CHAPTER - III
POSTCOLONIAL DILEMMA OF WOMEN

Feminism in the 1960’s and 1970’s broadly experienced and problems which were mainly related to the problems of mediocre females of westernized families. However, it represented all women on a whole. Representation of women literature was supposed to be the most important fiction in 1960s, with the women’s movement of that time, the rebirth of the older beliefs, notions and battles began. It recognised the value of women through the medium of text. In culture and economics, this movement of women became politically prominent. It was an innovative venture for the upcoming fictional columnists. The feminist critics dispute that literary texts replicate public base that regards a woman to be only the spouse of male.

Sahgal had repeatedly brought forth the freedom and new meaning of the virtuous woman. In the select novels, we find the heroines are conscious of the unfairness done to them in their marriage and they walk out of their homes. Sahgal’s heroines mirror the changing social conditions. In spite of being deep seated in Indian culture, they care and long for personal freedom and have their own identifies. Freedom for women according to Nayantara implies ones’ awareness of her identity and raising the voice against injustice. Sometimes they revolt against the exploitations of men and sometimes compromise with this social reality. She portrayed women mostly from the upper strata and often a political backdrop is created. Family relationships and the personal shattering experience of divorce are woven deep into the fabric of her novels. Her women characters realize the importance of physical love well as that of the soul which (Storm in Chandigarh) promulgates her attitude to love, sex and marriage.

The postcolonial women writers created literature by making women occupy a place, which would be suitable to the changing scenario, especially keeping in mind the psyche of such women. From time immemorial, women have consciously accepted the domination of the patriarchal value system, just by submitting themselves to their roles that have been traditionally allotted to them and allowed their male counterparts to dominate them. But the education, their rights and privileges brought in a sort of
awareness making them think. Though they could gain economic, independence, and knowledge out of their education, the strong urge for independence, still made them fearful and frightful of their position in this modern society which had not given them enough strength and confidence to walk out of the situation. Women writers were able to understand the predicament of women and were able to portray them in a realistic manner. Women as the epic centre were showed in various shades right from the time they started writing. The portrayal of the protagonists in the beginning of the independent era were different, compared to the later periods. Gradually with the western influence, they have been shown, demanding a better place in the society. The impact of the western feminist theories by Simon De Beauvoir (*The Second Sex, 1952*), Betty Friedman (*The Feminine Mystic 1963*) and Kate Millet (*Sexual Politics, 1970*) created a new trend. They delved deep into the psyche of their characters and also herald a new concept of morality. The earlier women writers wouldn’t agree that their writing were feminist biased, but a deep analysis shows the strong feminist ideas and women issues, were their chief concern of plot. The latest writers slowly deviated by not being as prolific as those writers, yet their themes are related to the issues like women, society and man- woman relationships in their works.

This chapter deals with *Post Colonial dilemma of Women* with “educated women” characters such as Saroj, Tamara, Gowri, Sudha and Anju from the novels of Nayanatara Sahgal and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni *The storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *Vine of Desire* (2002) are respectively chosen to examine the issue of “marriage” and the emotion of “Love”.

As a postcolonial writer Chitra’s portrayal of certain problems faced by the immigrant women found a proper display in her novels. Identity and cross cultural crisis are highlighted to occupy the centre stage of her work. The problem of gender also adds to the dilemma of women. Tradition and custom on one hand and untraditional and modernity on another, are the pulls that women face at the juncture of lives. Marriage is a condition that gives them a new dimension to their lives. Through her works, she also showed that women should have the courage to face a situation and the humanity of the suffering women rebels against the oppressive patriarchy. Her observations as a diasporic
writer give her a deep understanding of the western ideology of feminism and also her own literary tradition of the women writers.

Sahgal’s respect for Gandhian values and her western education, made her a rationalist thinker, hence she took a mid-stance not favouring any political movement. She admits this in her *Passion Called India* where she says that though politics was her background and the environment forms a natural material, her exposure to that period of literature and politics, made her interpret these qualities in a different way. She never believes in kings, queens or political dynasties. Neither she had any ideology, nor she belonged to a political party.

The educated Indian reformers like Swami Vivekananda, Jyothiba Phule etc strived hard to bring a change in the traditional customs and beliefs that made the Indian society backward and stagnant. As the British colonialism thrived well in India for almost two centuries, they were able to influence the nation by exercising considerable leverage over the princely states to bring the entire nation under their rule. Their strategy of divide and rule policy was used effectively and the western educated Indian elite were knackly tutored to become model British subjects. This liberal education made them look down upon their own culture. Lord Macaulay, *Minutes on Indian Education*, which was a well articulated speech, attracted many Indians who felt that British occupation of India would further progress the nation and transform into a westernized nation. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in their introduction to *The Empire Writes Back* and explain the term ‘postcolonial’. “The semantic basis of the term ‘post colonial’ might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of imperial power… we use the term postcolonial, however, to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day.” (1)

The postcolonial literature challenged the colonial order, reabsorbing the assumptions and discarding the dominant ways of seeing the world and giving a new shape to reality by not imitating the so-called colonial values. The postcolonial literature gave rise to a new national identity. There were many challenges faced by the newly independent country, which were projecting the hopes, ideas and apprehensions of the
people after independence. The administrative system functioned through the colonial framework where the country was burdened by the alien system of values and education. Impatient for progress and intolerant to suffering, self-centered political leaders who were similar to the colonial leaders were either looting the nation or acting selfish. Sahgal symbolizes Gandhian and non-Gandhian in the persona of politicians like Harpal Singh and Gyan Singh in her novel *The Storm in Chandigarh*. The novelists deal with the leading themes of the times where the description of love, sex, marriage are very bold and rather unconventional. The capital Chandigar is a significant symbolisation of the new face in the post independent India. Le Corbusier “architecture reflects an alien world which distributes people like Vishal on his visit to the city. This was architecture transplated, not conceived here, and he wondered how successful it was or for that matter how successful democracy was or for that matter how successful democracy was superimposed on lit iterate masses, exploding millions of them” (Strom.210) *Vine of Desire* by Chitra Banerjee portrays two generations of women and how they differ from each other who may not have wanted to be like their mothers like Gauri and Nalini but Anju and Sudha had to identify themselves with their mothers though they may not be widowed women but lead estranged lives out of their choice. Chitra Banerjee portrayed the emotional conflicts and the dilemmas in the lives of the protagonists Sudha and Anju.

The writers have sympathetically painted their protagonists balancing between the natural co-existence of unfettered freedom and space. We observe traditions, conventions and cultural values that play a role in shaping human life. In Sahgal’s *Storm in Chandigarh* the women are torn between family duties, the desire to work or independence, illicit love and it is a story of love, sorrow and compromise. The women revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, problems of marriage, women’s dilemma and their struggle for survival. The women were educated but caged within the confines of a conservative society. The western education led to their independent thinking and made them intolerant to family and society – like Mara in *Storm in Chandigarh*. Both the novelists dealt with the themes of times with description of love, sex and marriage in a very bold and unconventional manner. They showed marriage as a social institution losing its sanctity and relevance. Lack of faith in traditional customs resulted in decline of moral values. In *Vine of Desire* the first generation Nalini, Gauri
and Pishi Chatterjees give priority to family rather than education. They all glorify marriage and gave it an utmost priority unlike Sudha and Anju who decided to leave their homes but turned out to make decisions that are suitable for their lives. Education gave them the strength and confidence.

