Chapter 5
"Self Determination and Assertiveness": The 1980s


Tara in Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* (1980) falls in love with Bakul. Tara makes Bakul request her elder sister Bim to arrange a marriage between them. Here is a love-cum-arranged marriage. Unlike in the previous decade where the first novel dealt with love marriage, the first novel of this decade deals with a love-cum-arranged marriage. Bim's consent is necessary because she will have to take care of Baba, a handicapped brother if Tara marries Bakul for their brother Raja had already left them after marrying Hyder Ali's daughter. Bakul talks to Bim:

"Bim", he [Bakul] said again with unusual suddenness, "would it add to
your own worries or would it lessen them if Tara marries me?" "What?"

She was startled. [...] "Oh. Oh, I see. You want to marry Tara. Yes, I thought you did. I think she wants to marry you too."

"Yes, she says she does but wanted me to speak to you first."

"Oh, did she?" laughed Bim. "I'm head of the family now, am I? You think so, so I must be." She shrugged, looking plain again. "I don't think you need to ask anyone - except Tara. Modern Times. Modern India. Independent India." [...] 

"I [Bakul] can speak to Raja, of course, if you think I should."

"No, don't worry him," she said sharply. "I don't like you having all the worries of the family."

"You are lessening them, aren't you, by taking Tara off my hands?"

"Will I? Or is she a help to you? In that case, I won't press her now—not till later when Raja is well and Baba settled and your aunt - "[...]

"There is no need to wait. Do marry-quickly. But what about your parents?"

"They know Tara. They love her. And since I am to go to Ceylon shortly, they will agree to an early marriage."

"An early marriage-that is exactly what I'd like for Tara," Bim said. "It will suit her. And she will suit you. Blessings, blessings," she called lightly, and began to laugh again as she saw Tara, half-hidden behind the bamboo screen at her door, listening, waiting. (Desai *Clear Light* 81)

Tara is clever in seeing to it that her choice of marrying Bakul is accepted. She makes Bakul talk about their marriage to her sister Bim. She knows that in the present scenario she cannot wait for her sister to get married. Therefore, she sends Bakul to convince Bim about their marriage. They have no parents. It is Bim who has to accept their marriage. If she accepts, then there is no problem. Bakul is the Indian Ambassador to Sri Lanka. She wants to escape from the responsibility of their mentally retarded brother like her elder brother Raja. Tara is also clever enough to escape from a joint family system to a nuclear family. As Renu Juneja
observes: "For Tara, marriage also provides escape from a strange, unhappy household. We may note Desai’s care in avoiding all hints of self-sacrificing womanhood in Tara by making her escape into marriage during a time of immense crisis for the family—when, after the death of the parents, Bim must **cope with** Raja’s illness and Aunt Mira’s alcoholism" (83). Bim does not protest **against both** of them. She knows their intentions. She is a History lecturer in a college. She never tries to escape from her responsibilities. She too had an opportunity of getting married to Dr. Biswas who was very much interested in marrying her. I feel many academics would not like to escape from their responsibilities, as many of them are conscientious people. Thus Bim is not tempted to escape from the responsibility towards Baba. Dr. Biswas himself makes a statement as to why Bim does not want to marry him. She is not selfish. She has a moral responsibility. Tara's basic idea is to be in a nuclear family. She does not want to live in a joint family. It is inevitable that the nuclear family has its own advantages like less work, less expenditure, luxurious life, small family, enough privacy etc.

Unlike Tara, Bim remains unmarried out of both compulsion and choice. There is a compulsion because both her younger brother Raja and younger sister Tara escape from the responsibility of looking after their mentally retarded brother Baba. According to P. Bhatnagar, Bim "[•••] opts out of marriage so that she could devote herself to the care of her mentally-retarded brother Baba, her old Mira-Masi and her younger brother Raja who she was very fond of" (151). When Bim and Tara discuss the Misra boys getting married without completing any degree, Bim says:

"But they're not educated yet," Bim said sharply. "They haven't any degrees.

They should go to college," she insisted.

"Why?" said Tara [...] 

"Why?" repeated Bim indignantly. "Why, because they might find
marriage isn't enough to last them the whole of their lives," she said darkly, mysteriously.

"What else could there be?" countered Tara. "I mean," she fumbled, "for them".

"What else?" asked Bim. "Can't you think? I can think of hundreds of things to do instead. I won't marry," she added, very firmly (Desai Clear Light 140).

The above quotation shows how Bim is committed to education. Bim does not view marriage as the most significant thing in a person's life. Rosenwasser claims, "Bim's remaining unmarried is voluntary, a choice, based on the negative images of her mother, her sister and her aunt. Her admirer, Dr. Biswas, misunderstands Bim's refusal to marry, assuming that her family responsibilities cause her to sacrifice her own future" (105). I do agree with Rosenwasser's view that Bim remaining unmarried is "voluntary" and "a choice" based on the negative images of the women members of her family. However, I do not agree with Rosenwasser's view that Dr. Biswas misunderstands Bim's "refusal to marry" him due to her "family responsibilities". It is true that Bim has refused to marry Dr. Biswas, as there is no one to look after her mentally retarded brother Baba. A. Clement reinforces my argument: "Bimla, the enlightened and emancipated heroine [...] chooses to stay single to take care of her retarded younger brother, spurning the offer of help of the others including the offer of marriage of their young family doctor [Dr.Biswa]" (238). Both Raja and Tara have left for Hyderabad and Sri Lanka respectively, leaving Bim alone. Otherwise Bim has no reason to refuse to marry Dr. Biswas. So both her brother and sister are escapists, leaving the responsibilities to Bim. Ultimately Bim has to sacrifice any thought of marriage. An opportunity to marry Dr. Biswas who was interested in her slips away from her. But she makes it appear as if it is her choice of remaining unmarried. She dedicates her life to teaching.

As far as career is concerned, "[...] Bim takes up a teaching job after finishing her
Teaching is her own choice and is not forced upon her by anyone. Bim tells Tara: "I shall work-I shall do things," she went on, "I shall earn my own living-and look after Mira-masi and Baba and be independent" (Desai 40). Bim is very keen on making her students too become aware of this idea of "independence" and "independent thought". Rosenwasser says: "Bimla's determination to instill independent thought and self-sufficiency in her students results from her anger at the deficiencies of her own education: 'I'm always trying to teach them, train them to be different from what we were at their age—to be a new kind of woman from you or me—and if they knew how badly handicapped I still am'" (104).

Bim is very determined to work as she says that she "shall" "earn" her "own living" not just for her own sake, but in order to look after "Mira-masi and Baba" who are her dependents. Moreover, she wants to be independent. This word "independent" is very crucial for Bim. In other words she wants to say that an "educated" woman has to earn and be "independent". Her use of the modal "shall" suggests her determination in choosing a career.

In the same novel it is not clear as to what kind of marriage the neighbours of Tara and Bim, Jaya and Sarla have. But we know that Jaya and Sarla who are also called "the Misra sisters" are married but have been abandoned by their husbands. Under forced circumstances, they run a school after their husbands abandon them. Since it is their own school, they are able to show to the society that they too have some work. Though they look after the school, they teach without loving the children. It is not a career for them. It is only to cover up their lost prestige. They behave that way. In fact, they need not feel bad that they are abandoned. They can even declare that they have been abandoned. Because they teach without love for teaching, Bim expresses her hatred for them. Bim says:

"Least is the right word-the very least," said Bim with asperity. "I think they hate it really—they hate children, they hate teaching."
"Do they?" said Tara, shocked. Hate was a word that always shocked her. The image of a dead dog immediately rose before her, bleeding. "Then they shouldn't teach."

