Dawesar’s ‘Babyji’ is her second and the best known novel, published in 2005. It is first-person-narrated novel, i.e. by Anamika (or Babyji) herself. Its milieu is Delhi of 1980’s and early 1990’s. The focus in the novel is centered on its heroine Anamika, i.e. Babyji, who is a teenager studying in 12th standard, innocent as well as fiercely sensual. Anamika as a girl believed that everyone should be allowed to have affairs. She thought,

“I decided, I would avenge myself by holding hands and flirting with girls since Indian society was so holier-than-thou about having boy-friends.” (1) P.11

Obviously the novel is a study in female promiscuity through the character of Anamika. Anamika’s character-sketch is beautifully summed-up by the ‘News Week’ blurb on the back cover page:-

“Anamika Sharma is the kind of girl you always hated. She gets perfect grades and as Head Perfect of her school in Delhi, has vast authority over her classmates. But Anamika’s extra-curricular activities are far from exemplary. She is at the centre of a love triangle between a low-caste house-servant, and uneducated old divorcee. On top of that, she begins serious flirtations with the most popular girl in school – Sheela. Anamika’s flirtations also included two men – the father of her best friend whom she called ‘Adit’, and the other was her classmate, a hoodlum, Chakra Dev. Anamika’s amorous indiscretions provide a colourful backdrop to her questions about morality, gender roles and social rank in modern India, resulting in a tantalizing and sophisticated coming-of-age story.” (2) Back cover page.

In the novel the moment you are in the middle of Anamika’s life you will be fascinated by a sixteen-year old girl who applies her preternatural intellect not only to her far-ranging sexual conquests but also to quantum physics and India’s complex caste politics. She is irreverent yet tender, compassionate yet hard-hearted, precociously wise and undeniably sexy.
The novel begins at the time Anamika reaches her puberty and feels tremendous changes that are taking place in her mind and heart. She thought,

“I was experiencing things that I was sure my friends Vidur, Ashima, Sheela, Preeti, Deepa, Sonali and Tina had not experienced. In fact, my momentum was such that I was almost certain the class hoodlum, Chakra Dev, who was taller and more physically developed than any of the other boys, was soon going to be left far behind. I was suddenly ahead of everyone, more grown up.” (3) P.15

Exactly at that mental and physical state Anamika meets two women to have affair with them and to make love. In the very first chapter she meets a divorcee woman in the school who wanted her small son to be admitted in the school. Anamika gave her the name India. She lived alone near Anamika’s home and invited her the next day at her house. The same day, another woman, a domestic servant took employment in her house – a young, healthy, low-caste woman, Rani.

The first one or two visits to India were rather casual and formal. But her visit to India late at night was rather dangerous step. When her parents went to sleep she slipped through the back-door towards the construction site where there were jhuggis. She found some men squatting together and laughing. She rang the door-bell and bewildered India opened the door. She directly told her that she wanted to pass that night at her place.

India permitted her and Anamika immediately jumped into her bed to sleep. She found that India was not wearing anything under the white sheet. Then she asked India if she could touch her. India did not object. Anamika then began to touch the various parts of India – her palm began to explore hers, then her wrist, her fore-arms, her shoulders. Anamika says,

“We must have caressed for hours. I felt as if I was living out of my body and outside of time….. Drifting off, I dreamt that India and I were revolving around each other as particles, and then suddenly Trans forming into waves, tides, currents.” (4) P.22
Thus, in an ecstatic mood Anamika enjoyed the might with India, and began her first romance with her. The next day she began her another romantic relationship with the new domestic servant, Rani. In the afternoon, when Rani came to do the house-hold work Anamika was alone, and she called Rani on to her bed and touching her lips with her index finger and kissed her. Rani’s mood had lifted, and then Anamika kissed her again, this time with full intension. Thus, Anamika’s second romance began.

The same day evening Anamika repeated her passing the might with India, employing the same trick, when her parents went to sleep she slipped out of the house from the back door to the service lane within ten minutes she was in India’s bed. In India’s bed Anamika began to think that she had come of age suddenly:-

“Some girls come of age when they hit puberty, others when they have a child. Girls like my friend Sheela when they start going to the temple. My coming of age was distinct and happened in a split second.” (5) P.26

In the bed with India beside her Anamika moved both her hands all the way down India’s back and over her cheeks. Then she grabbed both her buttocks and squeezed them. She felt that she was an adult. She expressed her feeling thus:-

“I felt overwhelmed by the sensation. I wished I could express it in words. She was moaning softly and rubbing her smooth calves on my eyes. I squeezed the flesh in my hands more firmly now. It occurred to me that I could go further… We spent the rest of the night cradled in each other’s arms.” (6) P.27

The next day in Physics class the teacher Mr. Garg asked about Plank’s constant theory and nobody except Anamika could answer. That shows that Anamika is a queer mixture of brilliance and her free-minded physical actions.

The next day, while doing erotic actions she told Rani that when they are alone they are just equals and friends not master and servant.

While Anamika’s romance with India and Rani was going on a third romantic adventure started for Anamika. It was with her class-mate Sheela. Sheela was very beautiful, intelligent and very popular with the boys. One day, Anamika, enamored by her beauty and recently developed
fire in her told her that she had beautiful lips and she would like to kiss them. She repeated it and said that she was serious. Sheela remained silent, but in the evening when Anamika was sitting with her mother, Sheela rang her and enquired what she meant about her talk of kissing her. Conscious by her mother’s presence she replied that she was just joking.

But the next day in the school when Anamika met Sheela, once again the topic of kissing started. When enquired she told Sheela she did not think kissing wrong thing or immoral. During the assembly Anamika went up to Sheela for uniform inspection as Head Perfect and found fault with skirt. Sheela fell out of line ready for punishment. Sheela pleaded not to ask her to run as her skirt was high and the boys would stare. Then Anamika suggested if she could kiss her. Sheela told her nobody had kissed her so far. Anamika wanted more fun and mischief with her. She told Sheela that uniform inspection was not over, and she wanted to check her bloomers under skirt. As per the rule girls were supposed to wear white bloomer and not simple panties. Anamika lifted Sheela’s skirt and found Sheela wearing a blue pants. She also noticed Sheela’s waxed legs, as a punishment Sheela was asked to do then ‘Uthak-Bethaks’. Anamika narrates the action:-

“I stood a few feet in form of her and watched her box-pleated gray skirt fly up and down and her thighs stretch and flex as she counted breathlessly toten.” (7)

Thus, romantic fire for Sheela was ignited in Anamika. After that, she took all opportunities to have a look at Sheela or talk to her.

Once, Anamika took Sheela to canteen to please her, although she did not like to go to canteen. At the counter she ordered two cokes, two burgers and one pineapple pastry. While eating and drinking at the canteen Sheela wanted to know from Anamika if she had kissed anyone. Anamika replied that she did but not anyone from the school or the class. They were older persons, Sheela just wondered.

Then Anamika took Sheela to horse-riding, with the help of the school horse-keeper and coach, Sameer Bhaiya. Sheela did the riding timidly, and then a little bravely she rode a horse and made a saluting gesture. During this process Anamika’s entire dirty mind was watching
Sheela’s bodily parts. Although Sameer Bhaiya, a young boy of twenty years was quite innocent and unmindful about touching Sheela while her climbing on the saddle or getting down.

