Chapter-V
The Present Phase (2000-until this date)

5.1. Preliminaries

Third wave feminist movements are aimed at social and economic equality with sexual freedom and inclusion of women from different groups like colour, culture, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and low income groups. They struggle for women’s reproductive rights, protection from violence at home, workplace and public place i.e. rape and domestic abuse, economic rights as equal pay, parity, pensions, poverty, recognition of work, political, social and religious rights (Narayan, 1998, Rockler, 2006). Naturally, Indian novelists, especially women novelists explore these views and approaches in their novels.

Deshpande depicts the issues like widowhood, widower, remarriages, inter-caste marriages, multiculturalism, women rebel, man-woman relationships, extra-marital relations, psycho-analysis, etc. in her novels. Manju Kapur portrays woman relations, desire, gender discrimination, marginalization and protest of educated middle-class women in metropolitan cities with feministic approach. She presents women protest against male dominance, subjugation, control over and marginalization. The novels of Chetan Bhagat deals with the 21st century issues of Indian youth i.e. adventure, romance, music, social and political and education systems. Therefore, five novels viz. ‘Moving On’ (2004) by Shashi Deshpande, ‘A Married Woman’ (2006) by Manju Kapur, ‘In the Country of Deceit’ (2008) by Shashi Deshpande, ‘The 3 Mistakes of My Life’ (2008) and ‘Revolution 2020’ (2011) by Chetan Bhagat are selected and analysed to know recent trends in representation of women in Indian English novels in the 21st century.

5.2. Man-woman Relations

Deshpande used ‘quilt’ as a symbol of love and family togetherness (MO: 126). The relationships between husband and wife, mother and daughter, mother and son, father and daughter, father and son, brother and sister, and other family members like grandmother, grandfather, aunt, etc. forms this ‘family quilt’.
Husband-wife Relations

Deshpande depicts that physical union through sex along with love is complete union of two human beings. She expresses their concept of love as complexities of ideas, emotions and responses coming from mind, body, heart, breasts, skin, etc. (MO: 188). Further, Devayani in CD argues,

But how can you love a man and not sleep with him? How can you not long for the physical union? It’s not just sex, it’s showing your love through your body, it’s seeing and feeling his love through his body. It’s the desire of union, the most complete union two human beings can achieve. (CD: 226)

Further, Deshpande gives similar explanation of expressing love in her novel, MO.

How can you love and not speak of it, how can you love and not crave to be together, how can you not touch each other? This inchoate, incomplete, unfulfilled thing –was this Mai’s idea of love? (MO: 99)

How could people in love live apart that way? I was watching the movie with Shyam, his body besides mine, his arm about me, his hand holding mine, his breath on my face as he whispered in my ear. (MO: 103)

Thus, Deshpande presents necessity of physical relations in husband-wife. She shows physical disunion of couple through separate beds of Mai and Baba which remain only emotional love.

Gayatri and RK have good and mature relations. There are number of family members at home. There is no privacy for couple, but they are happy without children (MO: 12). Further, Manjari realized that her Baba was a passionate lover of Mai through used words and language (MO: 102). Kapur shows good relations between Hemant and Astha,

After he left, ‘How good Sa’ab is,’ said the day nurse with a sigh.
‘Coming to see you every day. Not every husband is so nice.’
(MW: 77)

Mai explores the complexities of marriage between poor girl and rich boy in her novel, ‘Manasi’. The rich boy thinks that his wife from poor family hasn’t had any expensive things like saris, jewels, own car, etc. and arranged these for her. However, she feels that these arrangements are arrogance and showcases of her earlier poverty and walks out on him after a
fierce quarrel and lives alone for years. Deshpande shows the essence of love at equal ground through reconciliation after the years (MO: 102, 103).

Hemant encourages Astha for her writing and painting as,

Maybe she could become a poetess as well as a painter. Her life was opening up before her in golden vistas (MW: 42).

Asth is modern woman has affair with Rohan when she was in college (MW: 23-26) but marries with Hemant. She plans about the birth control and both decide about baby. She shows freedom of her pregnancy (MW: 56).

However, Bhagat portrays the suspicious views of society towards man-woman relations. They overlook friendly relations and these relations interpreted only in view of sexual manners. Phoolchand says to Gopal,

‘You are going with a girl. You may forget the time.’
‘You have a setting with her?’ … (RT: 34, 35)

Further, Bhagat reported that ‘In small towns, everyone is interested in every male and female interaction’ (RT: 34, 35).

Man looks mechanically towards the man-woman relations with ultimate product of sex. He wants comfort, look after, children, love and more centric on sex. However, woman is more sentimental centric on lovely relations. She wants children, look after and more conscious about love.

She says, ‘You know what the problem was? We never communicated.’
He says, ‘But we had sex.’
She says, ‘But that’s not communication!’
He says, ‘Then what is it?’
She walks out on him. (CD: 98)

Further, Bhagat portrays inner men conscious about complexities occurred in liberal man-woman relations.

Life is a bitch when the only woman you can think of belongs to someone else. (RT: 159)

• Extra-marital Relations
Man can express his extra-marital relations to wife which woman has limitations. Deshpande presents these issues through the situations in Hindi movie that the man says to his wife,

*I don’t love you,
I love another.* (MO: 104)

The wife replies emotionally, ‘I don’t love you either’ but she couldn’t hide her grief. The women in Bharati Mukherjee’s novel, ‘Wife’ have no courage to tell about another love to their husband.

Deshpande depicts extra-marital relations of man and woman in her CD and MO. Manjari in MO has extra-marital relations with Raman. She believes that it is need of her body and what her body demand, she had given and it is nothing wrong (MO: 258, 259). She also found in a novel that a woman academician has an affair with her young student which she calls it ‘An arrangement’ (MO: 260). Manjari’s husband Shyam has extra-marital relation with her younger sister Malu and made her pregnant.

Devayani establishes pre-marital relations with married Ashok Chinappa, District Superintendent of Police who has wife and ten years old daughter. Devayani feels free from grief of her mother’s death, social and mental pressure. However, she realised that her relation is as a kept woman instead of status given to wife.

I wanted this relationship…

Relationship? What relationship? Mistress? The other woman?
The kept woman? …….I thought instead of love ….. (CD: 142)

She is far away from her maternal relations and their love and felt that she is ‘entered in the country of deceit’ (CD: 147). Devayani realises the reality of adulterous relations and recall the tragic adulterous relations between Anna Karenina and Vronsky in ‘Anna Karenina’ by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910).

I now realized that adultery remains adultery, whoever the couple maybe. (CD: 149)

Ashok says,

We would never be able to live together.
‘I want to be with you, more than anything else in the world I want to be with you,’ he had said.

Devayani replies,

But that was not true. He had his life, his work, his wife, his daughter. All that I had was guilt. (CD: 152)

Deshpande shows history of extra-marital relations of Devayani’s family i.e. grandfather had mistress which her mother never spoke about that relations (CD: 162). Typically, the mistress called in marathi ‘angwastra’ meaning women are used as clothes. Deshpande rightly pointed this approach of men towards women through the number of girlfriends of Roshni’s father, Prem.

Roshni’s father never married after Ma left him. He’s having a great time. He changes girlfriends like he changes his shirts. (CD: 166)

Such approaches have not any limitations i.e. age, profession, caste, etc. Roshni reported that her father keep girlfriends even at her age and expected from Roshni to be a friend of them.

Women! Most of them are girls, only a little older than me. (CD: 166)

Further, Rani willingly accepts lover, Mahesh even-though he beats her (CD: 169). Mahesh was a married man has an extra-marital relation with Rani whereas his wife demands for divorce, which he didn’t seem to want for some reason (CD: 213).

Deshpande depicts the limitations of extra-marital relations especially for women. Devayani confused, puzzled and questioned for her relation with Ashok.

‘Ashok, I can’t go on like this any more.’ (CD: 232)
I have no claim on your life. There is no future for us. (CD: 237)
Love is not enough, Ashok love is never enough. (CD: 237)
I’m tired of lying and deceiving others. (CD: 237)

Further, Devayani express that every mistress has desire of marriage.

I would never have known the joy, the experience of loving, of being loved, of becoming one with another human being. I wonder whether this union is what we long for all our lives. (CD: 237, 238)
But she doesn’t want marry with Ashok (CD: 236). She confused not only for her future but also wife and daughter of Ashok. She has no answers of their complexities. Ashok asks her,

‘Do you want me to divorce my wife, do you want me to abandon my daughter? Tell me, just say that’s what you want. I’ll do it.’

‘I don’t want anything. Just go away and leave me alone.’

I couldn’t say anything more, I couldn’t breathe, I was suffocating. (CD: 233)

Shree’s letter to Devayani regarding her relations with Ashok influences their family status and reputation,

You, Devi! And then I was angry, very angry. I thought of our families, yours and mine, of Aba and Mai, I thought of your name and reputation. How could you, Devayani, I thought, how could you! (CD: 196)

Thus, Deshpande explores the complexities of man-woman relations when we going to apply feminist views (CD: 197).