"Oh they don't say they do-perhaps they don't even know they do—but you can see it by the way they look, so haggard and eaten up."

(Desai Clear Light 151)

Bim's comment is very crucial here for those who "teach". A teacher should have love for her "children" and for "teaching". Otherwise he/she should not teach. Tara is shocked to know that Jaya and Sarla do not "love" children and "teaching".

Coming to the issue of divorce, Jaya and Sarla have not been legally divorced but they can be considered under the "divorce category". As P. F. Patil rightly says: "[T]he Misra daughters, Jaya and Sarla, belong to the 'once married' category, used and thrown away like old pieces of comfortless furniture" (141). The husbands of Jaya and Sarla do not give them divorce in legal terms but they have abandoned them for reasons stated below:

"And Jaya and Sarla," Tara said sympathetically, almost tearfully, feeling for them as well as for herself, feeling for all women, helpless and abandoned.

"Poor things."

"Yes, abandoned by their husbands. Isn't it odd how they were married together and abandoned together?"

"Abandoned? Are they actually divorced?"

"I think they are—but it's not a word that's used in their family, you know. In their case, it was the husbands who were too modern, too smart. They played golf and they danced and gave cocktail parties. Imagine poor Jaya and Sarla who only ever wanted to knit them sweaters and make them pickles. They soon came home to Papa and Mama-were sent home,
actually. For years they used to talk of going back to their husbands and make up reasons for not joining them where they were—they were in the army and the navy, I think, which was convenient. Now I notice they no longer do. Now all they talk about is their school".

"At least they have that."

"Least is the right word—the very least" said Bim with asperity. "I think they hate it really—they hate children, they hate teaching."

*(Desai *Clear Light* 151)*

Jaya and Sarla have been shown sympathy for their abandoned condition. Tara seems to be very sensitive in "feeling" pity for Jaya and Sarla and for such women generally. She feels particularly odd that they were "married together and abandoned together". From the above conversation it is clear that they are not legally divorced but are separated or "abandoned". Jaya and Saila's parents are very secretive. They do not reveal whether their daughters are divorced or abandoned. However, they are separated and not on talking terms. The husbands of Jaya and Sarla seem to be smarter than the Misra girls. They enjoy playing "golf" and "giving cocktail parties". On the other hand, Jaya and Sarla seem to be interested only in "knitting sweaters" and "making pickles" for the husbands. The couples seem to be incompatible. They were "sent" back to their "homes" very early after their marriage. When any one asks them about their going back to their "husbands", they make up false reasons. Finally, they stop talking about their husbands; rather they talk of their school which is owned by their parents.

On the other hand, Saru in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) has a love marriage with her collegemate Manohar who is a lecturer in a degree college. As Barche remarks, "Against her parents' wishes, Saru married a boy from a lower caste. Her marriage to Manu is a sign of her turning away from the traditional ways and values her orthodox mother adhered to. She married to attain autonomy of the self and to secure the love lost in her parental home" (86-87). If the parents do not provide "love" to their daughter, it is obvious that she
will seek love from outsiders, like Saru seeking Manohar's love. However, after marriage there are problems between the couple. The main reason for Saru going in for a love marriage is that her mother hates her. She does not allow her to do whatever she wants to do. Her mother discourages her in every respect. Barche further says: "Saru receives education in spite of her mother. Her education makes her see the difference in the treatment of a son and a daughter by the same parents" (86). Why do parents, especially mothers, not permit their daughters to go in for higher studies? Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit gives the answer in the following lines:

Even in middle class urban families sending girls to higher studies is considered to be a wastage of money because, they have to go for a bridegroom with high educational qualification. An employed bachelor with higher qualification means more amount of dowry. Increasing cost of education i.e admission fees, transportation, textbooks etc. prevent some parents from sending their daughters to higher studies. (29-30)

Moreover, Saru's mother pampers her son and neglects her in every respect. For example, look at her attitude towards her daughter:

Don't you go out in the sun. You'll get even darker.
Who cares?
We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.
I don't want to get married.
Will you live with us all your life?
Why not?
You can't.
And Dhruva?
He's different. He's a boy. (Deshpande The Dark 45)

Kamala, Saru's mother, feels a burden about her responsibility. Her attitude
makes Saru react that she does not intend to marry. Saru wants to continue to be a burden on her mother. Saru feels that she has been neglected. Later on, when she wants to marry Manu, her mother reacts: "I know all these 'love marriages'. It's love for a few days, then quarrels all the time. Don't come crying to us then. To you? God, that's the one thing I'll do. Never!'"(69).

Saru's mother Kamala is of the strong opinion that "love marriage" means quarreling, as if there are no quarrels in arranged marriages. She feels that the effect of "love" will last only "for a few days". Her mother is very confident that Saru will come to her crying but she will have no time or sympathy if such a thing happens.

Saru has married into a nuclear family. She marries Manohar against her parents' wishes. It is an escape from her mother's clutches. Saru's mother would have found her a match in a joint family. Saru's mother tries to curb Saru's interests and likings so much that she is aware she will never be happy with her mother's choice. Perhaps that is the reason why Saru chooses Manohar as her husband and marries him. The fact that Saru's mother discourages Saru's interest to pursue medicine reveals how narrow minded her mother is. Can any mother curb her daughter's interest, questioning the use of education for girls after a certain age? This is the biggest reason for Saru choosing Manohar as her husband. In fact, Saru has eased her parents' burden regarding her marriage. Saru opts for a nuclear family. However, she is not happy with her choice. The reason is that Manohar does not understand her fully. He develops a complex as he earns less than her. The society is also responsible for their problems. But her mother is not willing to forgive her even on her deathbed.

Saru flirts with Boozie, as there is a misunderstanding between her and Manohar. It is quite natural that if there are misunderstandings between a couple, either of them starts flirting with the opposite sex as Saru does with Boozie here. However, later she discovers that Boozie is gay. This relationship does not affect her
marriage drastically; nor does it lead to any divorce. In other words, Saru has respect for the institution of marriage.

Saru has chosen the career on her own. In Sarabjit Sandhu's words: "She is brought up in a traditional atmosphere but the education she receives makes her a changed person with a rebellious attitude towards tradition. As an educated young woman, she does not accept anything without reason. Her mother almost forces her to stay within the four-walls of the house. She does not give her permission to take admission in the medical college, but Saru does not listen to her [...]" (88). However, it is not an easy choice for her, as she has to convince her father. Baba asks Saru:

"What subject do you want to take up for your B.Sc, Saru?"
"I'm not going on for a B.Sc." [...] 
"I want to do medicine," I [Saru] said. [...] 
"**You** mean you want to become a doctor?" [...] 
"Are you sure you want to do it? Have you thought it over?"
"Yes, Baba". 
"You can't change your mind later. This isn't something like taking singing lessons". 
I flushed. Why remind me of that? 
"I am eighteen now. Not a child".
"It isn't easy. You'll have to work enormously hard."
"I know that. I can work". (Deshpande *The Dark* 141-143)

Saru is very determined to do "medicine". She expresses her desire to do medicine but not "B.Sc". Baba is testing Saru by reminding her that doing medicine is not a joke and it is not like opting for "singing lessons" and abandoning the singing lessons when one is not interested. She asserts and tells Baba that she is old enough and is aware of the "work" involved in studying medicine. It is very rare that an "educated" woman chooses her career with so
much of confidence. She is able to convince her father and he has no other doubt about her choice.

