered to the bar and required one more peg to a pretty young bar girl but she refuses:

I’m sorry; I can’t give you another drink sir. The bar is now closed, ‘She told him. ‘I know sweetie.’ He flashed his best smile. But I want just one last drink and then we can all go home,’ ‘I am sorry, sir. The bar is closed. We have to follow regulation, she said, rather firmly this time. F**K your regulations’ Vicky snarled at her.
'Don't you know who I am? No sir and I don't care. The rules are the same for everyone. You will not get another drink. Vicky Rai flew into rage. ‘You bloody bitch!’ He screamed and whipped out a revolver from his suit pocket. ‘This will teach you a lesson’! He fired at her twice, shooting her in face and the neck in the presence of at least fifty guests. Ruby Gill dropped dead mango descended into bedlam. (Six Suspects 16)

When the case finally came to trial, the ballistics report said that the two bullets had been fired from two different guns. The murder weapon had inexplicably ‘disappeared’ from the police strong-room where it was being stored. Six witnesses, who claimed they had seen Vicky Rai pull the gun, retracted their statements. After a trail lasting five years, Vicky Rai received a full acquittal just over a month ago, on 15 February. To celebrate the verdict he threw a party at his Mehrauli Farmhouse. And that is where he met his end. Ram Ahuja’s comments illustrate this fact:

The Police department is said to be the most corrupt department where bribes are taken by constables upwards to high status officers. What is surprising that the police takes money both from the accused and the complainants. The powers enjoyed by the police are so wide that they can accuse, arrest and harass even an honest person. (452)

Vicky Rai was shot dead by an unknown assailant at his farmhouse in Mehrauli on the outskirts of Delhi when he was celebrating the acquittal party of Ruby Gill’s Murder case. And his murder became the mystery and enigma. The Police Commissioner personally investigates about this case. Sub-Inspector, Vijay Yadav was on traffic-control duty at the farmhouse when the killing occurred. He sealed off the entire farmhouse in which there were three-hundred guests. He started search operation and found there were six individuals discovered to have guns in their possession and were detained. He caught Six Suspects on murdering Vicky Rai. Vicky’s murder had become the headlines of every newspapers and TV Channels. Barkha Das, a TV reporter, interviewed Mr. Arun Advani who was investigating the murder mystery of Vivek Rai. He criticized the corrupt system of India and says, “It was against the system which permits the rich and powerful to believe that they are
above the law. Vicky Rai was only a visible symptom of the malaise that has infected our society. If justice is really blind, then Vicky Rai’s Killer deserves to be brought to account just as much as Vicky Rai is.” (Six Suspects 19)

Through these Six Suspects, the writer presents the changing scenario of contemporary urban Indian society. He presents the corrupt face of Indian Administrators, Politicians and corrupt police department who work for only rich people. He gives the detailed account of these six suspects. Jabberwock says, “This book is really a collection of six separate stories – all of which are reasonably well plotted- that eventually converge into a large narrative. Many other authors would have been tempted to milk this material for all it was worth, to perhaps spread it over two or three books, but Swarup packs it all into one dense novel.” (Web)

The Bureaucrat: Mohan Kumar

Through the character of Mohan Kumar, the novelist portrays the real face of Indian Administrators, who are corrupt and are always surrounded by prostitutes. They misuse the government power. “Mohan Kumar, the former Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, whose reputation for corruption and womanizing is unparalleled in the annals of the Indian Administrative service” (Six Suspects 18). He was also arrested in Vicky Rai’s Murder case and becomes one of the six suspects. He had acquired houses in seven cities, a shopping mall in Noida and a Swiss bank account in Zurich. He revelled in being a man of influence. A man who could command the entire machinery of the state with just one phone call, whose friendship opened closed doors, whose anger destroyed careers and companies, whose signature released bonanzas worth millions of rupees. His steady rise through the echelons of bureaucracy had bred complacency. He thought he would go on forever. But he had been defected by time by the inexorably ticking clock which had tolled sixty and ended all his powers in one stroke.

He misused the govt. power when he was serving as a chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh. He felt crippled when he got retirement. After his retirement he works for Vicky Rai’s company. He is now on the boards of half a dozen private companies belonging to the Rai Group of Industries which together pay him ten times of his former salary. But, “he feels a lesser man without its aura, a king without his kingdom. In the first couple of months after his retirement he woke-up on some nights, sweating and itchy, and reached dimly for his mobile to see if he had missed a
call from the chief minister” (Six Suspects 24). Vicky Rai gave him a well decorated office in the Rai group of industries, corporate headquarters in Bhikaji Cama Place, but he was not satisfied with his job. “Now he goes there every day, and stays from nine to five, reading a few project reports but mostly playing Sudoku on his laptop and surfing porn sites” (Six Suspects 25). Chandan Mitra’s apt observation is worth quoting here:

Policy-Maker in India at least since Indira Gandhi, have paid little or no attention to the question of Bureaucratic recruitment, training rewards and punishment. As a result the ‘steel frame’ of the civil services, which ought to have been the most powerful deterrent to corruption, has steadily become one of the tools of the corrupting process.” (27)

Such type of crooked bureaucrats snare innocent girls and women and their colleagues in their web and exploit them sexually when they want. Some corrupt women make use of such bureaucrats because they know their weaknesses. They use their body and take illegal benefits of them. Mohan Kumar is such type of bureaucrat, who had a sexual relation with his colleague, Rita Sethi. “She is a divorcee with no children, and a well-playing job which requires her to go to the office only three times a week. There is a gap of twenty seven years between them, but no difference is in their tastes and temperaments. At times, he feels as if she is a mirror image of him, that they are kindred souls separated only by their sex. Still, there are things about her he doesn’t like. She is too demanding, nagging him constantly for gifts of diamonds and gold.” (Six Suspects 25)

Here the novelist focuses on the prostitution what is richly prevalent in urban society and it is result of modernization. In metropolitan cities, the women and girls pretend to be modern, they follow western culture and they are under the influence of Hollywood and Bollywood movies. In this novel Rita performs the role of such vitiated woman. “Rita fumbles underneath the pillow and retrieves a pack of Virginia slims and a lighter. She light up a cigarette expertly and draws on it, releasing a ring of smoke which is immediately sucked in by the AC. Did you get tickets for Tuesday’s show? She asks” (Six Suspects 26). In high-profile society and middle-class society, the women pretend to be modern. They spend their time in late night-parties and dancing-clubs, indulging in smoke and drink. Clever people make sexual relation
with them when they are intoxicated and propel them in prostitution. Middle-class girls want to lead a luxury life, but face lack of sources and so they join massage parlors which propel them in the mire of prostitution. And to replete their unfulfilled desires, they indulge in other criminal activities. Dr. Madhurima says:

Prostitution, shop-lifting, theft, fraud and drug-related offences were mainly done for economic reasons. When women did not have resources or were unable to obtain sufficient money from traditional and legitimate sources, they indulged in illegal and criminal activities.

(13)

In the influence of modernization and urbanization, some women get involved in criminal activities especially in urban society. But there was a time when Indian women were far away from such activities, and they were worshiped and considered *Laxmi*. They lived in the four walls of house and known for their *lajja*. They concealed their face when they were talking to unknown persons and the whole society worshiped them. But at present time, the situation has been changed. With the spread of education, urbanization and modernization, the women values and attitude has been changed. The spread of education has brought a great change in the life of women. At present, most of women are working and do not depend on their husbands, and they lead free life.

The Actress: Shabnam Saxena

Through the biography of Shabnam Saxena the novelist apprises us about the struggle of Actresses that how many problems they have to face in this metropolitan society to become heroines. They have to make bait of their body in front of producers to sign the films. When they got familiarity, they are tortured and threatened by underworld dons. These dons force these heroines to make sexual relations with them, if they deny they have to die. This often is the reality of Indian film Industry. Shabnam Saxena says:

I find the letters from the girls especially disturbing. Some of them are as young as thirteen. They want to run away from their homes, forsake their families, for fifteen minutes of fame. They have no idea what it takes, what it costs, to make it in Mumbai. Even before
they made it to the casting couch, they would be lured by some grubby photographer or smooth taking agent to a steamy massage parlor or sleazy brothel. And their brittle dreams of stardom would crumble against the nightmarish reality of sexual slavery. (*Six Suspects* 48)

Here, the novelist apprises us about the exploitation in film industry, where actresses have to pay a lot to become actress. They have to sacrifice their body in front of some lame producers. The world of glamour seems very bright outwardly but the ground reality is very harsh. It also propels girls into prostitution. There are thousands of girls who came to become heroine but later serve in the brothels. Films industry seems like a *jungle* and, “It is the law of the Jungle. Only the fittest will survive. The rest are consigned to the destine of history.” (*Six Suspects* 48)

In Indian film industry, the awards are not distributed on the talent but it is conferred to those who have a political approach. Shabnam Saxena shares her personal experience when she came to contact with Vicky Rai, who likes and wanted to exploit her. He tries to persuade and allure her and says:

> There is much that I can do for you. Such as? Such as getting you a National Award. My dad can pull a few strings in government. Now don’t tell me you don’t want a National Award. These Film-fare Award and Hero Honda trophies are ok, but eventually every good actor and actress craves a National Award. It’s the ultimate recognition: ‘Well, I am not interested in award at present.’ Ok, how about if I offer you a part in my next film? It’s called plan B. I’ve already signed Akshay for it. It’s going into production next June. I don’t have any dates free in June. I will be shooting in Switzerland with Dhawan *saab*: If you can’t spare a month can you at least spare a night? Just one night?

(*Six Suspects* 49)

Corruption and exploitation is all pervasive in India. Even the world of glamour is not safe. A girl has to cross a numbers of ordeals to become a heroine and when she gets name and fame, she becomes the victim of underworld dons.
The Tribal: Eketi

Eketi was one of the six suspects; he was also arrested with gun from the place where Vicky Rai was murdered. He was a tribal man and came from another island for the purpose to find the sacred stone *ingetagi*, which was stolen from the tribe. This ‘searock’ was a gift from their greatest ancestor Tomiti. This tribe assumes that when this stone was stolen, since that time the whole tribe was suffering a lot, they consider it curse on the tribe. So they wanted to retrieve this stone. They got a clue that it is smuggled to India. The tribe selected a person named, Eketi, and sends him to search for the stone which looks like a phallus and ‘shivling’. Eketi started journey by boat and reached India and searched for that stone from place to place. He reached at the place where Vicky Rai was celebrating his acquittal party but he was murdered there, so Eketi was also caught on suspect by police. Through the journey of Eketi the novelist gives us the accounts of various Indian cities and its societies.

