In the 1990s there is a change in the authors' perspective regarding their characters. However, there is a slight similarity between the 1980s and 1990s. Let us see what these similarities and differences are in this chapter.

I will begin the discussion with Malini Arora in Shobha De's *Starry Nights* (1991) who goes in for an arranged marriage based on mutual understanding with Akshay Arora. Malini has a career, in that she is a ghazal singer even before her marriage. But she has been asked to give up her career as a ghazal singer after her marriage. The reason why Akshay wants his wife to give up her career is that he wants his wife to be a homemaker and not a career woman. He says:

[...] "I want a home-maker. Someone who will be a good mother to my children. I don't want to marry a painted doll; some cheap film girl who will flirt with all my friends. Malini is the right woman for me." Malini, in turn, had explained her decision to quit her career. She was a ghazal singer who was just beginning to get noticed, when Akshay proposed to her. "My husband means more to me than a career. I believe a wife's place is in the home, not in a recording studio. Akshay is an old-fashioned man. I will never displease him." A cheeky reporter has asked her. "But about his affairs? Will you tolerate them?" Malini was tight-lipped. "I trust my husband. He will never do anything to hurt me." (40)

What prompts Akshay to want his wife to be "a home-maker" is that children would be affected if both husband and wife have careers. He has seen personally how some women go to the extent of doing anything for a flourishing career. However, he cannot generalize that every film girl will flirt as he imagines. He is wrong because he has not been able to see the positive characteristics of a career woman which could have evoked respect for such women in him. But, at the same time, he flirts and is involved in an extra-marital relationship with Aasha Rani. He is a hypocrite and does not believe in providing freedom to let Malini have her own career. Therefore, he has chosen Malini to be his wife and lays down a
condition that she has to "quit her career" of ghazal singing. Malini agrees to the condition. The question to ask is why she should "quit her career". Does she not have the desire to have a flourishing career? Malini is quite talented. Perhaps, she has not been successful in getting marriage proposals. Having a career is one of the biggest problems for "educated" career women who want to get married. Unless the husband is broad-minded and wants to encourage his wife, women will have a tough time getting married and continuing with their careers. Here is a case where Malini has been asked to "quit her career". This is very unfortunate. Why should she compromise and say that a wife's place is in the home but not outside home?

Like Malini, Amrita in Shobha De's *Strange Obsession* (1992) has an arranged marriage with Rakesh who is broad-minded enough to accept Amrita who was involved in a lesbian relationship. He knows that Minx (Meenakshi) has exploited Amrita. Minx haunts Amrita until she gets married. Minx has been obsessed with Amrita's beauty. She has a strange obsession of possessing Amrita and trying to do anything for the sake of holding on to Amrita. Amrita is in a state of turmoil and is guilty of her relationship with Minx. Rakesh in fact falls in love with Amrita as soon as he is asked to meet her at a hotel in Bombay. Amrita's mother Mrs. Aggarwal is very particular about Amrita's marriage with Rakesh. He too believes in an arranged marriage as he tells Amrita that he has taken his parents' "official permission" to marry her: "I'd gone to meet my parents and got their official permission to marry Amrita, that is, if she still wants to marry me. I'm an old fashioned man in that respect-I wanted my parents to give me their blessings" (156). It is interesting to note that people like Rakesh who believe in an arranged marriage are generally considered "old fashioned". On the other hand, Amrita has been helped and saved by a friend who loves her, Karan from the clutches of Minx. He books the flight ticket and makes sure that she reaches Bombay safely. He takes photographs and a video movie of Amrita's wedding. The wedding is described thus:

As the flames from the sacred fire rose higher and smoke swirled around the
decorated mandap Amrita looked up, squinting her eyes to keep them from watering. And there through the haze stood Karan at the edge of the small crowd, his eyes fixed on her face. Amrita was so glad to see him. [...] She could not wait to introduce the two of them to each other. She turned her face to stare at her husband-of-a-few-minutes. [...] "He is my best friend. He saved my life in more ways than one". (De Strange 167)

Before Amrita gets married to Rakesh, she wonders whether Rakesh would accept her or not. She is to be appreciated for discussing her previous lesbian relationship with Minx frankly and candidly with Rakesh. He understands her problem and does not show any anger about her past relationship with Minx.

On the other hand, Minx hates men and has a lesbian relationship with Amrita who aspires to become a model. In order to lure Amrita, Minx creates stories that have an element of hatred towards men. She goes to the extent of saying that her father raped her at a young age. In fact, it is a falsely created story so as to make Amrita develop hatred towards men. At the same time Minx tries to have a hold on her lesbian relationship with Amrita. She even murders Amrita's competitor in modelling in order to retain her relationship with Amrita. However, at the end of the novel Amrita is saved from Minx's clutches and a life of ruin. I am not suggesting that a lesbian relationship is wrong or immoral. I am only suggesting that any relationship be it lesbian or heterosexual should not be out of force. Until and unless both partners agree mutually, no relationship is acceptable. The point here is that an individual and his/her feelings must be respected.

Amrita has chosen a career on her own with her parents' full support. Amrita goes from Delhi to Bombay to be successful in her career, as there are more possibilities in Bombay. Amrita gives the reason as to why she wants to move to Bombay:

"Mrs. Aggarwal, you are spoiling your daughter. What nonsense this is!
(De Strange 1)

Many parents are afraid of sending their daughters to distant places, either for education or for a career. The reason is that the daughters are "young" and either they have to be accompanied or placed in relatives' house. How can a daughter be restricted from going to distant places if she gets an opportunity to do a course or to pursue a career? Opportunities do not come to one's doorstep or at one's own place. One has to go in search of opportunities; otherwise some one else is always there to take one's place. Amrita's parents have to be appreciated for sending their daughter with full confidence in her. Mrs. Aggarwal defends her daughter's choice of going to "Bombay" to establish herself as a model. Amrita does not want to be a "third-rate model" in Delhi for a small company product. She wants to bag a well-reputed company project.

Amrita has a problem with Minx who is a lesbian trying to possess her for life. Neelam Tikka argues:

Amrita feels close to Minx since she fulfils most of her needs, so love is from within and not without. She also helps her in developing her career. Amrita has everything, a good house, somebody taking care of her finances. She is taken care of very well. The only thing she lacks is a child. If that need could be fulfilled, she would prefer this relationship to a heterosexist one. (225)

I disagree with Tikka's view that Amrita is not required to marry as every "need" including "her career" has been provided by Minx. Consider the following:

Amrita continued in a low voice. "May be I should just forget about this
whole modelling thing and go back to Delhi."
Karan stared at her in surprise, "Are you crazy? You are going to be the most sensational discovery on the modelling scene after our new campaign gets released. You already have half a dozen prestigious contracts in hand. Tomorrow you might get flooded with movie offers. And you want to throw all that away because of some mad woman?"
Amrita confessed, "I am scared to death of her, Karan. I feel she could harm me some day. I can't go anywhere without the creepy sensation that she is close by somewhere, watching me. It's a horrible position to be in."

(De Strange 24)

Look how terrified Amrita is of Minx. But her friend Karan urges her to be brave and stay back. But Amrita is horrified at the prospect of continuing in Bombay.

In spite of being scared of Minx, Amrita has been successful as a model in Bombay. Yet she has a fear of not getting modelling chances and expresses doubts of her survival to Sheila, her model friend:

Amrita continued to voice her doubts. "What if I don't get assignments for a month? How do I pay the rent and share expenses? With Mrs Pinto it was a fairly flexible arrangement. I don't want to ask my brothers or parents to subsidize me ... my self-respect is at stake." (De Strange 50)

It is common in any competitive field like modelling or acting to experience a fear of not getting enough offers and opportunities. So Amrita has expressed her "doubts". She is very independent and wants to show that she can lead her own life without any family member's support. She has become a role model for any "educated" woman who wants to be independent. I like this kind of a woman who always thirsts for an independent life without depending on her family members. The work of parents ends when they give women enough support to get them educated. What more does one need than education and the confidence to start
one's own career and establish oneself? Her friend Sheila says:

[...] "Oh my! Such a propah little lady. Don’t worry. I'm a real Shylock. I'll get the money out of you. Besides, stop being so bloody modest. You’ve put us all out of business after getting here. If you don't get assignments, what about the rest of us?" (De Strange 50)

Amrita, who has been successful, feels that way what about the 'rest' of the models who are less popular than Amrita. As the narrator says:

Amrita laughed. It was true. She had been hogging all the plum jobs and her rates had gone through the roof, upsetting the market. This had led to some hostility and jealousy, but she had been far too busy to bother about it. Some of the girls, like Sheila, had accepted her supremacy with grace and good humour. Others had not been as sporting. But Amrita was smart enough to realize that nobody did anybody a single favour in the cut-throat modelling business. You either delivered, or you were out. And right now Amrita was delivering—ad after sensational ad. (De Strange 50)

Like Malini and Amrita, Devi too in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) is highly educated and has an arranged marriage. She is doing her M. A. in U. S. A. when her mother reminds her that it is time to get married. Her *mother* is very particular about an arranged marriage. She finds the proposal from the Sreenivasans good enough for her daughter. The Sreenivasans would like to see the prospective bride and settle the marriage. The following lines reveal their expectations from their prospective daughter-in-law:

So they were looking for an accomplished bride, a young woman who would talk intelligently to her scientist husband's friends, but who would also to be, as all the matrimonial ads in the Sunday papers demanded, fair, beautiful, home-loving and prepared to "adjust". (Hariharan *Thousand* 17)
What is interesting here is that the "bride" has been asked to prepare to "adjust". This adjustment can be anything, be it with regard to the hectic work at home, be it with the husband leaving the wife for days together in the name of official tour, be it with regard to an impotent husband, or one who does not encourage further studies etc. Moreover, she has to be "fair", "beautiful" and "home-loving". Though Devi rejects this particular proposal, she marries Mahesh with expectations similar to those of the Sreenivasans. No matter where she has studied and what she has studied, no matter if she is educated or uneducated, a woman goes through the same process. Even if a woman dislikes a particular man she has to suppress her dislike and pretend so as not to disobey her parents.