Initially a new light was thrown on the aspect of “marriage” which was portrayed in these novels. The literary and media projections help us evaluate the relevant point about marriage where Jasbir Jain gives his own perception saying, “Marriage, home, the claims of the family, are traditional goals set for the female child. It is only by examining and exploring the restrictive aspects of this value system that any change can be affected. Formal education does not equip women for this kind of self or social analysis – but literally and media projection are likely to be of greater relevance” “The Feminist prospective: The Indian situation and its Literary Manifestations” (69) (other Englishers: Essays on Commonwealth writings). The novels depict if women are serious about formal education, they can utilize its tools for self and social analysis.

Marriage has been considered holy in a human being’s life. “From ancient times”, as V.V.Prakash Rao and V.Nandini Rao say “marriage the family and women in India New Delhi, Heritage (1983) “marriage is considered as a ritual and a sacramental union. Marriage is an indispensable event of Hindu life and the person who is unmarried is considered wholly” (14). In Hindu epics like Ramayana and the Mahabharata too we have the concept of both arranged and love marriages. In India it is often believed, that arranged marriages are the most effective. However, due to literacy rate and education, the scenario has changed in regard to marriage. Qualities like independence, democracy, rights, self-reliance, self-respect, self-assertion, economic freedom, employment aptitude etc. have been the most significant reasons for the changing scenario. V.V.Prakash Rao quotes Gore’s study: M.S. Urbanization and Family change. Bombay popular (1969).

“Education was considered a major differentiating factor in the attitudes of respondents towards arranged marriages (---). He found that seventy three percent of the respondents without formal education as against a percent with graduate education hold to the traditional arrangement of marriages by elders. That means the more educated a respondent is, the more likely he is to give more freedom to the boy or girl concerned.” In
summary, he concludes that high education and urban residences are directly related to the attitudes of the respondents in regard to the freedom of choice of the parties to the marriage concerned.” (20) The alternative to arranged marriage is love marriage. The reason is that education helps them think and question their parent’s attitude and adamant behavior”. However in India as Aileen D. Ross puts it, “love was not necessary prelude for testing the relationship” (251) Prakash Rao says, “The Hindu family in its urban setting. Toronto: U of Toronto P.1961.

“Love was regarded as an uncontrollable and explosive emotion which makes a young person blind to reality, reason and logic. The family's stability may even be jeopardized since the emotions might lead one to marry an unsuitable person not only to his temperament but to the entire joint family. (---) The Hindu system regarded male selection by self choice as undesirable and feared that freedom of choice might upset the process of adjustment of the bride in her new family”. (16). In spite of the above statement about Hindus regarding love as uncontrollable and explosive emotion and emphasizing that love is blind to reality, reason and logic, the educated women feel that they have their own desires, aspirations and dreams about married life. Girls/women may not be mature enough to take decision about marriage, as they do not have enough experience. It could be just infatuation or lust, sometimes they mistake it for love and think they are capable of selecting their own life partners. Kalidasa, the Indian poet, remarked that “young people seek pleasures”. Sometimes it may work out very well and sometimes it may not. Let us see how the ‘educated’ women in the novels of 1950’s chose between arranged marriages and love marriages.

Gauri, Nikhil Ray’s wife an educated woman in Sahgal’s Storm in Chandigarh (14) neither had any emotional demands nor material demands from her husband or from Vishal Dubey who happens to be their family friend who is talented to know how to make her life comfortable.

Sahgal in her introduction to the collection of her epistles confesses: “when (Sahgal) she found the health of her marriage seemed to depend on the woman’s devotion, submission and nature, she gave up all these not only because she had a natural propensity for devotion, and submission in the cause of a structure built to last, seemed
worthwhile but because this was what women were expected to do and she had a woman’s instinct to cherish and preserve” (Sahgal & Rai 1994: vii).

The estrangement of husband and wife result from the lack of communication and temperamental incompatibility, which forms the central theme of *Storm in Chandigarh*. The women, portrayed in the novel, try to establish a new system, with some changed standards, where women can be their true selves, as there is no need for hypocrisy and the character is judged by the purity of heart and not chastity of body. This sort of alienation between the couple fails to build up a relation based on mutual communication, companionship, and equality. The women characters in the novel suffer from loneliness and unreciprocated love in marriage largely because of the haste or wrong choices.

In Sahgal’s *Storm in Chandigarh*, Saroj and Inder, Jit and Mara, Leela and Vishal, Gauri and Nikhil – all these couples have strained relations outside marriage. We could clearly see in the novel how the young hearts are broken by compulsions of matrimony and the call for a newfound love. The relationship between Saroj and Inder is not happy because all her attempts to hold a relationship based on love, companionship, and equality with Inder, fail. They both are poles apart and temperamentally incompatible. Inder is fickle minded, impulsive husband while Saroj is intense and has a sharpened sensibility. Saroj’s premarital sex is not considered as a sin by her but she feels it s all part of her growing up. Her honest confession with her husband was to wipe away her past life and to be clear of guilt. But this honest confession made Inder burn from inside which made him move away from her. As it was haunting him, time and again he blames her for her impurity.

This always came in between them Saroj’s guilt free attitude always made her say “I have committed no crime *Storm in Chandigarh* (85). Inder however does not accept the truth and like a typical male chauvinist believes that “a thousand years from now a women will still want and need a master” *Storm in Chandigarh* (92). According to Inder, a wife should be treated in a different way where he feels that “half of an enterprise, the complaint partner who presided, over home and children and furthered her husband’s career. *Storm in Chandigarh* (46). Saroj was always busy with herself, her concentration was only her family and household chores which was not appreciated by Inder. Saroj is
aware of her relationship with Inder if they are truly close to each other or are they only sharing some responsibilities like children, household work etc by being under one roof. She also knows that there are some stumbling blocks between them which cannot be removed. May be it has something to do with her past life. That is the reason for Inder’s irritation that rakes up whenever he sees Saroj, which he uses as a weapon for his frustration. He feels so obsessed with the man who was involved with Saroj’s life from the past making their marriage a “mockery” and a “betrayal” “The Past rose in dreadful images to taunt his manhood. Jealously had caught him unprepared….He was maddened by it. When it came over him he sat looking at Saroj with a revulsion that…….Some where he had read there were primitive societies that demanded the bold of virginity as evidence of female purity…The foundation he had thought rock had turned out to be straw and beneath it the unknown yawned”. (Storm 86). Inder’s anger turned out to be a vengeance, where, in his subconscious mind, he wants to kill that person if he meets him.

Inder had even stooped down to hurt Saroj constantly by reminding her of the past whenever he gets an opportunity, raking up the wound by not allowing it to heal. This strained their relationship as wife and husband. Though he knew it much before marriage, he was unable to put it behind and whenever it surfaces, it leaves a bad taste.

Inder’s chauvinistic attitude does not allow him to reconcile unless he rakes up the sore point in Saroj. According to him, he feels he was cheated and paying for it by suffering in disgrace that finally turned him to a stone. This was the reason for lack of warmth and understanding in their relationship. Saroj is a sensible and educated woman who is quite opposite to Inder. Though Inder had many relationships in the past and even at present with Mara, yet feels no remorse. For him, it is a man’s world but for a woman, it is a stigma to have premarital sex. Hence, he does not appreciate or understands the amount of efforts Saroj puts into their family. It is his callous and rigid attitude that has killed the spirit and warmth in their relationship.