The Thief: Munna Mobile

Through the character of Munna, the novelist highlights many problems which are badly prevalent in urban India, like slums, poverty, the gap between rich and poor, unemployment and begging etc. Due to unemployment, Munna started his career as mobile thief with his friend Lallan, so he was called Munna Mobile. He remained a family servant for some time of Mr. Dinesh Pratap Bhusiya. But he couldn’t survive for a long time. Here the writer presents the bitter relationship between servants and employers in urban society. The servants are often exploited by their employers and do not get the proper wages, so they want to take the revenge to them. “...beware a servant’s revenge. There are so many elderly couples in Delhi whose throats have been slit by their Bihari cooks and Nepali Guards. Why? Because the servants were driven to the limit by their employers.” (Six Suspects 73)

In high-profile society of urban India, the female servants are exploited more in comparison to male. Their employers make sexual relation forcefully with these helpless poor women and they have to remain silent against their employers; if they raise their voice they have to lose their job, so they become the victims of their employers. In some cases, the high-profile, unsatisfied women make sexual relation with their servants. In high profile society, some men can’t give proper time to their wives due to their busy schedule, so their wives make sexual relations with their servants, when their husbands came to know the matter; they try to kill their servants.
In some cases, the servants slit the throats of their employers. The same incident happened in this novel. Asha, the wife of Mr. D.P. Bhusiya, is sexually attracted towards her servant Munna, because she was not satisfied with her husband. Munna says:

He (Bhusiya) pretend to be as tough as bulldog, but his wife confided in me that in bed he was like a mouse as useless as a camera without film. Bole toh, fully impotent. My affairs with his wife lasted two months. The icing on the cake was that she even paid me after every ‘performance’. So while Mr. D.P. Bhusiya was at his brick kiln in Ghitorni, I would be in his bed with Asha earning an extra hundred rupees. I was in his bed this afternoon, when he happened to make an unscheduled visit to the house. It was exactly like they show in films. The husband returning home and opening the bedroom door and his jaw dropping on seeing his wife with another man - worse, his own servant. (Six Suspects 73)

Through this incident, the novelist makes it more comic, when Munna was caught red-handed by his employer with his wife, Asha. He wanted to murder him and forced him to eat poison. Munna says, “He took me to the garage on the ground floor, backed me into a corner and forced me to drink the bottle of Rat-kill-30. And that is where I now stand counting the seconds till my death. A murder which will be presented as a suicide” (Six Suspects 74). Anyhow, Munna escaped from that place and reached at Sanjay Gandhi Slum where he lived. And then he decided, “That I am never ever going to work as a servant again” (Six Suspects 75). So he gets back in his old profession as a mobile thief. Before that he used to steal the shoes and slippers of devotees who went to temple. He steals the mobile phones from cars with the help of his friend, Lallan. Lallan diverts the driver’s attention and Munna snatched the phones and run-away. He says, “I have kept a record of each and every mobile phone we stole over a three-year period. The total came to ninety nine” (Six Suspects 77). Here, the writer focuses on the forced robbery what is badly prevalent in urban India. In big cities like Delhi and Mumbai, a man is not safe any longer. The mobile thief, Munna says in his own words, “stealing a mobile phone is not as easy as it seems. It really is
a fine art. Just as a pickpocket takes your wallet from right under your nose the mobile thief makes away with your phone. Far from a crude snatch-and-grab operation, it is more like a disappearance trick, a sleight of hand. One moment you have the mobile in front of you and the next moment it is gone. Like magic.” (Six Suspects 79)

One day, fortunately, he steals the mobile phone of a smuggler and got a call on that mobile. He received the call of an unknown person who tells him the location. He said in guttural voice, “Go to the alley next to Goenka public school on Ramoji Road, The maul has been left in a black briefcase inside the municipal dustbin. Collect it within the next half-hour. Ok? ‘Haan’, I say again” (Six Suspects 81). Munna went to the told location and found a briefcase full of money. It was a big surprise for him; and the briefcase changed his life.

The Home Minister: Jagannath Rai

Through the character of Jagannath Rai, the writer reveals the appalling face of Indian politicians that how they indulged in criminal activities. Almost all politicians of country are involved in corruption. As Chandan Mitra says, “Politics is the fountain head of corruption not just in India but the world over, which explains why similar efforts in west countries, too have concentrated on unearthing links between politicians, businessman, bureaucrats and criminals. Arguably, unless politics itself is seen as pursuit of the common good, rather than a mere ladder to personal profit or social mobility, corruption is destined to increasingly emerge as the dominant societal value.” (35-36)

Jagannath is a most crooked politician of Uttar Pradesh. He was called Bhai, and he reigned there as the don of the underworld:

Hello, is this the spiritual meditation center in Mathura?

‘Yes’. ‘Is swami Haridas there? Bhaiyyaji wants to speak to him.’ Bhaiyyaji? Who is Bhaiyyaji? ‘Are you new there? Don’t you know that there is only one leader in Uttar Pradesh who is addressed as Bhaiyyaji and that is Home Minister Jagannath Rai. (Six Suspects 83)

Jagannath is a paradigm of such type of politicians who get involved in many cases of murder and corruption. He is a father of notorious boy, Vicky Rai, who is also a most corrupt businessman of Uttar Pradesh. Jagannath was worried about the
cases which are charged on him. He wanted to consult his horoscope and his Pandit, Swami Haridas. He phoned to Swami Haridas:

I am more worried about the case against me.
There are so many cases against you.
Which one you referring to?
It is an old murder charge, dating back to 2002.
Whom did you kill?
It was Mohammed Mustaqueem; a worthless heel who had dared to challenge me. The prosecution case was very weak, based only on circumstantial evidence. Now suddenly a new witness called Pradeep Dubey has come forward, claiming that he saw me shoot Mustaqueem.
The court hearing is on the fifth of next month. If the Judge convicts me of murder, it could be curtains for my political career. As you know, Guruji, the chief Minister is already biased against me. According to your horoscope, all this is the result of Saturn sitting in the fifth house. The bad period will last for another four months. After that all your troubles will disappear. So what should I do during this period, Guruji? (Laugh).
You Know what to do. After all, the entire police force is under you. (Six Suspects 84)

Such type of Politicians like Jagannath, misuse the police. This is the real face of Indian politicians. Most of the politicians are charged with criminal activities. Some politicians are accused with murder cases but they get acquittal at last, due to political power and money. They buy all the witnesses. The law doesn't implement on them. They misuse the police department. If any honest police officer disobeys them and tries to eradicate the corruption, then he is transferred to other state. As K.S. Subramanian Asserts:

The Home Minister of India is perceived to be the second most powerful figure in government after the prime Minister and only a hardcore loyalist was appointed to the post. Officers who held out against political pressure were summarily transferred. In states
such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, top police officers and district police chief served for less than one year in office, and station House officers for even less! Electoral changes invariably caused turnover in police postings. Political manipulation led to decline in discipline and senior officers were often unable to control undisciplined junior with political connections. 

Even senior officers were affected. (68)

The corrupt politicians misuse their political power; they perform the main role to spread the corruption in India. Jagannath Rai had murdered Mohammed Mustaqueem. There was only one witness who dares to give the evidence. He was Pradeep Dubey. Mr. Jagannath Rai ordered his secretary Mr. Tripurari Sharan to offer the money to Pradeep Dubey who was a single witness of that murder. But Pradeep Dubey was an idealistic man he refused to take the money. Mr. Tripurari Sharan apprises to Mr. Jagannath, “So the news is bed, ah? What happened? Was Pradeep Dubey not available? ‘No, I met him. He seems to be an idealistic young man. I offered him a lot of money to keep his mouth shut, even went up to ten lakhs. But he refused to budge. Said, he will definitely testify against you” (Six Suspects 85). Pradeep Dubey was not a corrupt man and he refused the money what was offered to him to shut his mouth against Home Minister. Jagannath gives contract to Mukhtar Ansari for his killing. And Mukhtar killed him. It is the great travesty of India in which an honest man can’t survive for a long time.

The novelist presents the terrible face of contemporary urban India. In big Indian cities, the politicians spread the terrorism, and they nurture gangsters and criminals. They keep contacts with gangsters and rogues. And these criminals work for corrupt politicians, when they are caught by police then these politicians release them from jail. In this novel, the novelist reveals the cruel face of Indian police. In India, the police department has become corrupt to the lowest level. Some police officers take bribe and work as an agent for politicians and rich. They obey politicians and do what they want. An honest person can’t survive in police department for a long time. If any honest person joins this department, either he has to become corrupt, get transferred, suspended, or to lose his life. In this novel, Mukhtar Ansari is a Contract Killer and left hand of Jagannath Rai. He was caught in rape case and he approached to Home Minister for his release. Jagannath Rai called the IPS officer Navneet Brar in
Ghaziabad, to release his man. But he refuses to release Mukhtar Ansari, because he was an idealistic man. Jagannath threatened him on phone:

Hello, Navneet Brar Speaking.
Navneet, this is Home Minister Jagannath Rai speaking.
Well, what I can do for you sir?
I believe you have arrested a man of mine.
Mukhtar Ansari is his name.
Yes, Sir. He has been arrested for rapping an under-age girl. It is a non-bailable offence, sir. Section-376, in conjunction with 366. No Leniency can be shown.
I am not requesting you to show leniency. I am directing you to release him immediately.
You cannot issue such an order sir. The matter is before a magistrate. Now Mukhtar can be released only by a court order.
How dare you defy the Home Minister of the state!
I am sorry, sir, but I have been tasked with upholding the law.
It looks as if you are not too bothered about losing your job.
I am more bothered about doing it correctly, sir.
Then do the correct thing. Obey the order of your superior.
I regret to say, sir, that I cannot obey an illegal order.
So you refuse to obey me?
I refuse to abet a criminal activity.
You are a young officer, Brar, and hot headed.
You are making the biggest mistake of your career.'
I am prepared to face the consequences. (Six Suspects 87-88)

Indeed, the culture of corruption has become so all-pervasive that it is not surprising to find even idealistic young officers lose heart. Some eventually get sucked into the system, and not only give up the battle but actually become major players in the corruption net. Others simply look away as their superiors and subordinate staff
colludes to defraud the exchequer. Mercifully, though, there are still some officers who refuse to abandon the fight.