Mahesh, Devi’s husband, is a regional manager in a multinational company that makes detergents and toothpastes. C. Vijayasree calls Mahesh "a diligent and serious minded business executive" (177). Mahesh is most of the time away on tours, like Dalip in This Time of Morning and Som in The Day in Shadow. He has no time to spend with his wife. Husbands who are in business might have problems such as this with their wives and their marriage may end in a divorce as in the cases of Dalip, Som and now Mahesh. After the marriage Devi is fed up with Mahesh. She says:

I find I can barely suppress my increasing longing to say, yes, we have said enough about your work, your tours, your company. A marriage cannot be forced into suddenly being there, it must grow gradually, like a delicate but promising sapling. What about us? What kind of a life will we make together? It seems too foolish, too intense a question to ask of this reasonable stranger who has already carefully examined, experienced, dissected, and is now ready to file away as settled, something as fragile and newborn as our marriage. Can this acute businessman's eyes, with all their shrewd power, really be weak-sighted? Does he not see that it is too early for quietness? Too soon for the companionship of habit? (Hariharan Thousand 49)
According to Pradeep Trikha: "Devi has some expectations from her husband, Mahesh to support and understand her on emotional grounds but her expectations are never realized" (9). On the other hand, Mahesh expects his wife to become his companion as soon as he marries her. Devi has been examining her husband's mind to realize that he is taking her for granted.

Devi is interested in learning Sanskrit and goes to her Baba to converse with him. But she finds it very difficult to understand Sanskrit. So she expresses her desire to learn Sanskrit. Mahesh responds thus to this wish of Devi:

"Why," Mahesh asked.
"So I can understand Baba's quotations better," I said.
"Don't be foolish," he said. "The English translations are good enough. And what will you do with all this highbrow knowledge?"

(Hariharan Thousand 52)

Rather than understanding her desire, Mahesh cross-questions her and brushes it aside. It is for her to decide whether it is good to understand a Sanskrit quotation. It is not his concern. The reason is that he has never interacted with Baba. Moreover, Mahesh considers Sanskrit "highbrow knowledge" and wonders what use such knowledge is to her.

When Devi wants to apply for the position of a research assistant, he discourages her:

"I must look for a job, I have so little to do," I said. My hands spread before me on the table, palms upward, empty.
"What can you do?" Mahesh asked, like a ruthless interviewer stripping away the inessential. When he says the words, they become true. What could I do?
"I saw a post for a research assistant advertised in the paper," I said. "You need at least one more degree for that," he said. "And what will you do when the baby comes?" (Hariharan *Thousand* 64-65)

_Devi thinks that _as there is not much to do at home, she would like to work to _overcome _her boredom. But Mahesh questions her capacity. Moreover, he sees _her only _as a home-maker, a mother.

_In fact _there is no news of Devi becoming pregnant after their marriage. Look at what Mahesh tells Devi:

"Let's have a baby," Mahesh said. "There's no reason to wait. I want you to have my baby," he said, and after a night of purposeful love-making, he left the next morning on a month-long tour.

He is far too civilized to raise his hand and bring it down on my rebellious body. He snarls instead about women's neuroses and my faulty upbringing.

Am I neurotic because I am a lazy woman who does not polish her floors every day? An aimless fool because I swallowed my hard-earned education, bitter and indigestible, when he tied the _thali _round my neck? A teasing bitch because I refuse him my body when his hand reaches out; _and _dream instead, in the spare room, of bodies tearing away their shadows and melting, like liquid wax burnt by moonlight? (Harharan *Thousand* 74)

He wants Devi to have his baby, to have a control over her body and emphasizes the role of a mother. But having a baby is not like buying or selling a product.

_Devi _is then attracted towards Gopal, who is her neighbour and, allows him to _touch her:_

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Gopal strolls into our garden every day, his raw-silk kurta strangely out of place among the coarse, weed-ridden bushes. His music is his life; he walks a straight and narrow path as purposeful as Mahesh's. But he misses nothing. He knows every muscle on my face, he sees the shadow before it falls across my eyes. We talk, he sings. When he takes my hand and brushes the fingertips with his moist mouth, the lush prison around me dissolves into a green blur. I sleep less and less every night. I ache for that drug, that blissful numbness. Waiting for him, even the trees outside do not stir in their breathless anticipation. (Hariharan Thousand 77-78)

Eventually Gopal writes a letter to Devi asking her to elope with him: "A letter from Gopal like a mirror. He sees himself, the artist, scaling dizzy heights with arrogance. Come with me, he says. You must decide for yourself, he says" (Hariharan Thousand 89). Gopal extends his hand to her asking her to accept him as her lover and elope with him. Mahesh writes a letter to Sita, the mother of Devi, saying that Devi has run away with Gopal:

The promise made to her, the promise she had made to herself, was not fulfilled. After months of silence, Sita received a terse telegram from Bangalore, not from Devi, but from Mahesh. Devi has run away, he said. Letter follows. All necessary action being taken. (Hariharan Thousand 108)

Sita has never interfered in their married life. She receives "a terse telegram from Bangalore", not from Devi but from Mahesh, about Devi running "away" with Gopal. C. Vijayasree remarks that after running away with Gopal, Devi seeks [an] escape in the company of a musical celebrity Gopal, remains for some time on the fringes of the ambitious maestro's world of fans and fame, and finally returns to the arms of her mother not a defeated or dejected loner, but a fugitive sure of her survival, determined "to stay and
Devi runs away with Gopal thinking that her life now will be better than that with Mahesh. Unlike it was with Mahesh, who has been away from her most of the time, she can spend time with Gopal. So she makes her choice to go with Gopal. She finally realizes that Gopal too is self-centred and makes the decision of returning to her mother to start life anew.

There are some similarities between Shree in Raji Narasimhan's *Forever Free* and Devi. Both are "educated". Both leave their husbands, are attracted to other men but finally go back to their widowed mothers to live with them. In both the novels women's bonding is highlighted.

Unlike Malini, Amrita and Devi, Urmila in Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine* (1992) opts for a love-cum-arranged marriage with Kishore who works in the Navy. Urmila is an English lecturer and marries a childhood friend. She falls in love with Kishore in her adolescence and gets the consent from both the families. As I have said earlier, this is the best type of marriage. The reason is that they are in love with each other and have the consent of their family members. There will be lack of family support if there is no consent either from Kishore's family or from Urmila's family or from both the sides. Urmila and Kishore have perfect understanding. They do not quarrel even on the first night when Urmila walks out on Kishore without having sex and the next day they continue with the daily routine as if nothing has happened the previous night. On the contrary, Akka who is Kishore's mother has a different story to tell. In fact, Kishore's father sees Mira in a marriage he attends and falls in love with her. Remember, he is already married to Akka who has a son Kishore and a daughter Vaana. Akka agrees to her husband marrying Mira as a second wife. She does not mind, as she is a traditional woman. She respects and obeys her husband's wishes. Thus, Mira, who is eighteen years old and doing her third year B. A. course, is married to Kishore's father. Later on, Mira's tragedy of her sexual abuse by her husband is revealed to us through her poetry. This has been discovered by Urmila, her
daughter-in-law, who gets the poems published. Evageline Shanti Roy says: "Mira's poems are in Kannada, and as Urmi pieces their meanings together with difficulty, she is horrified to find that, running through all her writing, is a strong, clear thread of an intense physical revulsion for the man she married" (77-78). The above lines reveal how horrifying her sexual experiences with her husband have been. Although he has married her with a lot of passion, in reality he has been a failure and has abused her sexually. J. P. Tripathy has this to say about Mira's death: "Mira, the mother of Urmila's husband Kishore, who died in the second child birth and could not emotionally adjust with the possessive egoistical love of her husband" (151).

Urmila has chosen teaching as a career out of her own interest. She loves teaching and enjoys it. Urmi expresses her fascination for her career to her brother Amrut:

"What are you planning to do?"
"Go back to work, what else?"
"Are you sure Didi? You want to go on with teaching?"
"What do you mean? I always wanted to teach."
"I know. Gives you a chance to be bossy, huh?"
"I enjoy my classes."
"Good enough for now, but I can't see you going on and on with undergraduate teaching. You've got to start on your doctorate work-last time you told me you'd start as soon as…"
"Arm was older, yes, I'd planned that."
"Then get going, Didi, don't postpone it."
"Do you know, Ambu, you sound like Papa. He always felt teaching was something too lowly for his daughter." (Deshpande Binding 26-27)

Teaching is what Urmila enjoys. Enjoying a chosen career is very important. The above lines also reveal that Urmila has kept her "doctoral work" pending because her child was growing up. The conversation makes it also clear that her Papa is
not happy with his daughter's choice of teaching. It is therefore crystal clear that
the choice of a career is Urmila's own.