This led to a longing desire to find a solace, a vent to her feelings where her spirit moved in search of it and found Vishal Dubey to empathize with her. Their relationship was like a soothing balm bringing comfort in her life, either in the form of walks or even when he acts like a sounding board.
Vishal Dubey’s life also was a beaten one, with strange relationship between Leela and him. Professionally a good liaison officer who failed to settle his affairs in the domestic front as he had some dents in his marriage. Their mutual infidelity was at the core of their fantasies, which proved fatal to the fulfillment of their marriage. It took a long time for Vishal to realize that though he could live in intimacy with Leela for all their adult lives still they remained as strangers to each other. Finally, he had realized that it was a torture to live that suffocate them. Umpteen times, he was lost in long silences of his marriage, trapped in helplessness and longed to cry out “Talk to me” Storm in Chandigarh (28). Saroj also felt similarly like Vishal, which according to them, marital relationship should be based on emotional communication, honesty complete acceptance of other person’s weaknesses and lack in pretence. Hence, they could not be close to their respective spouses. Though Vishal treated his wife as his equal and expected her to give him her natural self, who always maintained a distance and proved to be an adulterous woman, with Saroj, he wanted to have relationship in which there would be no pretence but frank communication. Hence, he liked her for she being a beautiful human being rather appreciate her physical attributes.

The nature of the two married women is quite contrast. Though Saroj was married to Inder for four years and bore him two kids, they have not developed a proper emotional bonding. There was a great amount of vacuum between them. When she conceived for the third time, yet Saroj enjoyed that motherhood who always loved to serve the family. Her past was left behind and she moved out of it and started taking up a very responsible position with Inder and family. She found happiness in those responsibilities but she never had any complaints in discharging her duties as a wife and a mother. On the contrary, Jit and Mara though educated and independent, Mara was not happy with all that she has. Mara being an ambitions woman, always wanted all that was present around. Hence, she was able to be with Jit as well as Inder. She always wanted the world’s best and nothing unclean. She wondered why she was unhappy in that house though it is planned with devotion and built with care. She never wanted to have children of her own and in the place of her own, she had the school which had everything a woman could want, except children of her own. Storm in Chandigarh. (47)
The reason for the failure of marriage in the post-colonial society is it lacked the inner harmony and spirit. The value crisis in the society is seen in the relationships of these couples. One has to agree with the words of Fanon Frantz, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, “If nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by the very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism it leads up a blind alley”…. (32) Here one can understand that these blind alleys are the choices that these woman” have chosen to live.

Vishal tolerated the tantrums of his wife Leela. But it abruptly ended due to her untimely death and he accidentally strayed into the life of Gouris “natural luxuriously feminine bounty attracted him *Storm in Chandigarh* (14). Their’s was a romantic relationship which was a momentary need for them. Nikhil Roy was the son of an industrialist who was always busy with his business. Gauri, his wife, though educated was never keen to do anything in specific but was complacent with her life. But their marriage also was filled with vacuum as it has not brought any satisfaction in their lives. Gauri’s attachment to Vishal with no strings attached, had not felt any strain or stress in his life. He started befriending this couple during the confused remorseful year after his wife’s death.

Gauri was a woman who neither had any emotional or material demands from Dubey because she was happy with her husband. “She made no emotional demands on him partly, Dubey guessed because she was happy with her husband”. *Storm in Chandigarh* (14) but she categorically liked Dubey and never ventured to cross the comfortable boundaries. Dubey felt the grace and favour in her memory of their relationship. Her generous spirit made her surrender easily to him. Hence, Dubey could easily encroach into her life. He never felt a sense of uneasiness when he had to leave her and go. She never clinged to him and on the contrary there was certainty that she would welcome him with open hands. Her shrewdness would not allow her core to be touched. She believes that it is a no man’s island. This is what attracted Dubey. He whole-heartedly appreciated her generosity and beauty before leaving to Chandigarh. “This woman needs no flattery she is beautiful and generous and honest”. *Storm in Chandigarh* (14, 15).
Sahgal through her novels shows that ‘virtuous woman’ doesn’t mean that they have to follow tradition meekly, suffer, endure and put up with the problems that come in their way. The women have quietly walked out of them. This shows how courageous women have become when they risk the unknown and are ready to face the consequences. Through Gauri, Vishal comes to know about Saroj who was always docile and not assertive. Though she was bright and intelligent, she never expressed herself at all. Saroj and Inder are a different kind of people. But a thin veneer of westernization makes them, move away from the periphery. Though Saroj is married for few years, Inder never bothered to know, if she was happy. He was always selfish and was only bothered about his life. Saroj, often was living in loneliness. Even, Inder’s presence never made a difference. This feeling pervaded even when he was with her, because he never realized how Saroj was neglected or ignored. Basically, he was unable to forget her past. But Saroj felt she would be relieved of her guilt. May be Inder felt leaving Saroj was the punishment that he wanted to give her. Saroj learnt to be alone at home or even at a social gathering. But loneliness was often surrounding her. Hence, felt even in the presence of Inder. “It’s awfully quiet. Where are the children? They’re out for the day…… I’m used to it. It’s not being alone I mind. I enjoy that. It’s loneliness. I’m alone even when Inder is here”  

(Storm 203)

On the contrary, Mara’s westernized outlook makes her fail to understand the typical nature of an Indian husband who takes pride in his wife depending on him for everything. Being dependent on him, responding to his unpredictable laws of his emotions and to live in obedience was the duty of a wife. This is very true in Saroj’s life. But women like Mara support men like Inder to get rid of their wives on these grounds. It shows that, they lack empathy and push women like Saroj to live in the labyrinth of distress “She wanted some man to drag her by the hair to submission, bring her to gasping shuddering climax in sex, and brand her personality with his won every waking hour”. (120) Saroj’s unassertive nature and Inder’s ‘he-man’ attitude lie as an incompatible aspect of their marriage. Though they come from different cultures they are plastered with a thin sheet of westernization that make them fall apart. This mismatch between the couple can be perceived as an act of betrayal. Married woman like Gowri on the other hand is a lover of social life and only interested in her personal comforts and
pleasures. She gets into an extra marital relationship with Dubey (14). Dubey’s attraction and affinity is due to Saroj’s innocence and transparency. Saroj was attracted to his concern, and affectionate words. His company was like a vent to her ‘loneliness’. Saroj’s past made Vishal appreciate her honesty. His kind words for her predicament could heal her heart to some extent unlike Inder who was raking up the injury by not allowing it to heal.

The age-old institutions of ‘Family’ and ‘Marriage’ have been undergoing tremendous strain in modern times. Commenting upon the breaking up of the family, David Mc Reynolds observes in his work, “nor can a person find his identity in the family for that institution is breaking up. One of the major factors for the disintegration of family is the rampant promiscuity in sexual relation. Another reason is that the economic freedom that makes marriage less necessary, resulting in entrapment between man and his wife”. Shobha De’s Socialite Evenings portrays a picture of contemporary Indian society, especially marriage and man-woman relationship. In this fictional cosmos of the book, the family is crumbling and marriage comes to be redefined. The new definition of marriage postulates complete sexual freedom, with no notion of marital infidelity. Economic security for wife seems to be the corner stone of this marriage arrangement, which appears more like a contract than living, in a vibrant, emotional relationship.

The reader is, set to keep in pace with Sahgal’s robustly, outspoken manner of propagating the typically unconventional, but painfully realistic thesis that the ritualistic hypocrisy of the institution of marriage is increasingly taking the shape of the dead albatross around the neck of modern emancipated, self-respecting man.

Fraility, Thy Name is (W) Oman (1993) is an excellent portrayal of the man-woman relationship. In this, the novelist R.W. Desai explores the place of woman in Indian society before marriage. In our society, which is essentially patriarchal, a female child is brought up under the strict control of her parents with a view that she has to be given to a new master, her husband who should find her acceptable, meeting his expectations. Marriage is thus considered a great ambition and ultimate goal of a girl. The traditional feminine virtues and graces are instilled in her. So that she could be an attractive ‘commodity’ in the marriage market Simon De Beauvoir’s observation that –
“Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society” is nowhere truer than in India (Second Sex).