The IPS officer, Navneet Baraar denies the order of corrupt Home Minister for the releasing of Mukhtar Ansari. But he had to pay a lot for his honesty. He was transferred to Bahraich, the most remote area. He was also threatened by Jagannath to lose his job. Jagannath phoned to DGP (Maurya), he was very corrupt officer:

Maurya, tell me how long have you been Director General of Police?
Eight months, Sir.
And who made you the DGP?
You, sir.’
Then why is it that you do things which make me regret my decision?’
What... What Sir? What has happened?
Your police have picked up Mukhtar Ansari from Ghaziabad. I think you know very well that Mukhtar is my right-hand man. How could you allow this to happen? This is the first I have heard about this sir.
Must have been a local operation. (Six Suspects 88-89)

This is the stark and ugly truth of Indian system. Indian corrupt politicians tame the contract killers and gangsters and use their muscle power. Mukhtar Ansari is Jagannath’s tamed man and he is arrested on the charge of rape. So Jagannath forces DGP to release his man, Mukhtar Ansari from jail. When he comes out from jail, Jagannath gives contract to Mukhtar for the killing of Pradeep Dubey. He says, “There is a man called Pradeep Dubey who is threatening to testify against me in the Mustaqueem murder case. He needs to be neutralized.” (Six Suspects 90)

These corrupt politicians also misuse the media. They threaten media when it speaks or writes against them. They bribe the media not to highlight their crime. If any press reporter tries to write against them, they threaten him to kill. Jagannath threatens press reporter, Prem Kalra:

Hello.
Hello. Can I speak to Prem Kalra?
This is Prem Kalra speaking.’
Then listen carefully, mother-fucker. This is Jagannath Rai speaking. And this is my last warning to you. If you publish one more story against me in the *Daily News*, both you and your rag will be history. (*Six Suspects* 90-91)

In India, the politics has become the arena of corruption and terrorism. Almost every politician has criminal cases on them. The Home Minister confessed that, "High command made me Home Minister, despite the fact that I have thirty two criminal cases against me" (*Six Suspects* 92). In this novel, the chief Minister is involved in criminal activities. He is very much anxious because the election is about to come and the Media is tossing the news of Ruby Gill murder case again and again in which Jagannath Rai’s son is involved. It has been become the high-profile murder case, everyone knows that the murder was done by Vicky Rai but he got acquittal. So it has been become the political issue. But, Jagannath asserts that every leader have a criminal cases, “Then why are you making such a big issue over my son’s involvement in just one murder case, when the judgment has not even been delivered? It is no ordinary case, Jagannath. It has become the most high-profile murder case in the country” (*Six Suspects* 92). The chief minister was very much worried about the party’s reputation because the election is very near and his all ministers are charged with criminal cases. He discussed with Home Minister about this matter:

... Journalist Arun Advani continues to cause trouble. Did you read his latest column? He is alleging that you are trying to bribe the Judge. It is giving us very bad publicity.’

Let him write what he wants. The good thing is none of our voters know English. I was telling the Education Minister that we should ban all English-medium schools in the state. We should teach children only in Hindi. If we take away the bamboo how will the flute play? (*Six Suspects* 93)

This is the agony of India where the most corrupt people fight the elections and win on the bases of their money and fraud vote casting. They bribe the illiterate and ignorant public and get votes in their favour. They break the law and misuse the government power. They force an honest man to become corrupt. As Don C. Gibbon
asserts, "Crime is a political phenomenon. What gets defined as criminal or delinquent behaviour is the result of a political process within which rules are formed which prohibit or require people to behave in certain ways" (27). These corrupt policy-makers make rules in the favour of rich. They make policies for rich, and poor are always ignored, so the rich are becoming richer and the poor are poorer day by day, because the rich exploit the poor.

Most of the Indian leaders make use of innocent girls and women and propel them in prostitution. Even the Chief Minister had a sexual relation with Rukhsana, She forces him for divorce. He says, "I am dying for that. Sumitra will leave for Farrukhabad on Friday. I will come to you on Saturday and stay the night. Why don't you divorce your wife? She is only causing you grief." (Six Suspects 95)

The American: Larry Page

The American, Larry Page was also one of six suspects as he was caught with gun where Vicky Rai was murdered. He was an honest person who was duped by an Indian girl, Sapna Singh, who wrote him letters regularly and sends him the photographs of an actress, Shabnam Saxena to allure him. Larry page falls in love with her but she makes fool of him. She promises him for marriage and extracts money from him. He came to India for the purpose of marriage and searched for her from place to place. But he becomes the victim of beguilement. Sapna Singh usurps the amount of five thousand dollars from him for the wedding.

Through the character of Larry Page, the writer presents the murky face of Indian urban society. Larry Page was duped by Indians, wherever he went. He was astonished to see the corruption of India. He didn't want to live in India any more.

Motives:

Six Suspects is a complex murder mystery. Through the story the novelist presents the complexity of urban society where murder has become a common thing. People are murdered on minor mistakes. The murders are done such expertise that it becomes difficult to trace the murderers. There are so many murder mysteries which remain unsolved, and the murderers are not punished. Six Suspects is also such murder mystery which is very much difficult to solve. In this novel, the six suspects are caught with guns at the place where Vivek Rai was murdered, but nobody knows who is the real culprit. Every suspect has a motive to murder him.
Through the character of Mohan Kumar, the novelist makes this novel more intriguing and interesting. It depicts the dirty image of Indian bureaucracy. These crooked politicians and bureaucrats misuse their power and ensnare the innocent girls and women and harass them. Mohan Kumar is a corrupt IAS officer, and he has sexual relation with Rita Sethi. Once he met with an accident and lost his memory. After that incident, he feels that he is Mahatma Gandhi. He forgets himself and thinks like Gandhi. He couldn’t recognize his driver, Brijlal. He was to go to his mistress, Rita Sethi, and his driver led him to Rita Sethi’s house but he couldn’t recognize her also, because he had forgotten everything. Rita Sethi welcomed him and says:

You are late darling, she drawls, and attempts to kiss on the lips.
Mohan Kumar draws back as though stung by a bee,
Don’t... don’t. Don’t touch me please.
What’s wrong with you? Rita raises her eyebrows.
And who might you be?
‘Ha, she laughs, ‘Now you pretend you don’t even know me.’
I really don’t. My driver has brought me here.’
I see, Rita says with exaggerated politeness. ‘Well, Mr. Kumar, my name is Rita Sethi. I happen to be your mistress and you come to my house twice a week to have sex with me.
‘Sex with a woman! Oh my God!’
‘This is getting tiring, Mohan. Come on, cut it out.’
‘You see... you see, Miss Sethi I have taken a vow of brahmacharya requiring complete celibacy. I cannot have sex with any women.
Have you joined some theatre company? Rita asks crossly.
Why are you putting on this act of behaving like Mahatma Gandhi?
But I am Gandhi.
Gandhi? Ritu bursts out laughing. (Six Suspects 117-118)
It is indeed a ludicrous episode in this novel when Mohan Kumar lost his Memory. He was libidinous, having sexual affairs with many girls and women and he exploited them. But it becomes ridiculous when he treats Rita Sethi like Mahatma Gandhi and says that he has taken a vow of *brahmacharya* and complete celibacy. In urban society, it has been become usual to keep an extra-marital affairs and sexual affairs with various girls and women. It is an influence of modernization and westernization on Indian culture. In big cities, the rich and powerful people make use of innocent girls and helpless women as the commodity of sex, they allure them and duped to make a false promise of marriage, most of the girls are propelled in prostitution by these rich people. Prostitution is more prevalent in urban society in comparison to rural society. Dr. Madhurima says, “Prostitution is also considered to be a city base crime. The proportion of crime against property always tends to be highest in urban districts, whereas the proportion of violent crimes against persons is highest in rural areas.” (147)

Mohan Kumar reached his home and his wife, Shanty was totally surprised when he said, “Let me tell you, shanty, that I have taken a vow of complete celibacy, so please do not have the expectations of a married man from me” (*Six Suspects* 120). It was an amazing transition of a corrupt and libidinous person into an honest and celibate man. His wife was happy with his decision. “He raises his finger like a teacher. I will now devote my life to fighting injustice. I will use truth as my anvil and non-violence as my hammer” (*Six Suspects* 120). Mohan Kumar changes his lifestyle; he commences his routine, sitting in the temple every morning with singing *bhajans* and religious songs. He abandons suits and shirts and starts wearing simple *kurta* and *pyjamas* and Gandhi cap. He eats complete vegetarian food. He spends his spare time on reading *Gita* and other religious books and writing letters to the newspapers on the issues such as immortality and corruption. “The entire neighbourhood is talking about Sahib’s transformation, Brijlal confides in Gopi, ‘some people say he had gone mad. He has started imaging himself to be Mahatma Gandhi. Why does not Bibiji take him to see a good mental doctor?’” (*Six Suspects* 121). Mohan Kumar orders his servant Brijlal to destroy all the bottles of wine which he had collected. He denotes the amount of twenty lakhs to poor people. It was *Deepawali* festival and his room got fire when he was sleeping. It was a terrible accident but he was saved. Then he got his lost memory and he demanded meat and wine. His wife asked him, “Two week ago, you told us that you would stop eating meat and drinking alcohol. Ha! He laughs.
Only a lunatic would take such a decision” (Six Suspects 125). When Mohan regains his lost memory and came to know that he had ordered to destroy the collected bottles of wine, he became mad. Brijlal had a great need of money for the marriage of his daughter, Ranno. So Brijlal sold these bottles with the consent of Mohan’s wife. He earned twenty five thousands rupees and he was very happy. But when Mohan knew the matter he requires to revert the money.

Mohan Kumar became mad when he came to know that he had donated twenty five lakhs in his absent mind. He consults Dr. Diwan about his illness. “Doctor, some unknown force has insinuated itself in my body like a persistent toothache. I have started walking talking and acting like another person. And who is the other person? He pauses. You won’t believe me. Try me, the doctor says drily. It is Gandhi... Mahatma Gandhi” (Six Suspects 132). Dr Diwan suggests him to consult the psychologist and says, “I believe you are suffering from what we call Dissociate Identity Disorder” (Six Suspects 132). But Mohan Kumar was very much frustrated with his illness.