Anamika was thinking about Sheela,

“My mind was elsewhere, weighing the pros and cons of having one more affair, with some-one of my own age, a girl without a husband of a son. A girl who was neither a servant nor an elder, someone more or less my equal.” (8) P.53

Thus, Anamika got involved with three women. Sheela was her third and the latest lover. Anamika thought about it:-

“After I decided to add Sheela to my list of lovers, I started to work toward my goal. I would use my academic reputation in conjunction with my official authority to complete my project.” (9) P.55

As a part of this project she told Sheela that she would help her in Mathematics and Physics. They both would stay back after classes for ‘extra-curricular’ activities. Sheela was told to tell a lie to her parents that she had to remain in school for practice for Sports Day. Having decided this Anamika was wondering how to handle three lovers. Then, she thought of Draupadi having five husbands. She felt in her case she was the Draupadi and India, Rani and Sheela were Pandavas. As Pandavas must have lain down some rules on how to share Draupadi in the same way Anamika also needed a set of rules about her three lovers. It would be wrong to give one of her lovers more time than the others.

The novel ‘Babyji’ also deals with some of the social problems, apart from its main theme of Anamika’s having ‘lovers’, Husband – beating their wives is one of them. Earlier also Rani had told Anamika that her husband used to beat her sometimes India, i.e. Tripta Adhikari also separated from her husband because her husband used to beat her. All classes of men ranging from working class to Tripta’s top class husband, Tripta tells Anamika’s mother about Rani being beaten by her husband :-

“All men are alike. Mine was super-educated. He went to Doon School and St.Stephen’s and he still beat me. I left him.” (10) P.66
One day when Anamika returned home from School she found Rani lying on the floor, badly bruised. She told her now the previous night her husband had beaten her cruelly. Anamika took her to her room, took off her clothes and applied antiseptic lotion on her wounds. She told her that hence forth she would not go back to her husband. She would stay with them.

When Anamika’s mother returned from office she narrated Rani’s pitiable plight. Her mother agreed that Rani would live with them, and sleep in Anamika’s room. She would talk to her husband about Rani the next morning.

Then, Anamika and her mother took Rani to the doctor who gave some lotion and pain-killing tablets for Rani. Anamika felt very much obliged to her mother for her kindness for Rani. She expressed her gratitude by kissing her in the morning. She brought to her memory her mother’s kind-deeds ever since she was in kindergarten.

While Anamika was on her pursuit to Sheela, Vidur, and her class-mate gave her a porn magazine. It was a German magazine with different sexual posture and pictures. She also discussed with Vidur freely about the important role of sex in front of Sheela. Anamika also managed to sit beside Sheela in the class-room.

One day, while Mrs. Pillai was teaching math in the class-room the peon came and told the teacher that the Principal and Counselor Madam were calling Anamika as Head perfect. The Principal told her that school was going to arrange a chat on the subject of sex since they were senior students. She welcomed to idea. But the Principal and the Counselor were divided in opinion whether the boys and girls should sit together or separately. Finally, the counselor’s opinion prevailed that the boys would discuss with a male doctor and the girls would chat with a female doctor. The day, date, time and place were also fixed.

As per the pre-arranged programme that Anamika would teach physics to Sheela after school hours and they would return home by DTC bus, Anamika and Sheela went to the large field in the back after the school was over. Anamika told Sheela at the very beginning about Physics:-

“Physics was like making love. You couldn’t plunge into it. One had to start slowly and from the beginning. (11) P.81
Sheela had not followed the first chapter. Anamika found that there was no point in teaching her straight about quantum mechanics. So, they sat and labored at the introduction. Anamika made sure that she understood last year’s course and re-capped everything she should know. Then Sheela got bored with Physics. She told Anamika mischievously that she would pay her for teaching in the currency of kisses. Anamika started her action by putting her index finger into Sheela’s breast pocket, Sheela got perplexed. She was alarmed as to what was Anamika up to? Anamika told her that she was going to do everything or not to do anything. Thus, ended their meeting and they started for the bus-stop to catch a bus for home.

They were both not used to travel by DTC bus – not knowing even the bus number that would go to their area. At the bus stop cheap laborers and other were casting dirty gaze at Sheela – her legs etc. with a dirty leer. Anamika was not the centre of attraction as she was ordinary-looking, wearing glasses, dark, short and flat-chested. They asked two goons about the bus number for Chirag Delhi area. It was seventy seven. After some uneasy waiting the bus seventy-seven approached. It was packed. They could not have an inch to climb and get ticket or enquire whether the bus would go to their area. Anyhow they climbed the bus and held the railings with all strength because the bus was swaying back and forth. Both the girls were squeezed from all sides.

At one stop three men climbed and further pushed them. Then, both the girls were not even visible to each other. One man tried to touch Anamika’s thigh under her skirt. She was helpless. Both of her hands were tightly holding the railing. The grip of hand on her thigh became stronger as if he was scratching. She used all the force of her body and gave a loud yell. The man let go his grip. After a while Sheela was visible to Anamika. She was very upset and looked miserable. She was almost in tears. She noticed a ruffian’s hand was rubbing Sheela’s underwear very fast. He looked vicious and dirty. Anamika could not tolerate it. She let go the railing that she was clutching and brought her right hand heavily on the head of that man and screamed ‘bastard’. There was no door on the bus, and the man touching Sheela was dangerously close to the entrance. Anamika turned around fully and pushed him as hard as she could. He fell off the bus and on to the road with a scream. At the next bus-stop they both got down. Thus, end their horrifying experience on a DTC bus.
They decided to go to Evergreen market to eat something. Sheela was very grateful to Anamika for having saved her life. They ate golgappas and then hired an autorickshaw; Anamika dropped Sheela near her house and went home. This episode speaks volumes about the Indian life in various walks of life. The rattling buses, poor transport system, deteriorated law and order system, women are not safe, they are harassed manhandled, sexually abused and even looted and raped.

Anamika reached home with the decision not to tell Rani about her being ruffled on the bus by hooligans. She enquired about Rani’s injuries and whether the medicines had worked or not. Rani replied that the medicines did magical work and she was alright. She asked Rani to massage her legs, and then she fell down on the bed. Rani removed her shoes and socks. Rani’s expert hands started massaging her legs. Anamika’s entire body felt relaxed and seemed to melt. Her fingers expertly cracked even one on each toe.

Then she needed her thighs. The man on the bus had thrust his nails into her legs. It had almost cut her skin. Remembering the incident she started to cry. Rani could not bear to see tears in her eyes. She enquired pleadingly what had happened to her. Rani took her head in her lap and anxiously wanted to know the facts. Anamika narrated the incident on the DTC bus, and how two dirty men started touching her and her friend. After knowing the facts Rani showered vulgar abused upon the unknown goons, for their misbehavior on a small girl – a mere child.