The relation between literature and society is reciprocal, both serve as cause and effect on each other. A literary creation does not come into existence by itself, its emergence is determined by social situations. Of all the literary forms, the novel is considered to be the most socially oriented because it depicts human relationships in its varied aspects. The recent study of contemporary literature shows that it is passing through a conflict in roles and values. One of the most significant themes of modern Indian fiction is that man-woman relationship.

Postcolonialism

One of the first major theorization about postcolonial literature, Bill Ashcroft, Iareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in “Key Concepts in Post-colonial studies.” defines ‘Post-colonialism’ to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression.

It can be argued that of all postcolonial theorists Gayathri Spivak has most consistently focused on what has come to be called the ‘Subaltern’, literally the category of those who are lower in position or who are lower in rank. In one of her famous essays, Can the Subaltern Speak (1988), Spivak expresses her concern about the agency of the subaltern oppressed to represent themselves. She argues that since the subaltern female cannot speak for herself because the ‘double bind’ of colonialism and patriarchy, silence her. Any intellectual project must seek to make visible the position of the marginalized. She also argues that the appropriation of the marginalized into disciplines such as postcolonial studies condemns them to perpetual marginality, always the subject of somebody else’s discourse. She points out that during imperialism, the British assumed the authority and prerogative to speak for the oppressed native woman (especially in the colonial discourse on Sati). The works of Nayantara Sahgal explore diverse issues of colonial and post independence India from communal violence to political corruption.
The writing of diaspora forms significant part of postcolonial literature since it deals with the ethnic issues like nation, movement, location, identity, alienation, displacement and belonging etc. The diasporic literature seems to be an extension of national literature in an alien land where the writer is conscious of preserving and presenting the themes, thereby to extend the boundaries of the nation. Rushdie writes in his *Imaginary homelands* (1991). “Our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that, we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the things that was lost, that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands India’s of the mine.” (10) The diasporic writers create an imaginary homeland through their literary art by writing myths, folklore, cultural and social beliefs out of the memory. Hence, it plays an important role in their writings.

Unlike Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Nayanatara Sahgal’s works are deeply rooted with political issues. They deal with the postcolonial Indian ethos, the traumas, trials and tribulations faced by the Indians in the process of the partition and nation building; In one of her interviews to ‘*Literary Criteria*’ she herself stated, that as far as politics goes the real life in India as the reality of life is so political here. One lives by values and every culture is a frame work of eternal values which is re-established continuously, whenever there is a threat to these values, they will project their grief and anguish at the national plane. Hence, any post-colonial expression is a quest for values and interaction of emotions and perceptions towards the traditional values of the colonized country. In view of William Saffran, “The migrants retention of collective memory about their homeland” and their continued effort “to relate personally or vicariously to that homeland in one way or the other,” (*Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of homeland and Return. Diaspora Spring, 83-99*) are the two important characteristics of diaspora. Under the influence of second wave criticism, some of the women writers in the post colonial diaspora use myths, folk tales and epic stories as feminist devices of subversion for female gender representation. In this light, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *The Palace of Illusions*: offers interesting reading in the form of fictional representation of postcolonial issues on marginality of gender, race and class. The novel covers the story of the whole epic from the birth of Panchali to her (Mahaparasthan) death with appropriate references to background stories. The novel can be considered as a bildungsroman as it traces the
development of Panchali at different stages of her life from a fire born timid female to a fiery princess, a famous queen to a woman who ruled her time by ‘Changing the course of history’, a true queen and a mentor for the next heir of Pandavas to the throne, a faithful wife following her husband’s till their death, and lastly a spiritual genderless entity in the unknown realms of life after death.

The colonization brought its western ideas of male domination or supremacy over the female beings thereby creating a female marginalization of gender in the society. These ideas influenced the psyche of the Indians, which brought changes in the social status of men and women. According to Ashish Nandi, an early psychologist who explored on the idea of masculinity in the Indian context traces the impact of British Colonization on Indian men. (Woman versus womanliness in India: An essay in Social and Political psychology – A.Nandy – psychoanalytic review, 1976). Earlier to British rule, Indian gender roles were much more fluid and flexible but after the advent of the British, the imperial ideology of superiority of male and masculinity brought in a change of increase in the Kshatriya mode of masculinity. Besides, masculinity was hierarchial and created barriers of class and caste. The later generations have internalized these ideas and adopted them in the society. These concepts of status related to patriarchal subordination of gender and hegemonic masculinity, were described by sociologists like Connel that men were trying to overpower not only women but also other men, which are clearly given an expression in The Palace of Illusions. (Connel; R.W. ‘Masculinites’ Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995) (Quoted in N. Chandra ‘Reciprocal Relationships between Masculinity and Femininity in Thi.Ja’s Mogamul and Mulk Raj Anand’s Gauri) Post Colonial Indian Fiction in English and Masculinity. Rajeshwar Mittapalli and Letizi Alterno Eds. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2009).

The Vine of Desire the select novel for the study of this Chapter is a sequel to The Sister of my heart. Sister of my heart is a story of two young women Anju and Sudha. Though distant cousins, they regard one another as sisters of their hearts, because they were born a few hours apart from each other, have bonded in ways even their mothers could not comprehend. Urged into marriage, their lives take sudden unexpected turns in
India and America. The upheavals in their lives are simple aftershocks of their cultural displacement and ambivalence, quite typical to post colonial cultural shifts.

_The Vine of Desire_, the sequel picks up where Sudha, a divorcee comes to America to visit Anju and her husband Sunil, who has an early crush on Sudha. The happy reunion of the two is again marred by Sunil’s passionate feelings for Sudha and by Sudha yielding to his desire. Sudha leaves Anju and works as a caretaker to earn her livelihood. Anju seeks divorce from Sunil and starts a new life leaving away her old value system. The novel is set in the backdrop of the Chatterjee’s family already deprived of its male figures and its former economic status. As the three widows Pishi Ma, the cousin’s paternal aunt, their mothers Nalini and Gowri, Sudha and Anju the two young girls of this family, meander their way through the drama of life, facing marriage, motherhood, divorce, widowhood etc: Each stage brings into focus a certain aspect of the upper-class Bengali Culture and tradition.

In _Manu Smriti_, (Chapter IX-3) it is written that a woman can never be left alone: “Pita Rakshathi Kaumare, bharata rakshiti youvane. Rakshanti Sthaviri Putra, na stree swatantry amarhati.” It means that always woman should be protected and never should be left alone and marriage plays an important role in a woman’s life. Marriage in Sudha’s life made her run away from the husband whose family forced her abort her daughter, and her first love Ashok who wants to take care of her but not her child. Anju and Sudha hope to find solace in their sister – like relationship. Anju wants to have Sudha beside her to comfort growing restlessness as well as for her dissatisfaction with her dissatisified life with her husband Sunil. Smothered by her past life and to escape from it, she becomes an attendant in her sister’s house. Each of them acknowledges Sunil’s attraction to Sudha though unspoken. The novel depicts the cousins in an obvious betrayal of Anju’s and Sunil’s failed marriage and more importantly the gradual realization on part of both the cousins, confronting life in different ways. They evolve to achieve their independence from the conservative platforms where both of them begin. Anju ends with college education and becomes a member of a writing group and takes up creative writing as her vocation and Sudha was able to understand the unjust desire of Sunil, her first love Ashok and the new love, Lalit who were ensuring her and make her wary of. Finally,
Sudha returns to India but to lead an independent life, and decides to look after father like old man to stand on her feet. “Uma Benerjee believes that the hypocrisy of the institution of marriage is increasingly taking the shape of a dead albatross around the necks of the modern emancipated and self respecting women” (123) Sudha finds herself entangled in the institution of marriage and thus faces difficulty in surviving and in looking after her daughter Dayitha.