The novel also throws light on the working class like servants who are always punished by their employers on minor mistake and they are forced to do crime by these rich people. Brijlal was indeed frustrated and he came to Mohan’s house for the purpose of killing him. He was in sozzled condition and he wanted to take revenge for his humiliation. He says, “Today my Ranno was to get married. Today I should have been listening to the sound of Shehnai. My house should have been ringing with laughter and happiness, but instead i have been listening to the sobs of my wife and daughters. All because of you” (Six Suspects 137). In his anguish he comments, “I have never been more humiliated in my life. And what was my fault? The bottles were going to be destroyed in any case if I made some money from them, what harm did I cause anyone? You big Sahibs cheat your wives and affairs with other women. You booze and gamble and don’t even pay tax. But it is poor people like me who get insulted and arrested” (Six Suspects 137). Further the novelist introduces us to Brijlal who got order to destroy the bottles of wine, but he sold them with the consent of Mohan’s wife to earn money for the marriage of his daughter because he didn’t have enough money. But unfortunately, Mohan regains his lost memory and requires the money so Brij Lal had to cancel the marriage. Here, the author presents the miserable condition of servant class in urban society. They try to be loyal to their employers but they are treated like dogs. Even the dogs of rich get better place in comparison to their
servants. These poor servants are dominated and exploited because they are weak and powerless. So urban society is like a jungle in which only the strong and powerful can survive. It seems that the poor are born only to serve rich people. In big cities, the servants slay their employers, they do not want to kill them but they are forced to do that, because their employers exploit and torment them. The same incident happens in this novel, Brijlal wanted to take revenge; he goes to Mohan Kumar and tries to kill him. And Mohan Kumar tries to persuade him:

You are drunk, Brijlal, he appeals again. If you take any foolish action now you might regret it later. I am desperate man, Sahib. And a desperate man does not care for consequences. My wife and daughter, in any case, will commit suicide. My son will find a job somewhere or other. As for me, after I kill you I am going to kill myself. (*Six Suspects* 138)

Mohan Kumar is such a double-faced character who performs two different roles, one time he becomes a corrupt IAS officer and becomes the cause of evils, and the next moment, he pretends to be Mahatma Gandhi, an idealistic man who fights against the evils. The novel becomes more comic when the most libidinous person who has sexual affairs with many women, protest for the commodification of women. He protests against the porn movies which give bad impact on the society. He attacks on the theatre in which such movies are played, and says:

I am not protesting against sex. I am protesting against the perversion of sex, the commodification of women. But my films contain nothing objectionable at all. They are cleared by censor Board, he says. If you want to see the commodification of women then go five hundred metres to the underground Palika Bazaar. There you can buy all the triple-x films you want for just a hundred rupees each. Go ten Kilometres to GB Road for a hundred rupees you can actually buy a young girl why ‘don’t you try stop these evils instead of picketing our hall. (*Six Suspects* 151)

In this novel, the novelist attracts our attention towards the miserable condition of women in urban society. Even, at present time, women are sold and
bought like animals. “Woman is considered a cheap commodity which can be used, misused, degraded and even destroyed when the society want so” (Kundu 87). In Delhi, there is a market of women called, GB Road, Where a man can purchase women like animals. In GB Road, a man can purchase woman in hundred rupees and there the women are considered only the objects of sex. It presents the bare truth of progressive India. It is no doubt that, “Women’s qualification levels have improved rapidly, and well-qualified women get better, higher paying jobs. Such women tend to enter into partnership with similar men, and are more likely to remain in employment” (Crompton 146). It is a fact that a large number of women are employed today in big cities as teachers, doctors, advocates, IPS officers, IAS officer, welfare workers and even pilots. They challenge the traditional thinking of society and play equal role like men but it happens only in high-profile, middle-class and some developed families. But one can’t deny that in India there are such classes in which position of women is very miserable and they are treated like animals and considered cruse on the family and they are aborted before the birth. Asha Mohan Sethi says:

The conflict in the values and the actual practice with regard to the status of women causes a dilemma for an Indian woman. She is treated with reverence as Ma, Durga, Shakti, Laxmi (a Goddess) placing her at a very high pedestal. She is worshiped as a Goddess during Pooja days (Navratri Utsava) in her girlhood till she attains puberty. But this mythical status is quite at variance with her actual subservient status both at home and outside in the social set up. (51)

Later, Mohan met Babloo Tiwari, “Babloo is the uncrowned king of Tihar, each and every official having been bribed or bullied into servicing him. He runs his empire from inside the jail” (Six Suspects 160). In jail, there is also discrimination between weak and strong. The weak person has to serve for the stronger. Mohan Kumar meets with an innocent minor boy, Guddu, who was sent in jail for minor crime. Mohan asks him for his crime and he says, “I stole a loaf of bread from a bakery. Now I have been here for five years. They beat me every day make me clean the toilets. I want to see my mother. I miss her very much. I know only you can get me out; he says and starts sobbing” (Six Suspects 158). This is the most pathetic scene of novel. It is the great travesty of India where the most corrupt and criminals are not
sent to jail though they make big crimes like murder, rape and corruption, but they are exonerated due to their political power and money.

In Tihar jail, Mohan Kumar got the news that Vicky Rai got acquittal from Ruby Gill Murder case and he knew that he was the murderer. He had spread Gandhism in jail. He wanted to take the revenge of Ruby Gill’s murder. So Babloo Tiwari provides him gun to shoot Vicky Rai, but anyhow he runs away from the jail. He reached the place where Vicky Rai was celebrating his acquittal party. Later Mohan Kumar was also arrested with gun and became one of six suspects. He had also a motive to kill Vivek Rai, but it was not declared that he was the murderer.

Another aspect of our country is revealed through the life of Munna, where the writer puts light on the life of slum dwellers of Indian cities. Indian cities shine with high mansions of rich, but behind these sky-touching buildings there are some dirty slums which tarnish the glory of urban India. These slum dwellers live in miserable condition, they are not better than animals. As Munna says:

> We lived in the Sanjay Gandhi slum in a makeshift hut made with corrugated metal sheets. We had no electricity and no water. Mother cooked with cow-dung patties on a mud hearth which used to fill the entire hut with smoke and make my eyes water. Now we have a pukka one-and-a half room house, with a paved brick fireplace, a ceiling fan and even cable TV (Which I have siphoned off the temples connection) of course, it is still extremely cramped for three people. We have divided the main room into two parts separated by a wooden partition. I have one side, with my mattress and a small wooden table, and mother and champi have the other side. (Six Suspects 180)

Munna is here a slum dweller and he has a responsibility of surviving of his mother and sister. His sister champi is a blind and ugly looking girl. He was worried about her marriage that who will marry with a blind girl. She has a need of operation but it will take a large amount of money and they are unable to spend money on her because they have nothing. Champi is a victim of Bhopal gas tragedy:

> Champi is known all over the world as the Face of Bhopal. There was a big industrial disaster in Bhopal
more than twenty years ago. Poisonous methyl isocynate gas leaked out from the union carbide plant and all those who inhaled it died, or went blind or become mad. Champi’s Mother Fatima Bee was living in Bhopal at the time. She too was affected by the gas, although she didn’t know it then. She gave birth to Champi five years later. When the doctor saw the newborn baby, they told Fatima Bee that the gas has caused the blindness and all the deformities. (Six Suspects 175-176)

Champi is not Munna’s real sister but she was adopted by his mother. “Unfortunately, Fatima Bee also fought a running battle with illness. Three years ago she passed away of tuberculosis, leaving Champi all alone” (Six Suspects 176). So Munna’s mother adopted her. Here, the writer once again shows that the life of poor is always full of misery. Munna’s mother never talks about his father’s death but he knew that his father was killed in a road accident, when he was only six years old. He says, “I still remember father’s dead body lying outside our hut, wrapped in a white sheet and mother breaking her bangles and bashing her head repeatedly against the wall. A week later a heavy-set man wearing white kurta-pyjamas came to meet mother with folded hands. He shed a few crocodile tears and gave mother twenty-five thousand rupees. He also got her the job in the temple and this house. Father gave us in death what he couldn’t give us in life” (Six Suspects 180). The novelist delineates the life of poor and slum-dwellers. They are crushed, when they are sleeping on the roadside. After the killing, their family members are paid a little amount to shut their mouth. When, Munna’s father was crushed on the road, the next day a rich person came to them and gave only twenty five thousand to keep silent. It reveals that the death of poor has no value in this urban society.

Once, a reporter, Nandita Mishra came to their slum because she wanted to make a documentary on Champi who was victim of Bhopal gas tragedy and she also wanted to make a film on the life of slum dwellers. She took the interview of Champi and after that she wanted to take the interview of Munna Mobile, who reacts:

A slum is not a tourist attraction, madam, I scoff. ‘To experience slum life, you have to born in one. She looks at me sharply. That’s quite a good line would you mind
repeating it for the camera? So I too, prepare to give an
interview for the first time in my life, expounding on
life in the Sanjay Gandhi slum. It is a subject I know
well. The slum has been my playground since the age of
three I have many insights into slum living now a
family of six manages to squeeze itself into an eight-by-
eight foot space. How a girl protests her modesty, while
bathing underneath a municipal tap in full view of
hundreds of people. How a married couple make
clandestine love with furtive eyes watching their every
move. How grown men sit in rows and shit like buffalo
at the edge of the railway track. How the poor breed like
mosquitoes and live like dogs, while the dogs of the rich
sleep on Dunlopillo mattresses in mosquito-free
mansions. (Six Suspects 182-183)

Slum problem has become a big problem of urban India. It tarnishes the glory
of India. The Government doesn't pay attention to uplift the slums-dwellers. They
have to face a lot of problems in their life. They have no electricity, no water and no
toilet facilities. They are deprived of all amenities. They live in extreme poverty and
their quality of life is unimaginative. Their children never see the face of school so
they remain illiterate. They have no desire to grow and spend their life like animals.
As Kamlesh Singh says:

The slum is an area of dingy neglected houses where
people live in poverty without minimum civic
amenities. The estimates of India's urban population
living in slums very widely. However, according to an
estimate, not less than us million people were living in
slums in 1995 and as the urban population is increasing
fast, their number must have had increased by now. It is
said that the Indian population living in slums is more
than the total population living in slums is more than the
total population of about 107 countries of the world.
Generally, the larger a city, the more people live in
slums. Naturally, metros like Mumbai, Delhi and
Kolkata have more slums dwellers formed 45 percent of the population in Mumbai, 44 percent in Delhi and 42 percent in Kolkata. The situation is no better in other metropolises like Chennai, Banglore, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad etc. (10-11)