Arati in RT became sentimental about her relation with Gopal as,

‘You pushed too much,’ she said and wiped her eyes. (RT: 185)

‘It’s not easy being a cheat,’ she said and turned all teary-eyed. (RT: 231)

• Sister-brother Relations

Deshpande presents free and friendly relations between Gayatri and Badri who share everything with each other including very personal things like menstruation (MO: 9). Vasu maintains her relations with her brother, Laxman even though he is a criminal,

‘He is my brother, I can’t wipe that out.’ (MO: 168)

5.3. Patriarchy: A Basic Feature of Indian Society

Religious literature tries to propagate the ideology of patriarchy through myths like Brahma, Adam and Eve, etc. The literature notices that the first individual is ‘he’ and ‘she’ comes later (CD: 97). It gives all kind of rights to men and denied women. Saroja in Deshpande’s MO returned to maternal home i.e. RK’s house after her husband died. Though, she
talks and laughs loudly than the other women, bossing the servants and slapping children but the property rights goes to her brother.

‘This is my brother’s house, I have every right to order people about.’ (MO: 151)

Here, it is notable that she is sister of RK and heir of that family but she not claims that house is her own and declared patriarchal rights and possession transferred to her brother. Brother has to be look after and protect his sisters as being a responsible family member. Raja looks after his sisters i.e. Premi and Hemi (MO: 40). Further, patriarchy teaches to the society that woman should go back to her in-laws and become as a good wife, a good bahu, a good bhabhi, etc. (MO: 19). Manjari is watching all these things in TV serials.

RK is head of the family in Deshpande’s MO who not aware about his position but his wife Gayatri tries to maintain his headship. She arranges special chair, towel, etc. for RK which no one permitted and dare to share it.

The entire household revolved around RK – Gayatri arranged it that way – but he never seemed to be aware of it. (MO: 77)

‘Here, wipe your hands’. But aware of Gayatri’s eyes which warned us not to take the towel, we would say, ‘It’s okay, Kaka’, and go out to wipe our hands on the ‘janata towel’, as BK called it. (MO: 77)

Similarly, Kamala also takes care of BK and his all comforts and giving his place as husband and father as head of the family.

I never saw BK doing any chore in the house; even his Scotch, soda and ice were placed before him by Kamala, … (MO: 92)

Another woman, Vasu placed her husband, Badri Narayan at paramount place in the house. She believes that he is the annadata, the breadwinner and respectable. She muttered at the end of each meal - ‘Annadata sukhi bhava’, (MO: 122).

Children are prominently known by father’s identity and not by mother’s.

‘Are you Badri Narayan’s daughter?’ (MO: 128)
Men follow the patriarchal customs which bound him to carry his headship, power and simultaneous responsibilities. Devayani’s father, Vasant not ready to accept his wife’s money for daughter’s marriage as head of the family (CD: 63).

Generally, women are treated as an innocent. Deshpande raised the question that why the men society has adopted the approach of underestimating the women even though she has gone through birth, death, despair and sufferings (CD: 223). The similar approach has also willingly adopted by women towards women.

Identity of heir by father and immovability property rights in inter-racial, -caste and -ethnic groups are fundamental identity of patriarchy. Father in the novel, MO says, if his son will get marry with girl from different castes, he will be lost his family and property rights, forever. Badri’s grandfather in MO disinherit to his son for his decision of marriage with girl from different caste. The mother’s consent is not taken into consideration for the decision of disinherit to their son.

‘he disowned his son ritually, he disinherited him legally.’ (MO: 6)

Similarly, Arun Joshi’s Mr. Khemka instructs his son, Babu not to marry with American girl, June Blyth instead of Marwari girl otherwise he will disinherit him legally in his novel, ‘The Foreigner’. Therefore, these novels explore husband, father and child especially son essence for woman.

- Father and Husband Essence

Deshpande shows essence of father (MO: 179) and husband in woman’s life especially for widowhood (MO: 48). Fatherless Brahmin girl has inauspicious Mangal in her horoscope which Manjarij’s grandfather married with her, second time. These fatherless daughters have problems even after marriage as shown in horoscopes (MO: 7). The husband said to his wife,

‘You are wrongdoing our son. He must know his father. We need to know our parents….’ (MO: 19)

Father is role-model for son and sentimental place for daughter. However, daughter is more conscious about presence of father in the family. Sachi is more curious about the absence of her father than Anand. Sachi asks her mother,
‘You haven’t even kept a picture of him!’….which the dead father’s picture hanging on the wall is the focus of the family’s life. (MO: 48)

Manjari feels loneliness in her widowhood and cannot share her feelings of pleasure and sorrows with anyone (MO: 86). Further, Kapur depicts the father essence for the children’s career. Mrs. Trivedi’s parents call her back to live with them in Bangladesh after her husband’s death. Mrs. Trivedi decides to educate her children in Shiksha Kendra but her parents warned,

‘This school will not equip Ajay and Pipeelika for the competitive world,’ warned the grandparents. ‘They need to get ahead. They have no father, they are starting out with a disadvantage.’ (MW: 119)

Husband is essential for woman to interact with other men. Iqbal and KN in Deshpande’s CD hesitate to come into Devayani’s house because she is living alone (CD: 156).

- **Child and Son Essence**

Manju Kapur and Shashi Deshpande present child essence for woman not only for survival but her status in family and society. Medha and Bharat in MO are childless keep Malu with them (MO: 156). Especially, son is more essential for family heir, property rights and religious rituals (MO: 243). The preference given to son, Badri for all kind of rituals performed after the death of his father but not daughter, Gayatri (MO: 13). Badri looks after and care his father in illness. It is expected in patriarchal families from the son as he is the heir of that family not from the daughter.

But I do know that I can’t expect anything from her –not because she is a daughter, but because I failed her in her time of need. (MO: 55)

Further, Deshpande presents the son is common heir for family like brother’s son, in the case of couple is childless. Childless RK and Gayatri looks their heir in brother’s son, Raja as son of the family.

…though RK was fond of Raja; to him, Raja was the son he didn’t have, he was the heir of the family. (MO: 91)

Deshpande further shows inner urge of men for son even they are satisfied with their daughters. Baba realizes this when he was with her grandson, Anand as,
I understood for the first time why men want sons. I had been happy, more than happy with my daughters, but this was different. It was like seeing my own past, like seeing the possibility of a different future, it was like being given another chance. (MO: 243)

Further, she shows the son essence for the property rights of the family in her another novel, CD (CD: 211). Manju Kapur also presents son essence and presence for women’s support and survival in her MW. Pipeelika thinks about her brother, Ajay settled in US like,'What’s the use of having a son and brother if all he does is write patronizing letters from the States? ’(MW: 123)

- Urge for Son

The son essence ultimately inculcates and promotes the urge for son in married couples and society at large. Therefore, they perform many of religious rituals before and after marriage, gives birth number of girls in waiting of son and man married with more women and harasses them. In modern society, parents are educated and trying to establish gender equality up to some extent. Hemant in Manju Kapur’s MW has no difference between boy and girl child even though his in-laws expect boy child from his wife. He says to his mother-in-law,

‘But Ma, I want a daughter,’ (MW: 57)

In America there is no difference between boys and girls. (MW: 57)

However, his reported equality is not extended up to the next child which they have girl child at first. Hemant wants son from Astha for his paternal heir as he is only son of his parents. If the second time they will not have a son, they will try third time, fourth, fifth….. for son,

‘I want to have my son soon,’ declared Hemant, looking emotional and manly at the same time. ‘I want to be as much a part of his life as Papaji is of mine.’

‘How do you know we will have a son?’ asked Astha, feeling a little scared.

‘Of course we will have a son, and if we don’t we needn’t stop at two.’ (MW: 61)
Women are also not behind for the support of patriarchal demand of son. Kapur not only explores the women support but maternal demand of son from their daughters for well being in their in-laws. Astha’s mother wants boy child from her daughter. She says to Hemant, ‘Beta, you are right. May it be a boy, and carry your name for ever. A great son of a great father.’ (MW: 57)

Asth’a’s mother believes in God, Swamiji and religious and traditional ways,

‘God willing it will be a boy,’ said her mother. ‘I have asked swamiji’s advice as to what offerings to make.’ (MW: 67)

Kapur depicts the consciousness of society about the baby’s gender i.e. everybody, colleagues, in-laws, friends’ wives, mothers, the cook, the gardener and all (MW: 68). Therefore, the birth of son is the point of the great celebrations especially if he is the first male in the family (CD: 101).