Vaana in the same novel tries to become a doctor and is unsuccessful, as she does
not get enough marks to get a medical seat. However, she works as a medical
social worker and chooses this career on her own. Later on, she works in a
hospital as a nurse. Vaana has always had a passion for a career in medicine:

When she was still in school, she made up her mind to be a doctor. She
worked hard, adhering rigidly to her schedule, not letting anything distract
her from it. And yet, in the crucial year, she fell short by a few marks of
what was then needed, and couldn't get into any medical college. She
collapsed. She frightened Akka and me with her total
downbreakdown; nothing, it seemed, could stop her weeping. But in a few days,
hers equanimity almost restored, she began preparing herself for the career
of a medical social worker. (Deshpande Binding Vinel9)

While she may have been upset at not being able to become a doctor, she is strong
enough mentally to decide to be a medical social worker. She does not want to
give up the medical field. She is determined to continue in the same field if not as
a doctor, then as a social worker or a nurse. Vaana works in a hospital. She has
been asked to help in not transferring Kalpana who has been raped and brought to
the hospital for treatment. Kalpana has been informed that she will be transferred
to another hospital as they are short of beds. Urmila has been assisting Kalpana in
her treatment and fighting publicly the case of rape. Since Vaana is working in the
same hospital, where Kalpana is admitted, she has been asked to help. Urmila
says:

Vaana's getting ready to leave. She's surprised to see me, smiles, then
seeing my face says, 'It's about Kalpana, I suppose.'
"You know about it. You know they're throwing her out."
She's embarrassed, I can see that.
"They're not throwing her out, they're just transferring her to a suburban hospital. Look, I spoke to the AO--they need the bed, there are just fifteen in that ward, she's been here four months already. And there's nothing more they can do for Kalpana here. She needs nursing, that's all. That's just as good in the other place."

"What about the mother? How can she go there everyday?"
"You can't expect them to think of that. Be reasonable. Urmili." [...] "You don't know what you're saying, Vaana. Not a terrible thing for the girl to die? You think the mother can see it that way? You know nothing about it, you shouldn't talk."

She flinches as if I've struck her, then controls herself with an effort. "I'm just doing a job here, you know I can't do a thing. I spoke to the AO, but once these people take a decision ... It' no use your quarrelling with me, Urmili. If I could do anything to help, I would."

"I know, but it seems so unfair. Pushing a girl like that around. Not enough beds!"

"Would you like to see the AO yourself? I warn you, though, it's no use. I have enough experience of administrators". (Deshpande Binding Vine 166-167)

Vaana tries to justify the hospital administration whereas Urmila tries to find fault with it.

Before Kalpana is raped, she has been working in a shop. It is not a career for her but a job. However, she feels she is leading an independent and self-satisfied life. Her mother Sakuthai explains this about her daughter who she admires:

She is very smart, that's how she got that job in the shop. Kalpana even learnt how to speak English. People in our chawl used to laugh at her, but she didn't care. When she wants something, she goes after it, nothing can
stop her. "She's stubborn, you can't imagine how stubborn she is". Pride gives way to resentment. "And she's secretive, she never tells me anything. She didn't even tell me how much her pay was, can you imagine that? Me, her own mother. As if I was going to take her money away from her! I don't want anything. All I ask is that she help me out. She does, I'm not saying she doesn't, but she grumbles. And can you believe it, she gives her father money more easily than she gives me. She doesn't grumble at that, even though she knows he will use it for gambling. He has that matka madness. It makes me furious. I don't understand her [...]." (Deshpande Binding Vine 92)

Had Kalpana not been raped and that too by her own relative she would have succeeded in her life. However, there is no information about what happens to Kalpana in the novel.

Unlike the characters discussed earlier, Mikki in Shobha De's Sisters (1992) has a love marriage. However her marriage and career are interconnected. She has been forced to choose business as her career as her father is killed in an accident. She is the only daughter of Seth Hiralal, the proprietor of Hiralal Industries. In fact, Mikki has been studying in the United States of America for her M. B. A. degree. She has to give up her studies in order to take up her father's industrial business. She is summoned and handed over the charge of Hiralal Industries by her father's personal secretary, Ramanbhai. As soon as she takes up her father's industries, Mikki asks Ramanbhai to brief her about the industries. He says:

I appreciate your method of trying to start at the bottom aid I agree it is the best way to understand any business. But your case is different. You have been thrown into an unusual situation on the death of your great father. This changes the picture. You don't have time on your hands for apprenticeship. Had you been a son, your father might have taken you into his confidence from a young age and guided you properly from the
beginning. But as a daughter, all he wanted for you was a good husband-that is all. Your training, if there was one, was to become an obedient daughter-in-law in some prominent business family .... Bed, the problem is nobody takes you seriously...why waste time with solicitors and accountants? What will they tell you? Nothing. They will give you a cup of tea, compliment you on your nice dress and send you home. My advice is-leave these serious matters to me. I am there to handle them. Trust me. I will guard your interests like a father. But you will make things difficult for yourself if you do things without consulting me."(De Sisters 30)

Mikki is right in asking Ramanbhai to brief her about the industries as she has no prior experience in business. Even Ramanbhai "appreciates" Mikki for her keen interest. He in fact tries to give her a lecture about the risks in business. He suggests that business is not meant for women and so her father has not provided afly training for her, as she is his only daughter. Mikki quietly listens to Ramanbhai and replies very carefully and tactfully:

Thank you for your advice, Ramankaka. I appreciate and value your words. But I'd like you to hear a few of mine now. I can't change my sex, unfortunately. That is the one thing all of you will have to accept. But I can change just about everything else... and I intend to. Fate has left me in my father's shoes. Had I been the son he never had but constantly longed for, perhaps I might have had more success with the likes of you. I don't expect you or the others to give up your prejudices-- but I want you to know that I will not let that stand in my way. This is going to be my show and I intend running it on my terms. If these old solicitors aren't prepared to talk turkey with me, I'll sack them. That goes for the accountants and anybody else who wishes to treat me like a simple-minded, spoilt little girl out to play at being a businesswoman. My genes are the same as my father's even if my gender isn't. I'm determined not to let the companies go by default. I will learn whatever I have to and I will hire whoever I
Mikki does not lose her temper with Ramanbhai for his "advice". Rather, she hits back at him and his accountants. While she thanks him for his concern, at the same time she asks him to "listen" to her "words". She tells him that she "cannot change her sex" as a response to Ramanbhai's point that she was not her father's son to look after the business. However, everyone will have to "accept" her as their boss. She warns them of consequences if they do not realize that she has taken over now.

Although she claims she would look after her father's business, she hands over all her business deals to Binny whom she loves and marries. In fact he pretends that he is interested in her but his main aim is to seize all her property and make her dependent on him. He is successful in his mission. Mikki is madly in love with him and does whatever he asks her to do. Binny puts conditions on Mikki about taking over Hiralal Industries in order to marry her: "[...] I'm prepared to take on Hiralal Industries with all its current liabilities on two conditions. The first—that you marry me. The second—that you relinquish complete rights in all your father's affairs to me—and that includes properties and any other assets my lawyers will come up with" (De Sisters 56).

In effect, he wants to take over both the industries and her self. Mikki's main intention is to marry Binny and not to bother whether the industry can be converted into a profit making industry or not. I agree with E. Satyanarayana's comments on Mikki's marriage:

Despite being warned, Mikki marries Binny. It is indeed surprising to note that unlike Shobha De's other women-heroes who generally tend to free themselves from the clutches of married life, Mikki deliberately gets into wedlock. Though she has been enamoured of the life of freedom, she is not averse to being a wife, but what she does not like is the inhuman
subordination of the woman and confining her to four walls of the kitchen.

What with her education in America and progressive thinking, Mikki gives in to Binny whom she loves very much. (148)

In order to marry Binny, Mikki is ready to do anything. Binny also knows about it. He has a calculating mind. He is successful in his plan. She informs her colleagues and personal secretary: "[...] There will be an immediate transfer of funds to ride over the present emergency, and thereafter, we shall be looking at a future take-over. I'll be convening a board of meeting tomorrow, followed by a general meeting soon after the motion is passed. Mr. Malhotra will be in full control...and I cannot think of placing the companies built up by my dear father in better hands." (De *Sisters* 88)

I think Mikki is not a successful businesswoman. In order to overcome temporary problems of finance, she is "transferring the funds" to Mr. Malhotra. He will control Hiralal Industries thereafter. Mikki is very firm in her decision although Shanay and Ramanbhai protest against handing over Hiralal Industries to Binny. She says:

[...] "We are discussing my father's companies and their future. As it turns out my marriage is linked to both. I'm sorry you feel this way, Ramankaka, but the decision is mine and I strongly believe it's in everybody's interests." [...] Mikki regarded him coolly, "Thank you for your concern and all you've done for my family, Ramankaka. I want you to know that I value you and your advice at all time. And now if you'll excuse me..." She walked off leaving him to stare after her retreating back. (De *Sisters* 89)

She is unfair to hand over the industry to Binny Malhotra for the sake of her marriage. As a proprietor she has every right to take a decision, which she strongly believes in but which is in everybody's interest.
Gudiya in Namita Gokhale's *Gods, Graves and Grandmother* (1994) falls in love with Kalki and though she does not get the consent of Phoolwati who has been Gudiya's guardian, initially, she has a love-cum-arranged marriage. Phoolwati had promised Gudiya's grandmother that she would look after Gudiya and see to it that she does not lead an unhappy life:

Phoolwati looked concerned. "What's bothering my Gudiya?" she asked worriedly, still waving the wads of notes in her podgy hands. "Arre, Gudiya, you are born to be a princess ~ you have your grandmothers (sic) blessings - tell Phoolwati what you want, Gudiya, and she will get it for you. Just test your Phoolwati for once."