Some years later, Saru starts practising as a doctor and earns more than her husband Manohar. As Meenakshi Shivram rightly says: "She [Saru] is a doctor; financially independent, and runs her family of husband and two children with her earnings. Her husband, Manohar (Manu), does not belong to her privileged caste. He also finds it increasingly difficult not to depend upon his wife's earnings which is substantially much more than his" (180). Here the caste issue has been raised. Even in love marriages the caste issues become prominent, especially when the wife earns more than the husband. The husband will have guilty feeling about it. Premila Paul also feels that "the career becomes an indispensable crutch as it gives her so much importance and power over the others" (63). It may appear as if Saru has obtained some power over Manu in terms of the income she earns. There is no doubt that Saru has obtained power over Manu in terms of the income she earns.

Like Saru, Indu in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows* (1983) goes in for a love marriage with Jayant and unlike Geeta in *Inside the Haveli* who goes from a nuclear family to a joint family after her marriage with Ajay. As T. Ashoka Rani says, "Indu [...] views marriage as a gateway to freedom and marries Jayant, a man of her choice defying her authoritarian family" (127). Although there are no direct references to love marriage, we do get some sense of Indu and Jayant's marriage from the following conversation:

"Can I massage your head, Atya? I've become an expert now. Jayant has headaches like you. Then I have to sit and massage his head like this until he goes off to sleep." I felt her hand on my wrist for a second. "Are you happy with him, Indu?"

"Happy? Who can say that? But I know I can't be without him-"

"How glad I am, Indu, it's all right. I can remember Akka saying, "Such
marriages never work. Different castes, different languages... it's all right for a while. Then they realise..." (Deshpande Roots 67-68)-

**Akka is the** eldest and the guardian of the family. She does not approve of Indu's marriage with Jayant. Nor do any of the family members dare approve and invite them. Akka believes that "love marriages" do not work. Love marriage could involve "different castes" and perhaps "different languages". Falling in love might not last a life-time. It is almost like Sana's mother's belief in The Dark Holds No Terrors. Akka is an important person in the family. Kaka is also afraid of Akka and does not invite Indu with her husband after their marriage. He says:

"How does it feel to be back, Indu?" Kaka asked me. "You don't know how happy I feel to see you home. I felt guilty we never asked you to come home with your husband. The first Divali... I did think of it. But Akka..."

"Really, Kaka! The way you talk! Why were you so terrified of Akka? What did you imagine she would do to you if you disobeyed?"

"It's not that, Indu. You people will never understand. For our generation, elders were to be feared, respected, obeyed. We used to sit up when they entered the room, and touch their feet when we went out; yet there was affection too." [...]  

"You youngsters now...you're a different breed altogether (Deshpande Roots 46).

Akka has made Indu her legal heir and also the head of the family. Therefore, Kaka asks Indu how she feels returning to the family which did not even invite her with her husband for the first "Divali" after their marriage.

**Indu** marries Jayant who comes from a joint family but decides to live in a nuclear family after marriage. She marries him without her parents' consent. However, she later on moves from a nuclear family to a joint family again as she has been made an heir to Akka's family. Financial power in a joint family system...
is very crucial. Even "educated" women are willing to run a joint family provided they are given financial power as we see from two examples, one of Geeta in *Inside the Haveli* and the other of Indu in this novel. Why does Indu accept the responsibility? Did she not protest against the system when she was part of it? Was she not against the system when she married Jayant? Why this dual view? Why this opportunism?

Moreover, Indu has a guiltless extra-marital relationship with Naren, like Gauri with Vishal in *Storm in Chandigarh* and Manasi with Vijaya Raje in *Alphabet of Lust*. I call it a guiltless relationship because nowhere does Indu feel that she is wrong in having an affair with Naren. There is a reason why she is involved in an affair with Naren. Jayant is like any other male figure having a typical patriarchal attitude. He tries to control Indu in every aspect. Indu surrenders totally to Jayant. When she is feeling unhappy with her conjugal life she is made heiress to the whole property. Thus she gets an opportunity to be away from Jayant. She accepts the responsibility and stays there. As she is alone in Akka's house, she develops an intimate relationship with Naren. Initially when Naren tries to make some advances, Indu resists saying, "[F]or me, it's one man and one man alone" but later on she offers herself to Naren. She feels that it is the body's requirement of which she does not have any control. I am surprised at Indu's behaviour. According to Jasbir Jain, Indu's "[•••] adulterous relationship does not lead to a sense of guilt, instead it liberates the psyche from false restrictions" (15-16). I do not agree with Jain's theory of "liberating the psyche from false restrictions". In another context, Jain in her article "Positioning the 'Post' in Post-Feminist: Reworking of Strategies" says: "When Indu has a physical relationship with Narendra, it is not infidelity to her husband, nor is it an involvement with him; it is merely the use of something she owns, in order to show that she cares for him as a human being"(88). How can any one bring in the "physical relationship" with someone other than the husband and defend the woman's sexual act as "something she owns" and call it "car[ing] for him as a human being"? Whether a woman has a physical relationship once or more than once, she is definitely called
"infidel". I also disagree with Anita Singh when she says: "She [Inda] suffers no 
guilt in her extra-marital relationship with Naren and decides not to tell Jayant 
about it [...]" (125). No guilt in Indu is something that I cannot digest in a 
mARRIED woman. the same argument applies to married men too. One can fight 
AGAINST "false restrictions" but not a guiltless affair. What happens if men also 
think in Indu's manner? will there be any respect to the institution of marriage?
Look at the total surrender of her body to Naren:

I lay down impelled by his thrusting body, feeling at first a passive 
languor. Oh, blessed, blessed hardness. An ecstasy filled my body and I 
could not be still any more. There was a joyous sense of release, of 
passion I could experience and show and participate in. I clung to him 
convulsively, marveling that I did not have to hold myself back. And when 
it was over, we lay back, both of us, exhausted and shuddering. I said, 
"Thank you, Naren." And languidly he lifted a hand to my hair and smiled 
at me. later, he lay floppily, untidily, as men always do, in a kind of 
supine bonelessness. While I felt in myself an intense desire for activity. I 
got up and began to tidy myself. Naren, who lay watching me through half 
closed, drowsy eyes, said, "You look like a bird smoothing its ruffled 
feathers.