In India, marriage is an institution between man where woman where society has a greater influence on it. The success of a marriage largely depends on society and the family. Patriarchal society keeps the woman in subordination, thus man enjoys the liberties but woman has to compromise and adjust within the four walls of her house. The relationship the cousin’s share here is very unique. The bonding they shared before was different. But marriage has changed their relation. It created an abyss between them. Though Sudha, wanted Anju and Sunil to love Dayitha she could part with her. She wanted Lupe her friend to help her with a job so that she can leave the house and move away from Sunil and Anju. She wants to enjoy the life in America at the same time hold the freedom in India, living in those nostalgic memories. At the same time, she wanted to be with Sunil. One can understand vulnerable and in secured woman becomes when she walks out of marriage. She doesn’t want to deceive Anju by snatching away her husband. But she was unable to move away from his loving and, caring gestures. She was torn between the emotions, vulnerabilities and virtues. Her mind is clearly seen when we read the following lines. “The river of my life is speeding toward an abyss’ what shall I do? I want an existence indecent as nail polish’ I want sleep. I want to bite the apple of America. I want to swim to India to the parrot green smells of childhood. I want a mother’s arms to weep in. I want my weather vane mind to stop its maniac spinning. I want Sunil” (*The Vine*.87).

These lines show the conflict, and the torment she was undergoing. Though she is in touch with Ashok, she is unable to go back to India as she is attracted to Sunil. She loses control on herself. She encourages him, surrenders to the momentary desire or lust of her body and mind “I have done that which I shouldn’t have *The Vine of Desire*. But she courageously admits her mistake to Anju “I have kissed your husband and I liked it”
(The Vine of Desire.108). She becomes selfish and guilty but hides many things from Anju and finally they part their ways. They were once “sister of the heart” but later they become strangers and especially Sudha and Sunil get burnt of their guilt where Anju becomes the pawn in their game.

Sudha was not ready to marry Sunil though he proposes, and explains his divorce to Anju. Though the cracks start appearing at the beginning of their marriage itself, finally it took time for Sunil to open. He coaxes her, saying that there was no need for her to feel guilty. Sudha succumbs to her bodily desire thus betraying Anju’s trust reposed in her. She was unable to face anybody for that matter. Dayitha becomes her weakness “If I were alone, I could….” (The Vine.189). She turns all her feelings of guilt, all the regrets and the rages that snatched away her youth onto Dayita. “My daughter, my enemy, my own wounded myself.”

The postcolonial dilemma is well portrayed in the novel Vine of Desire when Sudha feels that she was caught in a web of cumbersome situations. Her motherly instincts lie her up with Dayitha, her daughter who made her leave the known world behind, to boldly explore the new avenues with a new spirit, a strong trait of the postcolonial women. Sudha is ensured in this newly found bonding, making her helpless placing her in a maternal conflict, “I love you so much I could die for you. But here’s where the poetry breaks down: I like you only in spurts. Sometimes I feel trapped by you. And so I grow angry with you. (The Vine. 189)

The conflict of her mind, torn between the daughter and the man who attracts her, who has become a silent lover. She is frustrated, whether to listen to the body or to the heart. A young woman bereft of the family, without any male support moved to an alien country. As one reads the lines, “If I were to count the ways I love Dayita, what would I say? I love you with a pained love, a nerve grown wrong, pinched between bones. Because of love for you, I left everything I knew and plunged into uncertainty. (The Vine. 188) She was ripped off between the emotions of guilt and regret for her youth being victimized. “My daughter, my enemy, my own wounded self.” (The Vine.189) Chitra’s writings make one glide through the realms of these vulnerable situations and sympathise with the characters for their dilemmas.
Love is an epitome of trust. But when trust changes to mistrust, with an inkling of doubt, a person is always observed from close quarters. If this happens after marriage, he will be suspected and closely observed by his wife as it creates a suspicion in her eyes. But men are so vulnerable that they easily get attracted to physical beauty failing to realize, that, it brings discord in their marital relationship. This is what happens with Sunil who marries Anju but gets attracted to Sudha on the day of their marriage itself. Anju’s and Sudha’s bonding is undeterred, that they remain the same even after their marriage. The presence of Dayitha with Sunil, the new entrant has not brought any change in their bonding. Anju and Sudha led simple backgrounds unlike Sunil’s. His attraction for Sudha on the day of their marriage itself was noticed by Anju but she ignored it totally as it is quite natural to appreciate a girl like Sudha for her grace, beauty and poise. Anju is used to this sort of compliments. Though she was observing Sunil at that moment her departure to America, along with her husband made her forget all this, as they would be distanced from each other and they have to move on, with their respective lives. But the abortion has created turmoil in Anju’s mind which affected her mentally, making her go through a “roller coaster, ride of emotions.” She was shuttered physically and emotionally, after the loss of her son Prem. Anju desires to bring Sudha to America, which was totally a bad idea to Sunil. The miscarriage brought a distance between the couple. In bouts of her depression, she felt the emptiness, a vacuum in their relation. What a predicament for women to lose the emotional support of husband and also to lose the child. The foundation of their bonding started shaking. She wondered whether it was due to marriage or the person to whom she is married to? Marriage is a turning point in one’s life.

Rukmini Bhaya Nair says, “Women, Conventionalised into their roles of wives, sisters and mothers have, as a result remained trapped within a powerful cross cultural metaphor that violently divides the gender making us all, in one way or another, victims of Lawrence’s Pansay – Syndrome”, (9) as quoted in Kamala Rajan’s Thesis Cross cultural vision and Schizophrenic Imagination: A Study of Select novels of Nayantara Sahgal.
Marriage changes our attitude and gives lot of maturity, makes us realize our priorities and also brings in a possessive nature in woman. But for a man, he feels that he is tied down, freedom curtailed, doesn’t, like to be controlled and hates to be questioned. If his wife questions, he feels as if he is stalked, that finally leads to frustration and he takes it on his wife. He blames his wife for the cracks that appear in their marriage and the blame game starts. Men never would encourage confrontation. The emotional vulnerability of a woman becomes the strength of a man. He will avoid her, come home late and hardly spends time with her. In the bargain, woman feels that she is deceived and collapses, with no one around. The relationship of Sudha and Anju was purely on love, trust and warmth and were there for one another. Today when Sudha is visiting Anju at her invitation along with Dayita her daughter, her estranged life, has created nervousness and “unexpected dread” in her to meet Anju. She doesn’t want to brood over as she is aware of those questions.

Anju was affected physically and mentally after the abortion. Now she became superstitious. It may be because of the abortion or because of Sunil. Symbolically, the calamities in the USA like earthquakes, as ill omens, were bringing some misfortune into their lives and also in the form of Sudha. She was devastated with these thoughts. Motherhood was bringing a lot of change in Anju. She was emotionally connected to the child trying to share all the beautiful things of her life even from the past. She felt her articulation with Prem (the baby in the womb) was more solacing than talking to Sunil. Anju’s open confession of hatred towards her ancestral home, her love for reading books, longing desire to explore the countries would make an understanding her better.

She remembers the first incident at the time of her marriage, when Sunil stealthily picks up the handkerchief that was forgetfully dropped by Sudha. This made Anju envy Sudha, for a moment. Marriage is such a relationship that binds the couple, where each of them feel jealous, when someone tries to intrude, however close they may be in their past life.