[•••] "Tell me what's worrying you, Gudiya Rani," She cajoled. "I promised your dead grandmother that I would look after you. You wanted that wretch Kalki, you got him! Whatever happens, I will keep my promise. Now tell me, why are you sad?"

"How can I explain, Phoolwati," I sighed. "I never thought that being in love could make a person unhappy,"

"Are you talking about that Zero-Hero?" she asked contemptuously. "I wish you had fallen in love with a real man, Gudiya," "I love Kalki," I said irritably. "And my name is Pooja. Why can't you remember that?"

"How I wish you could have married a rich man," she continued wistfully. "Rich men are different." *(Gods 128)*

We were married within a week. It should have been the happiest day of my life. The entire temple premises were bedecked with swaying toranas of tender mango-leaves. [...] We got married in the mid-afternoon. *(Gokhale Gods 164)*

Therefore, she consents to the marriage, though reluctantly.
Gudia is a school dropout. Kalki lures her before marriage. He even finds out that there are no parents living with her except Phoolwati with whom she is living. He takes her to "a marriage party" and makes love to her:

He ripped open my kurta and fondled me with fierce passion. He pummelled my breasts until I cried with pain, and then moved his attentions downwards. When he entered me I let out a fierce cry of pain. He put his hand over my mouth and told me untenderly to shut up, didn't I know there were people around?... When we were finished he wore a satisfied smile on his face. "Liked it?" he asked complacently. "Girls always do". (Gokhale Gods 120)

As a result of this, she becomes pregnant. She comes to know this fact only after four months of pregnancy. This is a very advanced stage to abort the foetus. After marriage she leads a miserable life. She offers all her jewels to her husband so that he could meet some music directors and have a career. In other words, she has been cheated and exploited in the name of love.

Nisha in Shobha De's Sultry Days (1994) is in love with Deb but does not marry him as he does not believe in the institution of marriage. On the other hand, she remains unmarried and continues to concentrate on her career.

Nisha has also chosen her career as an ad agent on her own. She takes up the job to be independent financially. She says:

I took up a job with a mediocre ad agency straight after college. Just because I'd graduated with English honours and didn't really want to study any further, I had decided to go out and get myself a job, any job. And as everybody knows, when there's nothing better going, join advertising. If your bullshit sells-nothing like it. If not, you can still get by. Not shine as a supernova, but crawl along, jumping from one agency
to the next, till you join the huge firmament of senior mediocrities like yourself. By then, you at least have the ad jargon mastered and several cute tricks under your belt. (10)

I think what Nisha does is the right thing. Any "educated" woman should not wait for a big job in the initial stages. I don't mean to say that one should not have the idea of getting a good job. But a beginning has to be made. Nisha does not "want to" continue after graduating with English honours. Nisha is like Anjali in Socialite Evenings. She is of the opinion that after graduation there is no necessity to study further. It is better to take up "a job" immediately after graduation. I agree with her view, especially, if a person is not interested in higher studies. She is also of the view that if a person does not get "any job", it is better to take up an "advertising" job. She is practical enough to do so. The ad agency that she joins may not be good but there is always a chance of finding a better one. What is important is gaining experience in any field. Based only on one's own experience there are chances of getting better opportunities.

Nisha is not only happy with her mediocre job but is also content with her pay. She expresses this to a marketing guy Anil Bhandari who is back in India from the US hoping to pay back to his country by working in India. Anil and Nisha talk about their careers:

"[..] I wanted to come back home and set up my own shop. Hell, I decided, if I was going to bust my ass, I might as well do it for myself... but let's not talk about me. What about you? What's a nice girl like you doing in a sloppy ad agency?"

"Frankly, I don't know. I kind of enjoy it. It's not too demanding. The pay's OK. The people are fine. I have enough time to do other things... you know, see plays and stuff." (De Sultry 83)

Nisha is very frank with Anil about her career and her feelings about it. She gives
the impression that she is working to her capacity. She is not embarrassed about her mediocre and "sloppy agency" job. She is not interested in the type of agency but in doing the job and "enjoying" it.

At the same time, Nisha has also undertaken writing in the Sunday supplements of a newspaper. She is interested in doing different things. She does not hesitate to write and is aware of the money she gets out of writing:

Writing for Sunday supplements was fine. And fun. But it didn't fetch me too much money. And money was what I needed. Badly. Besides, freelancers are the real pariahs of journalism-nobody pays them either on time or sufficiently. Yet, everybody needs them. I had assignments galore. I even got to travel... Well, mainly to pick places the staffers didn't want to go to. It was enjoyable... but hardly rewarding in monetary terms. But I went along for the ride, covering abandoned monuments, abandoned wives, abandoned pets and abandoned dreams. Something was clearly wrong—I was working harder than ever before in my life, but my bank balance was dismally low. And horror of horrors, the importance of money had begun to dawn on me...finally. (De Sultry 182-183)

She is also aware that "freelance writers" are treated like "pariahs" in the field of journalism. She accepts all the pain in writing. Moreover, she enjoys travelling that the work entails. Earlier she was not worried about the money she earned but now she is. She needs to earn money too.

As a Sunday supplement writer she becomes famous. However, there is a drastic turn in her career-from journalism to selling basmati rice to Arab countries. Even if she is offered a huge amount for her journalism, she does not want to take up journalism as she has a flourishing rice business:

I also discovered to my utter surprise that I had business sense. This was
by accident. A school friend showed up unexpectedly from Dubai. "Can you supply basmati rice and chick peas to a few grocers there?" she asked. Rather a strange enquiry addressed to someone who was neither a farmer nor a shopkeeper. Recklessly, I agreed. And that's how I became a trader. Did it really represent much of a progression from being a lowly ad agency hack? Not really. But selling chickpeas to the Arabs was more fun than selling cigarettes to the locals. (De Sultry 183)

She has changed her career from ad agency to selling chickpeas to Arabs. Is this a progression? Yes it is. Moreover, she is enjoying her new career of selling chickpeas.

Even as she continues with this new business, Amar and Parthiv ask her to work for Bharat newspaper. Nisha accepts it only on condition that she be given independence, that she be allowed to continue her business and that she be given a great deal of money:

Amar continued smoothly, "How much are you making selling rice... five grand? Ten grand? We can make you an offer you can't refuse." "Fine," I said. "But I'd still want to continue to sell my rice." "Why?" Parthiv asked. "Because I enjoy it... and I like being my own boss. If I consider joining you at all, I'd prefer to work out some sort of a loose arrangement. Maybe you could consider a retainer. I don't want to give up my business... and in case you are interested, it makes me a great deal of money." Amar and Parthiv exchanged glances. "We had a package in mind actually. Plus, a fancy designation. You would be features editor with complete control. The only people you'd be reporting to is the two of us." [••] "Why not eight profiles over three months from you?"
"That sounds reasonable... and I'm interested." (De Sultry 209)
Nisha has risen to the level of being able to demand "editorship", for the job of editing is very prestigious. The reason is that the "editor" has more power than any other person in the publication department. Unless Nisha is allowed to continue her "business" she will not accept the deal from Amar and Parthiv. Moreover, she would like to dictate the workload and the kind of work.

In the same novel, Pramila, on the other hand, has an arranged marriage. She takes up writing poetry and then politics as a career. She finally divorces her husband because she is bored with that life. She in fact takes up this career not on her own but to find some change in her life. She has been feeling bored with her marital and materialistic life. She does not find her life meaningful. She tries to find some meaning through writing poetry. She in fact leaves her husband and children in order to flourish in her career. She writes for pulp publishers. Later on she gets a job. She writes a letter to her husband:

She had found a job in a Marathi fortnightly and was staying as a paying guest in Dadar. [...] The job kept her away for long hours...applying for leave without pay and staying home to look after the little girl while searching frantically for a substitute maid.

Her bosses were understanding but they couldn't stretch privileges endlessly to accommodate Pramila's problems. It was time for her to look around and move on--which she promptly did. [...] It was at this point that God ran into her through Yashwantbhai, who was trying to induct her into politics..."We need women like you," Yashwantbhai lured at their first meeting, scratching his groin thoughtfully, "Politics . . . women's issues...you are the right person. You could head our Special Cell. It is a good job. Good pay. We will look after your daughter's education . . . everything. Also you will be protected." (De Sultry 161-163)

Although she wants to continue her job, she cannot do so as there are two daughters to be looked after by her. It is very difficult to look after children as a
divorcee. Hence she has to quit the job. But luckily she enters politics with the help of Yaswhantbhai who needs "a woman" to fetch votes by raising "women's issues" and becoming popular. She has been assured that her children's "education" will be taken care of. She will be paid a "good" and handsome salary. Above all she "will be protected", as she is a lonely woman in Nagpur.

Pramila divorces her husband only because she has married a boring husband. She has everything in her life—a well-settled husband, children, house and a happy life. However she does not find pleasure in her life. She feels that her husband is a boring person and takes up writing in order to find some pleasure in life:

Married to a boring mechanical engineer from Pilani at an early age, Pramila strained against the kind of life he had to offer. In quick succession, she produced a boy and two girls, after which she considered her duty towards her husband over and done with. (De Sultry 160)

The main reason why Pramila feels bored with her husband Vilas is that she is married at a very early age. Perhaps she is not even a graduate. In addition to getting married at a very early age, she has three children even before she can get used to her life. This is a bad indication of their married life. Maybe, her husband should have given her some time to enjoy her life, given her enough time for her to settle down in her life. If a wife has a child one after the other and has no other occupation, she may have this kind of a bored life. She is indicating that all that her husband wanted is children and nothing else.