• Control Over Women

The purity of race and caste is always gone through control over women and their reproductive capacity. Deshpande explores men control over women as father, husband, brother and son in patriarchal society. They use women for their purpose,

Mangal, even as a young woman, made herself into a mother figure, a facade that Laxman used for his own purposes, the way he used his own mother,… (MO: 171)

Deshpande depicts the men control over women and their body even in extra-marital relations. Rani in CD has extra-marital relations with Mahesh. He expects that Rani should act with his direction. However, Rani should not give up her career along with Mahesh. Rani is ready to leave Mahesh for her career which then he became abusive and violent (CD: 214). Deshpande explores similar eternal conflicts between man and woman in her another novel, MO. The man asserts his rights and claims woman body (MO: 276). Further, Kapur also presents the men control over women and their body and mind also,

He sat on the sofa, and Astha knelt to take off his shoes. She unlaced them, and pulled off his socks, gathering the day’s dust in her lap. (MW: 48)

Chetan Bhagat explores the 21st century issues like education, corruption, politics, national freedom, hypocrisy, love, multi-culture, liberalisation, etc. However, the girls i.e. Vidya
is not allowed to attend tuitions outside the home. Her father not permits her to go outside but tutor should come at home (TMML: 38). Brother, Ishaan performs his responsibilities to sister, Vidya. He beats the boy who harasses her. Brother as protector of sister shows the control over women (TMML: 4). Further, Govind expresses his views about Vidya as an Indian girl,  

I’d have killed her if she walked around in a bikini. Wait a minute, I’d kill her or her brother Ish would kill her? Why should I care? But I did say I would kill her? (TMML: 166)

Bhagat crucially elaborates the control of brother, friend and life partner over Indian women. Thus, all these novelists present the patriarchal control over women even they are educated and modern. However, Manju Kapur and Deshpande show women rebel against this control up to certain limit.

- Male Centric

In male centric society, men always try to get credit of success to own even women contribute their efforts. Manjari in MO learnt to drive a car within two months but credit of learning goes to the instructor instead of Manjari’s efforts (MO: 162). Kapur explores men’s views about Astha’s painting which got better price in exhibition. It is Astha’s efforts but Hemant tells everyone that this is an example of his wife’s work (MW: 159). In patriarchy base society, maternal relations are at secondary status. They have no courage and rights to interact with relations from in-laws of daughter. Astha’s father feels shame for getting help and support from son-in-law, Hemant,

Hemant helped them to move. I don’t like asking him to do so much for us, beti,’ said the father.

‘He is your son-in-law, Papa. It is all right,’ said Astha. (MW: 53)

Kapur explores the son essentiality in the patriarchal family as,

‘Of course they don’t matter to me. I was so pleased Anu was a girl. But that doesn’t mean we should not try for a boy. I am the only son.’ (MW: 61)

Don’t worry, sweetheart, then we will try again, it’s perfectly all right. (MW: 68)
Kapur, Deshpande and Bhagat present women belief and support to male centric society in their novels. Deshpande shows the need of men protection to women from early childhood (MO: 40). Conversation between Raja and Manjari gives the idea about men essence. Raja says,

‘Whoever it is, you shouldn’t talk to anyone alone.’

Manjari replies,

‘No, I should loudly announce that I am a helpless female who can’t take her own decisions.’

Raja says,

‘Forget your feminism for a moment and face facts, Jiji. It helps to let people know you’re not alone.’

Manjari replies,

‘I did that. I spoke of my children, of my SON…..’ (MO: 219)

Further, Bhagat also explores that women are in need of men for protection. Gopal says to Arati,

‘Even a simple girl needs love, security, attention, support. Right?’ (RT: 223)

Asth’a’s mother and Hemant’s mother both are orthodox. According to them, the family without son is incomplete as,

‘The family is complete at last,’ said Astha’s mother piously, feeling her own contribution. (MW: 68)

Hemant’s mother agreed, too happy in the birth of her grandson, carrier of the line, the seed, the name, to respond with her usual reserve to someone she increasingly felt was her social inferior. (MW: 68)

Kapur shows the difference between the American father and Indian. There are controversies in Hemant’s views about women. He has different view when they had Anu (daughter). Astha feels Hemant changed his views after Himanshu’s birth. However, he believes that care of children, family, husband and in-laws are women works. The roots of patriarchy are in his subconscious mind though he educated in Western culture.

After he came home the last thing he wished to bother about was taking care of a child.

It’s your job,’ he said. (MW: 70)
‘It’s woman’s work,’ said Hemant firmly. Hire somebody to help you, or quit your job.’(MW: 70)

‘And,’ continued Hemant, ‘my son is going to be very lucky for us.’(MW: 70)

Asth’a’s mother willingly accepts that the property rights are belongs to man. She tries to convince her daughter to accept patriarchal traditional way of thinking about central man power and rights. She says to Astha,

‘People do not live in their things, beti. Besides,’ added the mother, ‘it is Hemant’s house, and he said there was no room.’(MW: 87)

Kapur explores that women try to support male centric society, believe on superior men abilities and accept responsibilities. Astha’s mother thinks that men know everything like, money, land, property, business, etc. She considers her son-in-law, Hemant more responsible than her daughter, Astha. Therefore, she hands over the money to Hemant instead of Astha. Astha is not ready to accept these things,

‘They why give it to Hemant?’ asked Astha bridling.

‘Why not? He is a man, he knows about money. He will invest it for you and the children. I have discussed the whole thing with him.’ (MW: 97)

However, feminism has acquired some space in different fields of society i.e. education, law, culture, etc. Therefore, new generation women are came into contact with the new feministic approaches and became aware of their rights at property of husband and father. Kapur shows through Astha mother’s argument that she should not live with daughter. But Astha replies,

‘It is my house too. If people mind it is just too bad. I don’t believe in all this shit about parents being the responsibility only of the sons.’(MW: 94)

‘Then who am I? The tenant?’ (MW: 87)

However, old generation Astha’s mother suggests Astha to accept and follow traditional ways and not runs away from house, domestic work, society and obligations. She tries to teach her to tackle them. ‘The meaning of life is struggle’ (MW: 88).

5.4. Views on Women
Deshpande and Kapur explore the views of men towards women. Kapur presents different views of man (Hemant) and woman (Astha) towards the woman especially, maidservant (MW: 74). Men look to maidservant as slaves inhumanly whereas women respond with her as a woman,

‘I am going to fire that bloody woman,’ ranted Hemant the last time Mala had fever. (MW: 73)
‘You treat her as though she was one of the family. You have to know how to handle servants.’(MW: 74)
‘See?’ You make the children too dependent on her.’
‘She helps look after them, it’s natural they should like her.’(MW: 74)

Asta’s father-in-law says about her every evening,

‘How nice it is to have a daughter in the house.’ (MW: 43)

Kapur shows the role of daughter-in-law at in-laws in Indian culture through Astha's talk about her sister-in-law,

‘Her only time off is with us in the summer. She is not allowed to work, rather her in-laws make her slave inside the house, she is nothing but an unpaid servant. If she complains, her husband sides with his parents. (MW: 168)

Hemant says to Astha,

You seem to forget that your place as a decent family woman is in the home, and not on the streets. ….’(MW: 168)

Kapur presents the woman’s completeness is depend on her pregnancy, as

‘With you looking like this, never,’ declared Hemant passionately.
‘A real woman rather than a girl.’ (MW: 57)

However, Hemant wants his wife more attractive and sexy. For that, he took number of sex manuals and sexy clothes for his wife, Astha,

At the suggestion of sexy clothes she balked.
‘What do you think I am? A whore?’ (MW: 44)

Husband considers wife as a toy for playing, sexual pleasure, etc. as,

‘So I am to be your teddy bear?’ (MW: 44)
Deshpande explores the views of common man about laywoman through incidences at driving class. The instructor assumes that women are bound to be slow, make stupid mistakes and panic, etc. It is notable that women are considered that they have to be protected from possible lustful attentions of the instructors (MO: 83). However, Manjari face the situation boldly and learnt driving successfully. The instructor surprised,

‘Madam, you are not like other woman.’ (MO: 84)

Further, Middle-aged shopkeeper looks at well dressed and extra make-up of Vidya in TMML of Chetan Bhagat.

‘Ahem, excuse me,’ I said as the shopkeeper scanned Vidya up and down. (TMML: 84)

Bhagat compares men’s views about women from Australia and India. Australian woman can work as waitress and has free relations with men and live boldly. However, Indian women are not free to establish such kind of relations,

‘But you guys are single. You must have pretty girls all over you in India.’ Everyone looked at us. ‘We don’t have girlfriends,’ Omi said.

‘Why not? Indian women are hot,’ said Michael, rolling his. (TMML: 159-160)

Indian man considers that spending time and energies on lovely relations with woman is wastage and stupid things,

Businessmen should not waste time on stupid things like women. (TMML: 180)

Bhagat presents the views about women of men and sadhus from Mankarnika Ghat. They talk badly about them.

‘Don’t. It’s not good. Especially for you.’