In this novel, Vikas Swarup presents the life of slum-dwellers poignantly. They dream like rich but their dreams are seldom fulfilled. In this novel, Munna who is a slum-dweller, fortunately, he got a briefcase full of money from the dustbin and it seemed like a miracle because he never thought what happened. He says, “I shop with a vengeance at the upmarket mall. Everything which my heart has always desired but my wallet couldn’t afford I buy” (Six Suspects 184). First of all, he purchased good attires because he always wanted to look like rich but he couldn’t replete his desire. He noticed the difference between poor and rich that how rich look different from poor. He says, “It makes me realize how much garments can change a man. And I know that there is nothing intrinsically different about the rich. They just wear better clothes.” (Six Suspects 184)

In urban India, the society has changed a lot. Westernization has left a deep shadow on the mind of people. Everyone wants to look modern. As S.L. Doshi Asserts, “Not only higher and middle classes but the lower classes too in the urban area have experienced the taste of postmodern lifestyle” (59). In urban society, one thing is noticeable and common in rich and poor, both classes are half-naked. The poor girls and women are half naked due to poverty their clothes are torn, because they have nothing to wear and they try to conceal their body from the glaring of people. On the other side, the girls belong to high-profile society are also half naked, but they are naked due to modernity and westernization, they don’t conceal their body, instead they try to expose more and more to attract the attention of the people. Munna noticed this thing when he went to dancing club. “Every other girl wears a body-hugging dress, halter tops with plunging necklines to expose half their breasts, short T-shirts leave midriffs bare and micro miniskirts barely conceal underwear. The dance floor has more skin on display than Fashion TV” (Six Suspects 186). In that western atmosphere, Munna was also feeling himself like a modern and rich man. There, he met Malini and Ritu. He introduced himself to them but he had to conceal his real identification. He tells his fake name Vijay Singh. Ritu asked him, “Are you also a Thakur, like me? Yes, I nod. I am also a thakur” (Six Suspects 189). Here, the
novelist draws our attention towards the casteism in urban society. On one side, people rock on the western music and pretend to be modern, but they couldn't free from the grip of casteism yet. When they meet someone unknown they first ask them of their caste. Casteism is more prevalent in rural area in comparison to urban area. As Ram Ahuja asserts, “Urban dwellers do not confirm to caste norms strictly.” (293). But it doesn’t mean that casteism has been eradicated from urban society. It has an indelible impression on the mind of Indians whether they are urban or rural. As N.G. Meshram asserts, “People in India lived under the umbrella of vedic philosophy, which they often found to be discriminatory in nature. Its numerous practices developed injustice and made Indian society a slave.” (294)

Vikas Swamp also focuses on the problem of begging system in urban India. Indian cities are teemed with beggars. Munna was caught by beggar when he was chasing for Ritu and Malini to get their phone number. He says, “I am accosted by a smelly beggar with a bent arm who grips my leg like a leech, a telling reminder that I have stepped back into India. I have not eaten for three days. Please give me some money. Kuch dede baba! he implores. I search my pockets and come up with a couple of one-rupee coins. I get rid of him and then duck into a quit alley to change into my regular clothes” (Six Suspects 190-191). The begging system has been become big problem for Indian. There is no city in India in which you can’t find beggars. India is known all over the world for beggars and snake charmers, and it leaves bad impression on other countries.

Munna falls in love with Ritu, but he gets disappointment when he came to know that she is a daughter of Jagannath Rai, the Home Minister of Utter Pradesh, and the sister of renowned Industrialist, Vicky Rai. He knew that the chasm of caste and class would never let them meet. He wants to marry Ritu Rai but caste and class becomes great obstacles between them. Munna says, “I am all too painfully aware of the wide gap between us. She is the daughter of an upper-caste, upper-class business tycoon and I am the uncouth son of a temple sweeper. The chasm between us is so wide that it can only be bridged in dreams” (Six Suspects 209). Here, the novelist lays bare the agony of urban youth that how they have to suffer in the bondage of class and caste system.

Munna had to disguise his identification from Ritu, but he was in love with her. So he wanted to divulge the secret in front of her but was afraid to lose her. He says:
I need to tell you the truth about me, Ritu. Then I will ask whether you want to be friend with me. Don’t speak in riddles. I won’t. Not any longer. So here’s the truth. I am not Vijay Singh. My real name is Munna. I am not a thakur I don’t own a four-bedroom flat. I live in a one-room shack inside the Bhole Nath Temple, where my mother works as a sweeper. Everything I told you before was a lie. But only because I am madly in love with you and didn’t want to lose you. *(Six Suspects 212)*

Ritu also loves him and she accepts him despite knowing his reality that he is a son of sweeper. But when her parents came to know the reality, they started to torture her. They forced her to marry Kunwar Inder Singh, but Ritu doesn’t agree. Ritu says to Munna, “My family will never allow me to marry you. Ritu slowly shakes her head. But I have made it clear that I shall not marry anyone else either” *(Six Suspects 216)*. It shows the helplessness of girls when their parents came to know their inter-caste affairs. Then they are forced to marry against their desire. The urban dwellers don’t follow the casteism strictly but they don’t even allow their children for inter-caste marriage. In this novel, Ritu feels helpless in front of her parents and she says to Munna (Vijay), “I love you, Vijay, but I cannot marry you. If I defy my father he will not only kill me, he will also kill you” *(Six Suspects 211)*. Here, the writer focuses on the honour-killings which happen in Indian developed cities. When the young do the marriage in other castes, they are killed by their parents and relatives either they are banished from the society. This is the ugly reality of progressive India. In this novel, Munna tries to persuade his girlfriend, Ritu Rai for eloping, but she doesn’t agree because she is aware that their parents will kill them:

She produces crumple news clipping from her handbag. It is from some Hindi Newspaper. What does it say? It says that two young lovers were lynched because of different castes. Nineteen-year old Pritam and eighteen years old Sonu were hanged one after the other from the roof of a house in their village. He was a high – caste Brahmin, while she was a member of a lower-caste community. Hundreds of people watched as the couple were hanged. *(Six Suspects 217)*
Munna and Ritu were helpless due to caste and class problem. They didn't want to lose each other but they had no alternative, they knew that their parents will not agree with them because they both belonged to different caste. The eloping was one alternate, so they make a plan of marriage. Munna got a threatening from Vicky Rai. He says, “Listen to me carefully. My name is Vicky Rai. And you have dared to raise your eyes to my sister Ritu. Now I will carve you up like a pig, I will break every bone in your body and then I will feed your carcass to my dogs. Get it” (Six Suspects 218). Munna and Ritu were getting threatening regularly, but they were in love and they don’t bother for the consequences. They had no option except eloping. Ritu says, “Now there is one option left for us, we have to run away,’ she declares” (Six Suspects 218). They make planning to run away, and they decide to go Mumbai that place will be safe for them. Ritu apprises Munna that her brother, Vicky Rai, is having a big party on 23 March to celebrate his acquittal. There will be nearly five hundred guests in the farm house and I will manage to slip out from there. She says I will come out at exactly eleven PM. at entrance gate where she will meet Munna and they will take a taxi for Mumbai. But, when Munna’s mother came to know about their planning of elopement, she got afraid, because she hates the family of Jagannath Rai. She knows the atrocity of that family. She divulges the secret in front of Munna and says:

You don’t know son, she replies in an anguish voice.
This Vicky Rai is the one who killed your father.
Mowed him down while he was sleeping on the pavement. I feel the ground shift beneath my feet.
What? Are you sure? A wife can never forget her husband’s death. Like a film, that scene has been playing in my mind for the past fifteen years. Yet you kept it a secret from me? He was my father, after all. I was sworn to silence by Jagannath Rai. He gave me money for this house, for your education in return for not implicating Vicky. (Six Suspects 221)

Munna was simmering with the fire of revenge after listening about the murder of his father. He also wanted to take the revenge of Ritu’s agony as she was tortured by Vicky Rai and his father. Unfortunately, at that night some ruffians came to his home and took back that briefcase of money what he found in dustbin. Because, Brijesh was
the owner of that briefcase and he was a renowned smuggler. Now, Munna had no money for eloping. But one thing was running in his mind constantly and that was the ‘revenge’. When, these ruffians came to get back their money, they raped his blind sister, Champi, in front to his eyes. This incident reveals the helplessness of slum dwellers that how their sisters and mothers are raped in front of them and they have to keep silent because they are weak and powerless. This alas is the real face of urban India, where terrorism is on its pinnacle.

Now Munna has lost the whole money what he had. So, he had to cancel the plan of eloping and he also cancelled the railway tickets what he bought. He shows his anguish against the urban society. He says:

I am not going to Mumbai any longer. Like Delhi, it too is a show-off city, flaunting its Mercedes and mansions. And it belongs only to the rich. There is no place for the poor in our metropolises. Does not matter how honestly you earn a living; you can still get accused of thieving and thrown into a cell simply because you are poor and powerless. As long as I had the briefcase full of money I had power.” (Six Suspects 229)

He feels, “Life suddenly seems brittle and pointless surprisingly, I don’t feel much anger towards my tormentors, the people who took away the briefcase. It wasn’t mine to start with. My rage is directed instead at Vicky Rai. The man who dared to hurt Ritu. The man who took my father’s life. Love can make you blind, but despair can make you reckless” (Six Suspects 230). He was angry with Vicky Rai and wanted to take revenge to him. So he purchased a pistol from illegal arms-dealers named Birju Pehalwan who was a member of the biggest criminal gang in that area. Munna had a motive to kill Vivek Rai, so he becomes one of the six suspects because he was also caught with gun where Vicky Rai was murdered.

In this novel, Vikas Swarup touches every aspect related to urban India. Through these six suspects, he presents the paradigm of corrupt Indian society. Through the character of Jagannath Rai, the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh, he presents the cruel and dingy face of Indian politicians, who can do everything in the favour of their political career. It is a fact that politics is game of dirty people and honest people can’t survive in it. There was a time when India was ruled by honest leaders like, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Lal Bhadur Shastri,
Subhash Chander Bose and Bhagat Singh etc, who are known for their sacrifices for nation. But, at present the situation has changed. There are such politicians who have tarnished the glory of Indian politics and made our nation the most corrupt. As Rajendra K. Sharma asserts, “The urban politics has become a profession. It is no longer a service. Everyone wants to make profit by hook or crook. Politics of today is a business where operations work strictly according to the law of profit and loss. All evils practices have corrupted modern urban politics.” (117)

Jagannath is a most corrupt Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He is involved in so many criminal activities. He has sexual affairs with various girls and Rukhsana Afsar is one of them. Jagannath keeps false promises and duped her. She phoned him:

Hello. This is Rukhsana Afsar; Can I speak to the Home Minister? Jagannathji is not at home. He is out addressing an election meeting in Gopiganj. Today is the last day of campaigning for the election. Who are you? I am his private secretary. Jagannath is not answering his mobile either. What is wrong? He has not taken my call once in the last two weeks.’ Madam, don’t you know that Bhaiyyaji changes girlfriends faster than you change your hairstyle?’ (Six Suspects 237)

Rukhsana commits suicide and Jagannath was responsible for her death. She leaves a suicide note and sent an audio tape to the editor of Daily News, named, Prem Kalra, but he too was a corrupt person as he works as the agent of Home Minister. When contacted, Jagannath says:

I am a public person. And you know in public life one meets many people, including women. Doesn’t mean that I have affairs with all of them. I am a happily married man.