On the contrary, Vilas her husband, wants to provide everything to his wife before she asks for it. He feels that he is being good to his wife and children. He is trying to please his wife and children but she thinks the other way round. The narrator says:

Unfortunately, Vilas had different ideas about holy matrimony. He saw
them putting down roots in Nagpur, drawing from his provident fund to buy a bungalow there. He wanted to see his son to follow in his footsteps and become a PWD engineer when the time came for him to retire. For his daughters he could only foresee a stable middle-class marriage to doctors (preferably g. p.'s with a "decent" practice) or lawyers. As for Pramila—why, she had everything a woman could ask for—a husband with a 'solid' job, security, lovely children, a moped of her own and all the time in the world to pursue her interests, join the local Mahila Mandal, attend haldi-kumkums, organize Sarvajanik Ganapati festivals and show off her latest sari brought by him from Bombay while on "tour". Yet, Pramila was wilting. He thought she was ill. She was, but not in the way he assumed. (De Sultry 160-161)

Vilas believes in the institution of marriage. He considers marriage as "holy matrimony". Once a person is married, he is bound to it throughout his life. He feels it is his duty to look after his family. He feels that in spite of all that he has provided Pramila, she is not happy with her married life.

As a result of this boredom, she has taken up writing to find some meaning in her life. However, she does not reveal to her husband that she is writing poetry. As soon as the children go to school, she starts scribbling on papers. Pramila reminds us of Jaya in That Long Silence as far as her writing is concerned. Pramila writes "intense", "erotic", and enraged poetry in a pseudonym and gets it published through the pulp publishers. She does get money and thinks of leaving for Bombay. She leaves never to return.

After a few months, Vilas and his mother receive a letter from Pramila informing them about her newly found job and about her being a paying guest-at Dadar. She enquires about her children and her husband. She also informs in the letter that she is planning to visit Nagpur very soon. The narrator explains as to why she is in Nagpur a year after her departure:
Nearly a year after her departure, Pramila went back to Nagpur. Vilas was stony-faced and hostile. The youngest child ran and hid behind the grandmother, while the older two rushed eagerly towards her and asked for presents from Bombay. Pramila was in Nagpur on a specific mission. She wanted a divorce. And the children. Vilas was stunned. His mother wasn't. "Give her the divorce and keep the children," she advised.

Vilas consulted his lawyer friend. "Your mother is right," he said. But Vilas was adamant. "I want her," he moaned. They arrived at a compromise. "Take the girls," the mother screamed. "The son is ours. He bears our name." And so it was that after battling for ten days, Pramila took the train back to Bombay with two very frightened little girls with her. (De Sultry 161-162)

The reason is that she wants "a divorce" from her husband. Why should she ask for a divorce? What wrong has he done her? He neither quarrels with her nor beats her up. The reason should be justifiable. Look at Vilas's reaction to her request. He is "stony-faced and hostile" and stunned. Vilas's mother asks him to divorce her without any hesitation. Why don't they think about children? How will they grow up when their parents are divorced? If the couple is incompatible or has an unhappy sexual life or if the husband is a wife-beater or a drunkard, then there is a reason for asking for divorce. There is no complaint of that kind against Vilas. However, Vilas is willing to divorce her, though reluctantly. At least to me Pramila's reasons are not justifiable.

Unlike Pramila, Aparna in Shobha De's Snapshots (1995) has a love marriage with Rohit who is an architect. Aparna is working as an Accounts Supervisor in an ad agency. Basically she is not a housewife but a career woman.

Aparna has chosen her career on her own as an Accounts Supervisor. Although she is career-oriented her husband does not encourage his wife. He has an ego that
he is the bread-earner. Even if his wife works he expects her to behave like a *housewife* and do whatever he asks her to do. She finds it problematic to cope with both married life and career. She finds it very difficult to lead a peaceful life, as her husband is not cooperative. He is a typical patriarchal person. She does not hesitate to argue with her husband. She cannot be taken for granted. When her husband says that he brings home the bread, Aparna reminds him that she also does the same thing. Rohit walks out of Aparna’s life without taking divorce legally. He does not understand that his wife also has a career to take care of. He expects his wife to be a traditional housewife:

One morning, Rohit asked for his coffee and while she showered, he casually packed. When she emerged from the bathroom, she found him dressed and ready to leave. She towel dried her hair and asked unsuspectingly,

"Going somewhere?"

"Yes," Rohit replied, lighting a cigarette.

"You didn’t tell me, Baroda again?" Aparna continued.

"Yes," he said coolly.

"How long?" she asked looking for something in her wardrobe.

"For good," he replied picking up his bag. [• • •]

"It is," he said ducking. "Watch me while I leave." And with those words he’d picked up his Samsonite and walked out of her life. No explanations. No apologies. (De *Snapshots* 19)

**Rohit** does not give any "explanations" as to why he is walking out of Aparna’s life. Nor does he apologize for leaving unexpectedly. He assumes that he can walk out of her life at any time he feels comfortable. Aparna misses Rohit and feels a shock.

**The** shock of his absence had led (sic) to a depression she had thought she would never pull herself out of. For four days she hadn’t dared to leave

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their smart, stark, impersonally efficient flat. She'd remained in bed with the Japanese lantern swinging maddeningly over her head. She couldn't eat. Or drink. Or smoke. Or think. Or even mourn. She missed him so deeply, so physically, every bit of her being ached. (De Snapshots 19)

Rohit walking out of her life has made her think as to why he has left her like that. She goes back to a time when both of them think of having a kid and then postponing it, as both of them are career oriented. She recalls an incident about forgetting to buy a wine bottle:

"Where's the wine?" he'd asked.
"I forgot. I'm sorry, but I forgot. I was so rushed at the office today--the secretary had bunked--and I had to get the presentation ready for those blasted new batteries—you know, the new account I was telling you about last week?"
Rohit had stared at her coldly. "Fuck you. And fuck your new account. When I tell you to make sure there's wine in the fridge, baby, you bloody well make sure there's wine in the fridge, baby, you bloody well make sure there's wine in the fridge. Now, if you know what's good for you, you'll get your ass out of here. Go to the Club and pick the fucking bottles up." (De Snapshots 21-22)

How can he be so rude to his wife if she forgets to buy the wine, as she is busy at office? Look at his reaction to her forgetting to buy wine for him. He uses filthy language and four-letter words. Look at Rohit's authoritarian attitude.

Apart from this, she also recollects the arguments that used to take place quite often between them. About one of them, she says:

[...] "I thought you were the New Man. I expected you to care and share. But you're like any other husband. The same old double standards. The same hypocrisies." Rohit would smile back sadistically, "Too bad you
miscalculated. Sure I have double standards I bring home the bread. You cook. Easy." Aparna would retort furiously. "Don't forget I bring home the bread too. I am a serious career person. When we married, you respected my priorities. You knew what you were getting into. If you'd wanted a housemaid, you should have married one." (De Snapshots 22)

As Jasbir Jain says in her article "Post-Colonial Realities: Women Writing History", Aparna is "rejecting the hegemony of female projections, [she] cross[es] over to occupy a centrality ordinarily withheld from [her]" (65).

Unlike Aparna, Parvati in Namita Gokhale's A Himalayan Love Story (1996) has an arranged marriage with Lalit Joshi. Parvati has lost her father at the early age of one. She has been looked after and is educated by her mother's stepbrother Hiranand Joshi. He runs a school and is very particular about Parvati's education. Contrary to her wishes, Hiranand Joshi has chosen a husband for Parvati. She is asked to marry Lalit Joshi and Parvati obliges. She does not say anything negative. She meekly abides by the verdict:

The year I turned twenty Masterji [Hiranand] told me that I was to be married. He had chosen a boy for me, somebody I already knew, and obviously liked. I thought perhaps he was talking about Mukul Nainwal, who was then studying in Allahabad; but no, Masterji had decided that I was to be married to Mukul's best friend, Lalit Joshi.

It was not that I disliked Lalit. In fact, all in all, I rather liked him. [•••] I considered the prospect of marriage to Lalit. It was not likely to be very exciting, but I was hardly in a position to contradict Masterji or his decisions. [...] The day I was to be married I was ritually bathed with turmeric and sandalwood. I wore a red silk sari and the gold champakali necklace my mother had left me. (34-36)
Why should she hesitate to say whether she would "marry" Lalit or not? Of course, Masterji has provided her education, money and now a marriage alliance. This does not mean she has to follow whatever he suggests. From the above lines, it is clear that she is interested in marrying "Mukul Nainwal" and not Lalit. However, she does not protest or expresses her opinion. She simply obeys him. She has no guts to say that she likes Mukul and would like to marry him. Why can't she "contradict" Masterji's "decision"? It is her life after all. I think it is also wrong on the part of "Masterji". He feels he can dictate terms to Parvati. One has to remember that he runs a school and provides education to children. He has to take Parvati into confidence before he declares his selection of a husband for Parvati. Parvati's position is also critical. She is faced with a moral dilemma. What is her life without Masterji's helping hand? Unable to cope with life, she becomes insane.

Maya too in Shobha De's *Second Thoughts* (1996) has an arranged marriage. She does protest to her mother about the arranged marriage:

"An arranged marriage? For me? Don't be ridiculous. Besides, I have one more year to go before I finish college," Maya remembered protesting just two months earlier.