‘Why?’

‘Because you are a girl.’

She smacked my elbow. ‘So what?’

‘People talk. They don’t say good things about girls who sit on the ghats holding elbows.’ (RT: 45)
Similarly, Badri’s father chooses an orphan *Harijan* girl for marriage, against his parents (MO: 5). His father use most abusive and derogatory words for *Harijan* girl. Normally, he uses abusive and derogatory words for ‘girls’, which indicates patriarchal and discriminated approach towards women (MO: 5).

Bhagat shows the Indian parents, their discriminating approaches and views about their children’s education and marriage. They are over conscious about daughter’s marriage. Arati says,

I think at some point a switch flicks in the heads of Indian parents. From “study, study, study” they go “marry, marry, marry”. (RT: 217)

Gopal says to Arati,

‘Have your parents gone insane?’ (RT: 265)

Arati replies,

‘When it comes to daughters, Indian parents are insane’. (RT: 265)

Badri gives less importance to his sister’s novel reading than his professional medical books and never read stories written by his wife, Vasu. He believes that women’s readings and writings are not only less significant but they do this for passing the space of time (MO: 196, 197). However, RK proud of Vasu as a writer and brought her in discussions and considered her opinions (MO: 121). He motivates her even though her English is inferior with Marathi-accented (MO: 121).

Shyam blames Manjari’s mother for her bourgeois behaviour.

‘Bourgeois’ he had called me, when I argued. ‘Like your parents,’ he said. ‘Like you mother,’ he had corrected himself. (MO: 307)

‘Mai’s manuscripts! Poor thing! No one took her seriously as a writer, she didn’t take herself seriously…..’ (MO: 36)

Manju Kapur presents the different approaches of mother-in-laws towards the rebel of daughter-in-laws against traditional views. The first is accepting the rebel of daughter-in-law willingly and the second rejecting and advice her to follow the traditions. Pipeelika’s mother-in-law from Muslim community accepts Hindu daughter-in-law. Astha participates in social
movements like *Sampradayakta Mukti Manch, Morchas*, etc. Her mother-in-law promotes her as a teacher, artist, etc. and be a decent family woman but instructs her to prevent from to leave home for social movements on the streets.

‘……..What is the need to leave your family, and roam about like a homeless woman on the streets of some strange city?’
‘To protest.’ (MW: 186)
‘It’s not a woman’s place to think of these things,’ she said firmly. (MW: 187)

Further, Hemant also opposes to Astha’s activities of social movements. Both husband and mother-in-law are following the traditional view that woman’s place at home and as decent family woman.

‘As my wife, you think it proper to run around, abandoning home, leaving the children to the servants?’ (MW: 188)
‘That’s your responsibility,’ he replied. I have work to do, a factory to run, I can’t be both mother and father.’ (MW: 189)

Deshpande shows men modernity with feministic approach through father. Pushpa suffered from epilepsy when she was a child (CD: 62). Her father is ready to accept daughter without marriage at home against the social custom and traditions.

……..she recovered, she was, as far as marriage proposals went, ‘the girl who gets fits.’ Her father could have found her a man who would marry her for his money. But he refused to do this; he preferred the humiliation of having an unmarried daughter at home. (CD: 62)

Manju Kapur presents the burdens of daughter’s education, character, health and marriage through Astha (MW: 1).

‘The girl is blossoming now. When the fruit is ripe it has to be picked….. (MW: 20)

Whereas, Krishna Bhat gives importance to girls’ education. He sent his daughters to school.

‘We never walked to school,’ she said. ‘Pushpi and I had our own carriage to go to school, our own *dhumni.*’(CD: 105)
Badri worried about Gayatri’s education after her marriage. She also believes that studies are not possible combine with home responsibilities. Badri supports her to join college instead of to get married. She is the most important person in his life more even than the father (MO: 9, 11).

Deshpande tries to present freedom of mature children especially for daughter in view of mother. Raja asks Manjari to stop her daughter, Sachi from selling house. Manjari accepts the children’s freedom and their modern way of living. She replies to Raja,

‘How can I stop her?’
‘You’re her mother.’
‘But once she’s eighteen –that’s next year –she can do what she wants.’(MO: 38)

However, Anand and Sachi disapprove the views of mother, Manjari. It shows the generation gap between parents and children. Intention of Anand shows male dominance and control over women.

‘They’re always looking down on me. And making their disapproval of me clear. Anand makes me feel sinful when I use a word he thinks mothers shouldn’t use! And Sachi…’ (MO: 68)
‘….. My children never tell me anything, either.’ (MO: 68)

Deshpande shows men acceptance and respect to women for their intelligence. Mr. Matthews pleased with the book which is translated by Devayani and gives all the credit to Devayani (CD: 152). Iqbal Sharif asks Devayani to work as a junior lawyer. He accepts Devayani’s intelligence and gives respect,

‘But why me?’
‘Because you have a law degree, because you are an intelligent woman, because I think you will be an asset to my office. (CD: 252)
You’re a brave woman, Devayani. You’ll get out of this. (CD: 252)

Aba is talking about his wife’s bravery and boldness in CD as,

‘Aba always said Malatiajjji was a Maratha warrior disguised as middle-class Brahmin woman.’ (CD: 190)
Further, Bhagat portrays the modern view of men towards the women’s career and their profession through Arati and Gopal. Gopal will be proud of Arati as a Principal of ‘Ganga Tech College of Hospitality’. However, Gopal is conscious about Arati’s beauty as a woman,

The students would totally flirt with her, given she should be the cutest principal in history. I would expel them if they tried to….. (RT: 251, 252)

One thing is notable that market forces in new liberal environment have influence in women approaches and bargaining power. Some of the women are giving more importance to money, property, things than the humanly requisites. Therefore, Shukla-ji says to Gopal,

‘Show her mother your car and money. Don’t take dowry. Even if the daughter doesn’t agree, the mother will.’ (RT: 255)

Women for Pleasure and Fun

Ashok Chinappa gives tips to Devayani of lovemaking from his and her body for pleasure (CD: 174). He has relations with many women and not satisfied. Men are not hesitates to tell women about their relations with another women but women are very conscious about their relation with a single man. Ashok said,

‘No one has given me as much joy as you have, no one has made me feel like you do,’….. (CD: 175)

Conversation between two sisters about the women is for pleasure to men. Savitri’s argument is that these policemen ask to their subordinates to get them women. All policemen are the same, they want woman, some woman for pleasure. She says that

‘Ashok will sleep with you and dump you. He’s using you, he needs your body, that’s all he wants.’ (CD: 184)
‘Will he divorce his wife and marry you?’ she asked finally.
‘I don’t know. I’ve never asked him.’
‘He won’t Devi, he’s taking you for a ride. You’re so innocent.’
‘He’s not cheating me. I know we will never marry.’
‘What!’
‘And he hasn’t deceived me. I knew he was married.’ (CD: 185)
Women are always submissive and surrendered. They never blame to men for their abandoning and extra-marital relations but women consider themselves as they are responsible for that not men.

Bhagat shows the women use for pleasure and fun in his novel, RT. Gopal asks Shukla-ji about call girls for inspector. ‘This one inspector likes women. . .’ (RT: 269). Further, Shukla-ji says,

‘You also enjoy them. It gets harder after marriage. Have your fun before that.’ (RT: 269)

Deshpande some men characters are womaniser in her MO. Mistry was Romeo among the friends of Badri. He is passionate lover forever falling in love and move on to the next girl for fun and time pass (MO: 54).

‘Some of us eat nuts and wafers, he goes for girls as a time pass.’
(MO: 54)

5.5. Culture and Religion

Badri’s grandmother is very conscious about her son, who is in jail with other people from different casts and religion i.e. Muslim, harijan, etc. Therefore, she wants to perform puja for purify her son and entire family (MO: 5). Astha’s mother in MW is traditional woman prays every day,

She prayed for a good husband for her daughter. (MW: 1)

She believes on old things, traditional views that are praying, offering jasmine buds or flowers, to lit silver lamps every evening, cooked meal offered first to the gods and then family (MW: 2). Hemant’s mother is also religious woman,

‘She is hiring a pundit to come every day and do some special pujas.’
‘Why?’
‘To ensure a grandson.’ (MW: 67)

Further, Bhagat shows that Arati wants to pray for success through lit diyas and afloat in the water in his RT,

Holding my hand, she said, ‘Let’s pray together, for success.’
‘May you get what you want in Kota,’ she said, eyes shut. (RT: 46)

The mothers of the students in Bhagat’s RT appeared for JEE exam performs little *pujas* and rituals for their mastery of science (RT: 91). Deshpande also presents that Indian people perform *pujas*, chanting of mantras, *gruha-pravesh puja*, etc. to enter in new house in her CD.