There is also a tape,

What kind of tape?

An audio tape?

And what is there on this tape?

Plenty. I have you talking to her, quoting some rather nice Ghalib couplets. I especially like the part, where you tell her your opinion of the Chief Minister.
How did you get this tape?
It was mailed to me by Rukhsana just before her death.
She must have taped you when you were in her bedroom.
Do the police know about this tape?
No. It is in my custody. (Six Suspects 241)

The editor, being a greedy man, sells that obscene audio tape to Jagannath for twenty lakhs. Here, the novelist presents the grim picture of urban India, in which corruption is all-pervasive. Even the Media is involved in corruption. It works for the politicians, leaders and rich persons and avoids writing against them. This is the real face of contemporary urban India.

The Assembly election is about to come and Vicky's acquittal from the murder of Ruby Gill has been become the breaking news all over India. Everyone knows that Vicky Rai was the murder of Ruby Gill but he got acquittal due to his political approach. Media is tossing this news again and again. Jagannath is truly anxious about his political career. He thinks that the acquittal of Vicky Rai can become the cause of his defeat in forth-coming electing. Due to his son, the Chief Minister orders him to resign from his post. He says, “The High command has taken its decision. You have to choose between Vicky and your Home Ministership. I want your resignation on my desk by tomorrow afternoon. If you prefer, we can say that you resigned on health ground” (Six Suspects 248-249). Vicky Rai has become the obstacle in his political career. Jagannath says to his son, “Vicky, you have no idea how much harm you have caused me” (Six Suspects 263). Jagannath has been painted as a most cruel character in this novel. He wanted to become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh but his own son is the cause of his political failure. He becomes one of the six suspects because he was also caught with gun where Vicky Rai was murdered.

Through the character of an American, Larry Page, the novelist presents the filth and corruption of Indian cities. Larry Page had a very bad experience in India because he was duped everywhere in India wherever he went. But there was a time when India was a reputed country in the world and the Indians were known for their honesty. As Chandan Mitra asserts, “Some visitors may not find India corrupt at all. Government clerks, railway officials and even customs personnel are known to size up their targets quite systematically and zero in only on there likely to be soft targets consequently; many travelers find India a hospitable, warm country with people going
out of their way to be helpful. However any foreigner who stays in India long enough cannot but come face to face with corrupt practices and some are quick enough to grasp the power of crisp currency notes in opening doors and upgrading facilities” (37-38). India was known for honesty but now the situation has changed.

Larry Page came from America to India for the purpose of marriage. He came into contact with Indian girl Sapna in correspondence and falls in love with her. She sends him letters regularly and sends him the photographs of Indian actress Shabnam Saxena posing to be her own photographs. She pretends to marry him to usurp the big amount of money from him.

Larry Page gets very bad experiences when he visits to India. He is forged and tortured at every step where he goes. When he reached at airport he was prevented to enter in India. “Sorry, we cannot allow you to enter India. We suspect you have a gorged passport. You will have to deport back to the United State” (Six Suspects 270). Larry Page feels very bad when the checker restrains him. He accused that Larry had a forged passport but he had an original. Larry Page pleaded that he has an original passport but the checker would not agree with him because he wanted some money. Larry says:

He looked around to see if anyone else was listening. I might be able to help you, if you can help me. I’ll do anything you say. I collect foreign-currency notes, he whispered. I have all the notes from America except the hundred-dollar bill. Can you give me a hundred-dollar note? Just put it inside your passport and slide it over. (Six Suspects 270)

Larry Page discerns his desire and bribes him because; he wanted to escape from him anyhow. Larry Page was very much exited because he was going to meet with her girlfriend to whom he will marry. She promised him to welcome at airport and he says, “I began hunting for Sapna in the crowd. Although there were plenty of girls at the airport, no one looked like her. I waited for three hours at the kerb, but my bride-to-be didn’t arrive” (Six Suspects 271). He waits her for three hours and scours the whole city but he couldn’t find her. Eventually he came to know that he was duped by that girl but he wanted to meet her.
Larry Page was astonished to see the corruption and fifth of Urban India in which everything was so chaotic. The city was teemed with thugs and idiots. It was very much difficult to walk in the city because it was filled with smell. He says:

I saw narrow lanes teeming with people and cows. Dusty men pulled wooden carts loaded to the brim sacks of stuff. Fat ladies rode in rickety rickshaws. Auto-rickshaws zipped around like toy cars. Cyclists weaved in and out, tinkling their tinny bells. The market was full of small shops selling fruit, groceries, televisions and books. Signboards were plastered on every space-advertising from ceiling fan to perfume oils. (*Six Suspects* 272-273)

He searched the entire city but he couldn’t find that girl. Eventually, he understood that he was duped. Now, he wanted to return to his country. But he was late so he will have to wait till tomorrow. He stayed in hotel, but he got very bad experience there. He was resting in the hotel, when a boy comes to him and asked, “Can I get you anything? Food? Coke? Smoke? I thought about the choices. ‘I wouldn’t mind a coke’, I said. ‘Five hundred rupees, please’, he demanded. That was more than ten dollars for a can of coke! I couldn’t cotton on to these Indian price tags. Reluctantly, I parted with the money” (*Six Suspects* 274). Here, the writer presents the flip picture of urban India in which the foreigners are duped. It leaves very bad impression on the mind of foreigners. In this novel, the waiter comes to him and takes five hundred for coke and after ten minutes he hands over him some white powder, and he was duped again:

What the hell’s this? I said. I asked for a coke. This is coke. High-grade. Top class. he said and scampered out of the room. Hey, wait! I shouted but the boy had already disappeared. I sniffed at the powder. It didn’t smell like coke at all. I was wondering whether I needed to mix it with water when the door was kicked open and a fat policeman barged in. Hold it right there, mister, he announced in a stern voice. What is this in your hand? I dunno. I asked for a coke and I got this. I said spreading my hands. Aha! So you admit you asked for cocaine.
Cocaine? What do you mean? Don’t act the innocent. In Paharganj, when a foreigner asks for a smoke, he means Marijuana. And when he asks for coke, he means cocaine. But possession of cocaine is a very serious criminal offence in our country. Now you will go to jail for ten years. (*Six Suspects* 274-275)

Larry Page was startled to see the corruption of India. Even the police are also involved in corruption. He ordered for coca-kola drink but the waiter serves him Cocaine and police arrests him and demands money from him. So he had to bribe the police, when he gives money to him, he says, “I am forgiving you this time. Don’t do drugs in India” (*Six Suspects* 275). Larry Page was very much afraid, he wanted to return to his own country. He didn’t want to live in India any more. When the market opened, he met with travel agent for the booking his return flight, but he feels disappointment:

Sorry, Mr. Page, he shook his head, your ticket is of cheapest category and there is no seat available on any flight. As you know, this is peak tourist season. The earliest I can get you a confirmed seat to Chicago is 24 November.

But that’s a long ways off; I cried. I want to return right now, today if possible. Sorry, then you will have to wait for 24 November. Till then enjoy our country. (*Six Suspects* 277)

Now, Larry Page had no option. He will have to wait till 24 November, but he was feeling suffocation in India. While he was walking in Delhi, he came to contact with Shylock Detective Agency, specialist in matrimonial. K.P. Gupta was running that agency. He tells his problem to K.P. Gupta. Larry Page says:

I was wondering if you could find the girl who sent me these pictures, I said and handed him the brown folder. He did a quick scan and frowned. But this is our famous actress, Shabnam Saxena. Why do you need to find her? So I explained the whole story of my friendship with Sapna Singh and the reason for my trip to India. Tch-tch, he said shaking his head. This girl Sapna has really
duped you, Mr. Larry what do you want me do? I want you to find her. Before returning to the state I want to meet her just one. Can you locate her for me? Of course. I can even locate Osama Bin Laden if the government asks me. Do you have any letters written by this girl? (Six Suspects 278-279)

Indian cities like Delhi are teemed with thugs, ruffians and trouble-makers. A man is not safe in cities, he can be made fool by any person. Some people have made it their profession. Larry Page was made fool at every-step in India. He makes contact with Shylock Detective Agency because he wanted to get information about Sapna. He meets with K.P. Gupta and he promises to search that girl but demands money, he says, “My normal rate is ten thousand rupees, but given that you are a guest in our country, I’ll give you a fifty percent discount. So let’s say five thousand rupees. I need half in advance and half when I finish the investigation” (Six Suspects 279). Unfortunately, Larry Page was again cheated. K.P. Gupta was fraud and he provided him wrong information and fake mobile number which was switched-off. He went again to Mr. Gupta to get the real information but he found that the ‘Shylock Detective Agency’ was closed without any information. He didn’t want to live in this hell for a minute but he will have to wait till 24 November. Now he had finished his all money so he will have to search for a job. He felt humiliation, when he was asked:

Now tell me, what’s your real name?
I told you sir. It’s Larry Page.
Look, it’s no use pretending any longer. I’ve already proved that you are not American. So What’s your real Indian name?
Is it Sitaram? Or is it Venkatswamy?
Well, sir you can put your boots in the oven, but that doesn’t make them biscuits. I told you, I’m Larry Page and I’m am American from the great States of Texas.
I am asking you for the last time, what is your real name? Your Indian name, goddamnit.
And I’m telling you for the last time. It’s Larry Page and I am not Indian, I’m American.
You motherfucking Indian are taking jobs away from here and you have the cheek to call yourselves American? Shame on you. (Six Suspects 304)

This incident reveals the real face of Indians. They get jobs because of their fake identification. Larry Page faces the same problem when he got the job at call-centre. The call-centre's manager asked his real name he thought that Larry Page is pretending to be foreigner. Through the character of Larry Page, the writer presents the murky face of contemporary Indian society which is full of corruption. For him, "Indians preferred doing things out in the open. I saw open-air hair-cutting salons, where barbers lathered and scraped customers in full public view, and tailoring shops, consisting of a tailor sitting on the pavement busy working his sewing machine. There were even people who cleaned your ears on the side of the road. I saw an old man in dirty clothes busy poking inside a customer's ear with a long pointy thing. It was enough to give me an earache." (Six Suspects 281)