"So? Who says you can't finish college and then get married?" her mother had argued.

"Then why do we have to go to Bombay now?" Maya had sulked.

"Because boys like Ranjan get snapped up before you and I can blink our eyes—that's why. Besides, he's available for only two weeks. Something about a big assignment he has to do. His family wants to finalize everything before then. Prodipda was very keen on our meeting the Maliks. Ranjan is quite a catch. Who knows, by the time we get to Bombay, some other lucky girl might have grabbed him. Don't think there are any pretty Bengali girls in that city. Bombay is full of them, I'm told there are thousands and thousands of good Bengali families there," Chitra
had commented in her characteristic agitated fashion. (3)

There is no one to listen to Maya about her anxiety of not being able to graduate. Look at the attitude of Maya's mother. If there is a good match available, families compete. They feel they may miss a "good chance" for their daughters. This is the case with Maya's parents. On the contrary, Maya is fed up with the talk of her marriage. She is interested only in completing her studies and getting a degree. If the marriage is fixed the parents may ask her to stop her studies. This is Maya's worry. However, her mother assures Maya that she can complete her college education. Look at Chitra using the words "catch" and "grab". How competitive are the mothers for "right" boys! Ranjan wants a wife who can be a traditional Indian wife. He feels that he is earning enough money to support his wife and family. He believes that it is a woman's duty to run a good home. After expressing his view, he asks Maya whether she agrees with him or not. In fact, she does not reveal her views:

Maya [...] nod[s] dumbly while every body waited to hear her well-considered views. Finally, it was her uncle who'd intervened to say with a laugh, "Our Maya is very talented. Always getting high marks in school and college. [...]"

In any Indian family, the husband's comforts always come first. Everything else follows. But it's good for young girls to have a hobby. Keep them busy also." (De Second 11)

I think Maya should have expressed her "views" instead of keeping her "views" to herself. Later on, Maya tells her views to her parents. She should have expressed that she is interested in doing a job as she is "educated" and has a degree in textile designing. My strong view about "educated" women is that they should not forget their education or dump it for family life. They have to do something, not just to earn money but to keep themselves busy.
Maya is married to Ranjan. He is a very orthodox person like his mother. He wants his wife to be at home, whether she is educated or not. In his opinion education is not for women. He does not try to understand his wife. He is busy with his own work. Maya has a neighbour Nikhil Verma who is "four or five years younger than" Maya. However, Maya has an extra-marital relationship with Nikhil Verma, who is unmarried. He makes advances towards her and gives her a gift, exploiting her loneliness. He has no business to try and interfere in her personal life. Life to her is boring. What has he got to do with her life? He has to concentrate on his own studies and future. Interestingly, Maya initially resists his advances and later on accepts them. The affair happens when Ranjan is out of town on office work. Nikhil enters her flat with flowers declaring that it is his birthday. He initially kisses her and later on takes her to her bedroom and has sex with her:

It was a kiss that involved Nikhil's entire being. A kiss so focused, so complete, I surrendered to its soft urgency even though my mind was on mundanities like the washerwoman showing up earlier than usual. [...] Every bit of me was suddenly alive to the feel of Nikhil's lips, hands, arms, neck, chest, knees, legs. [...] May be I was going crazy. I didn't want to th'nk of consequences. [...] I felt free. Lunatic. Wonderful. [...] I allowed myself to be pushed back on my bed-the bed I shared with Ranjan. I knew we were on Ranjan's side of it by the smell of the bed linen and pillows. I could feel Nikhil's hands under my caftan, pulling it up, up and up. [...] Fifteen minutes later, my eyes were still shut. Nikhil had obviously dressed and gone. [...] (De Second268-271).

Alka Saxena rightly points out: "After a breezy affair with Nikhil, Maya would have to spend the rest of her life, sometimes clad in her mother-in-law's discarded sarees and dance to the tune of her rigidly conservative husband. Nothing would have been more irksome" (270). The main reason for Maya to think in this manner is Ranjan's indifference to her emotional and sexual desires. One has to
blame Ranjan for his lack of understanding about his wife. Ranjan thinks that he is providing everything to his wife. He is providing material things. What about personal care, tenderness, affection, emotional expressions and romantic feelings? That does not mean Nikhil is providing all that. He is only an opportunist exploiting her.

Unlike Maya, Sumitra in Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time (1996) has a love marriage. Sumitra is loved by Gopal, who marries her. Sumitra is a young eighteen-year old girl and naturally reciprocates his love and marries him. It is an inter-caste and inter-lingual marriage. This kind of a thing is generally possible only in love marriages. Gopal takes the advice of his friends. Gopal feels: "She's not of our caste, she does not speak our language. What will my parents say?" (67). He agrees to marry her only when one of his friends says: "Marry her, the friend said, and he said it over and over again. 'Marry her, she's a good girl, she'll make you a good wife, I am sure of that. Marry her.' [...] So I married Sumi. And I knew I was right, it was my body that told me this truth. I never had any doubts about my feelings for her" (67).

Sumitra has been separated from her husband, Gopal. Gopal is a lecturer in History in a college. There is no legal divorce just like in the case of Rohit and Aparna in Shobha De's Snapshots who are not legally divorced but are separated. The reason that Gopal gives to Premi, the younger sister of Sumi, is ridiculous:

"Why did you do it, Gopal?" [...]  
"Why did I do it? I can give you so many answers, but I've begun thinking that the plain truth is that I just got tired."  
"Tired? Of Sumi?" [...]  
"Well, let me put it this way. I could no longer believe that there is a meaning to my life, a happy culmination waiting for me at the end of it. Can you imagine what living with such a person would be for my children? For Sumi?"
"No meaning to your life?" Premi gets hold of that phrase. "Oh Gopal, what about your children?"

"For you, it's Nikhil, isn't it? But not for me; to think of being the purpose of my parents' life would have been too heavy a burden on me to carry. Can I then burden my children with that load? No. Premi, the meaning has to be found in your own life." (Deshpande *Matter* 133-134)

He says he is "tired" of his daughters. Is it because he has no male company in the family? One cannot agree with his reason. He cannot give the Jack of a male member in the family as the reason. He also says that he does not find any "meaning" to his married "life". Why does he think of giving his daughters an education and getting them married a burden? Moreover, indirectly he points out to Premi that she has only a son, Nikhil to look after whereas he has three daughters. He suggests that his daughters find meaning to their lives on their own. He has to have a solid and logical reason to be separated from his family members. Is he trying to say that he cannot manage his family without a son in his family? He does not even say that he wants to take a divorce from his wife. Nor does his wife demand a divorce. She quietly accepts the separation. She does not even express her anger. The important factor is that he has fallen in love with Sumi and has married her against her parents' wishes. It is a love marriage. However, Sumi's eldest daughter Arundhati cannot tolerate her father leaving them without his support and presence in their house, without even applying for divorce. Aru does suggest the following:

[•••] Aru has no intention of forgetting, no intention of letting Sumi forget, either.

"I think you should see a lawyer," she says to her mother.

"You mean because of Gopal? Devi's been saying that to me, too, she wants me to meet Murthy's cousin who's a lawyer. But I don't see the point of it."

"The point? The point is you've got to do something."
"What? Get a divorce? I'm not interested."

"But he owes you, he owes all of us, yes, you especially, he owes you—" lamely, "something. He can't get away like this! He has to give us maintenance."

Sumi laughs, she seems genuinely amused. "Gopal has outsmarted the law. He's given us all that he had. And he has nothing now, not even a proper job. I don't think he's getting more than a bare subsistence from Shankar's press-so Ramesh tells me. So what can the law make him do?"

"Sumi, you are making it too easy for him, you're letting him get away with it. He's getting scot-free. It's not right, he must be made to realize what he's done ...."

"How? By punishing him? Do you want to punish him, Aru? I don't. I'm not interested. I just want to get on with my life". She puts an arm around Aru's shoulder.

"Let him go? Aru, just let him go. This is not good for you." [...] "Let him go? As if he's a--a mere acquaintance or somebody with whom we've had a small misunderstanding? He's our father, Ma, he's your husband. How can you dismiss it so lightly? I don't understand you at all." (Deshpande Matter 60-61)

Sumi is "not interested" in getting a "divorce" from Gopal. This indicates that she does not want to be separated from her husband. It is different if Gopal wants to lead a single life. Ara's point is that he has to pay for their "maintenance", for producing them and marrying her mother. Sumi does not want to take any action against her husband. She is not "interested" in punishing him. It seems she still has a liking for him in spite of his deserting her.