We had the usual puja before moving in- ‘to drive out the devils, to get rid of evil spirits.’ (CD: 5)

Bhagat presents the sentimental, emotional, weak and superstitious women i.e. Govind’s mother in TMML. She chooses the superstitious ways for her problems and hopes for reunion of her husband who left her for second wife.

‘She spent another year for consulting astrologers as to which planet caused dad to move out, and when would that position change.’ (TMML: 9)

Actress Rani in CD follows the religious customs like *Pujas*, offering flowers, etc. in the temple though she is active, bold, modern and courageous (CD: 70).

Educated modern Indian immigrants in US are also following these things in that country at the major occasions, like inauguration of shop, building, house, etc. Hemant’s parents perform *puja* at site of building before starting the construction activities (MW: 62).

Kapur presents the Indian culture at marriage of Astha and Hemant as *Pandit* and chanting *mantras* and seven steps around the fire (MW: 37). In Hindu culture, wife not allowed to call her husband by name. Rani calls her husband by his initials i.e. KN (CD: 15). Woman is not permitted to touch other men like shake hand except her husband. Devayani surprises when Iqbal Sharif shake hands with Devayani when KN introduces his friend to her.

Men didn’t shake hands, definitely not with women, in Rajnur. (CD: 48)

There are different rituals follow by Indians like children can’t allow marry up to three years after father or mother died (CD: 20).

Deshpande shows cultural difference between small town, Rajnur and metropolitan society. The people of small town believe and follow traditional customs which discriminates
women whereas metropolitan poly-culture is more liberal and gives more freedom to women. Asha suggests to Kavita to change her dress and appearance according to town culture.

‘Of course, you had to change. Can you believe it, Devi, this girl was wearing a skirt, up to here. A tight skirt. And with a – you know, a kind of gap….’

‘A slit…’

‘……on one side. And sandals with heels like this….’ He made a tapering gesture. (CD: 110)

Kapur depicts the Western culture and views about marriage and family. Astha informs to her colleague about her sister-in-law, settled in America that her husband was cheating her and now wanted divorce (MW: 168).

‘There they go on divorcing-marrying till the age of 60-70.’

‘They do not understand the concept of family. They only think of themselves.’

‘The divorce rate is three out of four.’

‘They don’t know what it is to be a woman, what it is to sacrifice.’(MW: 168)

Chetan Bhagat presents Muslim culture through women dress i.e. Ali’s mother, wearing a brown-coloured salwar suit, a dupatta covered most of her face (TMML: 63). Deshpande presents the struggle between modernity and traditions. Mai prefers cultural statues of Ganpatis and Devis in her house instead of the human body skeleton which put by her husband who is doctor (MO: 28).

• Women Orthodoxy and Men Modernity

Manju Kapur presents the modern and orthodox combination through Astha’s parents about daughter’s marriage. Father’s views are modern and mother’s are old one but the aim is same to search better husband for their daughter. Astha’s mother gives more importance to place for Puja than a shelf of book,

‘I will have a proper place to do puja, rather than a shelf.’ (MW: 7)

And, her father believes that Astha’s future lay in her own hands strengthened by the number of books passed. Astha’s father finds much potential in his daughter like drawing, painting, reading,
dealing with words, etc. He also remarks her little weaknesses in academics and maths but encourages her for the competitive exams (MW: 4). For that, at least once a day he says to her,

‘Why aren’t you studying?’ (MW: 2)

….there was no future in art. If she did well in exams, she could perhaps sit for the IAS, and find a good husband there. (MW: 3)

‘She is only in second year, Sita, for heaven’s sake. Let her finish her education at least.’ (MW: 20)

Kapur presents the men modernity and women orthodoxy in their way of thinking and approaches, as,

‘But Ma, I want a daughter,’ said Hemant.

‘That’s true, Ma,’ repeated Astha, ‘He wants a girl.’

‘In America there is no difference between boys and girls. How can this country get anywhere if we go on treating our women this way?’ (MW: 57)

‘Such a straight little nose,’ detailed Astha’s mother, ‘such big eyes. Handsome like her father. Girls who look like their fathers are lucky.’ (MW: 58)

Asth’a’s mother has traditional views,

‘When you are married, our responsibilities will be over. Do you know the shastras say if parents die without getting their daughter married, they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth?’ (MW: 1)

‘How can you waste the best part of the day? This is Brahmakaal, the hour of the gods.’ (MW: 3)

Badri’s father rejects dowry and disregards the fearful Mangal in girl’s horoscope (MO: 7). He has two children, Gayatri and Badri. He gives freedom to them for mixing in group of boys and girls which is very uncommon thing in certain Brahmin families (MO: 9).

• Men Orthodoxy and Women Revolutionary

Deshpande presents Manjari as a modern girl follows same things and behaves like boys. She wears shorts, T-shirts and lives with boys (MO: 150). Vasu encourages her daughters, Manjari and Malu to join the dancing class (MO: 154).

Sindhu suggests a boy for Devayani, who is Roman Catholic, but Gundu, Sindhu’s son thinks about other religion and not ready to accept it. It shows,
‘His name is Alexander...?’
‘What! He’s a Christian?’ I nodded. ‘Has my mother gone mad?’
‘And a Roman Catholic.’ (CD: 22)

Sindhu’s view about marriage as,

But it can never be too late to get married. If two people want to be together, what has age to do with it? (CD: 25)
I know marriage is not the final solution, or even the best. But at least once you’re married you know you are not alone. (CD: 26)

However, Devayani’s father began to consult an astrologer. (CD: 238)

Further, Kapur shows that there are differences between thinks and beliefs of mothers and daughters. Mothers are superstitious and daughters prevent them from these things as,

‘With reason, Ma. Swamies are known to take advantage of women, especially widows,’ said Astha. (MW: 55)
‘Somebody is putting ideas into her head. People think old women are easy targets.’ (MW: 56)

Asthia is modern woman who plan about the birth control. Astha and Hemant both decide about baby and then stopped using birth control facilities (MW: 56). Astha’s thinking about birth and gender of child is quite clear and different than her husband. She says,

‘It is not in our hands, at least not in mine. It is the man’s chromosome that decides the sex, and with two sisters in your family, it may be a girl. I have read about these things.’ (MW: 61)

Asthia thinks logically and scientifically, as

‘But puja may not make a difference, it may still be another granddaughter,’ objected Astha in alarm. (MW: 67)
‘But Hem, I do not wish to go on trying and trying until we get a son. It’s very difficult with the teaching as it is.’(MW: 68)

5.6. Matriarchy: A Subconscious Presence

Deshpande depicts not only inter-caste but also inter-religious marriages i.e. Chitpavan Brahmin father and Roman Catholic mother. Both are de-casted and cursed by their parents and family. Their children brought up as Roman Catholics which are known by mother-root but not
father-root as Chitpavan Brahmin. Here, Deshpande gives importance to women, matriarchy and gynaecracy (CD: 19).

KailashNavilur’s (KN) father was schoolteacher, ‘run away’ with a much younger colleague and abandoning his wife and two sons (KN and Jagdish) (CD: 47). Deshpande focuses on matriarchal aspects like changing name,

He had hated the place, hated his father. He had even changed his name, giving up his father’s name and adopting the name of his mother’s village, Navilur, as a surname. (CD: 47)

We feel more comfortable with motherly relations mainly in hardship. Specially, women become more conscious about women sorrow and pains (CD: 114). Deshpande explores maternal attachments of women through subject matter, location, names, etc. in Mai’s stories elaborated in her MO. Mai’s maternal family is living in Bombay. Therefore, locations and careful descriptions in her stories are in and about Bombay. It shows her strong attachment with maternal home and place (MO: 53).

Further, Bhagat depicts essence of mother through motherless Gopal and his urge of mother in his novel, RT.

‘Why doesn’t your mother give you a tiffin?’
‘I don’t have a mother,’ I said.
‘Dead?’ she asked.
‘Yes,’ I said. (RT: 16)

5.7. Feminine Symbols and Sensibilities

Kapur, Deshpande and Bhagat use the clothes, jewellery, accessories and traditional symbols like *kumkum, mangalsutra*, etc. to show femininity in their novels. Devayani’s grandmother in CD uses jewellery like variety of bangles arranged in the customary way on arms, heavy *todas* on her wrist, *patlis* near elbow, with variety of glass and gold bangles in between, three or four chains, necklace, *mangalsutra* and *chandrahar* (CD: 105). Sometimes such jewellery are remade and changed according to new fashion like Devayani’s mother remade her jewellery for her elder daughter, Savitri’s marriage (CD: 62).

There are clear cut instructions and meaning of jewellery wearing by married and unmarried women. Unmarried girls are permitted to wear four bangles, earrings and chain (CD:
whereas Vasant’s three married sisters are colourful loud boisterous women wore bright *saris*, big *bindis*, etc. (CD: 106).