"I wish I could say the same for you," I retorted. (Deshpande Roots 151-
152)

Indu participates in this affair with so much of passion. As a result of this affair 
she is "filled" with "ecstasy in her "body". she calls it "a joyous sense of release" 
and she could "experience" "passion" and "participate" in it without any guilt. 
She even "thanks" Naren for the affair, indicating that she has no feeling of guilt. 
She finds in herself "an intense desire for activity". Naren even compares her 
happiness "to a bird smoothing its ruffled feathers". Naren happens to be her 
childhood friend. That does not mean she can use this opportunity of living apart 
from her husband due to the compulsion of protecting the property of her 
ancestors and safeguarding it to have an affair. She does not feel any kind of guilt
Indu does have a job before she becomes the heir to Akka’s property. Indu has had to choose her career out of force and compulsion. She marries Jayant without her parents’ consent. In order to support her family expenditure she has undertaken to write stories for a magazine. She is a creative writer unlike Simrit who is a freelance writer and who authors a book on the river. There is a difference between Simrit and Indu in the sense that the former writes for self-satisfaction and the latter writes for money. Indu expresses her view on writing thus:

I no longer have any desire to mould people, to change them, to reform society. There is only one thing I know I can do...I can write. And I am writing the book that has been in me these past few years. Whether any publisher will accept it, whether it will win acclaim, appreciation accolades... I school myself not to dream of such things. Rave reviews and worldwide fame, a best-seller that will stun the world and generations—these exist only in the fantasies of immature minds and publishers’ blurbs. (Deshpande Roots 15)

Indu asserts that she has no "desire" in "reforming the society" through her "writings". While writing she also feels tired and goes to the extent of wanting to abandon her writing:

The other day, I came away from my writing, tired, dishevelled, almost in tears. "And after all," I cried out despairingly to Jayant, "it may be still born. If no publisher accepts it..." "I'll publish it for you," Jayant said, putting his arms comfortingly around me. [...] Yet, when I had first told Jayant about my plans...that I would give up my job and give myself to writing, he had been unbelieving. Then, confident of his influence over me, he had been sure I would change. (Deshpande Roots 13-14)
**Indu** is trying to suggest that any sort of "writing" is not easy. Look at the words **Indu** uses—"tired", "dishevelled" and "tears". Any writer will have the fear as to **whether any** "publisher" "will publish" the work. This is so with **Indu** too. However, her husband says he will "publish" it for her. That is not a happy thing **for Indu**. There will be a negative impact if her husband publishes for her. Hence she wants to give up her "job" as well as her "writing". A writer should write out of a need or for commercial purposes.

**Paro** in Namita Gokhale's *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984) marries Bubu, her collegemate. In fact it is Bubu who is interested in **Paro**. He sends his father to **Paro's** house to ask for her hand in marriage. Perhaps Bubu is infatuated with her **and** sends his father. Perhaps because it is only an infatuation, that the marriage terminates. The details as to why the marriage breaks up are not mentioned in the novel. **Paro** says:

"Then, in college, I met Bubu...Man, did he fall for me like a tonne of bricks! His father sent a proposal. Apparently, they hadn't heard about my rape-scene. Funny thing is that I wasn't raped, I loved every moment of it. Anyway, Daddyji was so glad to get Bubu off his hands that he didn't bother to scrutinize the police record too carefully. Maybe if I had a Ma-in-law she would have been more careful. And so there it was. Marriage."

She paused. "I always knew it sounded too good to last. And it didn't."

(Gokhale Paro 31-32;)

**Paro** then marries B. R., a businessman who runs the Sita Sewing machine company. It is believed that B. R. marries **Paro** out of infatuation. This is a verdict given by **Priya** who has been involved in a sexual relation with him even after her marriage with Suresh, a lawyer. The narrator of the novel **Priya** says, "A month **later**, he was married to **Paro**. It took all of us at the office completely by surprise. I have never forgotten, nor forgiven, a hurt" (Gokhale *Paro* 3). And again, "The
day after, the girls at the office were all agog with tales of her beauty and B. R.'s obvious infatuation with her" (Gokhale *Paro* 6).

Even after this marriage, Paro's life is not stable and she has an extra-marital relationship with "Bucky" Bhandapur. This extra-marital relationship is known in public because Bucky is a test cricketer. He is a public figure. That is why everybody talks about Paro and Bucky's relationship. Bucky is also like B. R. Both of them have the name, "A known Romeo".

B. R. divorces Paro because she is involved in an extra-marital relationship. But how is he any less to blame for he has affairs with several women. She gets an alimony and lives with "Bucky" Bhandapur. The narrator says:

> She had left B. R. only six months before. Everybody was talking about it. She was living in open adulterous sin with "Bucky" Bhandapur, test cricketer and scion of a princely family. The "Bucky", I gathered, was in commemoration of his faintly protruding front teeth, which lent a strange charm to his lean face. He was, like B. R., what the boys in the office used to call "A known Romeo". Ke was also a little younger than her. (Gokhale *Paro* 27)

Perhaps Paro's attraction towards Bucky is because he belongs to a "princely family". In addition to his family background, Bucky is "a little younger" than Paro.

In the same novel Priya, the narrator of the novel goes in for an arranged marriage with a lawyer. She has been working in B. R.'s company before she gets married to Suresh. She resigns as secretary to B. R. once her marriage is arranged. In an arranged marriage the prospects of the bridegroom are considered. Suresh is a good match for Priya. He is "a lawyer in Delhi" (Gokhale *Paro* 20). As soon as this proposal comes for Priya, her photograph is sent to Suresh and "he [finds] no
fault with neither, and within a week" Priya is married to Suresh. But in her office
she has been asked whether it has been an arranged marriage or a love marriage.
Priya replies that it is an arranged one. Her colleagues are disappointed. Even
Priya is not happy with this proposal. Even after her marriage with Suresh she
"sometimes think[s] of B. R. and [she] would sigh. But my head told [her] that
[she] had not got such a bad deal after all" (Gokhale Paro 21).

Priya does not have a career. However, she had taken up jobs such as that of a
typist and of a sales girl in a bookshop. Initially she was a typist and later she was
promoted to the post of secretary to B. R. She was working as a typist so that she
could find a suitable job. She does get a marriage proposal from a lawyer from
Delhi. As her marriage has been fixed with the lawyer she has to resign the job:

B. R. elected me from the typists' pool to become his secretary. [...] When
I told them at the office, they all asked excitedly, 'Is it Arranged or
Love?' When I told them it was arranged they all looked a little
disappointed. My marriage was a middle-class one, much as any other.
We did not have many relatives, and so it was uneventful, even a little
boring. My husband was a virgin, and did not seem to notice that I was
not. B. R. accepted my resignation with equanimity. (Gokhale Paro 15-20)

Priya's colleagues are "disappointed" when she says that she is going to have an
"arranged marriage". The problem with Priya is that she does not find out whether
she could continue with the same job or find one elsewhere as she is used to
working. In "middle-class" families "educated" women have no independent role
to play. Priya considers herself a "non-virgin" whereas her husband is a "virgin".
They have to abide by what their parents dictate to them. This is what happens in
women such as Anita and Priya. However, after marriage Priya does tike up a job
as a sales girl in a bookshop owned by her friend on a part-time basis:

A friend of mine had a small bookshop in the Oberoi Hotel, She asked me
if I wanted a part-time job, and I agreed eagerly. It was a quiet, peaceful place, and I would spend hours, curled up in a corner, leafing through books and magazines. Occasionally a customer would stroll in, and I would rise, show him around, and settle down to my private thoughts again. (Gokhale Paro 100)

I think Priya has done the right thing by taking up "a part-time job" as a salesgirl in "a small bookshop". She has broken her silence as Alka Saxena says: "One cannot ignore the fact that women have taken up jobs only after having obtained the consent of the male members of their family. Hence, under prevailing situation, women must realize that they have to save themselves. Unity, firmness of purpose, courage, self-determination and assertiveness have to be developed. The silence has to be broken" (24). Without taking prior "consent" from her husband Priya takes up the "job" and shows her "firmness of purpose". Otherwise what will she do at home sitting idle? The bookshop is a "quiet" and "peaceful" place where she can "spend hours" of her time. She has less work and more time to "[leaf] through the books and magazines" and settle down to her "private thoughts". However she says: "Suresh was very upset at my taking up a job. 'Priya, think of my position in society. Why, people will think-doesn't her husband earn enough for her to take up such a job?"' (Gokhale Paro 100). Why should Suresh be upset at Priya taking up "a part-time job" in a "bookshop"? She has to do some work as she has already worked at Sita Sewing Machines. When an opportunity has been given to her she accepts it without taking her husband's permission. Why should she take permission from her husband? She is "educated" and she has already worked. As Priya says:

But I was unmoved, for that job represented escape from my empty home. Of course, it wasn't my first job either, for I had put in three years of service with Sita Sewing Machines. It was pleasant to earn some money again, however little it might be. I worked from nine-thirty in the mornings, when Suresh left for court, until four in the afternoons, at which
time he normally returned. I was paid a thousand rupees a month. I never spent any of the money on myself, since personal maintenance and so on I took to be my legal due from Suresh; instead it accumulated in my personal account, a little nest-egg of my own. I think I deserved it, even if I do say so myself, for I was very conscientious about the cash box, and even put an end to all the pilfering that had been rampant earlier. (Gokhale Paro 100-101)

Although Suresh was upset with her taking up a "job", she is "unmoved". She feels working is important for her. She justifies her act because of her past experience. She feels happy earning some money so as to avoid depending on her husband. She has been paid a "thousand rupees" for her "job". It is not a small amount for her. Moreover, she has not been "spending" that amount. For her "personal maintenance" she has been taking from her husband. She calls it a "legal due" from her husband for having married her. She feels it is his responsibility to pay for her "personal maintenance". I do not agree with Priya on this point. She has been earning. Why should she demand a "personal maintenance" from her husband? She has been "accumulating" all her salary in her "personal account". Why should she bring a "legal" point here? She has been allowed to work, though unwillingly, by her husband. It could be a small or meagre amount for her husband. But for her it is all. She also justifies her timings for her job. She works when her husband is away from home and she is back by the time Suresh is also back. Then what is the problem for Suresh? The problem for him is her working in "a bookshop". He argues that he has a prestige in the "society" as a lawyer and she has spoiled his status. I think Suresh should not have any problem about her working in a bookshop. I agree with Priya and justify her choice of the "job".

Priya is asked to take a divorce for having an extra-marital relationship with B. R. and loving someone other than her husband and confessing this to her husband. Priya has worked as secretary to B. R. who is the Proprietor of Sita Sewing
Machine Company and has resigned the post as soon as she gets married to Suresh, a lawyer. However, Priya has fascination for B. R. and continues to have an affair with him even after her marriage with Suresh. Suresh asks Priya:

"Have you really had a liaison with B. R.?” he asked.
"No, of course not,” I shuffled.
"Do you have any intention of trying to get that thing published?” he asked next. [...]
"And do you love B. R.?” he hammered unremittingly.
"Yes, Yes,” I continued, still lost in my private rhapsody.
"In that case I think we would be best advised to live apart, at least for a while,” he said, and his voice had the ring of finality. [...]"
"It is the only home I know,” I said stubbornly.
"But a separation cannot do us any harm,” he said, “just think matters over.”
"But where can I live? Even my mother’s dead,” I said in desperation.
"There is always your brother’s house,” he said. "Or you can continue to live here, but then I shall have to shift out. And I do, after all, have to continue to live in Delhi to earn a living. My chambers and library are here. I have commitments to my clients.” (Gokhale Paro 128-130)

Look at Priya’s confession to her husband-that she loves B. R., that she has an extra-marital relationship with B. R. A natural response to her confession is that it is better to live "apart" from each other. J. N. Chaudhary, in his field study on "Illicit relations", finds the following: "The premium on illicit sex conduct is secrecy, and if it is proved or discovered, it may become for a married man or a woman, a sure ground for filing a suit for seeking divorce under adultery. Illicit relations as the cause of strained relations between the spouses in our study, were discovered among 30 cases” (55). Any husband who comes to know about his wife’s involvement in an illicit relationship would ask for a separation. No husband would ask his wife to continue with her married life when she loves
someone other than her husband and has an affair with him. Priya has no regrets about her affairs rather she asks for alimony for her maintenance. She says: "What about maintenance, alimony?" I asked. The question of money was, after all, pressing and all-prevailing. Panic flew in waves around my head at the prospect of becoming Dolly's drudge, the object of pity, a poor relative" (Gokhale Paro 130).

The fact that Priya asks for maintenance and "alimony" indicates that she has been preparing the ground for the divorce. Suresh reacts thus:

"My dear Mrs Priya Kaushal," he said grandiloquently, "one thing you cannot, I repeat, cannot, accuse me of is ever even attempting, I repeat, even attempting, to shirk or evade my responsibilities. I may be fat, I may even—in your eyes—be a buffoon, my love-making may leave you cold, but I do certainly abide by my duties. Even the fevered phantoms of your imagination cannot distort that irrefutable fact." (Gokhale Paro 130)

Suresh is generous enough to assure her that he will not "evade" his "responsibilities". Thus Suresh and Priya get divorced with mutual consent.

Like Bim, Sonali too in Nayantara Sahgal's Rich Like Us (1985) remains unmarried. She has been interested in marrying Ravi Kachru who has been her childhood friend and classmate. However, she has stopped thinking on the lines of marriage, as he has become corrupt in his office. Unfortunately, Ravi has become a corrupt officer and this is opposed to Sonali's ideology and principle. She cannot compromise on her ideology and principle. Sonali remains unmarried² having loved him and intended to marry him. She is the epitome of true love. She does not want to marry any other person. She concentrates only on her career.

Sonali has been asked to choose a particular career by her father. Sonali has been asked to write the I. C. S. She does take help from her parents and they are very
cooperative. As Sonali says about her father:

**Papa,** a member of the I. C. S. himself, had said with a pride I was used to hearing in his voice, "Sonali, people like you, especially women like you, are going to Indianize India." It was the day my name had topped the list in the competitive examination for the civil service. He was an emotional man and that day, fifteen years ago, there had been tears in his eyes with the achievement—his as much as mine—of having passed on to me, and only to me of his two daughters, a precious responsibility he had carried, and his firm faith that huge historical change could be peaceful. (Sahgal *Rich* 24)

Sonali’s pride has been boosted when her father encourages her to become an I. C. S officer. The expectation also forces an "educated" woman to work harder than her capacity. If there is support, then it leads not just to success but to topping the list. We can also argue from this that it is possible for an "educated" woman to occupy any position, not just men.

Thus she has chosen her career as an I. C. S. officer out of her Papa’s interest. Just because her Papa was an I. C. S. officer he wanted his daughter too to become an I. C. S. officer. However, it is not easy to pass the I. C. S. exam without great effort. Everyone can dream of becoming of an I. C. S. officer but in reality only a few people can succeed. Sonali is one of them.