The favourite place that Anju longed was the bookstore where she spent most of her time reading the novels of her favourite author Virginia Woolf. The bookstore also has a special mention because this was her first meeting place with Sunil whom she met
before marriage and was very much impressed with his panache. But later she realized that Sunil never was interested in Virginia Woolf but was there just, to win her heart. How women are naïve and innocent to believe in what they see especially when they are impressed with someone whom they decide to be their life partner. The love she had for Sunil was like giving reassurance to the baby in her womb that he would be the best father. May be Anju felt that the other side of Sunil is much stronger, especially the parental quality in him. She readily accepted his weakness as a man, who has fallen for a beautiful girl like Sudha.

She also admits the strength of Sudha’s traditional beauty and irrepressible intelligence. Sometimes Anju feels intrigued why Sunil chose her as his wife though he was the most sought after guy. The way Sunil took care of her especially after the abortion gives a slight pain in her heart. Was he doing this out of pity or regret? Pity for losing the child and for being under the post abortion trauma or regret for marrying her over Sudha. Anju had all sympathies for Sudha, as it became more complicated when she walked out of her marriage. Anju did not like Sunil supporting Ramesh and she snubbed him for standing up for other men no matter what their position is. Sunil was not very happy with Anju’s idea of bringing her to America, though money wasn’t what he was worried about but his feelings for Sudha that were buried deep in his heart. After all a man’s weakness lies in his physical attraction where he couldn’t come out of it though it was unethical to continue with this sort of feelings towards another woman when he has a loving wife whom he married out of his own choice. When Sunil did not respond to her request, Anju felt there was no need for her to count on men for anything. So she decided to work secretly and save some money to send it to Sudha. She felt for Sudha more than anybody else.

Anju made all the efforts to please Sudha. As a woman, she understood Sunil and his feelings towards Sudha. She knew Sudha very well as they grew up together. Sunil’s feelings were genuine. Her maturity made her balance between the two. Her love to Sudha is fathomless. But as a wife she could not reach her husband. Sunil’s feelings never touched her heart, due to his behavior as well as the first shocking incident at the banquet hall. Though Sudha loved Ashok ardently her decision to marry Ramesh, makes
us think that Sudha was a docile person who gave up her love. Anju shares Sudha’s remarriage proposal so that she can look after her baby, but Sunil doesn’t give his opinion. Sunil is a wise man who would play his cards carefully and would never reveal his mind and feelings openly. He was inquisitive to know about Sudha, what is happening in her life so on and so forth. But when Sunil heard Sudha’s arrival to America, to stay with Anju, he was really excited in core of his heart and was glad to know that she refused to remarry Ashok. But he was careful of not exposing his thoughts and feelings. Anju also notices the way Sunil reacts differently whenever Sudha’s name surfaces during their conversations. It was Anju’s love for Sudha and trust her cousin, which made her ignore sunil feelings. Sudha would never deceive her. Sunil is not afraid of anyone that is why he was boldly admiring the photograph of Anju and Sudha with a great pretence. Sudha, being not aware of his intentions feels jealous of Anju for having such a loving husband (The Vine. 29). Sudha’s daughter Dayita was the centre of the attraction in the house. Sunil spends most of the time with her whenever he is at home. Anju remembered the days when she was carrying Prem. Anju wondered if Sunil’s love for Sudha was platonic or romantic. What a hypocrite! He pretends to be a caring husband.

Sudha’s narrative abilities were due to her aunt Pishi’s art of storytelling. Today Sudha decided to narrate Ramayan to Dayitha and this is an analogy to be taken. She was talking about the Lakshmana Rekha, which is a very important warning to Sita, drawn by her brother-in-law Lakshmana who drew it for the safety of Sita. This is a beautiful analogy one would refer to a woman who has to be careful in her life and not to cross her limit to endanger her life because, this would bring trouble in her life for which she would only be responsible. May be this was the reason why people refer to Lakshmana Rekha as a simile where a woman should always know to live within the circle. Sudha narrates to Dayitha who was still a toddler as her heart was burning with guilt from the incident that happened with Sunil. She feels that everyone’s life has a circle drawn around and one must not cross it, because chaos waits on the other side of the line. But here leaving her husband, she has already stepped outside her circle. With the kiss, Sunil trampled the circle, his marriage had etched around him. She felt that she was already into an unsafe zone with no other options. She also felt the urge, the desire in her body, the biological need her body was craving for. That was the weakest moment of her life.
Is it going to stop with it? Or else where is it going or do they have to encounter each other when Anju is not around? Are they going to have control over the situation or are they going to yield, just by giving some excuses, convincing themselves that they can go ahead, as they deserve more, they are young and life is moving on. Where is it going to take them? Being married, they have moved out of their orbits they were supposed to live in. Varalakshimi points out that this fear in women is caused not only by the patriarchal system, but also by the internalized cultural ideals in women: “I would be accurate to say that women all over the world are generally apprehensive about doing anything outside the ordinary because they fear the speculation and gossip of not only the men around them but even more so the women who are influenced by social conditioning.” (109). Though Sudha knew, that she was wrong, she could not control the situation and she must have been apprehensive of the relationship and reputation she has to face with her cousin and the society as well. Everyone agree with the opinion of Varalakshmi which is apt for the above situation.

Anju’s assignment has brought the real self in her, just by observing her mother. Her mother’s obedience, grit, the sacrifices she made after her father’s death all are praiseworthy. She was a woman of endurance and strength who took care of the family, Bookstore and the property. Marriage has taught her some great lessons. She never fell into self-pity or yielded to any sort of temptations but only grew stronger who could understand the situations with lot of maturity. She even took care of Sudha, her mother and even Dayitha at one stage. (Pishi and even Aunt Nalini) Anju’s mother was a great personality that one should emulate. But for Anju the loss of her son (Prem) made the ground under her feet shake. She mishandled the loss unlike her mother. She also has a gut feeling that she was on the verge of losing her husband Sunil too. Sudha’s guilt was disturbing her and was unable to behave in a normal way. She was disturbed with the incident that took place between Sunil and her. Anju knows about Sunil’s nature. Maybe she was unable to gauge his infidelity and moreover she never expected that Sudha would cause such a problem in their marriage. Hence, when they had to attend a party at Mr. Chopra’s house she gave all her jewellery and the best saree to Sudha without an iota of doubt or jealousy. Anju’s love for Sudha was immense and she felt that it was her duty to support Sudha after the divorce, but never suspected her.
Sudha’s interaction at the party with Mrs. Pinky Chopra shows the assertive transformation of her who was timid and docile earlier. This throws light on Sudha as a woman of confidence and courage, which is lacking in Mrs. Pinky Chopra. As a young Sudha she needed protection right from childhood but she never lets anyone damage her core and her self-respect. Sudha’s strength was seen when she was able to cut through her mother in law’s plot to control her womb. She could step out of the card on of wifedom into the strong path of being a mother in a country like India where such things meant shame. She was ready to enter a new continent alone and lead a life on being alone.

One wonders if there is any true love existing between the Chopra couple or is it money that is binding them. Ordinary people like Anju and Sudha longed for love and a good marriage. They suffer in marriage though they are ready to make so many compromises and adjustments in their personal lives. They are ready to face life’s harsh realities without any importance for money matters. There might be minor skirmishes but Sunil never prevented Anju from working. She wanted to earn and buy a ticket for Sudha’s trip. On the contrary, Sunil was always a responsible son who looked after his parents’ needs.