On hearing the word ‘child’ Anamika suddenly stopped crying as if a tap had just been turned shut. She emphatically told Rani that she was not a child. Anamika suddenly changed her mood and as if to prove that she was not a child but a grown up and mature being, she threw Rani on the bed and started opening her blouse frantically. Then she pulled her Sari down and lifted up her petticoat. Then she touched her and slid her finger wherever it would slide in. Rani also reciprocated by hugging her hard. Her arms were tight, almost vice-like, around Anamika’s back. Anamika narrates the scene:–

“I had the image of the two men from the bus…. and I started pushing into Rani more vigorously. The German guy from the porn magazine, but with Chakra Dev’s face, the Brahmin from the movies with his servant positions from the
Kamsutra all mixed up in my head till I could no longer think. I felt rapacious and greedy for her.” (12) P.95

Later on, while preparing for the Monday Chemistry test Anamika thought of the afternoon with Rani:-

“Up until now we’d been very gentle with each other, but I had turned violent today and she’d seemed to like it. I had never seen India in that state.” (13) P.96

Anamika’s romantic overtures with India and Rani continued and then the important episode of chat on sex-education in school happened. Even before the day for sex-education. Lecture approached, Anamika was imagining various questions that she would ask to the doctor who would come, like – ‘Ma’am what is the difference between making love and having sex?’ or ‘Ma’am is it all right for a woman who is having her period to have sex?’

Finally the day for the sex-education Lecture arrived. Anamika took the senior girls to the school auditorium. When the Counselor walked in with the doctor, the girls stood up and applauded, after her brief lecture on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, She asked the students to ask questions related to sex. One girl asked the bold question why the sex before marriage is considered wrong. The doctor replied from the medical point of view that sex before marriage was not medically wrong, but the society did not accept it. Anamika’s question was whether men having sex with men were more likely to get AIDS or not. Her next question was how two men have sex? The doctor replied what it was not natural for men to have sex with each other, because sex was biologically meant for procreation and a sperm and sperm cannot combine to form a living cell. Anamika’s another question was whether two women can have sex. The doctor replied in the affirmative but added that it would not be penetrative heterosexual intercourse. Some other questions like anal sex, Hijaras homosexuality, masturbation were also asked. Thus, end the session for sex-education.

Sex-education episode discussed a current idea among the academicians that it is better to impart facts about sex to students than to keep it tabooed for them, and thereby resulting into the social problems and spread of venereal diseases and AIDS etc.
As important aspect of Anamika’s personality is her defiance against the accepted values of society e.g. children have to obey their parents for whatever they say. Anamika does not like to be taken for granted. The incident in the family was that Anamika’s father was invited to the engagement ceremony of his colleague’s daughter. The invitation was for the whole family. Anamika did not want to go. She pleaded with her mother first that her time would be wasted and she had to study. Mother asked her to talk to the father, fearing that he would not agree.

Anamika had a brief argument with her father. She told him that she had a lot of work at home and moreover, she had a test next day. By going to attend the function she would lose at least two hours. Her father retorted that she lost more than that time for her school sports day practice and cycling. Her next argument was that Mr. Dhingara was the only person known to her father and the rest of the family was not known to her so why should she go. Her father argued that it was an invitation for the whole family, and she being his daughter had to go, and that was the end of argument.

Anamika’s blood boiled she felt as she was a slave in her own home. A caged animal, she was living in her father’s authoritarian regime, where her own wishes counted nothing. But she reasoned and consoled herself that her parents could not stop her for long. She thought,

“No, I’m not; I might be brilliant, but not beautiful.” (15) P.130

Anamika represents the youth of today. It is the general practice with youth to be defiant and arrogant. They celebrated their freedom by taking drugs, drinks, or by rashly driving bikes or cars.

Anamika was very much impressed by India i.e. Tripta Adhikari when she came to know that India was a free-lance designer working freely at home. She was under no boss or subordination. Anamika also decided that she would also like to be a freelancer, enjoying perfect freedom.

In a casual way there was a debate on mind versus beauty. Tripta called Anamika beautiful and Anamika replied:-

“No, I’m not; I might be brilliant, but not beautiful.” (15) P.130
Then, Anamika asked the same question about beauty and intelligence to Vidur. Vidur replied that some are born intelligent like Einstein, and some born beautiful. But to maintain beauty or intelligence one has to work hard. In the next meeting Vidur told Anamika his father’s views on beauty and intelligence. Vidur told her,

“He says it depends on the context. Intelligence is more important than beauty if you’re a scientist, but if you are a model than beauty is more important” (16) (p.139)

Later he wrote on a paper,

“The mind is the jewel of one’s body because it is what makes men most different than animals. It is the mind that is the raison d’être of our humanity.” (17) P.139

Among the other things interwoven in the themes of this novel, is the far-reaching impact of the Mandal Commission’s recommendations, having a separate quota reserved for some more economically and socially backward castes in schools, colleges and government jobs. The Governments’ resolution was in the news papers. The principal of Anamika’s school also addressed the students out of turn. He spoke about the merit and hard work. There was a flutter among the students and the teachers.

There were sharp controversial remarks by the students. Vidur and Anamika were against the Mandal. Vidur Commented:-

“The new reservations are completely wrong.” (18) P.138

Chakra Dev and Sheela supported it. Chakra Dev, whose caste Yadava was included in Mandal, gave a sharp reaction:-

“The Brahmins have exploited everyone for centuries.” (19) P.138

Sheela also welcomed the recommendations:-

“Do you know how many atrocities are committed against them even how?” (20) P.138
Anamika explained her stand on Mandal to Sheela:-

“The Mandal recommendations are perverse. It a lower caste guy gets admission on the basis of merit, he won’t count in the reserved category. Reservations are for those who won’t make it on merit.” (21) P.141

During India’s visit to Anamika’s house the topic of Mandal also came up for discussion. Anamika asked India that in her class there was a boy Chakra Dev Yadav; what could be his caste. India replied that Yadavs are Jats, Then, Anamika mother commented:-

“They are on the Mandal list and qualify for reservations even though they have by far been the most dominant caste in Uttar Pradesh, economically and politically.” (22) P.155

During the dinner programme Anamika’s mother and India were watching T.V. news, on the T.V. screen a scene of fire and smoke was shown and a number of young people were running around. The news caster said that a seventeen-year old student had set himself on fire to protest the Mandal Commission’s recommendations. He had been hospitalized in Safdarjung hospital and was suffering from third degree burns.

Another topical subject of government policy of ‘Each one teaches one’ was discussed. It had been national literacy programmers where educational kits were distributed free of charge and each literate person was encouraged to teach an illiterate person. People tried teaching their servants. The campaign had failed to touch the families.

During all the Mandal, Sagai and Sex-education the main theme of Anamika’s love affairs with India, Rani and Sheela were never absent. Anamika continued her love with Rani. She was in the house always available to Anamika. Every night she slept and loved Rani. Once Rani had been to her husband in the jhuggi and told him that she was not coming to him any day.

In one of the meetings with India during this period, India told her that it was not good for both of them to continue their love-affair. She tried to reason with Anamika and tried to make her understand:-
“You’re young; you should be with someone who can be with you. I have a son, I have duties, and I can already see that this will go nowhere. We can’t be together openly. In fact, you should get involved with a boy.” (23) P.129

Finally, they decided to continue their affair but not to take it too seriously.

Anamika’s love for Sheela also continued as a matter of fact Sheela also started reciprocating her advances. After Anamika’s controversy with Sheela on Mandal recommendations, they met in privacy and compromised. They got closer and Anamika kissed her with full lip-contact and Sheela co-operated but stopped Anamika for her further advances.