**After becoming an I. C. S. officer,** she really shows her dedication in her career. She is willing to accept any kind of demotion for her principles. As I have stated elsewhere:

[..] Sonali, an ICS officer[...] has shown that principles are more important than promotion or demotion in discharging her duties as a sincere, honest, dedicated and patriotic officer... She has stuck to her
principles. Dev in collaboration with Mr. Neuman wants to establish a fizzy drink factory, which is not the sole purpose, but "is really a cover up for the import and storage for car-parts required for the manufacturing of an indigenous car by the Prime Minister's son". Having realized the reason, Sonali as per her principles, doesn't recommend the file writing a negative remark and raising her voice: "I wrote a brief rejection in the wide margin of the proposal on my desk". Sincere officers are not afraid of any higher authority. They don't even care for transfer or demotion. Here is a person who "rejects" the proposal without any hesitation. It is the power of the pen. Since officers always go according to the rules, she even tells the visiting representation about her stand. They don't have to oblige any one. She is not corrupt. The result of rejecting the proposal is obvious that she is demoted to a lower cadre and transferred to her own state. Surprisingly, the replacing officer is none other than her own childhood friend, classmate, batchmate in "service" and the deserted lover.

(Manohar 34)

All in all what I feel about Sonali is that she is very serious about her career and is dedicated to it. Sh; does not bother about her losses in her attempt to follow her "principles" and her stand: "[•••] Sonali refuses to submit to the will of those who try to force her into toeing the line of "Madam" [...]. This results in her losing her post as Joint Secretary" (Varalakshimi 368). She does not care about losing the post of "Joint Secretary".

Like Paro and Priya and unlike Tara, Sam and Indu, Jaya in Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence (1988) too has an arranged marriage. It is interesting to see that Jaya's husband Mohan has certain conditions about marrying a girl. Jaya's brother Dada says: "I believe what he wants is an educated, cultured wife. He says he isn't bothered about dowry, money and all that. An educated, cultured wife..." (90).
I strongly agree with Mohan when he says that he wants to marry an "educated" and "cultured" wife. We might ask why only an "educated" and "cultured" wife. The reason is that an "educated" wife will be "cultured" and have a broad understanding of issues so as to lead a happy and peaceful life. She will know how to behave with both the "educated" and the "uneducated". It is not just that an educated wife will find a job and bring extra money to the family. But it is to have an understanding and a good mannered wife. She can even correct the husband if he goes wrong or is tempted to go wrong. Moreover, Mohan does not "bother about dowry, money and all that". He only wants an "educated" and "cultured wife". Nothing more.

Although Jaya does not like this proposal, here is what she says about her brother and his responsibility:

Only later had I come upon them with a painful awareness. Dada had wanted me off his hands; he had wanted to be free of his responsibility for an unmarried younger sister, so that he could go ahead with" his own plans. After Appa's death, the Kakas had never let Dada forget his role as the man of the house. And so Dada had cleverly manoeuvred me into a position from which not marrying Mohan would have been childish, irresponsible and unfair to Dada. ("I know I'm only your brother, I know I have no real right to tell you what to do, if only Appa had been here . . .") And, if there had been no reason why I should have married Mohan, there had been no reason not to marry him either. (Deshpande That Long 93)

It is not whether the woman is happy or not in "marrying" a person. There is the "responsibility" of marrying "off his sister, as he is the man of the house. Obviously he wants to be free from his responsibility. Unless he completes his responsibility he cannot make any plans for himself. Moreover, Dada has been forced to bring in proposals for Jaya. Though she feels Dada has "manoeuvred" her she feels she has "no reason why" she "should" not "have married Mohan" as
he could provide a safe and secure life.

Much discussion goes on in the house of Jaya as to whether Mohan ought to be Jaya's husband. Jaya at last says:

By the time they had finished wrangling and Dada had restored Ai's good humour, as I had known he would, I had made up my mind. I would marry Mohan. The decision would be mine, not Ramukaka's, not Dada's, not Ai's. [...] But all this is actually a futile exercise, trying to figure out why I married Mohan; the truth is that he had decided to marry me, I had only to acquiesce. (Deshpande That Long 94)

Perhaps Jaya may have felt irritated with the prolonged discussion. Therefore, she makes up her mind that she "would marry Mohan". Deepakshi Kotwal opines: "Jaya ha[s] married Mohan to defy her mother. Curiously Deshpande's women not only rebel against male domination but ferociously satirise their mothers and grandmothers who had not taught them to articulate their desires and needs. Jaya represents a naïve young girl who sees marriage as a passport to freedom from the oppressive control of the parental home" (42). She feels that "trying to" find out why she has decided to marry Mohan is a "futile exercise". The fact is that it is Mohan who has made the decision as he likes her "educated and cultured" background. She has only agreed to Mohan's proposal. Thus hers is an arranged marriage. On the whole, she has no role in her marriage.

Jaya chooses a career of creative writing. She writes for a magazine to come out of the boring situation of a housewife. She has been encouraged by her husband and her friend Kamat to make use of her writing ability. First of all her husband says:

[...] "Why don't you take up a job?"
"A job? Me?"
"Yes, I thought..."
"But you never wanted me to. That time when I wanted to try my hand at teaching..."
"Oh, that was different. Circumstances were different then. But now, may be you should try."
"What can I do? And who'll give me a job?"
"A magazine. One of the weeklies. Surely you should be able to get something?"
"I don't know. You can't get any job just like that. And at my age . . . I've no experience, either". (Deshpande That Long 98-99)

Is this the reason why Mohan wanted to marry an "educated" wife? He is asking her to "take up a job". Jaya is surprised. At the same time Jaya reminds him that he was not in favour of her trying for a teaching position in a school. He tells her that the situation then "was different". The main reason is that he is about to lose his job in a corruption case. She feels that she is too old for the job. Moreover, she has "no experience". But her friend Kamat has suggested: "Take yourself seriously, woman" (Deshpande That Long 99). Mohan continues:

"But you have been writing . . ."
"It's not the same."
"You can try. You don't lose anything by trying. Suppose, by some chance, I lose my job?"...
"Thank God you have your column. And your "Seetha" fortnightly. And your stories. That's something. Not much money in it, but . . ." (Deshpande That Long 99)

Mohan is preoccupied with the idea of Jaya taking up a job. He is apprehensive about losing his "job". So he wonders what will happen to the family if he loses his job. Therefore, he puts pressure on Jaya to take up the job. According to Rose Laub Coser: "Whenever women are gainfully employed, they gain power in the
family (Coser, 1987), and men lose power. As Sorenson and McLanahan have shown (1987), if women work at home they are completely dependent on husbands. They decrease their dependency in the measure in which they are gainfully employed" (206). She further says: "In 1940, white married women, on average, relied on their husbands to provide 86 percent of their economic support. By 1980, their dependency had been reduced to 58 per cent (Sorenson and McLanahan 1987, p. 670)" (206). I extend this to the Indian situation also. Jaya too is going to "gain power" though she has been asked to take up a job by her husband. Mohan is making her independent and providing her the "power". Mohan however feels thankful to god that she has her "column" to publish her stories. As a result of publishing the stories they would get some money. That money may not be much. However something is better than nothing. Mohan had once discouraged Jaya when she wrote a story, in the story-writing contest, about a couple having published and winning a prize for it. She did point out that she was unhappy that he had tried to identify himself with the male character and had thought that people would think that the story was about Mohan and Jaya. Except for this discouragement, she has no obstacles in her career. But this episode has created a storm in Jaya's mind. That is why she does not show any interest in writing stories. When he has needed some income from her writing he has encouraged her to write. He has shown his shrewd attitude in arguing according to his convenience.