Sunil’s friend Lalith’s friendly disposition, his wit and lively nature brought Sudha close to him. Lalith kept her at ease at the party because he was enchanted by Sudha’s poise and grace. Sunil was growing jealous and he always kept an eye on them throughout the party. He neither could ignore his wife Anju nor openly embrace Sudha because he is a married man. Though his heart doesn’t accept Anju, he was longing for Sudha. That was the conflict in his mind. Sudha’s proximity with Lalith was all the more making Sunil jealous and frustrated. This is why, Sunil got into an altercation with the security guard, like a vent to all his frustration. Anju was shocked at his unusual behavior. Sudha’s acceptance of Lalith’s invitation also disturbed Sunil.

But Sudha never had any feelings for Sunil because she was treating him as her brother-in-law who happens to be the husband of his beloved cousin. When Sudha puts forth the dating proposal by Lalith, Anju was very happy to hear that but Sunil objects to this. We can see how possessive he is of Sudha. Sudha, being an independent girl, walks out of her marriage when someone else was controlling her and her family. Though
Ramesh was educated and an efficient Engineer, he was spineless which she couldn’t take. Sunil’s objection to go out with Lalith was not at all appreciated by Sudha because she knows what he was trying to do with her and she was not prepared to cheat Anju and snatch her husband away. But Sunil has a hidden agenda i.e. to betray Anju. Sudha is aware of his ulterior motive so she says “I am not exactly..., you hypocrite” (pg.157). Lalith’s arrival in Sudha’s life made her recollect the words of her mother “Folly and Frivolity” are two single words that would bring pain in one’s life. As a girl she was advised to be cautious of these two words which would snatch the things when one longs for it.

Sudha’s mother insisted that she should respond to Ashok who was Sudha’s first love and wanted to marry her because Sunil’s rigid father wouldn’t accept any blackmark from the bride’s family. She did not want to jeopardize Anju’s life. Secondly, when she walks out of marriage and marry Ashok, he was not ready to raise Dayitha who wants Dayitha to be left with her grandmother, which upsets Sudha. It was too late, by then, Sudha had already left to America. Woman who had faced so many ups and downs in life, was ready to live on her own terms even in an alien country, of the financial problems. Sudha never saw it as predicament though she has to live with Anju never obliged to Sunil’s request.

Lalith’s friendly disposition attracted Sudha who even narrates her past to him. Marriage with Ramesh is like a duty towards his wife where there was no love. The institution of marriage fails, when a husband fails to love his wife and serve her with affection. If she wanted to continue to live with her husband, she has to obey their wish and get aborted. She lived with guilt and fright and was ashamed of her plight. She finally decided to give birth to a girl child and walk out of marriage. Lalith’s parents were a good example of compatibility. Though there were situations where her father would brainwash his mother, she did what she wanted because she thought it was right.

Sudha’s love for her daughter Dayitha was making her feel guilty but she was sharing everything with her. She admits her predicament, what made her leave her husband and carry on with the pregnancy. She was also blaming herself for the intimate
relationship with Sunil, tearing up Ashok’s letter, for dancing with Lalith, above all leaving Dayitha at the care of Sunil and Anju, when going out on a date with Lalith.

Sunil’s lust for Sudha made him share many of his feelings for her without any apprehension. He even said that he was afraid of losing her again “Can one lose what one never had” Sunil’s audacity to say, that he doesn’t love Anju was a cowardly act. To hide his love for Sudha even before his marriage shocked Sudha. Sunil spoke all his feelings to Sudha may be because he did not want to lose her as Sudha was showing some interest in Lalith. This made him feel jealous of Lalith. His jealousy nature for Lalith must have made him to use opportunity to spill the beans. Sudha could see some honesty in his confession. She felt that he would have been a good friend. She knew that it was not possible for her to betray her cousin Anju by accepting his proposal.

Life has taught Sudha many lessons. Finally, she decided to leave Anju’s house and chose to be a caretaker to an old man, considering him to be a sibling to Dayitha. When the old man throws the cereal cup and spat at her face Sudha was not angry. She faced many such violent acts since her childhood. As a child, her mother pounded Sudha’s life into the shape of her desires. Mother-in-law wanted to cut away from her whatever she considered unseemly. Ramesh backed away with foolish apologies Sunil exploited her body for his pleasure. Each time she convinced and compromised herself saying it was for duty, family honour, respect & passion. But today when the old man spat at her, she treated as a punishment for all her mistakes she committed in her life. The shelter she got now is giving her enough time to lick her wounds and give her sigh of relief. Sudha was guilty for leaving Anju’s place, without even informing her. Anju was the one who wanted Sudha to come over there and stay with her. Another alarming mistake was her intimacy with Sunil to whom she offered her body. Is it not a betrayal? Hence, she could easily forgive the old man’s spat and her heart aches with pain, when she remembers her father who was with them throughout their childhood in anonymity as a driver and who died alone without any one around. Sudha knew that she deserves all this pain and Dayitha should be a ray of hope and happiness in her life. She decided to channelize all her energies to raise her up. She punishes her body by not pampering it with any lotions, allowing it to peel and crack in that winter season. She felt this is what
she deserves and she has to bear all the pain. Sunil finds the letters Sudha wrote. He reads and dumps them into the dustbin. He was ready to face the repercussions after Anju returns. Anju confronts him but there was no reply from Sunil. Sudha’s new job as a caretaker to the old man was holding good and she was instrumental in making the marriage of Myra and Trideep workout when it was on the brink of disaster due to the old man’s sickness. Sudha’s patience paid a rich dividend by keeping up their marriage intact. She realizes the importance of marriage and had a sigh of relief.

The letters by Anju, Sunil, Gouri (mother of Anju), Sudha and Nalini (Sudha’s Mom) are all reflections of their true emotions, causing a turmoil in their lives. Sunil’s letter to Anju reflects the guilt more than his worry for her, may be a financial worry or an emotional one. He knows that Anju is not financially equipped to establish herself in the US. He knows how sensitive and fragile her mind is. When she couldn’t bear the loss of an unborn child, how could she withstand such worse blows? Sunil’s humanity made him provide some financial assistance to her. He honestly admitted that their relationship has ended and in future, they can only be friends. He smoothly washed off his hands and quietly moved away to Houston.

Anju’s letter shows how she was deeply hurt and proved her individuality. Her self-respect did not allow her to take any sops from him. She was so heart-broken that she never wanted to hear from him anymore. She was shattered and never wanted to hear from him. She decided to take divorce though she knew Sunil was feeling guilty but never wanted to contact him. News of his father’s demise did not reach Sunil in spite of his mother’s phone calls and letters. The letters from his mother-in-law, Gowri were also heart wrenching. This shows the bonding, respect and empathy Gouri has for her daughter’s in laws. As a woman she stood by Sunil’s mother extending moral support.

Anju’s letter to her mother is a reflection of her present state. She feels betrayed by her husband and Sudha. She has not shared it so far with her mother and it was such a devastating situation where a daughter shares about her broken marriage to a very conservative lady who would have never imagined even in her wildest dreams that her daughter would face such a predicament. Sudha is the cause of their divorce. The situations in her life have changed her so much that she is now ready to face any
situations. She wants to change the adversaries into fortune and prove her mettle. Sudha writes to Anju after a long time and was ready to face any confrontation from her cousin.

But it was a disgrace to Sudha for being the culprit to shatter the home of Anju. She was a blot in the family who put the entire family to shame. Ashok’s letter to Sudha was a letter of consolation. We understand how much he understood her and what is that she needs now at that moment. He was ready to accept her with clear heart. As he sincerely loved her, wanted to marry her even after knowing the predicaments she has been facing which has not deterred his love. He repents for the delay caused. Had he done this before, Sudha wouldn’t have got into this mire. His decision to go to the US and bring back Sudha was commendable. As Shakespeare says “Let love not find any alteration, whenever it finds an alteration”, let me not to the marriage of two true minds is very true in case of Ashok who still having the same feelings for Sudha.