Like Sumi, Ammu too in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things (1997) marries an assistant manager of a tea estate (his name is not given in the novel) for love. He sees Ammu in a wedding reception and proposes to her. Ammu decides immediately and writes a letter to her parents. They don't respond to her
letter. However, Ammu does not wait for their consent or for their letter. She goes ahead with an elaborate Calcutta wedding:

He was a small man, but well-built. Pleasant-looking. He wore old-fashioned spectacles that made him look earnest and completely belied his easy-going charm and juvenile but totally disarming sense of humour. He was twenty-five and had already been working on the tea estates for six years. He hadn't been to college, which accounted for his schoolboy humour. He proposed to Ammu five days after they first met. Ammu didn't pretend to be in love with him. She just weighed the odds and accepted. She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem. She wrote to her parents informing them of her decision. They didn't reply. Ammu had an elaborate Calcutta wedding. (Roy God 39)

Ammu divorces her husband because he drinks excessively. Moreover, Ammu's husband asks her to sleep with and look after his boss. This divorce is justified, as her husband is an alcoholic, a wife-beater and one who is willing to "sell" his wife. No "educated" woman would accept it if her husband crosses his limits. The narrator says:

Her husband turned out to be not just a heavy drinker but a full-blown alcoholic with all of an alcoholic's deviousness and tragic charm. [•••] Ammu was eight months pregnant when war broke out with China. [...] Estha and Rahel were born. [...] By the time the twins were two years old their father's drinking, aggravated by the loneliness of tea estate life, had driven him into an alcoholic stupor. (Roy God 40-41)

No wife can tolerate an alcoholic husband. He does not take care of his wife even at the stage of "pregnancy". As she does not have her parents' support, it is his responsibility all the more to take care of her.
He knows that he will be sacked for neglecting his duty. However, his boss eyes Ammu and her beauty. He wants to exploit the situation by threatening the husband by asking him to resign from his post. At the same time Mr. Hollick, the boss gives a suggestion by which he may be able to retain his job:

"You are a lucky man you know, wonderful family, beautiful children, such an attractive wife..." An extremely attractive wife..." Over coffee, Mr. Hollick proposed that Baba go away for a while. For a holiday. To a clinic perhaps, for treatment. For as long as it took him to get better. And for the period of time that he was away, Mr. Hollick suggested that Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be "looked after". (Roy God 41 -42)

Look at how Mr. Hollick tries to exploit Ammu's husband's weakness:

She said nothing. He grew uncomfortable and then infuriated by her silence. Suddenly he lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her and then passed out from the effort. Ammu took down the heaviest book she could find in the bookshelf—*The Reader's Digest World Atlas*—and hit him with it as hard as she could. On his head. His legs. His back and shoulders. When he regained consciousness, he was puzzled by his bruises. He apologized abjectly for the violence, but immediately began to badger her about helping with his transfer. This fell into a pattern. Drunken violence followed by post-drunken badgering. Ammu was repelled by the medicinal smell of stale alcohol that seeped through his skin, and the dry, caked vomit that encrusted his mouth like a pie every morning. When his bouts of violence began to include the children and the war with Pakistan began, Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem. (Roy God 42)

Ammu remains silent to his proposal. Her husband loses his temper and "feels
uncomfortable and then infuriated” by ”her silence”. She leaves with her children to her native place. However, Ammu is not welcomed by her parents at Ayemenem.

Virmati in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* (1998) too has a love marriage with a small difference. She becomes Prof. Harish Chandra's second wife. Virmati protests against her parents' choice of a husband for her. She does reveal the fact that she does not want to marry him. Thus she decides to do her B. T. course so that she can be away from the home and her future husband. She falls in love with an English Professor. She even becomes pregnant before marriage and terminates her pregnancy. She demands that Prof. Harish marry her. He has to marry her as a second wife on the suggestion of a poet friend of his:

> The poet tich-tiched in exasperation. "Bhai, what can they do? Now you get married. Nothing is simpler. A pundit will be arranged—that's all you really need. [...] The next morning a pundit was arranged, and the puj^\*^ samagri brought. The groom, throwing himself into the spirit of the thing, decided that his bride had to be dressed in something suited to the occasion. [...] In the evening the wedding ceremony proceeded smoothly. The poet's parents did the kanya-daan, the seven pheras were taken, the couple pronounced man and wife. As Virmati rubbed her eyes, watering from the smoke, she knew, rather than felt, that the burden of the past five years had lifted. (Kapur *Difficult* 186)

Before the marriage takes place, Virmati has had sex with Prof. Harish by involving herself in a pre-marital relationship. Harish is already married with children:

> The Professor tightened his grip. His hands inched higher. "Don't," she whispered. "Please."
> "Why aren't you mine? And I yours? Body and soul, heart and mind? I
worship you, Viru. I want to express it. that's all." The Professor got up and pressed his lips to her throat, her ears, her chin, her lips, murmuring endearments while his breath came faster. He seemed to be in a trance. Dazed, Virmati didn't think it would be fair to bring up the fact of his existing wife and children. But this wasn't right either. "Then marry me," she said, trying to push him away. "Marry me and make it clear to everybody." 

"I will, I will, darling, I will. Just give me time."

His hands held her face, stroked her hair, pushed her against the pillows, wandered lightly over her body, still so tight and miserable. They drew light circled on her skin, loosened the drawstring of her salwar, opened the hooks of her Kammez. (Kapur Difficult 114)

Professor Harish has taken the initiative in having an affair with her. He loves her passionately and intently. However, Virmati is not willing to participate, as she is a virgin. She does not want to be part of it until he marries her. Harish again brings his romantic words such as "mine" and "yours" and philosophical terms such as "body" and "soul" to convince her. Virmati surrenders to him and loses her virginity. I feel Virmati's parents are responsible for her losing her virginity. She has been forcibly engaged to a canal engineer. In order to escape from this marriage, she goes on to do further studies and gets involved with Prof. Harish.

Virmati unwillingly bows down to her parents' wishes to get engaged to Inderjeet, a canal engineer. However, she is bold enough to say to her parents that she does not want to get married to Inderjeet and wants to go for further studies:

"I want to study." How weak and fragile that statement sounded, even to Virmati, as it left her hesitant lips, and fell on the skeptical ears of the family. Kasturi hit her. Across her face, from cheek to cheek. "For this, I let you go to college. So that you are ruined permanently? Are you mad?"

[...] "Achcha, achcha", Suraj Prakash made neutral noises. "Maybe she
was in great difficulty, but she should have come to us, that was her mistake. Why did you do this? Tell us, beti. whatever is in your heart?"
"Study," mumbled Virmati like a mantra. She swallowed. "Study . . ."
"For such a little thing?" said her father. "You did this for such a little thing?"
"And not marry." Virmati's face twisted. "I don't want to marry."
"But why? You know every girl has to go to her own home. This is your right, and our duty. As it is, we have taken our time, not wishing to hurry you. We have let you study, as much as any girl has studied in Amritsar."
"I know, Pitaji." Oh, why was he so good to her? Why did he speak so gently? She preferred the way the others spoke.
"Then, what is it? The boy, too, is good."
She had to say something. "The boy," she said. "I do not like the boy."
(Kapur Difficult 79-80)

Later on she goes for further studies as an escape from being close to Inderjeet and falls in love with Prof. Harish and marries him. She does not even hesitate to be a second wife. This itself shows how strong her voice is. She is involved in pre-marital sex, becomes pregnant, and even aborts the foetus. All these decisions are taken on her own.

Virmati marries an English Professor not as a first wife but as a second wife. The reason is that if she marries Inderjeet, who is her parents' choice, she will have to lead a life in a joint family. She knows what a joint family is. She has been in the set-up of a joint family right from her childhood. She does not like the system. She is educated now. She protests against the system. Therefore, she is ready to marry a married man. She feels that being a second wife is not as bad as living in a joint family system. Maybe she will have less work, more privacy and personal satisfaction. She knows the intricacies of a joint family system, especially how difficult it is for women. Further Harish is a lecturer in a college. She expects that she will have a peaceful life, as his first wife is uneducated. She feels that she will
be preferred to the first wife. The fact that Harish is interested in Virmati tells us that he may not like his first wife. Perhaps his wife is not educated and cannot discuss or share intellectual ideas with him. Otherwise he would not have shown any interest in her. The ultimate aim of Virmati is to move away from the joint family system. She is a strong advocate of the nuclear family system. There is no doubt about it.

Virmati too has been forced to do her BT course and then become a Headmistress of a school in Nahan. The narrator says:

Virmati was charmed by Nahan. She heard the sounds of the foundry floating up at all hours, and felt herself at one with the working people of the world. She stood in her tiny garden and looked across the valley, turned her head and looked towards the school of which she was headmistress, and sensed her singleness and her power. She was twenty-three and the youngest amongst her staff. Her qualifications, BA and BT from Lahore, were so impressive that the Maharani had dispensed with the usual interview prior to the appointment. (Kapur Difficult 169)

At 23 with B. A. and B. T. qualifications, she is very young to take up the job of Headmistress. This fact itself reveals how lucky Virmati is. The Maharani does not interview Virmati as a regular formality. The Maharani is very impressed with her qualifications. Virmati has to teach apart from her administrative duties:

Virmati’s other major duty in the school was teaching. She taught English Literature and Household to classes IX and X. Household was hygiene, nutrition, domestic management, health care, and enough applied maths to balance a budget. (Kapur Difficult 169-170)

Whatever may be the job it does not satisfy her. She works until Harish marries her. She even writes a threatening letter to Harish about marrying her early:
She wrote to the Professor that she was sick and tired of waiting for him. If he couldn't make up his mind to marry her, then she might as well devote herself seriously to her career. Nahan was not the place to do it. Either in Lahore or, if her family didn't agree, Jullunder. (Kapur Difficult 173)

The above lines clearly indicate that she is not career-oriented but is doing the job to pass her time till Harish marries her. Veena Singh rightly says: "She is a B.T., goes for a job but a career is not her goal" (169). Further, Singh says: "Virmati does a professional course but is not career oriented. She does not think in terms of education and profession as a means to achieving individual freedom" (165). Virmati says straightaway in her letter that she is "sick and tired of waiting" for his call. If at all he has not "made" up his mind to "marry" her, then she "might as well devote herself seriously" in concentrating on "her career". This shows how committed she is to her career! As soon as Harish marries her, she leaves for his home. After the marriage she is not happy as a second wife. Harish treats her specially as a companion not just as a "domesticated" wife. He even asks her to take up either a paid job or voluntary one so as to avoid conflicts with his first wife Ganga. The narrator says:

Virmati did get a job, but not as a volunteer. Opposite AS College was a primary school, housed on the ground floor of an old building. As before, Virmati's qualifications made her an excellent choice for principal, while marriage added acceptability. Nobody thought much about her youth or beauty now. (Kapur Difficult 213)

When an "educated" woman has qualifications there is no dearth of opportunities to "get a job". The only difference is that in the present one she is a married woman and in the earlier one she was unmarried. Thus she has been carrying on with her job out of force rather than out of self-interest.