Through her career, Jaya develops a close relationship with Kamat and gets inspiration from him in order to write more and more short stories. He is a kind of a guide to her. She even discusses things with him that she does not discuss with her husband Mohan. This reveals how intimate she becomes with Kamat. Kamat becomes Jaya's confidant. He even permits her to use his address for her correspondence. Kamat says: "You want to use my address for your mail? Sure, go ahead. You can use my typewriter too if you want to" (Deshpande That Long 146). It leads from just a close contact to a physical relationship:
And then he has said "Jaya" once again, and this time he held my face lightly within his palms, so light a touch that I had scarcely felt his hands. "Your name is like your face," he had said to me once, and passed his fingers lightly over my face. And the touch had meant nothing. But this time...His eyes had looked steadily, almost dispassionately at me. And my body had responded to that look, that voice, that touch. I had almost felt his body on mine, becoming a part of mine, I had felt his mouth on mine, I had almost been able to smell and taste his lips. [...] There had been no anger in me when I had done that; there had been no outrage, either. There had been nothing but an overwhelming urge to respond to him with my body, the equally overwhelming certainty of mind that I could not do so. Later there had been confusion. "Jaya" he had said and I had become only Jaya. It had annihilated Mohan entirely; it had frightened me the way it had annihilated Mohan entirely. (Deshpande That Long 157)

If Mohan had looked after Jaya, she would not have allowed Kamat to "touch" her this way. She has developed a liking for him. The effect of "his calling her name has made her "annihilate" Mohan entirely. At the same time how can she justify her actions with Kamat? On the other hand, how can Kamat justify his physical intimacy in the name of helping and sharing?

Karuna in Shobha De’s Socialite Evenings (1988) too has an arranged marriage, although she had a boyfriend. She marries her husband because her parents force her. She is not happy with her marriage. Karuna has this to say:

And even though I had married well in my parents' eyes [...] I was stuck in an increasingly meaningless marriage. [...] What was wrong with my marriage? What had gone wrong? [...] My marriage went sore because I married the wrong man for the wrong reasons at the wrong time. My husband was not a villain. He was just an average Indian husband-unexciting, uninspiring, untutored. Why he did marry me, I shall never
Karuna marries her husband for the sake of her parents. In "her parents' eyes" she is a happy wife. However, for Karuna it is a "meaningless marriage".

Karuna has an extra-marital relationship with Krish, a friend of her husband. The reason why she has a relationship with Krish is because she is bored with her husband, Bunty, a rich businessman. Another interesting fact is that she tells her husband that she has an affair with his friend. This conversation between Krish and Karuna reveals the fact:

Krish phoned the next morning when the husband was in the bath. I promptly interpreted it as a good omen. I spoke to him on the kitchen phone and turned the TV up to muffle my voice.

"Guess who's here?" I croaked.
"Who?"
"Your friend."
"Which one?"
"Black Label." (We had nicknamed him that in memory of the first night.)
"You're kidding! What's he doing there?"
"He has found out about us".
"Oh hell! What a bore. So what does he want to do? Kill me?"
"No--he wants to take me to Venice". (De *Socialite Evenings* 188-189)

Extra-marital affairs make persons become secretive and cheats. Look at the use of a nickname to maintain secrecy. She also tells Krish that Bunty has come to know about their affair. Once an affair starts, it will go on, whatever may be the hurdles.

Karuna chooses a career of modelling and she has been exploited in the name of a
career. She does not allow her photograph to be published in a newspaper for an advertisement. She is interested in modelling. Charlie, Karuna's collegemate, has an uncle who runs an ad agency. Charlie goes along with him to take her photograph. Mr. Chopra and Charlie discuss Karuna and ask her to pose as a trial. **Charlie's uncle** says:

"Mr. Chopra would like some photographs of you." I looked quickly at Charlie who winked and mouthed, "Say 'yes'!" I was totally confused. I suppose the client thought I would be flattered, but uppermost in my mind was Father's reaction. "I haven't asked my parent's permission." I stuttered.

"They will get angry."

"Don't worry we will not print these pictures without your permission. These are just trial shots for our files. Your parents will never find out." Uncleji said.

"I don't know ..." I said weakly.

As it turned out, the client liked my photographs and they got used - without my permission and without any payment. (De *Socialite Evenings* 23-24)

Actually Karuna is not interested in modelling for the "ad agency". One fine morning Karuna's father finds his daughter's photo in the newspaper, recognizes his daughter, asks his wife and summons Karuna:

One morning I heard father calling out to Mother "Isn't this Karuna?" Mother replied nervously, "Must be some mistake. . . let us ask her." I was summoned. Father flashed the newspaper in front of me. "When did you do this? How dare you? Do you want to disgrace us completely? This is not something girls from respectable families do. Mow did this photograph get here?" I just stared and stared at the ad. Actually it looked pretty good, and I looked pretty good too. A smile must have appeared on my face,
because suddenly I felt Father's palm hitting me sharply across the face. "Disgraceful! Cheap! Filthy! No Brahmin girl has ever stooped so low. Tell me— how did this photograph get here?" (De Socialite Evenings 24)

Karuna's "father's" angry questioning and chastisement come from the feeling that such an act is disgraceful to a good Brahmin family. But Karuna is not apologetic; in fact, she smiles.

After going through a number of experiences, as Urbashi Barat says, Karuna finally turns to a career as a writer for ad-film scripts and is able to return to her parents: "Karuna is now secure enough to return to her parents and come to terms with her past—an important phase in the progress towards identity. This sparks off her creative spirit, and she begins writing scripts for ad-films almost as though inspired" (127). Subhash Chandra has this to say about Karuna's career:

Even though she is not precisely gifted or trained for any profession, she is made to light her way up, getting recognition in advertising and television productions. She becomes financially self-dependent, carves out her own niche in the professionally competitive world of advertising and acquires all the resources to flirt ad infinitum, which she is shown doing with a married journalist, Ranbir Roy. (147)

Karuna gets divorced from her husband because of her extra-marital relationship with his friend Krish and because she conceives Krish's child. Karuna is surprised when her husband proposes to divorce her. He points out that the child Karuna is carrying is his friend's:

"How would I know? These days you are up to all sorts of tricks. You might call your activities 'theatre-related.' But I don't trust you. If you could screw around with my friend Krish, right under my nose, you could be screwing the whole town. Adultery is an addiction—it's only the first
time that's difficult. After that, it's only a matter of one fuck here or there—isn't that right?" (De Socialite Evenings 215)

Karuna has been having a relationship with Krish secretly. Whenever she is asked, she tells her husband that she has been busy with "theatre-related" activities. However, her husband does not "trust" Karuna. Krish has cheated his friend and has sex with his friend's wife. Karuna's husband tries to moralize saying that "adultery" is "an addiction". Once you start you don't know where you are and what you are. Adultery is worse than cigarette smoking. Karuna asks:

"What are you trying to tell me?"
"I think you are clever enough to know. I don't think there's any point in continuing this farce. I've been thinking about it. We'd better call it off."
"Call it off?"
"Our marriage."
"Are you serious?"
"Of course I'm serious. I've discussed it with my mother."
"Before even talking to me?"
"Why should I consult you, my dear? Did you expect me to seek your permission? You didn't 'consult' me when you jumped into bed with Krish. Fair and square." [...]  
"I don't owe you any explanations. I mean, look, did you really believe you could have your little tryst in Venice and come back like nothing had happened? Do you know what I did the moment I reached Bombay? I saw a lawyer. I wanted to check on the legal position. Let me tell you a few things—you don't stand a chance in hell. I'd suggest you go along with my plan. Let's file for divorce by mutual consent. That way we'll save a lot of time, money and headaches. My lawyer has briefed me on this. I'm not interested in prolonging the proceedings and going through a bitter court battle. In any case, there's nothing to contest". (De Socialite Evenings 215-216)
Karuna does not seem to think a divorce is warranted. She is also appalled that an important decision has been taken without even consulting her. But her husband feels it is inevitable and the charge of adultery cannot be contested. Thus they are divorced and Karuna wants to go to her parents. I think what Karuna's husband did is right. No husband would live with his wife if she has not only an extra-marital relationship but also conceives a child outside marriage. It is justifiable from her husband's point of view. Even her parents do not support Karuna and refuse to entertain her when she calls her parents:

I called my parents. My misfortune hadn't stopped—Father picked up the phone. I asked for Mother but was told she was having a bath. I should have put the phone down then, but I wasn't thinking. I just told him the whole story—expecting what-sympathy, I guess. All he said was: "What you've done is unacceptable, totally unacceptable. Nobody in our family has done it before, nobody will do it in the future. You've made the mistake, now you pay the price. We're old people and we cannot help you. You were the one who wanted to marry your husband, it was your decision. Now we don't want to get involved. We have only a few years left to us, let us live them as peacefully as we can." Having said that he put the phone down. (De Socialite Evenings 218-219)

Her father is angry and finds the entire thing unacceptable. Had her mother picked up the phone, perhaps her reaction may have been different.

Karuna is responsible for her divorce. Karuna's husband Bunty is innocent. She feels lonely as her parents refuse to justify her act. No husband can tolerate it if his wife has an affair with another man. It is traumatic for any husband. It could be the other way too. Extra-marital relationships cannot always be kept a secret. They will surface one day or the other. Especially, after a few years of married life a husband and wife can easily understand the mind of each other. Moreover,
Karuna is carrying Krish's child. If Karuna has felt she has not been able to conceive due to a problem with her husband, they should have expressed their anxiety to a doctor. As we have already seen, Karuna is not happy with her husband. She has been feeling bored with him. If a wife is not happy with her husband she should be bold enough to say that she does not want to continue living with him. There are also opportunists who want to have extra-marital relationships. As a prey to Krish’s opportunism, she is left alone, away from her husband, from her parents and also from her lover Krish.

In the same novel, we have, Anjali, a friend of Karuna, who has a love marriage with Abe without her parents' consent. We are told about the Anjali-Abe marriage through Karuna:

Anjali had married Abbas "Abe" Tyabjee when she was just nineteen. [•••] Anjali and Abe had met on flight. She'd joined Air India as an air hostess like other attractive girls of her generation. She later explained, "Basically I wanted to get out of the closed, boring, middle class environment of my family. I wasn't interested in studies. I wanted to be on my own, independent. To see the world, meet people, buy lovely clothes and perfumes. What else does a pretty girl at that age want anyway?" (De Socialite Evenings 11-12)

Anjali is an ambitious girl at the age of nineteen. She wants to "get away" from a "middle class" "family". She wants to earn on her "own" and be "independent". I appreciate her desire for an independent life and an independent income.

Anjali has an extra-marital relationship and feels that she has fulfilled her desire that has long been due. When Karuna asks Anjali about her affair with Pierre she says:

"You're awful. You don't have any romance in you. You just want to
spoil everything by asking crude questions... But to answer your nosiness—yes, I have slept with him. It was wonderful. I felt the earth move. Just like in those books. For the first time, I felt something." (De Socialite Evenings 74)

Anjali does not want to share her experience with Karuna but she shares her feelings with her. She even calls this affair, "the experience [she] has been waiting for" (De Socialite Evenings 78).

Anjali has chosen her career on her own. She is from a middle class family. She is tired of this middle class life. Anjali has initially become an air-hostess not to make a career but to earn money and to get out of the "boring life". Moreover she is "not interested in studies". I think what she feels is that education up to a certain level is enough to earn and be "independent". She seems to be quite practical. She seems to suggest that she has had enough education to get a job and earn her own "money". When she says she is not "interested" in "studies" what she means is that she is not interested in further studies. That does not mean education is not necessary for her or for any one. Nor does she mean that education is not interesting. After earning and becoming independent, she wants "to see the world", "meet people", and "buy lovely clothes and perfumes".

Anjali has divorced her husband Abe, a Muslim. Theirs has been a love marriage. Anjali has a problem with Abe:

[***] "I have lost all my girl-friends to Abe. The minute he meets them, he starts his seduction plans. It doesn't take very long. One lunch, two drinks—and boom—they're in bed. I don't want to lost (sic) you". "But do you find him sexually attractive?" she asked anxiously. "No!" I almost yelled back.

"I know Abe finds you attractive. He has told me so. He even asked me, ‘Would you mind very much if I went to bed with her?’ I didn't say
anything. But he could tell from my expression that I was upset." (De *Socialite Evenings* 43)

**What** more reason can a wife need to divorce her husband than his having affairs with or trying to have affairs with her "girl-friends". He may be talented in seducing his wife's girl friends. But he is not talented enough to save his married **life**. Therefore, Anjali cautions Karuna and expresses to her that she does not want to lose her friend.

The reasons why Anjali divorces her husband are evident from the following lines:

Anjali’s divorce (yes, it finally happened) wasn't easy. While Abe wasn't bothered one way or the other, Anjali suffered in style: she wept into expensive Swiss hankies or into whisky-sours in various five star bars. There were suddenly a whole host of sympathizers—mainly male—willing to listen to her tales of neglect, abuse and torture. "What a bastard that man is," would run their refrain, as they counted the minutes to when their sympathetic shoulder could be switched for an even more sympathetic shoulder could be switched for an even more sympathetic bed. (De *Socialite Evenings* 64)

In the novels of this decade, there are two unmarried women Bim and Sonali, one woman Tara who has a love-cum-arranged marriage, three women Sana, Indu and Anjali who marry for love and four women Priya, Paro, Jaya and Karuna who have arranged marriages. There are varied careers that "educated" women opt for. Bim teaches in a college; Jaya and Sarla run a school; Saru practices medicine; Priya becomes a P. A. to a businessman and a salesgirl in a bookshop; Sonali holds the high designation of an I. C. S. officer; Jaya becomes a creative writer; Karuna becomes a model and Anjali becomes an air-hostess. This decade seems to be opening up several careers for the "educated" women as the range of careers
of these "educated" women demonstrates. As far as the issue of divorce is concerned we find Jaya and Sarla being abandoned, Paro, Priya and Karuna being divorced for having extra-marital relationships, and Anjali divorcing her husband for being involved in an extra-marital relationship.
Works Cited


Notes

1 In Shashi Deshpande's *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) the two educated women characters, Devayani and Kshama who are cousins, remain unmarried and the third woman character in the same novel Mrs. Jyoti Raman remains a single parent with a daughter. There is no indication of their marriage and as such there is not much discussion of marriage in the novel. All the three characters have a job in a school. These three women characters are, however, not committed to their careers.

2 I agree with Nayantara Sahgal's view in her article "Passion for Indian" (*Indian Literature* 32.1 (1989) 79-88): "[...] Devi in *A Situation in New Delhi* and Sonali in *Rich Like Us* do without dependence on men and are whole and complete without them. What I feel, I suppose, is that men are not yet ready for equal partners; for true everlasting love, for real give and take, a love that transcends misunderstandings" (84).