One opines that one need to agree with the writing of Ashok Chaskar in his article, ‘Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s The Vine of Desire. A Study of Immigrants’ Cultural Dilemmas and Displacements in Contemporary discourse. The dilemmas and displacements presented by Chitra Banerjee are relevant to the sensibilities of human beings in the age of globalisation. The displacements are associated with innumerable options of life styles in different geographical settings and the shock of rootlessness in the process of hybridization is explored in The Vine of Desire. “We see the struggle of the immigrants to assimilate in an alien land and their unfulfilled longings, with finding themselves trapped in the middle of nowhere, desperately try for a way out and suffer in the process of cultural dilemmas and displacements in the newly adopted land.” (104-109)

The other novel Storm in Chandigarh by Nayantara Sahgal examines the value crisis in postcolonial India. Values are one of the important facts that one has to live with and culture forms an integral part of it. If it is jeopardized even to a smaller extent, whether to an individual or to a nation, the anguish caused would be enormous thus resulting in an intense search to restore it. The novel is an interplay of emotions and attitudes where one could perceive a strong jolt to the traditional values of the colonized country.
Jasbir Jain, “Sahgal’s Political Journey: Stepping outside the Frame”, mentions three different attitudes one of those who has the greed for power carried forward the agenda of their imperial rulers. They proved to be even more dangerous than the imperial rulers as they appealed to same passions emotions that were active in the years of freedom struggle. In the novel it was represented by Gyan Singh, the Punjab Chief Minister who was unscrupulous but had great oratory skills with strong and imposing personality. The second group is to in contrast to this opportunist attitude but we preferred to stay passive and to this group Harpal Singh, the balanced Chief Minister of Haryana, Saroj the wife of Inder and to some extent Jit also belongs to.” (181)

The third category represents the elite class of Indian youth who even with their analyzing ability of the ancient values and their rational attitude fails to strike a chord between the strong convictions and their surroundings, as they are minority in number. Sahgal is conscious of the colonial impact that was prevalent in India after independence in all walks of our lives that was handed over to us by the Britishers. Independence had disturbed the rhythm and created a cultural disturbance and failure of transparency, sincerity among the bureaucracy. The society portrayed in the novel is caught between two worlds where one remains passive and the other powerless to be born. The traditional Indian Values were struggling to adapt to the new phase of our independent country whereas the Western Values cannot be followed by the masses. This resulted in a friction at all levels creating an opposition to the value system, resulting in violence. Hence, one could perceive the strains of violence in all its manifestations resulting an upheaval even in their personal lives. The violence of emotion was displayed even in the lives of Vishal and Gyan where it was like relationship, which lacked commitment and appeared as if it was an exercise expected of them. It was not only a violation of each other but also their own as well.

The novel projects the failure of the true impact of democracy on the city of Chandigarh where the reader can find it in the lines of Storm in Chandigarh (212). That was architecture transplanted, not conceived here and he wondered how successful democracy was superimposed on illiterate masses exploding millions of them.” The storm in Chandigarh (212). The attempts to establish freedom by picking the best from
the West had only dismantled the inner harmony of people. The political failures surfaced even in their personal lives. Vishal and Leela fell apart because they never accepted each other in totality. She could only see the hero in him thereby unable to accept him totally, whereas Vishal was blinded to see Leela beyond her vivacity, which is truly needed in a married life. In the same way, Jit and Mara also lacked the sanctity in their marriage as “she wanted all the world she could lay her hands on and the best of each – the softness of Jit and the hardness of Inder.” The storm in Chandigarh (92). Even Saroj’s and Inder’s relationship appeared as if it is for their convenience sake. Constant abuse by her husband made Saroj weep and her sobs were only like an instant reaction.” She was a being of pride and purity with a face uplifted to stars” (Strom.97) which shows the integrity of Saroj. Thus, all the couples showed a fragile relationship which is a trait observed as postcolonial dilemma of Women.

The novel makes the readers perceive it as an autobiographical work because it deals with complex marital problems just like Sahgal’s. Though the novel was a political novel, the marital problems highlight the political problems. The ego of men, who try to control and dominate, portrays men as colonizers, exploiting their women with no love for their partners. One can show an analogy of this, in the relationships of the couple, Inder and Saroj, where Inder tries to control Saroj by bringing a marital discord, in the same way Gyan Singh’s egoistic and dominating nature to control Harpal Singh who is passive and Gandhian in his ideology causes the political disaster. Vishal Dubey a true champion of the oppressed stands for Harpal and fights against Gyan Singh and in his private life supports Saroj to walk out of marriage.

Nishat Zaidi in the article Storm in Chandigarh: A Search for Values in the Post-Colonial India. Quotes R. Radhakrishnan who points out that “the important point about Sahgal’s narrative trajectory is that it does not hesitate to incorporate gender narrative within its ambit. The novel takes into account the question of gender vis-à-vis the value crisis in a Post Colonial Society in dialogic relationship of mutual accountability.” (114-115) The novel projects the different status that was available to women in the postcolonial Society and the effect of this was due to the outcome of their roles they played and their dynamics with others. (R. Radhakrishnan, “Nationalism, Gender and
Saroj talks about the individuality she contained and how she preserved it and at the end she has to walk out of her marriage. Her words show how important for one to preserve it without being damaged where the other qualities also get buried deep inside. “I don’t want to destroy it in myself,” ------ “Like museums in Europe stored away their art treasures in their basements to keep them safe from bombing during the War.” Vishal replies, “one should not keep their qualities in storage. There is such a limited time to live.” (Strom.205) these words have illuminated her predicament, which showed that she was recovering from the wounds of marriage and made her realize that she can take it into her own hands and change it the way she wanted to in spite of its hardships. The decision to walk out of Inder’s life, breaking away the shackles of the bondage that her marriage has brought in, is a testimony of her changed self, making her understand the value of life where one has to live happily rather than suffer under the guise of rigid traditions.

Sahgal opines that the Indians mentality to seek refuge in smaller sub-national identities would ruin the multiculturist policy of India. She in her, some thoughts on Puzzle of Identity says, “My own novels are about how the idealism of an emergent nation has withered and roled in corruption and decay.” (87).

Conclusion:

It recognised the value of women through the medium of text. In culture and economics, this movement of women became politically prominent. It was an innovative venture for the upcoming fictional columnists. The feminist critics dispute that literary texts replicate as this regards a woman to be only the spouse of male.

Religion, social environment and cultural backdrop recognise women to be just an ornament to make postcolonialism and Feminism share the common objective of
challenging form of oppression but also share tense relationships with each other. Sahgal set against the spirit of postcolonial tradition. She has repeatedly brought forth the freedom and new meaning of the *virtuous woman*. In the select novels, we find the protagonists are conscious of the unfairness done to them in their marriage and they walk out of their homes. Her heroines mirror the changing social conditions. In spite of being deep seated in Indian Culture, they care and long for personal freedom and have their own identities. Freedom for women according to Nayantara Sahgal implies awareness of her identity and raising the voice against injustice. Sometimes they revolt against the exploitations of men and sometimes compromise with this social reality. She portrayed women mostly from the upper strata and often a political backdrop is created. Family relationships and the personal shattering experiences of divorce are woven deep into the fabric of her novels. Her women characters realize the importance of physical love as well as that of soul *“The storm in Chandigarh”* promulgates her attitude to love, sex and marriage.