For some time Anamika felt very perplexed and confused about her relations with three women. Especially after meeting at her place and talking with her about stopping the relations with Anamika. She felt very upset. She wanted answer about right and wrong about morality and morally wrong things. She thought:-

“Was my current state of multiple affairs something I had constructed for myself or was it Indian style – inevitable and fated? Divorced woman, servant woman, underage woman, I was pursuing them all” (24) P.152

She was craving for knowing the truth: - She thought,

“The truth about life and about love is the truth about itself. Why couldn’t someone who knew everything just sit me down and tell me. Why was it that no one knew anything?” (25) P.169

In this state of mind she wanted to consult Vidur’s father, Col. Adit Mathur.

While Anamika was passing through the crisis about the mystery of answers of some questions, Anamika entered into another affair unintentionally. This time it was with Vidur’s father, Col. Adit, of thrice the age of Anamika. Though Anamika was rather passive, yet she did not oppose or reject Adit’s soft advances.

It started when Vidur asked her to talk to her father about the answers of her perplexing questions. Anamika went with Vidur to his house after school hours to meet Adit. The three took lunch together, Afterwards, Col. Adit asked about her questions. Anamika asked,
“I don’t have the patience to wait while my life unravels. I need to know now what’s wrong and what’s right. I need to know that I should truly want.” (26) P.176

She explained her question was not whether she wanted to be a doctor or engineer, but about her feelings wherever they take her. She said,

“To the moon, to hell, to suicide, to prison”. (27) P.176

Then, she asked the Col. Whether he follows what his heart says he replied in the negative saying the following what the heart says would make life impossible. Then, dramatically he put his hand on his heart and he said looking at Anamika:-

“It says, Adit, watch out or you’ll fall for this kid.” (28) P.177

Anamika was horrified; she felt a bolt of lightning struck the middle of her chest. Then the three went to Anamika’s house, took tea. Nothing noticeable happened except that Col. Adit ran his hand through Anamika hair, and then his hand reached up to the back of her head.

The same day, there was a phone call from Adit, quite late in the evening; It was quite obvious that the call was quite in romantic mood. Surprisingly, Anamika, instead of stopping him for such calls rather cooperated with him and told him in a quizzing way that he should call her at three in the afternoon.

An incident happened that showed the defiance of Anamika for her father. The point was that there was in T.V. news that another boy, the third, had immolated himself against Mandal recommendations. Anamika’s father said that boys are burning themselves to die for strong principles. Anamika felt enraged and she retorted to her father’s comment that:-

“Principles, my foot, they are immature and reckless teenagers. Everyone’s doing it out of some kind of herd instinct.” (29) P.190

Her father explained that self-immolation was a Gandhian way of protest. Enraged Anamika replied,
“Please that’s a lot of shit” (30) P.191

Her father asked her how she dares talk like that angrily. Still maintaining her stand she told him that she was only calling a spade a spade. Her mother asked Anamika to tender an apology. She refused at first, and then later she said ‘Sorry’ to him. Later on, again, there was a controversy about good and bad. Her father replied God tells us about good and bad. Moreover, our society and customs also decide the norms for good and bad.

Anamika persisted on her argument telling him social norms and customs change; girls did not go to school then, but they go to present. Her mother supported Anamika that like good or bad there cannot be a single path to happiness.

Anamika continuing the argument said,

“You like tea, I like coffee. I want to be a physicist, and Vidur wants to join army. I don’t want to get married, and mom did. How can the same formula make us all happy?” (31) P. 197

Thus, Anamika is not a sheepish girl obeying whatever her father or parents told her to do. That night, when Anamika went for sexual actions with Rani, She objected by saying,

“It’s wrong. You should marry a boy like Vidur baba. You have your life ahead of you. I’m unlucky to have a brute for a husband.” (32) P.200

But inspite of Rani’s protests Anamika did with her, whatever she wanted:-

“I just did everything that I thought he (films villain) would do. Although she didn’t stop me, I felt that some part of her was resisting me. But then there was a distinct moment when she yielded.” (33) P.201

Once again the story of the novel turns its direction towards the violent demonstration against Mandal’s recommendations.

One day when Anamika reached the school campus she found a large number of security guards present in the campus. The Principal call Anamika in the office and acquainted her with
the situation, he told her that the Milieu is very uncertain, any time the Delhi administration might order for the closing of all the educational institutions.

As a step towards preparation for the situation he would like to take the phone numbers of all the students and teachers. The principal made the proper announcements about the situation. Mr. Garg, the teacher told Anamika that if the school is closed, he would come to her house for personal coaching because she was a good student.

In such atmosphere of uncertainty the school started functioning. Chakra Dev went near Vidur and Anamika and spoke some very vulgar words, about the teacher Mrs. Pillai and called Anamika a bitch.

Vidur rushed towards him and caught him by the Collar. Other students also rushed to beat Chakra Dev. Horrified Chakra Dev said sorry to Anamika. The whole matter eventually subsided.

In the meantime Anamika went to meet the Head Mistress Mrs. Nyaya Singh to plead for Tripta’s Son’s admission. She assured for that, later on, a loud fire-cracker was heard in the school campus. Students thought it was a bomb. Later on it came to light that Chakra Dev had told some junior students to do it to frighten Anamika. She went to the principal who was ready to suspend him. But Anamika assured the principal that she would get a letter of apology from Chakra Dev. Suspending him would jeopardize his future. The episode reveals Anamika soft side of personality against the meanness of Chakra Dev.

In the next two three chapters of the novel the incidents happened in the quick succession in the life of Anamika. After the Chakra Dev’s bomb incident and Anamika’s assurance to principal about taking a letter of apology from him, Anamika was upset by her father and suspicious about the future of her love-affairs.

In the afternoon there was a phone call from Adit for Anamika, he wanted to meet her. Anamika felt annoyed, she told him:-

“You think anyone will understand why we are meeting? My parents won’t. Your son won’t, your wife certainly won’t,” (34) P.222
Still Adit insisted to meet her – after the school or so. Anamika felt quite irritated and felt that there was no point in talking to him and she put down the receiver.

Then she felt talking to Chakra Dev, but he did not talk properly; he replied rather roughly and ‘I don’t care’ style. Anamika told him that the principal knows that he was the Culprit for the bomb incident in the school. Then she told him plainly that principal had decided to suspend him but she stopped him. When Chakra Dev still remained care free and arrogant she told him that either he should tender a letter of apology or he should be prepared for the consequences. Chakra Dev started abusing her, and Anamika hung up the phone.

The same day in the evening, Anamika decided to visit India, with her mother’s full knowledge. As soon as she met India, She took her to bed. Once in her bedroom she turned off the light. They both undressed themselves and started fondling each other. It was the way they expressed their love. Anamika was so lost in love-making that she forgot everything that she had wanted to talk about. When she returned home late evening then she thought of telling her on phone that she had talked to the primary section principal about Jeet’s admission, and Tripta should talk to the principal directly about Jeet’s admission. She also told Anamika that she wanted to be very close to her in bed enjoying sex, so could they go out for some days to some other place?

A little later, on the news at 9 p.m. the headlines on T.V. showed the footage of another boy going up in flames, protesting the Mandal. Then, the news reader said that all schools had been closed indefinitely by order. Immediately afterwards, Anamika received phone calls from Vidur telling her about the closing of schools, and then told her that his father would take her on the way back to his house. He would teach them both. Anamika agreed. Then, there was a call from Sheela who told Anamika that she was alone the next day so she could visit her in the morning.