Here, the writer presents the grim picture of Indian cities. He presents the two faces of Indian cities, one 'Shining India' with branded shopping malls, teemed with rich people showing the opulence of high-profile Indian society. On the other side, he presents 'Dark India' of underclass society which tarnishes the glory of urban India. Larry Page was unhappy to see the extreme poverty of India. He says, "I found myself near New Delhi railways station. The station was another world. The poverty of India hit me like a hammer. I saw entire families living on pavements inside makeshift tents made of plastic sheeting. And there were some who didn't even have that. One man lay stretched out in the middle of the road, like a drunk outside a bar. Another sat on the pavement naked as a jay bird, his body caked in mud, scratching his chest with his nails." (Six Suspects 282)

Vikas Swarup also focuses on another bane, the begging system. India is known for the beggars and snake charmers and it leaves very bad impression on foreigners. All Indian cities are full of beggars. It seems that India is the poorest country in the world. Larry Page was very much amazed to see the Indian cities when he was loitering on the road of Delhi. He says:

A haggard-looking woman approached me, wearing a green sari with yellow blouse. She was as thin as a bar of soap after a hard day’s washing and her hair looked
like she had combed it with an egg beater. She held up a skinny little boy who looked like he hadn’t eaten in a year, all bones and hollow eyes. The woman didn’t say anything, just cupped her hands and made a motion from her stomach to her mouth. It was enough for me to take out my wallet and give her five hundred rupee. No sooner had I done this than I was surrounded by an army of beggars. *(Six Suspects 282)*

Through the character of Eketi, Vikas Swarup gives account of many cities of India like Jaisalmer, Kolkata, Chennai, Mathura (Uttar Pradesh), Allahabad and Delhi. Eketi was one of six suspects; he was also caught with gun at the farmhouse of Vicky Rai, where he was murdered.

Eketi was a tribal from Little Andaman. He was sent to India by the Onge tribe to search out the sacred stone ‘ingetayi’ which was stolen. It was gifted by Onkobowkwe to the onge tribe. It was seventy thousands years old and it was a rare piece of black sandstone, approximately thirty inches tall and engraved like a phallus which looked like *shiv Ling*. The onge tribe was suffering since the time it was stolen. They consider it the curse of Onkobowkwe. So, the tribe selects Eketi to search for that sacred stone. He came to India with Ashok Rajput, who was Junior Welfare Officer. Eketi came to India by ship. The ship had completed its 1255 kilometer journey in three days. When he reached India he was surprised to see the glaring Indian cities:

He saw men exercising with huge weights, running, skipping, and walking with dogs. He smiled when he came across a group which was standing in a circle and simply laughing, and fell silent upon seeing the grandiose baroque of the Victoria Memorial, its white marble shading pink under the nascent sun. *(Six Suspects 346)*

Ashok Rajput instructed Eketi to disguise his real identification. He suggests him to give his introduction as Jiba Korwa belonging to Jharkhand. Ashok says to Eketi, “So you must keep your hair covered all times with your cap and ensure that the jawbone around your neck is hidden underneath your T-Shirt. If anyone asks, you should say that you are an adivasi, a tribal called Jiba Korba from Jharkhand.
Jharkhand is an Indian state which has many primitive tribes like yours. Understood?" (Six Suspects 343). In India, Eketi came to know that Banerjee has stolen that sacred stone. So he went to Banerjee’s home, but he was not there. He discovered a black leather wallet lying on the table. He grabbed it and he got a business card in it. He got the address of Calcutta Antigue, Prop. Sanjeev Kaul. 18-B Park Street, Kolkata 70016. It was certain that Banerjee had sold the sacred stone to that person. Anyhow Mr. Ashok Rajput contacts him on phone:

I am here in connection with the theft of an ancient stone artefact belong to the Onge tribe. Did Mr. S.K. Banerjee sell a shivling to you? Yes. About ten days ago. Do you realize, Mr. Kaul that you are in violation of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972? Banerjee didn’t tell me that it was an antiquity from the Andamans. Kaul frowned. Look, I was not aware. I was breaking any law. I thought it was just an old rock. I would like to see it. I am sorry; it is no longer with me. Last Monday I sold it to a client of mine from Chennai.

(Six Suspects 355)

Mr. Eketi and Ashok feel disappointment, when they realized that Mr. Sanjeev Kaul has further sold it to Mr. S.P. Rajgopal who belongs to Chennai so they started their journey towards Chennai. They reached at the house of S.P. Rajgopal and met with his wife and knew that they have given it to Guruji, Swami Haridas, who belongs to Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. So, Eketi and Ashok reached Mathura and knew that Guruji was not in Mathura:

Actually Guruji is not in Mathura now, then where is he? He has gone on a world tour. Yesterday he left Madras for Singapore. From there he will go to America, then Europe. So when will he return after two to three months. Yes, your best chance of finding him will be at the Magh Mela in Allahabad in January next year. (Six Suspects 360)

Their journey had become more complicated and they had to wait for January. They waited for Magh Mela where they met with swami Haridas and knew that the stone
has been stolen. Anyhow, Ashok Rajput got the information about the sacred stone that, “It is now in Delhi, with an industrialist called Vicky Rai” (Six Suspects 405). So they started their journey towards New Delhi where Vicky Rai lived. They reached New Delhi at 10 March. There, Eketi met a girl named, Champi, and falls in love with her. She was a blind and ugly looking girl. Eketi promised her to marry. She lived in Sanjay Gandhi slums with her mother and brother, Munna mobile.

Through the character of Eketi, Vikas Swarup gives account of many cities, and focuses on the problems which are badly prevalent in urban India. Eventually, Eketi and Ashok Rajput reached New Delhi. Here, the writer highlights the problem of slum-dwellers who live in miserable conditions. Ashok and Eketi wanted to see the farmhouse of Vicky Rai, where that sacred stone was situated:

They went through the Sanjay Gaandhi slum, a warren of narrow, dark alley ways containing a conglomerate of small, squalid huts held together by bamboo poles and tattered burlap bags, their roofs an ugly patchwork of tarpaulin, plastic sheets, pieces of metal, old clothes anything the owners could lay their hands on and weighed down with rocks as protection against the wind. A group of men wearing pathan suits lazed in the open while their women filled pots of water from a municipal tap or chopped vegetables. Naked children caked in dust played with mangy dogs. Piles of rubbish and animal waste littered the ground like dead leaves. The smell of wood smoke and dung cooking fires drifted in the air. Eketi tugged at Ashok’s sleeve. ‘Do people really live in these huts? Ashok stared at him irritably, ‘of course they do. Have you never been to a slum? Eketi shook his head slowly. Even birds make better nests on our island. (Six Suspects 408-409)

Eketi was not happy to see the miserable condition of slum-dwellers. He thought that there is a need to change the prevalent system. There he meets comrade Babuli and comrade Uday, who felt resented with the prevalent system, and they wanted to transform the society. They felt, “We are the biggest Naxalite organization in the region. And we are fighting to awaken people like you. But I am already awake! Ha!
You call this being awake? Your lives are controlled by the imperialist rich. They employ you and pay you a pittance. They grab your land and rape your women. We will change all that. Yes. We are going to destroy this corrupt and hollow bourgeois society and its institutions and replace them with a completely new structure; the younger man added. 'We are going to create a new India. And we want you to help us' (Six Suspects 415). Eketi agrees with comrade Babuli and comrade Uday and they provide him with a gun. Here, the writer reveals that it is only the corrupt system which converts the poor into Naxalites and terrorists because they are exploited by rich people.

Through the character of an actress, Shabnam Saxena, the novelist presents the world of film industry. Their life is full of troubles and they have to face endless number of problems in their life. Shabnam Saxena becomes the victim of her own domestic servant, Bhola. He makes her naked video in her bathroom and blackmails her. Shabnam was shocked when she got the video tape. She says, “The twenty-minute video showed me soaking in the bath, playing with the shower head, spraying the foam bubbles from my body, doing the kinds of things a lonely girl does in bathroom” (Six Suspects 453). She didn’t know how many video tapes he had. He had installed the video camera in her bathroom. Here, the writer presents the shrewd face of domestic servants who exploit their employers. A man is not safe in his own home. He can be blackmailed and murdered by his own servant.

Shabnam Saxena had left home for some days. In her absence, her servant Bhola loots the house. She was amazed that, “This man who used to call me his sister had now become a blackmailer” (Six Suspects 454). In urban society, a man can’t trust any person. Even, one can be duped by one’s close relatives and servants because the society has become corrupt. In this story, Bhola makes a forged signature of Shabnam Saxena and signs the contract for porn movie. Shabnam Saxena was shocked when she came to know about the contract. She says:

Producer Jugs Luthra, better known as the soft porn King of Bollywood, met me today. A fleshy, corpulent man who wheezes when he speaks, he was nevertheless made four hits in a row. So, Shabnam, can we begin shooting form 15 April? He asked in his breathless voice. Shooting for what?
For my film, sexy number one. Luthra Sahib, I told you six months ago that I cannot do your film. I was not comfortable with all those kissing and bathing scenes you wanted. But then you changed your mind. I have already paid you fifty lakhs in advance. (Six Suspects 455)

Shabnam was surprised to know that her servant has taken advance from the producer to make a porn movie. The producer insists her to work in his movie. She says, “My head started spinning; Bhola had taken five million on my behalf and got me in a sleazy B-Movie? I am sorry, there must be some confusion. I never authorized Bhola to agree to your project.” (Six Suspects 456)

Shabnam was startled when she went to bank and found her account nil because Bhola had withdrawn fifty lakhs with forged signature. And he threatens her that if she tries to inform police, he will disclose her nude video. Here, the writer successfully presents the vitiated face of urban society and focuses on the dishonesty of servant class.