Asth a was given gold jewellery and a new sari. Anuradha and the child’s aunts were given gold necklaces. (MW: 69)

There are also different traditions of wearing clothes and jewellery for different events like wedding, holydays, etc. Bride wears specially prepared wedding *sari*, the *mangalsutra*, the silver toe rings, etc. (MO: 250). Deshpande skillfully portrays the combination of female identity and presence of their jewellery,

And Kamala’s soft voice, the musical jingle of her bangles mingling harmoniously with BK’s and Baba’s voices conversing, arguing, laughing. (MO: 92)

….Kamala in her pastel saris, her glory hair neatly knotted, the diamonds gleaming in her ears, gold bangles jingling on her arms. (MO: 95)

Some of the women, especially from upper class are fully loaded in functions like wedding ceremony, parties, etc. who have enough money to spend on jewellery, ornaments, etc. Laxman says to his wife Mangal,

If you go about wearing all that stuff,’ he told her once, when she came home loaded with jewellery, the way she invariably was, ‘the income Tax people will be after you.’ (MO: 170)

Kapur presents the cultural differences with some feminine symbols. Aijaz’s mother has rounded fingers with gold rings, short nails with clear nail polish, long sleeves of *kurta* and fitting, many bangles, etc. She given ‘heavy gold necklace, thick gold bangles embossed with flowers, and a set of *jhumkas* with pearls and rubies’ to Pipeelika (MW: 136).

Bhagat also presents the feminine symbols of women beauty as,

She had applied a glittery silver-white nail polish only on the outer edge of the nails. How do women come up with these ideas? (TMML: 46)

Sometimes women adjust fake gold jewellery matching for status. Arati in RT matches such type of jewellery with her full length dark blue dress sent her by relatives from US (RT: 129). Further, Gopal’s father wants to keep his wife’s jewellery for his daughter-in-law (RT: 42). However,
Bhagat presents modern approach towards jewellery when he changed his approach and wants to sell his wife’s jewellery for Gopal’s engineering coaching classes.

It had a thick gold band around it. ‘I don’t need this useless ring,’ he said. ‘We also have some of your mother’s jewellery.’

‘You want to sell Ma’s jewellery for coaching classes?’

‘I had kept all that for your wife, but after you become an engineer, you can buy them for her yourself.’ (RT: 42)

New generation youngsters like Gopal reject traditional approaches like wearing sari as the cultural symbol of womanhood.

‘Wow, you look so different,’ I said.

‘Different? Formal? Is that all you say?’ she mocked.

‘No…. You look great. But I didn’t expect to see you in a sari,’ I said. (RT: 183)

- **Women Names**

Women names give idea about views of parents, relatives and society at large towards women. Shashi Deshpande uses names from religious literature. Savitri is famous idol in Hindu literature shows ‘pativrayatya’. Devayani’s father gives name of his died mother to his elder daughter, ‘Savitri’. It indicates transformation of such approach through generations. ‘Devayani’ is another name from *Mahabharata* means the brave woman (CD: 35, 36). ‘Lakshmi’, means money, wealth and property but ‘Lakshmi’ in CD is maidservant struggling for survival (CD: 29). Earth called ‘Vasundhara’. RK is calling ‘Vasu’ as ‘Vasundharabai’ shows his enormous respect in her MO (MO: 78). Gayatri is related to cow (MO) and Arati means to pray God (RT).

‘Roshni’ indicates the light (CD: 30), ‘Vidya’ means knowledge (TMML) and Kshama means apology (CD). These names are used to show woman intelligence and submissiveness. Whereas, Kamala and Pushpa indicate the girls are beautiful, tender, smooth, soft as like as flowers (CD). Malu comes from Malati means ‘mal’, the chain of flowers used to indicate the combo of different characters showing beautifulness used in MO. Steady and continuous hard working is enormous characteristic of Indian women which used in MW through ‘Pipeelika’. It is a *Sanskrit* word meaning an ant (MW: 121).

- **Feminine Sensibility**
Deshpande skilfully portrays the development of feminine sense in girls mind with changes in their body. They become conscious about their body features and femaleness when men eyes looking at them (CD: 170). Vidya in TMML is conscious and worried about her menstruation after she has sexual relation with Govind (TMML: 206-210).

Vidya becomes sentimental for Govind’s appreciation to improved performance in Mathematics.

‘You did quite well,’ I said as I finished reviewing her work.
‘Excuse me,’ she said and ran to the bathroom. She probably had an outburst of tears. She came back, this time her eyeliner gone and the whole face wet. (TMML: 80)

‘Vasundhara’ means Earth is the fundamental source of nutrition and energies for all lives. Therefore, mother is equally respected to Earth (MO: 78). Kapur shows the fulfilment of woman as she looks after her family, husband, daughter and son,

Her in-laws frequently commented, ‘Woman is earth,’ and it is true she felt bounteous, her life one of giving and receiving, surrounded by plenty. (MW: 69)

Bhagat also depicts the motherliness of Arati for Gopal in his novel, RT,

‘Yes,’ I said, like an obedient child. I liked her maternal instinct with me. (RT: 90)
‘I thought you might be hungry’,… (RT: 150)

Sindhu experiences motherly figure in Devayani,

‘I never knew a mother’s love,’ she said, ‘but the way Devi looks after me, I feel as if I finally have a mother.’ (CD: 119)

Therefore, ‘A mother’s love’ is marked out for the female race (MW: 69). Women are become more sentimental for their children. Savitri acts over sentimental for Arjun’s illness (CD: 181). Bhagat shows the grief of mother when she lost her son,

‘Get my Dhiraj. I say get my Dhiraj,’ Mama’s wife’s wails echoed against the temple walls. (TMML: 215)

Bhagat presents women consciousness about their children. Govind told about the violence at Godhra station and burning the bogie by Muslim mob. Govind’s mother says that,
My mother made me swear that I’d never fall in love with a Muslim girl. (TMML: 217)

It shows the fear in the sub-conscious mind of women.

Kapur presents the women are more sentimental than the men. When Hemant told about the news in the paper headlines, ‘THEATRE GROUP BURNED ALIVE IN VAN’ to Astha, she could not read further for the tears in her eyes. However, Hemant tempers for her sentiments towards burned alive and angrily replies,

‘Why are you crying?’
‘What was he to you?’
‘Some murderers trap and burn a whole theatre group in a van and you ask me why I am crying?’
‘This kind of things happens all the time, I don’t see you wasting your tears.’(MW: 139)

Deshpande explores the facts of dominant emotions in mother than the practice whereas fathers are practical and easily overcome the emotions even in complex and critical situation. Hemi in MO is abnormal daughter. Her mother, Kamala feels that she is normal as her sister, Premi and problems are arise only due to delay in her marriage. Therefore, she should marry early as possible which will make her normal and happy wife and mother. However, the father, BK accepts the practical problem of Hemi’s abnormality. Kamala blames him about his passive approach as cruel and unfeeling father (MO: 94).

5.8. Women’s Strengths and Weaknesses

- Women Work

Women love to cook and feed others. Kapur explores the role of women and their work at in-laws. Astha plays two roles, as a daughter-in-law and wife. She spends more time in kitchen and takes care of husband’s clothes – shirts, pants, socks, etc. as wife.

The time spent in the kitchen experimenting with new dishes was time spent in the service of love and marriage. (MW: 43)
Freedom from drudgery work at home is primary demand of women to alleviate discrimination at home. Naturally, equal work distribution at family level is solution of such equalities and women empowerment. In Indian society, these works are not assigned to men but women maidservants are used to reduce pressure of drudgery work on women. Kapur presents such temporary solution of women freedom through Astha which she became expert in house work through maidservant Mala,

Mala’s appeal grew when Astha discovered how quick and capable she was. She was fast, she was clean, she needed to be told nothing twice. (MW: 72)

Further, Kapur depicts the hard work, neglect and plight of slum girls. ‘They always worked hard, cook, wash clothes, look after the cows, buffaloes, younger brothers and sisters, send them to school, help in the family business, they embroider, make envelopes, necklaces, sew sequins on, but are often made to feel worthless’ (MW: 125).

Bhagat also shows the close association of women with domestic works like cleaning, cooking, etc. Vidya’s room looks typical girlie with extra clean, extra cute and extra pink. (TMML: 44). He also presents similar association of Arati with cooking for her boy friend, Gopal. She says,

‘If I came to Kota with you, I’d cook for you everyday.’ (RT: 43)

In present socio-cultural circumstances, women prefer specific work assigned them i.e. cleaning, washing, cooking, etc. for business also. Auto driver in the novel, RT says,

‘…..My wife runs a tiffin business. You want food delivered?’