In the next chapter a series of incidents happened in quick succession taking the themes forward towards the conclusion. In the early morning Anamika went to India (Tripta) for a short visit and then, as per their programme she went to Sheela’s house to study Maths together and make love. Sheela was alone except that her male-servant was there. They both went to Sheela’s
room on the second floor. Sheela was not in a mood to study Maths. Instead she put a cassette with western music loudly and began to dance.

Then Anamika closed the door and both of them started kissing. While kissing Anamika put hand under her t-shirt and then removed her T-shirt. The narrator describes the incident:

“I pinned her down on her bed and held her hands above her head. I kissed her face and neck. She closed her eyes and smiled. I held her two hands in one hand of mine and unzipped her jeans.” (35) P.236

In the same position for some time and then as the narrator describes:

“She closed her eyes again, but this time I couldn’t tell if she was enjoying it or not. I pushed with my finger; I wasn’t slow, the way I had been with India and Rani. I was afraid if I was too gentle she would use it to move away. I used all the force, I could muster.” (36) P.237

It was the climax scene; and Sheela let out a loud how! ‘Stop!’ and then she told Anamika to get out of her house. Thus end Anamika’s virtual ‘rape’ on Sheela.

Anamika went to her house. The door was locked. The parents must have gone to their job, and Rani might have gone to market. After some time Adit called on her to take her to his house. Adit followed Anamika in the kitchen and hugged her tightly. She did not resist. She describes:

“He came even closer and squeezed me tightly. I felt relief, as if a huge charge I had been carrying inside my body had just been dissipated.” (37) P.239

Afterwards both of them started for Adit’s house. Vidur was there. Immediately Adit and Vidur sat down to study organic Chemistry for an hour. Then, they discussed the adverse effects of Mandal on their future. Adit told them that they had no future in India, so they should move out to Australia or America.

In the evening at dinner the family was watching the T.V. news announcing that there was a country-wide protest against Mandal. A large number of college students had gathered for
a rally in protest. Then, she began to think about the 1984 riots, after the then P.M. Mrs. Gandhi had been shot dead. She became sentimental and sobbed in her mother’s lap.

The three incidents described in this chapter Sheela, Adit and 1984 riots, present Anamika in bed light. Anamika may be a brilliant student, but rationality is certainly doubtful. Mutual romance between Sheela and Anamika is alright, but her brute behaviour that her finger was tinged with Sheela’s blood is unpardonable. Moreover, as a teenager wise girl she should have resisted Adit’s sexual advances. After being harsh on the telephone, she should not have allowed him to come at her place, embraced her tightly and then went to his house, why? Adit is of her father’s age. It seems that her flesh is weak.

And then, her becoming sentimental – or rather over sentimental about 1984 riots against Sikhs – sobbing and weeping over an incident of distant past for her, is something unexpected from a thoughtful and wise girl like Anamika.

The Schools were close and looking to Anamika’s gloomy mood, when Tripta suggested for a trip to the hills will Anamika, her mother readily agreed and she persuaded Anamika’s father for his consent. Tripta told Anamika’s mother that along with them a young couple would drive them to Kasanli. They were good people and Anamika would like their company. Moreover Deepak was a Karate black-belt, so they all would be safe.

On the decided day and time Anamika’s mother and Rani dropped her at Tripta’s house. Deepak and his wife Arni were already there. Anamika and her mother instantly liked Deepak and Arni. Everything was ready; Tripta told Anamika’s mother not to worry about her. The drive to Kasanli was six hours long. Deepak and Arni were to stay a bit further up on the upper mall road. Tripta’s friend had given the key to the servant. The opened it and found it large and opulent.

It was evening when they reached. Deepak and Arni went to their own cottage, promising to meet them next evening at dinner. Tripta and Anamika washed up and dined, then retired to the bedroom. They undressed themselves and slept clinging to each other, Anamika describe the scene:-
“Then she pulled me close to her. Her arms and legs and belly were deliciously warm. As soon as my skin touched hers I felt. I had arrived at some place after a long journey. India’s embrace was so well placed that my whole body savored. Every part of her, from her tiptoes to her forehead, was seeking its counterpart in me. For the rest of the night we did not speak much. There was no need.” (38) P.253

Thus, pass Anamika’s first night blissfully with Tripta. Anamika got up early in the morning, she saw Tripta upper half naked body – pure white, and thought:-

“She looked like a painting. Life was at the tip of my fingers. All the questions I had asked myself about the meaning of life, the future, success – everything was answered. Beauty was all the mattered.” (39) P.254

Tripta talked to Anamika while taking tea and toasts, about Deepak that she knew her mother and she knew Deepak when he was of Anamika’s age. They were just friends and nothing else. She also told Anamika that Deepak and travelled everywhere in the world, and was quite successful, good hearted and a brilliant man.

Anamika found that the world was beautiful and bathed in sunlight. From a far, she watched the little hills of Kasanli, and their cottage was illuminated – Blessed, singled out. She looked at Tripta and wanted bite her, bit by bit, like an apple. She narrates:-

“I rolled over forcefully so that she was on her back and I was on top. Then I bit her cheek as if I were biting an apple.” (40) P.259

Anamika was charmed by the scenic beauty of Kasauli. She found Kasauli the greenest place she had ever seen. On a walk with Tripta she saw pine trees for the first time. The walk reminded her that there was a world outside also. In the evening they both dressed for the dinner with Deepak and Arni. Anamika wore jeans and checked shirt, and Tripta wore mustard and green sari and backless blouse.

Deepak was repeatedly calling Tripta as ‘Aunty’ and touching her back. Arni remained unmindful, and even asked Tripta to sit in the front seat of the car. In the restaurant when the waiter went up to them for the order. Deepak, after getting assurance about Anamika, ordered
four beers for the table. Anamika agreed about beer because she did not want to be considered as immature child. Anamika looked at the rates of the menu and found that her mother’s Rs. three hundred fifty was quite insufficient. Dinner was over and Deepak drove then back to their cottage. Once again Tripta and Anamika slept together enjoying the bliss of the night.

“Anamika felt the life in Kasauli as if it had rhythm. She describes:-

“Though we had been there just over twenty four hours, we had out bed-teas and took walk the next day as if we had been residents of Kasauli forever.” (41) P.266

The next evening Deepak and Arni were invited at Tripta and Anamika’s cottage. While talking to Deepak and Arni she came to know that Arni was having a job, but after her marriage with Deepak she lift it. Then there was a discussion about Chakra Dev, whether Anamika was right in her action about him or not.

In the atmosphere Tripta put a cassette and began to dance on some musical song. Then she asked Deepak if he had the ‘stuff’ and Deepak took out some green stuff and some rolls from his jacket pocket. Anamika was horrified and reminded her of ‘Dum Maro Dum’. Deepak offered a stuffed-role to Anamika which she refused. Anamika states her mental condition on the moment:-

“A small reasonable voice in my head told me I was insane. I closed my eyes and imagined my mother talking to me. I felt as if I were being tested. The love of my parents, my education, every moral lesson I had learned was being challenged. I had lost the previous night when I had had beer with them.” (42) P.268

Tripta and Deepak were dancing, much to the embarrassment of Anamika about Tripta. She was holding Deepak’s hand, and smoking drug with the other hand. Just as the dinner was over, Anamika told the friends that she was feeling sleepy, and went away.