Shabnam was confused when she suddenly got a phone-call from her home. Azamgarh (Lucknow) was her birth town. She knew to her mother that her father is seriously ill and she had to go her home. When, she reached her home, she came to know that, “Two days ago, Sapna (her sister) was abducted while returning from college. She was taken to a small house in Sarai Meer, a notorious locality just outside the city, known for its gangsters. There her abductor tried to rape her, but Sapna somehow managed to get hold of the gangster’s gun and shot him dead” (Six Suspects 463). Sapna was terrified that police will take her to jail. Her father had a heart attack on receiving this news. Sapna was afraid because she didn’t want to kill him, but she had to do for her self-defense. Her mother says, “I couldn’t look into her eyes, so full of pain. Lawlessness had increased so much in this city that no girl is safe. Well, what can you expect when the Home Minister of the state is himself a known criminal? (Six Suspects 464)

The situation of urban India is critical at present time. Terrorism, corruption, robbery, murders, rape, abductions, have become normal thing in cities. Women and girls are not safe; they feel like innocent lambs in the crowd of lions in a jungle. In this novel, Sapna recites her own experience when she was picked by the gangster. She tells her sister (Shabnam), “I’d never seen him before. He just grabbed me from
behind as I was walking out of college and pushed me into a taxi. At least twenty students must have seen me being abducted, but no one dared to raise an alarm” (Six Suspects 469-470). Terrorism has been spread badly in Indian cities. Innocent people are murdered, looted and abducted openly. People have become habitual to see such incidents. No one dares to oppose the criminals. Everyone closes eyes when such incidents happen. In this novel, Sapna was abducted by a strange person, she never seen him before. She was coming from college when she was abducted. Her friends and classmates were along with her but everyone had ignored her. She was carried on a strange place and tried to rape her. She says:

He asked me to undress. When I refused he lunged at me, caught hold of my Kameez and tore it in half. That’s when I glimpsed his gun lying underneath the pillow and grabbed it. He charged at me like a mad bull and the gun went off. I swear didi, I didn’t mean to kill him. I only wanted to get away from him. Didn’t neighbours hear the gun shot? They must have, but gun shots are so common in Sarai Meer, nobody pays any attention to them. (Six Suspects 470)

Shabnam Saxena went with her sister, Sapna, where she was molested and in order to escape she had to murder the abductor. Shabnam tries to clean every proof. She picks the pistol which was used for murder. She kept it in her possession. She wanted to escape with her sister from that murder case; and wanted to meet Vicky Rai, getting acquittal from murder. So the venue was fixed in his farmhouse at Mehrauli in Delhi, where he was celebrating his acquittal party and gets murdered the same day. Shabnam was also caught with pistol where Vicky Rai was murdered. So she also becomes one of the six suspects.

Six Suspects is a very complex murder mystery. It is full of murders and presents the real situation of urban India, in which murders have become common thing and such killings are done very cleverly and remain unsolved. Police eventually catches six persons on the basis of suspect but couldn’t solve the mystery. India’s investigative Journalist, Arun Advani eventually solved this murder mystery. He says:

There was a time when solving murders was easy. They fell into predictable pattern of cause and effect; were
slotted into neat categories of motive like Jar, Joru or Jameen. Money, woman of land. Nowadays you have serial killers, sex maniacs, Junkies and psychopaths stalking our streets. Sick people who kill just for fun. And the graph is rising constantly. A violent crime is committed in India every three minutes, a murder every sixteen. Worse, of the ninety murder cases recorded every day, the vast majority never got solved. (Six Suspects 515)

The novel presents the complexity of urban India. It is full of suspense and keeps readers engrossed till the end. The suspense remains intact till the last page of this novel. Arun Advani, the investigative journalist divulges so many secrets. He says, “I can announce the name of the murderer. It is Mukhtar Ansari, a well-known contract killer whose main base of operations is Utter Pradesh, and the man who gave the contract is none other than Jagannath Rai, the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Vicky Rai’s dad” (Six Suspects 516). Arun Advani got an audio tape which confirms the intention of the murder of Vicky Rai. Jagannath had given contract to Mukhtar Ansari, for the murder of his own son. Jagannath wanted to get rid of his wayward son. He had become the blocking stone in his political career, because he got acquittal of the murder of Ruby Gill but everyone knows that he had done the murder. Jagannath desired to be the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh so he decides to kill his son. Jagannath was also charged with a number of murder cases but he contests the election inspite of that. It is the travesty of Indian politics that maximum politicians keep criminal career and get involved in corruption. Arun Advani says, “It is our apathy and indifference that has led to the criminalization of politics and allowed mafia dons like Jagannath Rai to win elections, become MLAs and ministers, and convert the entire state into their fiefdom, where they can break the law with impunity” (Six Suspects 517). They tame gangsters and make them do illegal works and use their muscle power. In this novel, Jagannath is such type of leader. Arun Advani says, “It is my fervent hope that the publication of the Jagannath Rai Tapes becomes a clarion call of our leaders and to all citizens of our country. Let us resolve to cleanse the political system of criminal elements and ensure that law-breakers do not become law-makers. That is the only way to safeguard and strengthen our democracy” (Six Suspects 518). What will be the future of a country in which the law-
breakers become the law-makers? India is such country in which the law is implemented only on the poor people and there is no law for the rich. The law is broken by those people who make the law themselves. This is the real face of modern urban society. As S.L. Doshi says, "Modern culture has not been accepted by the people in its pure or authentic form. Democracy has been misused and all sorts of benefits are taken by the leaders, high-castes and elites for their own consumption. Fundamentalism flourishes in the name of secularism and religious traditions. Political leaders misuse the public funds on temples and mosques; and encourage religious sentiments of the people for contesting elections." (240)

*Six Suspects* is truly a complex and mysterious novel. It presents the stunning image of contemporary urban society. Through the audio tape, Arun Advani reveals that Jagannath gave the contract of his son’s murder to Mukhtar Ansari and he is the murderer. But the story took a turn when the TV reporter, Barkha Das, divulges the secret of Mukhtar’s death. She says:

There have been dramatic developments in the Vicky Rai murder case. Police have reported a break-through in their hunt for Mukhtar Ansari. His badly decomposed body was discovered earlier today in a house in Sarai Meer on the outskirts of Azamgarh. Forensic experts have confirmed that he died of gunshot wound, and that his body had been lying in the house for at least a week. If this is correct, there is no way Mukhtar Ansari could have been in Vicky Rai’s farmhouse on 23, March. So who killed Vicky Rai. (*Six Suspects* 522)

Vicky Rai had so many enemies, and it has been become very complex to find out that actually who had murdered him. Ashok Rajput had also a purpose to kill Vicky Rai. He was the brother of Kishore Rajput, the forest ranger, working in the wildlife sanctuary in Rajsthan. He was murdered twelve years ago because he would have implicated Vicky Rai in the killing of the two black bucks. Ashok Rajput was in love with Kishore wife, a fairy woman called, Gulaboo, but she had made a condition before she would agree to marry him – that he must first avenge his brother’s death and kill Vicky Rai. So he gave false information to Eketi about the sacred stone that it is planted in Vivek’s farmhouse because his intension was to murder Vivek Rai. Ashok had been planted the replica of sacred stone in the small temple in Vicky Rai’s
garden. And he ordered Eketi to switch-off the light and Ashok Rajput shot Vicky Rai at point-black range and deposited the murder weapon in the tribal’s open bag. But Eketi didn’t know that what happened. And Eketi was arrested with a weapon. But police discovered that there were two bullets fired on Vicky Rai, one was fired by Ashok Rajput, but it was missed and Vicky Rai was dead with another gunshot. So it was difficult to decide that who is the murdered.

The end of this story is startling when the murderer confesses that he had murdered Vicky Rai. He declared that Vicky Rai was not his enemy. And he is not related to any of six homeless people whom he mowed down as a teenager. He had no relation with Kishor Rajput, the forest ranger whom Vicky Rai killed. Ruby Gill was not his colleague nor his sister, nor his lover. But he wanted to kill Vicky Rai because he broke one law after another and received acquittal at every time. He was tapping Vicky’s phone calls since long time. He says:

> For two years I listened to Vicky Rai’s voice on a daily basis. I listened to the favours being exchanged, the bribes being paid, the frauds being perpetrated, the girls being seduced. I heard ear-numbing accounts of how laws were broken and subverted, how evidence was falsified, how justice was trampled upon, raped, pillaged and sold to the highest bidder. Every infraction was like a band of iron squeezing my heart. Every injustice was like a nail being driven into my body. (Six Suspects 552)

The murderer’s blood boiled when he listened to the phone tape of Vicky Rai on 17 March. He was dazed to hear the conversation between Mukhtar and Vicky Rai. Mukhtar apprised him:

> Vicky baba, you are in trouble.
> What do you mean?
> Boss called me to his house an hour ago.
> So? Who did Dad want bumped off this time?
> You, Vicky baba. He gave me a contract to kill you.
> Have you gone mad?
> No, Vicky baba. I swear on my dead father. This is exactly what Boss asked me to do. (Six Suspects 553)
Here, the novelist lays bare the heartlessness of high-profile urban society. He also reveals the cruel face of Indian politicians who can do everything for the sake of their political career. Even they can murder their family members for political benefit:

Mukhtar, will you do a job for me?

_Hukum_, Vicky baba.

I want you to kill Mr. Jagannath Rai. On the same day, at the same place. I will pay you one hundred times what Dad would have paid you. Will you accept my contract?

Vicky baba, how can - I will send you ten lakhs right away, and the balance on completing the job. You don’t need to do any more hits after this one. Do we have a deal? (Six Suspects 553)

The murderer was startled after listening to the conversation between Mukhtar and Vicky Rai through the phone tapping. He was stunned to know that Jagannath wanted to kill his own son and gives the contract of killing to Mukhtar Ansari. When Vivek Rai came to know the matter, he offers ten lakhs to Mukhtar for the killing of his father. So the murderer couldn’t restrain himself, he says, “How long can you see what is happening around you and remain unaffected by it? How long can you pretend you are not a citizen of this country, not thinking, feeling man? And I said to myself, ‘Enough is Enough. I decided to kill Vicky Rai, mete out my own justice to him. If the corrupt father was going to die, then so would the depraved son.” (Six Suspects 554)

The murderer planned to kill Vicky Rai. He went to acquittal party of Vicky Rai. He waited for the light to go out. At precisely 12:05 AM, the light has gone and he listens to the sound of gunshot and Mr. Jagannath screamed. He thought Mr. Mukhtar has done his duty and he fired his gun on Vicky Rai and he was dead. But he was wrong, Jagannath was alive yet, and Ashok Rajput was fired on Vicky Rai, because he wanted to take revenge of his brother’s death who was murdered by Vicky Rai. But his fire was missed and Vicky Rai was killed by the investigative Journalist, Arun Advani, who was investigating for this murder mystery. He confessed that he was the murderer of Vicky Rai, and he divulges so many secrets which justify his act. Hence this novel is a complex murder mystery which presents the real, harsh and unsavoury face of contemporary Indian urban society.
Works Cited