(RT: 49)

Mrs. Shrivastava is professor’s wife serves tea and poha for breakfast but joined in negotiation for her husband’s salary with delegations (RT: 156). She also involved in cleaning, washing, etc. (RT: 158). However, now these women abilities remain historical. Old women like Malatiajji were made foods like pithla, laddoos, etc. which had smelt like heaven (CD: 180). Women realise reality of about unpaid labour at home (MW: 72). Kapur compared the work of women at home and outside. They earn enough even for the one-tenth of work they did at home. Manjari has ability to struggle and fight with situations and desired to work outside whereas Malu is delicate, prefers less work and willingly accepts work at home (MO: 44, 45). Further, Mina and Kusuma came into influence of liberal market forces and trying to find their space in
men’s world. Mina in CD wants to start a beauty parlour in Rajnur and Kusuma wants to demonstrate her recipes in the cookery shows on TV (CD: 45).

Further, Kapur shows equal distribution of responsibilities within husband and wife as an impact of Western culture. Suresh involved in cleaning table after meals, washing plates, cutting lawn at the weekend, child caring instead of discriminated women centric work distribution at home (MW: 273).

• Uneven Responsibilities

Deshpande portrays uneven responsibilities between men and women, son and daughter, boy and girl (CD: 19), and husband and wife (MO: 96). Men are engaged in highly responsible and prestigious works like looking after family, sisters’ and brothers marriages, financial and property issues, (CD: 19, 60), public relations, etc. whereas women are busy in secondary and inferior works like cooking, washing, cleaning, child caring and household. Kamala in MO is interested in drudgery and children whereas her husband Balkrishna is devoted in public and national events including books and music (MO: 96). Bharat is an engineer working in automobile company (MO: 101). Men can easily avoid family responsibilities and spend their energies where they want even for fun.

Today, if a man isn’t married, it means he wants to avoid responsibilities, or he wants to have fun. (CD: 19)

However, women have not such options but they are inborn assignments which present her inferior and drudgery. Deshpande’s Devayani changes this poor approach and gives respect to all women for to manage the drudgery (CD: 37). Vasu in MO is a writer (MO: 98) but has important role at home with prime responsibilities. She gives importance to her freedom instead of saris, jewels, etc. and wrote about women happiness with their freedom than work for the sake of husband. She wrote about the women and issues related to them like an independent woman who hated being questioned, silent, sacrificed women, ignored body, demands of physical beauty, etc. (MO: 175,176). Women found their happiness in submission, not only to husband but also to families as well (MO: 125). Manjari works as a typist for survival in Deshpande’s MO whereas Devayani in CD works as a script writer and book translator.

• Careful and Responsible Women
Deshpande shows women are hard worker and have coordination, devotion, teamwork, etc. (MO: 306). Kapur presents women accountability through maidservant, Mala. She looks after the family, children, their meals and homework. Here, Mala represents universal woman and her responsibilities at home (MW: 73). The carefulness and awareness about responsibilities in woman are inculcated from childhood. Malatiajji propagates the importance of caring the foods through telling the myths to the children, Shree and Bakula (CD: 95, 96).

Anna he purna Brahma,........yes, food was sacred, food was Brahma; you could not insult food. Once you said ‘no’ to it- that was it, it was over. (CD: 96)

Bhavani wants to learn English for to help and support her husband’s work and career. She feels that with this support her status and social life would improve and her children should not be ashamed of her (CD: 46). Naseem wants to go at home because she had children at home and aged in-laws. She says, ‘I have to give them their dinner’ (CD: 49). Kamala in MO is responsible woman takes complete charge of children (MO: 239). Sindhu is caring about Devayani and her work as a scriptwriter.

I can’t see you as a scriptwriter, Putta! I thought scriptwriters are men who drink a lot, have two or more wives and steal ideas from other movies. The truth is –and let me stop fooling around and come to the point –I am a little frightened for you. You are too innocent. (CD: 118)

Sindhu is talking about her mother and father’s responsibilities. Mother is more responsible and struggle hard whereas father is irresponsible and always happy. He is always cheerful and playing harmonium from mornings and calls ‘riyaz’ as going to be a great singer. Mother is struggling for money with the lands for children as well as domestic works (CD: 161). Ratna’s husband lies for all day and works occasionally and her brother-in-law fell of a ladder and injured. Therefore, all the family responsibilities came to Ratna (MO: 88).

Generally, men want children but neglect responsibilities like child caring and house maintenance goes to women. Shyam irritates for his son cried all night and said,

‘I need my sleep’. (MO: 290)

Ajay wants her sister, Pipeelika to come to the states and do Ph.D. and increase her market value. She is not interested to go and thinking about her mother, as she will be alone,
what about her. She is careful and responsible for her mother, as a daughter. She joins an NGO, dealing with the education for slum children. On the other hand, Ajay never came back as a responsible son (MW: 120).

Kapur shows careful and responsible women for their husband, children and family. Astha made changes in family’s way of eating for her husband, Hemant who suffers from chest pain. She brought some books for low cholesterol diets and tries to adopt the recipes with no fat and less salt (MW: 283).

Daughter-in-law has to be work for family as well as men pleasure. Savitri in ‘In the Country of Deceit’ of Deshpande is busy in performing her duties like looking after guests and deferring prettily to her mother-in-law with perfection (CD: 218). However, Chetan Bhagat depicts the women rebel against traditional discriminated work distribution and her inborn domestic accountabilities cultivated by the customs. Arati says,

‘Do I have to do something? I am an Indian woman. Can’t I get married, stay home and cook? Or ask the servants to cook?’ (RT: 24)

She wants to come out from domestic responsibilities and to build own career like an air hostess.

•  **Women Negligence for Self-caring**

In patriarchal society, women are engaged in housework like caring children, aged in-laws, cooking, cleaning, washing, etc. She always busy in preparing her for the sake of husband’s pleasure. Many of the women came out from the house to build the career and earn for family. In this torn, she has no sense, time and energy for self-caring. She neglects her fundamental needs like health, protection, etc. (CD: 119). Devayani devotes her life in caring of father, mother’s illness and to face financial problems and house making. Therefore, she became over aged and remained unfit for arrange marriage. Vasu in MO hides her suffering and never speaks about her suffering and her feelings (MO: 204).

•  **Physical Needs and Mind Weakness**

Deshpande explores the physical needs of man and woman in her novels, CD and MO i.e. sexual and natural desires (CD: 95) with complexities between physical need and social constrains. Manjari explains to Malu that the sexuality is need of body for reproduction and its
usefulness, not dirty (MO: 267). Manjari goes to Raman’s room for her physical satisfaction. However, she felt wrong in social privilege and said,

Never again, never again, I tell myself when I’m back in my own bed, ….. Never again. It’s over. (MO: 257)

Bhagat also depicts the physical needs of women through Arati in his novel, RT. She keeps secret relations with Gopal for her satisfaction.

‘Raghav has no time. My parents can’t see why I want to work. They can’t understand why the DM’s daughter has to slog. All my girlfriends are getting married, planning kids and I am not. I am weird.’ (RT: 220)

‘My parents are pressuring me to get married. I can’t fight them forever,’ she said. ‘Raghav doesn’t seem to understand that.’ (RT: 226)

Deshpande depicts the women consciousness about women’s problem like divorce, betrayal, extra-marital relations, etc. Tara and Devayani are not even ready to listen the stories about angry betrayed wives and the picture of KN’s mother burning her husband’s books. Devayani says,

I didn’t, Sindhu, I didn’t enjoy it at all. Like Tara, …. (CD: 161)

Masculine power is exercised number of time for women control and suppression. Women are treated as physically weak. Manjari is widow, frightened for intruder’s attack and nuisance for selling house (MO: 129, 130). She calls Ratna, her daughter and Nirmala for support but they are not considered equal to one man for power (MO: 136, 138). Devayani’s dream is also about the man who frightened her (CD: 94, 242). Dream of fear indicates women’s mind weakness.