Next morning, Anamika felt very lonely. Tripta was sleeping, she felt very bad of her for taking drug. Inspite of government ad ‘just say no’ sponsored by anti-drug committee, and yet Tripta and Deepak took drug. She thought Sheela would never take drugs. She felt very gloomy and she took a pen and paper and poured her feelings by writing a letter to Sheela. She went to the post-office to drop the letter. She was so shocked about drugs that she talked to her mother
and broke into sobs. Her mother was concerned about her. She told her to go back to her in Delhi. Anamika told her mother that probably they would return on the next day.

She was very upset with Tripta. When she returned to the room she found Tripta was putting on her nightie. Tripta went up to her to hug her but she recoiled, and continued to read book ‘Lolita’, then she asked Tripta that she could not like her taking drugs. She added that drugs give only false sense of happiness and drugs make someone lose control over her. After that they both compromised and started making love with each other.

They made the programme for the day that they would go for a drive with Deepak and Arni. The drive up the hill was very pleasant. They stopped at a place. Tripta and Arni began to play cards. Deepak and Anamika went for a walk. On their way Anamika learnt a lot about him. He was a merry-go-lucky man, believed in the general theory of happiness – with beer and R.R. that meant rest and relaxation, i.e. sex. He had been to America for the study of engineering but he had to wash dishes for making a living. He belonged to a vegetarian Brahmin family, but in US he had to scrape off the dishes. After three years, he got a job worth the salary of a senior-most I.A.S. in India. Then he travelled to a number of countries. After MBA a he got a very good job.

During that period he had relationship with girls belonging to various countries. But he was particularly attached to a girl from Poland. But because Deepak wanted to return back to India, and Poland-girl would not have suited in India, so he did not marry. After reaching India, he married Arni and was happy. They all decided to return to Delhi in afternoon.

During the day, watching the T.V. news Anamika came to know that school in Delhi were still closed. Protests against Mandal continued. North India burned like a large funeral pyre. The smell of kerosene and young upper caste flesh smelt everywhere.

Deepak and Arni had come up to Anamika’s house to drop her. Anamika’s parents treated both of them nicely. Anamika introduced Deepak that he had done his M.B.A. from America. They took tea and departed.

Anamika’s mother told her that Vidur and Sheela both called at her place in her absence. Anamika decided to return their calls the next day in parents’ absence.
Anamika’s felt a void in her life, as school were still close and she had not much to do. She told her parents that she should call her Maths teacher for tuition. She called her, and Mrs. Pillai came to her house the next day and taught her for an hour. Days were passing without any important happenings. Except some phone calls, there was nothing happening. Sheela told her on phone that while she was in Kasauli, her letter was received by her. Her letter was quite poignant. Sheela was very eager to meet Anamika and she told her that after an hour, she would visit her.

The next day there was a phone for Anamika from Adit, telling Anamika about the same non-sensual things as where she had gone, with whom she had gone and why she did not phone etc.

Anamika replied to his queries peevishly.

As decided, Anamika visited Sheela at her house. Sheela received her very warmly, forgetting their last meeting – Anamika’s piercing finger causing her annoyed. Sheela kissed Anamika and hugged her. She asked about Kasauli and the colours of the sky. Sheela pulled her into the bed and both remained quire for some time. Anamika had some wild dream about her being on the moon, with phantoms of Sheela, Rani and India etc.

Sheela was becoming very romantic with Anamika. She told Anamika about the blank calls that she told Anamika about the blank calls that she did not pick up. May be the calls were from Chakra Dev, because once he had phoned her and wanted Sheela to talk to his mother at his house. Then once, Sheela was compelled to talk to Chakra Dev’s mother. She told Sheela that sometimes Chakra Dev – can be mischievous, but that he was good at heart. After that Sheela was getting the blank-calls.

During that Sheela-Anamika meeting Sheela also informed Anamika about Vidur’s visits a few times. Sheela assured Anamika that she loved her immensely.

Anamika’s some of the actions seem to be childish and immature. The reader feels puzzled by some of her actions. For example, after returning home, she made two phone-calls to person like Adit and Chakra Dev, for whom she shows her obvious dislike and even hatred. She called Adit and told him about meeting together with Sheela and Vidur. Adit talked about Sheela
as ‘beddable’ and she got furious. She told him if he was not ashamed of talking so mean about his son’s friend. Adit then told her that Vidur had lost his head for Sheela.

The second foolish call she made to Chakra Dev who replied very rudely. Anamika told him as to why he made blank calls to her friend- meaning Sheela. He answered that it was none of her business. Inspite of Chakra Dev’s calling her a ‘bitch’, She thought about him:

“Despite the rejection I could not help thinking that somewhere deep downs the bubbling of his soul were no different from mine.” (43) P. 301

Schools still close, and Anamika had nothing much to do, so she visited Sheela almost daily. They would lie down on the bed and stay like that for hours. Whenever they moved, Anamika used to be intensely aware of the voluptuousness of her body. Then, Sheela would be completely lost in her romantic dreams, as if Anamika was her husband. Anamika would say dreamily that they would have very little furniture and large windows in their house, and Sheela would comment that she had always liked thin red curtains. After such conversations with Sheela, Anamika would return home to do some low actions with Rani – Rani’s feet, mouth, belly, head or back, the highest sentiments with Sheela and lowest with Rani.

The next important incident was a visit to Anamika by Vidur and Adit. Vidur was a little agitated. Adit took leave after some time, and kissed Anamika when she went out with him to see him off.

Vidur told Anamika that he was madly in love with Sheela, but he could not express it, and so he required Anamika’s help, not knowing, that Anamika herself was in love with Sheela. Anamika describes his distracted condition:

“With one hand he was pulling his thick hair with the other he was nervously fiddling with the top button of his shirt. He paced like a maniac.” (44) P.306

Vidur insisted on Anamika’s help by telling Sheela that he loved her, But Anamika refused to do anything because, she told him :

“Love is not that sort of thing. It happens between two people, and no power on earth can hinder it or help it.” (45) P. 307
Finally, Vidur insisted on Anamika’s writing a poem, addressed to Sheela on his behalf. Anamika flatly refused to oblige Vidur by writing a poem on his behalf for Sheela. Vidur was angry and displeased with her, and took two pages from her note-book and sat down to write a poem for Sheela, himself.