Ida the daughter of Virmati is just her opposite. She is married but divorces her
husband, as her husband does not allow her to have a child. Veena Singh says: "[T]he forced abortion is also the termination of her marriage" (168). Ida says in the opening of the novel: "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother" (Kapur Difficult 1). Look at the daughter's criticism of her own mother. Although Virmati is an "educated" woman and works, she becomes a traditional woman. Geetha Ganapathy-Dore also feels that Ida's "[...] decision to divorce Prabhakar may have been prompted by the fact that he is a successful academic 'like her father'" (42).

Padma in Anjana Appachana's Listening Now (1998) is a Ph. D. holder, a lecturer in English. She is not married but has a child from her lover. In fact she could have married Karan, a college lecturer. Unfortunately, the adamant and narrow-minded attitude of Karan's orthodox mother has spoiled their getting married to each other. Karan's mother hides Padma's letters and does not inform Karan about Padma's parents' visit with regard to settling their marriage. In fact Karan has not been the major hurdle for her marriage. Moreover, without telling Karan and taking his consent his mother has fixed his marriage. Karan says:

"In the letter she wrote and said that now that I had got into the civil services the time was right to get married. She never got my answer, naturally. So she assumed that it was all right, I was never the best of correspondents. She went ahead with all the arrangements. She sent me a telegram a couple of weeks before I went home, asking me to immediately confirm by which train I was coming. I wondered... briefly... why a telegram? But ... I didn't give much thought ... I sent her a wire with the details of my arrival."

[...] "I told her, I can not get married. My mother collapsed. She has always had a weak heart. The doctor had to be called. My sisters took me to another room and said that I would not only bring dishonour to my family but to the girl's family. They said everyone had come—all her relatives, all ours, all their friends, all ours. About five hundred people
were expected for the ceremony that night." (Appachana *Listening* 374)

How can any mother fix a marriage without asking her son or showing the girl to her son? She must be very confident about her son's obligation towards her. Moreover, she goes ahead with the marriage arrangements for her son. Padma's Appa also commits a mistake by saying that if Karan is married then "Padma is married too":

He [Appa] said, "He asked me, Are you the man Padma wanted to marry? I said to him, Yes, but I am already married and - He did not let me finish. He opened the door and said, Leave. Padma is married too". (Appachana *Listening* 3 77).

Karan comes in search of Padma to tell her the real situation. In fact Padma is not married but as it is a prestige question he says so, which is one of the reasons why Padma and Karan are separated for thirteen years. In fact, Appa is a very broad-minded person with regard to providing education to his daughters and son. He encourages them to study upto the post-graduation level. He does not bother about the expenses for their studies. It so happens that he makes a mistake in separating Karan and Padma for thirteen years and life long.

Padma has been forced to take up the job of a lecturer in English as her lover deserts her, making her pregnant. Padma has no interest in a career but she works in order to fulfill her responsibility as a single parent to her daughter. She is offered a job in the English Department as soon as she finishes her M. A. At that time she is in love with Karan. She is not sure of her marriage. She wants to marry him first and later on decide what she would like to do. Her Appa also asks her:

[...] "Why don't you want to take up that lectureship?" For she had been offered one as soon as she finished her M. A., it had been offered to her on
a platter. Amma had said to Appa, "If she wants to work she can also do it after she gets married, she can get any job, but she might not get such an offer again." Appa hadn't even looked at Amma. "Why, my child?" he had repeated. (Appachana Listening 171)

She has no answer to her Appa's question, as she cannot give a straight answer. Her Appa shares his feelings with her Amma that it is a good "offer". Moreover, she cannot get this kind of a good offer later. Getting a job is not a problem for her. In spite of her Appa's repeated question she does not give the true reason. She keeps quiet. Later on, Karan leaves for his native place and comes back only after thirteen years. Before that, her sister Shantacca and her brother Madhava go to ask Karan's parents about Karan's promise to marry Padma. They get a negative reply and Padma remains unmarried. Meanwhile, she is pregnant and gives birth to Mallika and lives as a single parent, telling the neighbours that her husband has been killed in an accident. Padma takes up a job in a college and has not been enjoying her career as it has been forced on her:

[***] Padma didn't mix with anyone else, she didn't go out, she never went to her parents' for a holiday, she had no social life at all. All she did was to go to her college, teach, come back, tutor Mallika, take tuitions in the late afternoon, send off Mallika to play, correct papers, prepare for her lectures, spend about an hour or so chatting with Madhu and Anu, then it was Mallika again, and after Mallika slept she would work on her doctorate. On weekends she and Mallika went to the library, and Padma read and slept. How she slept, till nine in the mornings on weekends, Madhu noted disapprovingly. Sometimes Madhu would ask Padma about her college and the girls she taught and her colleagues, and Padma would tell her an anecdote or two about her teaching experiences and the conversations she had with the other lecturers, but since she never met any of them after she left her college and never spent any time with them

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unless it was between classes, there wasn't much to talk about.
(Appachana Listening 61-62)

Although she has told her friends and neighbours about her husband's death in an accident, it is not true. Her lover has deserted her. Naturally she has a guilty feeling about her own life. She has a daughter to look after.

Padma had to give tuitions to provide good education for her daughter. After thirteen years, Karan, the lover of Padma, accidentally meets her. They talk about each other's life and the reasons why they had to be separated. However, in the conversation Karan asks her what career she is planning for Mallika. Padma says:

"What subjects does Mallika plan to take in the ninth?"
"She isn't sure."
"Isn't she inclined towards the arts?"
"She is. But ... it isn't practical. Unless she wants to appear for the I. A. S. She will have more options with a science background. She can become a doctor."
"Is that what she wants?"
"She doesn't know what she wants. I suppose it's what I want for her."
"Sita was telling me she comes first in class."
"She and Pr.?bha~Mrs. Prasad's daughter, yes. One or the other."
"Wouldn't you like Mallika to teach, like you?"
"No".
"You don't enjoy it?"
"I love it."

She saw the surprise on his face and said, "I wouldn't have been able to support myself and a child on the salary. I've managed because my mother has helped support me, and I have ... the house. Mallika must be ... self-supporting." (Appachana Listening 450)
Thus she could cope with the teaching career. Padma opines: "Mallika must be self-supporting" when she grows up. Teaching career is a noble career unlike any other. I don't agree with Padma here. Money is not everything in life. What is important is mental and moral satisfaction.

Uma in Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) has an arranged marriage through a matrimonial column in a newspaper. However, she is cheated. This is one of the best examples to show how easily parents of a bride can be cheated in an arranged marriage. This is especially so with matrimonial column alliances. Uma has had no marriage proposals, as she is not good at studies and is a bit dull in her behaviour. Hence her parents give Uma's details along with her photograph in the matrimonial column. They get a response from Harish who claims that he is already married but that he has had no children through his wife. Thus he is interested in Uma. They have been told that Harish "is in pharmaceutical business and earning decent income" (87). In fact Harish has four children living with his wife in Meerut. He runs an ailing pharmaceutical factory. In order to save his pharmaceutical factory he marries Uma. By marrying Uma he gets a dowry and with that money he saves his factory. J. P. Tripathi observes: "The tragedy of a girl rejected by many parties in marriage is pathetically drawn in the case of Uma. She is drawn into another deceitful marriage with Harish, an already married man with children, for the sake of a dowry, after this marriage she is considered a blighted 'illiterated' girl" (19). Uma is cheated by Harish. She neither has a job nor is she divorced from Harish.

In this decade there are arranged marriages like that of Malini, Amrita, Devi, Maya, Parvati and Uma, love-cum-arranged marriages like that of Urmila, Gudiya and love marriages like that of Mikki, Aparna, Sumi, Ammu and Virmati. Malini has a career but gives it up on the request of her husband. Mikki undertakes a business career left behind by her father after his demise in an accident and is cheated. Amrita is a die-hard model and tries to dedicate herself to and concentrate on her career. Urmila is a college lecturer. Nisha is a columnist, a
challenging career for women. Pramila is a creative writer and enters politics. Aparna is an accounts supervisor. Maya could have chosen textile designing as a career but her husband does not encourage her and he wants his wife to be at home. Virmati does not consider a job as seriously as her marriage. In fact, she works out of necessity. Padma has a job of teaching and remains unmarried as a single parent with a daughter born outside marriage. There are separation cases in the sense that women do not divorce legally but leave their husbands and lead their lives. Devi leaves not only her husband but also her lover and goes to her mother, emphasizing a strong mother-daughter bond. Aparna is left by her husband. Her husband walks out on her just like that. How uncertain married life is in the 1990s! Sumi is also left by her husband for not having a son and does not look after his three daughters. What an escape from family responsibilities! Ammu's divorce is completely justified. Her husband is a rogue asking his wife to sleep with his boss in order to retain his job.