In the meantime there was a phone-call from Sheela, she was very eager to meet her at Anamika’s house. Anamika replied that she was busy with some other work, and would phone her later about her visiting her because of Vidur’s presence there. She saw a poor line ‘You smelt like rose’ was written by Vidur. Vidur found it difficult to write the poem, so he thought of making a phone-call. Then, he fixed an appointment with Sheela. Then, he marched out of the house, calling Anamika ‘abnormal’. Anamika began to think after Vidur had gone:

“He wasn’t going to sit around in my house telling me I wasn’t normal. Though abnormal I was, and not in the way he thought. I was abnormal because of that dream I had had, and because Chakra Dev had successfully gotten under my skin.” (46) P.312

While Anamika was away for a short while at Tripta’s, Rani told her that Sheela visited her, after she had gone. Anamika ran to Sheela and talked to her. Sheela wanted to meet her immediately. When Anamika visited her she told her that Vidur had gone mad about Anamika’s love for her, but he did not express his love for Sheela. Surprised Anamika told her about Vidur’s visit and the poem. She also told Sheela that Vidur’s father and perhaps mother also know about Vidur’s love for her. Sheela said,

“Chakra Dev and Vidur can tell their parents they like girls and their parents even try to help them. We can’t tell our parents anything” (47) P.316

Anamika was annoyed with Vidur’s mischief telling her that he loved Sheela and telling Sheela that he loved Anamika. Enraged Anamika phoned Adit in his office, in the absence of Sheela, that he should mind his son, telling other like Sheela that he loved Anamika.

Anamika realized her mistake—rather foolishness for the first time. She was in the vortex of her problems. Her insistence on freedom had put her into bondage. Her love for India, Rani, Sheela and her entanglements with Adit and Chakra Dev were too much for her. She thought,
“I was imprisoned in my own ring. My fantastic journey into freedom had turned out to be a fantasy, my acts of free will serving only to bind me.” (48) P.320

She thought of cleaning her mind of everything making it pristine. At night when parents had retired to their bed room, there was a call from Vidur; he told her that she should talk to principal about Chakra Dev’s blank calls to Sheela. Anamika told him that there was nothing wrong about it. Vidur and she also loved Sheela. So what was wrong if Chakra Dev wanted to talk to Sheela?

It seems Anamika has not improved from the lessons she should have learnt from caused her problems. Still she had not improved from her foolish acts. She did one more mistake. At night, when all were sleeping, she left her house to go to meet India (Tripta). After their initial talks Anamika told Tripta that she wanted to learn Organic Chemistry as to free her mind from her various concerns. They studied late in the night. Tripta told her:-

“She had not stayed up so late since the day she signed her divorce papers. That day, to celebrate, she had danced and smoked with her friends all night.” (49) P.324

In the morning, Anamika was shocked to know that it had been six o’clock in the morning, and her parents must have got up and found her missing. She rushed to her house locked from inside. Anamika ran back to India’s house, breathless. After thinking about thousand excuses that she would make to her parents, she made a phone call to her father and told him that she had been with Mrs. Adikari the whole night studying Chemistry. Then she prepared Tripta mentally, as to how to deal with the situation when her father visited to take Anamika. When Anamika’s father visited Tripta showed her utmost courtesy and offered him a cup of coffee. Father and daughter returned home. The incident was the height of foolishness of a teenager girl like Anamika, though; thankfully the parents did not take it seriously;

While taking leave from India that morning she had told Anamika that she wanted to host a party. Among others she wanted to invite Anamika along with her parents, Adit and Vidur, Sheela and Chakra Dev etc.

Anamika, later on that day, sat with a paper and decided the list of her problems:-
“In the last twenty-four hours I had lost a best friend and hurt Rani – indeed, I continued to hurt Rani, I had almost been caught by my parents, and I had discovered that Sheela thought of our activities as some kind of experiment.” (50)
P. 333

In her state of utter confusion she thought of Deepak to guide her to go to America in search of freedom. She phoned Deepak about it, he told her that as there was not much work with him, so he could go with her to USFFI office to get forms to apply for student VISA. Deepak helped her in completing the formalities, and then they returned. She told Rani about her plans to go to America, because, there:-

“Everyone is equal. There is no caste, either. Of course, some people are rich and others are poor, but that’s everywhere” (51) P. 338

About the reason to go to America she said:-

“I want to be free. I don’t want society telling me what to do all the time” (52)
P. 338

The thought of going of America for studies just because there is lot of freedom is a bit immature on the part of a sixteen-year girl. Moreover, her acts and thinking depicted in the next few chapters show Anamika in a different light. Academically she is a brilliant girl, there could be no doubt about it but in the practical life and her behaviour in it seems to be childish or foolish enough.

The schools were re-opened, and on the very first day she did a very funny thing. Just after the assembly, she went to her class-room early, and there she found Chakra Dev Sitting. Just picking a point for talking he started his rough behaviour. He went close to her in a threatening manner, and she was at his mercy. Just then she slapped him.

Anamika was at this point harboring a funny thought of going to America. At home also she talked to her parents that she wanted to go to America for higher studies as Deepak had done. Her father advised her that she was too young, and she could go after her graduation. In the school also she behaved in a funny manner. She started telling her friends, Vidur and Sheela that she was planning to go to America, as if she was just leaving for U.S. tomorrow. She cited the
example that all our great leaders went abroad for studies before Independence. But she could not convince Vidur and Sheela. They remained firm to remain in India. Anamika cited a funny reason for her proposed plan that in India:-

“We are just bound by so many constraints here. Even in our choice of subjects, each decision restricts us rather than setting us free. It is like marriage.” (53) P.347

In the meanwhile a very filthy thing happened in Anamika’s class-room. As they entered into the class-room, Sheela screamed in horror looking at her seat. It was a condom. Immediately Anamika’s mind had a quick lightening, she told the class-teacher Mr. Garg that it must be Chakra Dev.

Chakra Dev strongly denied having done it. Anamika was just hear to Chakra Dev; she was so furious that she strongly slapped him first to his left cheek and then to his right. Then, Mr. Garg and Anamika took Chakra Dev to the principal. After hearing from Mr. Garg about the matter the principal announced the rustication of Chakra Dev.

Just then a very funny and foolish act was done on the part of Anamika. It was she who was so angry by that dirty deed by Chakra Dev that she slapped him twice, and then, when the principal announced his suspension. She said,

“Sir, can we give him another chance?” (54) P.351

Not only had this she gone to the extent of resigning her Head Perfect ship. She pleaded:-

“Sir, I’ll have to resign my head Perfect ship if you don’t forgive him.” (55) P. 352

The principal agreed on that condition by Anamika, and told Chakra Dev to tender a written apology, signed by his father or mother, and a copy of it was to be given to the principal. Everyone wondered as to why her dislike and anger had suddenly turned into humanism. The next day, Chakra Dev told Anamika that he was going to submit the letter of apology to the principal.
The next important incident in the novel is the planning of a party or ‘Dawat’ by Tripta Adhikari for her friends and for Anamika’s friends. Anamika started giving invitation to her parents then at school she invited Vidur and Sheela. Then, in a very funny and foolish way she went to Adit’s office to invite him, whom she disliked for his indecent advances. The most surprising and shocking thing is that she also wanted to invite Chakra Dev in the party. It was the height of her foolishness.

Sheela and Vidur both opposed Anamika’s idea of inviting Chakra Dev. Vidur had strong objection, but he agreed because Sheela had already agreed. Anamika also invited her teacher Mrs. Pillai. When Anamika talked to Chakra Dev, he was rough in tone and behaviour. He did not show any sign of remorse or obligation for Anamika.

Preparations for the ‘Dawat’ were going on in full swing at Tripta’s house. Anamika and Rani went to her house to help in preparations. Deepak, Tripta and Anamika purchased pastries, cakes, fruits and wine. While purchasing, Anamika noticed two men – one old and one young, hand in hand, at a restaurant. Later they kissed each other. Tripta told Anamika in a whispering voice that they were ‘gay’ couple. To Anamika it looked like a sign of ‘liberty and freedom’ in America.

As Anamika, her parents and Rani were going to Tripta’s house for party, they met Rani’s ruffian husband on the way. He was hurling abuses at Rani, asking her to go back to him. When he was about to hit, Anamika’s father gripped him with force and the fellow fell down. Rani pleaded with Anamika’s father that she did not want to return to him, and he assured her that she would remain with them and nobody could forcibly take her away.

Tripta’s dinner party was like any upper-middle class party. Apart from Anamika’s parents and Rani, the guest comprised of Adit’s family, Deepak and Arni, Maya, Mr. & Mrs. Pillai, Sheela and Chakra Dev. So far as the party or the guests are concerned, there was nothing new, except that wine was also served. The noticeable thing of the party was the behaviour of Chakra Dev and foolishness of Anamika for having invited Chakra Dev in the party.

Soon Chakra Dev drunk a glass or two of wine and then started misbehaving with Anamika. Again and again he was putting his hand or Anamika, putting her into trouble. Anamika describes,
“I tried moving his hand again…. I gripped both his wrists as firmly as I could. He moved even closer into my space, his breath stinking of alcohol, his lips wet.”

(56) P.383

Anyhow, Anamika released herself from his grip and went into a dark lonely bedroom where he could take great liberty with her. Chakra was doing the same with her as Anamika forcibly did with India (Tripta), Rani, and Sheela. She thought:-

“I felt I was in greater proximity to him than I had ever been to India and Rani.”

(57) P.383

Perhaps it was feeling of love and hate for Chakra Dev. In the dark bedroom he did the worst thing that he could do with Anamika. She describes the experience:-

“And then the shock of something rigid in his pants. He pushed his whole body hard against my hand, which hung in his grip. He squeezed my wrists even harder. Arching himself he pushed his pelvis to my torso and sighed, his eyes closed.”

(58) P.385

Finally, Anamika realized her mistake and foolishness in having invited Chakra Dev:

She thinks about him:

“I couldn’t tell anyone else about what had happened because Vidur and Sheela would say I had only myself to blame. I decided it was best to make my way to the drawing room and simply avoid him for the rest of the night.” (59) P.384

Thus, end the party. Anamika, along with her parents and Rani, reached home. After a while the phone bell rang, it was Chakra Dev. He started with an abuse for Anamika being a Brahmin. She also retorted in the same language.

At the end of the novel we find that one of the main themes of the novel was Anamika versus Chakra Dev. They have love-hate relationship. She is confused about her relationship with him. Outwardly she showed her hatred for him, but her inner self had feeling for him. She wanted to improve him, and for that matter she had put her Head Perfect ship at stake. But so far she had not been successful she feels:-
“Everything I had been holding back came rushing out. I sobbed freely, my tears wetting the skin of her (Rani’s) breasts, sending rivulets of salt water down her belly and her sides.” (60) P.392

She was feeling ashamed of her failure. The experience at the previous night’s party had made her realize that she was not yet mature. Her mind was obsessed with Chakra Dev for some unknown reason. While studying between her Chapters and sums her mind would flash to Chakra Dev. She had come to the conclusion about Chakra Dev:

“Despite all my revulsions for the things Chakra Dev had done, I was still drawn to him. He was not going to change overnight, but I was determined to use my intelligence to win him. He was not an adult either. We were both at the mercy of the emotions that overwhelmed us at a particular moment. I had felt close to him because I sensed this.” (61) P.293

Compelled by such strange attraction towards him, the next day she phoned him, although he was in the same offensive mood, she talked to him calmly. She also wanted to explain to him about the next day’s test about ‘Rolle’s theorem’, on phone.

Anamika also mentioned to Chakra Dev that she was planning to go to America, and for that she was going to visit USEFI office the next day. If he wanted to go to America, he would have to take some exams and apply to colleges months in advance.

The novel ends with Anamika’s visit USEFI office along with Deepak, Sheela and Vidur to do the formalities for obtaining a student Visa. The novel ends on a note of uncertainty, Whether her decision taken at teenage for studying in America for the sake of enjoying freedom would later change when she grew mature or not. What happened about her feelings which she called love for India, Rani and Sheela, and more important, for Chakra Dev?

Overall, it is a novel about Anamika’s having turmoil in her mind and heart on her reaching the teen-age or puberty. Although the focus in the novel is on Anamika or ‘Babyji’, it can be taken as a general thing for all those who attain puberty. As a counterpart in the novel of Anamika, there is Chakra Dev. It Anamika is a female promiscuous; Chakra Dev is a male-promiscuous. The social and family taboos do not allow Anamika to have boy-friends to enjoy
her love for freedom. Chakra Dev, being a boy is able to express his freedom and passion by way of masturbation and even going to other women for sexual satisfaction. Moreover, he is forcing himself on Anamika or Sheela, whenever he gets a chance, and in whatever manner he can.

Anamika’s unreasonable and uncontrollable sympathy and feelings is out of her fellow-feeling for him. After all, she realizes that both all sailing in the same boat. If Anamika finds Chakra Dev as beyond improvement or incorrigible, she knows that she also cannot leave her India, Rani or Sheela.

Thus, Abha Dawesar’s novel ‘Babyji’ is the expression of overflow of the powerful feelings of teenagers through the Characters of Anamika and Chakra Dev. Meera Nair, the author of video has beautifully summed up Dawesar’s novel ‘Babyji’ :-

“From the moment Abha Dawesar dropped slap-bang into the middle of Anamika’s complicated life, I found myself fascinated how does one encounter a sixteen-year old who applies the preter-natural intellect not only to her far-ranging sexual conquests, but also to quantum physics and India’s complex caste politics? Irreverent yet tender, compassionate yet hard-hearted, precociously wise and undeniably sexy, Dawesar’s Anamika channels a wonderful new Indian reality. More power to her.” (62) Cover page back.

Thus, Dawesar has depicted Anamika in a representative teen-ager girl, as well as a singular, and extra-ordinary girl, who is ahead of all the other teen agers Vidur, Sheela, Amisa, and even Chakra Dev. Chakra Dev is other-side of the coin, more developed – physically and mentally. The other characters in the novel are not so powerfully drawn – Anamika’s parents are just ordinary parents, Col. Adit is a typical army-officer, a bit delinquent. His wife and son Adit are just to fill the gap. So is Sheela. Tripta and Rani are other representative characters of their class – Tripta of upper middle class and Rani, the lower class, their amorous advances or rather overtures are due to being divorcee or deserted wife.

The language of the novel is simple and lucid, yet captivating and steamy. Timeout, New York writes about it on the cover-page (back) of the novel:-
“A sweet exciting gust of fresh air…. It’s her rich language, simple yet heady
descriptions and priceless characters that linger long after you’ve turned the last
page. If you’ve ever experienced Delhi, the book will conjure strong memories, if
you haven’t, it’ll create them for you, Ditto for adventures ado-license and raw”.

(63) cover-page back.

Thus, Delhi as the background of the novel is brought before us – rattling city buses,
sophisticated building, latest over bridges and under-bridges, fine roads and broken paths and
Pitts, sky-scapper buildings on one side and jhuggies on the other.

REFERENCES

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