5.9. Views on Marriage

Traditionally, marriage is fundamental essence of woman in our patriarchy based society. Women are more conscious for woman marriage and her children. Mostly, they talk about and with woman is begin with woman marriage and children especially whether son or daughter. Devayani afraid about such kind of questions expected from KN’s mother (CD). Savi talks about marriage with Devayani like,
People say marriage gives you companionship, security, status—all of which is true. (CD: 41)

They feel marriage is for companionship, security, status, etc. However, Manjari rejects the common understandings about her marriage,

Marriage for security? I asked Raja. And why not? If it can keep my body safe … But the body craves not just safety, not only survival, there’s more. (MO: 215)

Therefore, parents consider daughter and her marriage as own responsibility as customs dictate. The mother in MW says,

‘When you are married, our responsibilities will be over. Do you know the shastras say if parents die without getting their daughter married, they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth?’ (MW: 1)

Sometimes, parents follow the superstitious and astrological ideology and horoscope to find the possibilities of daughter’s marriage. Astrologer says about Savi’s marriage which would be delayed and she goes on further studies. Whereas, she secretly thoughts about Shree. Devayani would marry early and would have four children, her mother’s face is happy about her daughter’s future and happiness (CD: 239). However, Janardhan Rao in CD rejects the horoscopes and accepts the natural livings for happiness in married couple,

How does one know what kind of a wife a woman will turn out to be? The horoscopes may match, the caste and subcaste agree, but when two minds are so different, what can anyone expect but unhappiness? (CD: 101)

Kapur shows religious conscious about marriage. Mrs. Trivedi is not ready to Pipeelika’s marriage with a Muslim boy. She believes that ‘They (Muslim) marry four times’ and this is part of their religion. But Pipeelika tries to convince her mother that it is not true, the boy is good, (Aijaz) meet him and then decide (MW: 117). Mrs. Trivedi says,

‘At least make sure my grandchildren are Hindus. Once you marry God knows what he’ll make you do.’ (MW: 122)

Deshpande and Kapur portray remarriages, inter-caste and -religious marriages, love marriages as well marriage failures. Deshpande shows the remarriages of men-women in different contexts i.e. widows and divorced men-women. 1) Keshav married with a widow, Sindhu, 2) actress Rani secondly married with Kailash Navilur (KN) from Rajnur. KN also
married earlier but failed and secondly married with Rani. Both are failure in first marriage and got second one. Badri’s mother is second wife of his father. Sindhu marries twice, her first marriage was very brief and her husband was sick most of the time and died later. Keshav is revolutionary and married with a widow, Sindhu against his mother (CD: 26, 28). He is modern thinker and follows the wilful marriage,

I don’t believe in getting married for the sake of being married either – and the heading for the divorce courts. (CD: 21)

Sindhu adopts the rebellious views about marriage as,

But it can never be too late to get married. If two people want to be together, what has age to do with it? (CD: 25)

However, Sindhu is not considered the marriage as final solutions of all problems in women life but she looks optimistic about marriage as she feels company and securities with life partner,

I know marriage is not the final solution, or even the best. But at least once you’re married you know you are not alone. (CD: 26)

Further, Sindhu’s both children, Vidya and Gundu select their own life partners and their parents accept children’s decision about marriage (CD: 27).

In Deshpande’s CD, the marriage of Alex’s father and mother, they are from different caste and religion. His father is from Chitpavan Brahmin family and mother from Roman Catholic. Alex became Hindu and called himself Sikander and Ajay after his mother death and his sister married with a Roman Catholic (CD: 19). Hindu Pipeelika married with Muslim Aijaz against her mother (MW: 129). Kapur presents the feministic view about inter-caste marriages. The girl from different community was accepted by her in-laws. Pipeelika’s mother-in-law (Aijaz’s mother) gave her a cheque of one lakh and said,

‘I didn’t spend on your marriage, now you take this.’
‘I don’t want it,’……they could cry together.
‘Please for him,’ replied the mother. (MW: 181)

Mangal and Laxman, Raja and Rukku, and Manjari and Shyam (Sindhi man) in MO are married against their parents (MO: 181). Rukku, Tamil girl is accepted by in-laws but Manjari’s mother, Mai is not ready to accept her marriage with Shyam. By the time, she accepts her
grandson but not to son-in-law. Deshpande and Kapur present the acceptance for daughter-in-laws from different community but son-in-laws are rejected and these rebellious daughters are also rejected especially by their mothers.

Deshpande shows the feminist views and support of men to the inter-caste marriage. Badri’s friend, Louisa married with a senior Marwadi boy. Both families opposed to the marriage. Badri was the supporter to her and gave his shoulder to sob on in her worst moments (MO: 57). Further, she explores different views about marriage, love and relations in CD (CD: 200). However, Devayani’s friend, Sapna (Hindu) married with a Syrian Christian. It is registered wedding and willingly accepted by both families even though they have different religion and culture (CD: 231).

Further, Deshpande explains the complexities of disturbed families due to extra-marital relations. Kailash Navilur’s (KN) father was schoolteacher in National School, ‘run away’ with a much younger colleague, abandoning his wife and two sons (CD: 47). Devayani has sexual relationship with Ashok, who is married and have a daughter of ten years (CD: 132). Kusuma’s husband has extra-marital relations with a woman, mistress, old enough to be his mother (CD: 149). Rani left her lover, Mahesh and went back to her husband, Prem (CD: 214).

Deshpande explores some reasons of woman not married like financial problems, family background including backwardness and marriage history, mother’s illness specially disease like epilepsy (CD: 161, 162).

Traditionally, the bride should be younger than the groom. The thumb rule is supported by the religious literature like Manusmriti and Mahabharata. Deshpande, Kapur and Bhagat show age difference between bride and groom and early age girls marriages (MO: 7). Kapur shows the marriages of village girls at sixteen or seventeen (MW: 129). Bhagat shows the age difference between husband and wife. Ali’s mother must have been twenty years younger than her husband (TMML: 64). However, Deshpande’s Raja breaks the thumb rule and married with Rukku, a Tamil girl older than him instead of the girl chosen by his mother, Kamala (MO: 95). Mai is much younger than Manjari’s father, Badri (MO: 7) whereas Gayatri is ready to accept much older RK’s proposal of marriage (MO: 10).

Landlord families wanted to marry their daughters into wealthier families and wanted to bring daughter-in-laws from equal families, if not wealthier (MO: 4). Kapur shows that Aijaz’s
family never tolerate a ‘Tees Hazari’ wedding which they have to go there and get married amid five thousand people at least (MW: 134). Further, Bhagat presents importance of the son’s education to get more value in marriage market.

For the job and dowry market a B.Tech degree never hurt. (RT: 188)

Deshpande also shows prestige of men education for marriage which increases family status and amount of dowry (MO: 4). Further, Bhagat explores the parents’ economical burden and mental pressure of daughters’ marriage and their minor solution.

‘Yes, imagine the saving. But if it is one ceremony, they want it in style. I have sold the godown, but I need a buyer for the goods.’ (TMML: 147)

Deshpande shows importance of physical beauty for girl’s marriage (MW: 3). She also gives the list of marriage essentials for bride like red and white bangles, thick red and gold silk sari, jewellery, beauty parlour bridal make up, mehendi, etc. (MW: 36). Mai and Manjari are talking about marriage,

‘Look at you, still wearing a skirt like a schoolgirl! And you want to get married!’ Mai said.

‘I’ll wear saris. I’ll wear a nine-yard sari like Ajji if you think that makes me fit for marriage.’ (MO: 248)

Wedding sari, the mangalsutra, the silver toe rings. (MO: 250)

• The Qualities of Bride and Groom

Our society gives options to groom for selection of his bride. Therefore, the expectations of groom have more choice than the bride. Deshpande explores the qualities of bride like suitable to groom, younger, convent educated, homely, fair, height less than the groom, smart and beautiful, good teeth and no glasses, from own caste, language, good and loving family, etc.

(Desperately?) wanted eligible (suitable?) groom (boy?) for (nearly? not yet?) twenty-seven year-old (law graduate?) Kannada-speaking (Hindu? Brahmin? subcaste? gotra?) convent-educated homely woman (girls?) wheat complexion medium height (no glasses? good teeth?) of good family (home-loving?) with own home…. (add more details?) (CD: 44-45)
Bride should be innocent, unspoilt, simple girl, a virgin, etc. However, women have not say about such kind of qualities of groom but as they are dependent upon men. They try to secure their livelihood. It interprets pseudo-barter between the bride and groom.

‘I wanted an innocent, unspoilt, simple girl,’ he went on.
There was a pause.
‘A virgin,’ he elaborated. (MW: 41)

Bhagat also presents the bride’s qualities for marriage, as

‘Wanted beautiful/ educated/ fair/ homely virgin for twenty-five year Kayasth Brahmin engineer working in stable government job. Girl must be willing to stay in joint family and respect traditional values.’ (RT: 206)

**Virginity**

Deshpande shows the importance of girl’s age and virginity for marriage through the conversation between Savi and her mother-in-law about proposed groom for Devayani. He is more than forty years old widower with two children.

Savi says that he’s too old. And she said, but poor Devi is nearly thirty. And I said no, she’s only twenty-six…’ (CD: 182)

Devayani is more conscious about her virginity which is essential for marriage.

‘Don’t be stupid.’ In a while she said, ‘You should get married, Putta.’
‘To whom?’
‘We’ll find someone.’
‘And will you tell him I’m a virgin? Will you say I’m pure and chaste and untouched? That I’m not second-hand goods?’(CD: 184, 185)

Kapur shows the importance of evidence of girl’s virginity in relations between wife and husband,

Afterwards they found a spot of marriage blood on the sheet. They both peered at it. (MW: 38)
‘Suppose I had not been one?’ asked the wife carefully.
And the blood on the sheet, what was that? A mirage?’ (MW: 41)
Manjari willingly accepts her virginity as,

> Partly it was the money, but more, it was a desire to give up everything for Shyam, to go to him clean and virginal. (MO: 250)

However, Chetan Bhagat denies the principles of well rooted traditions of women virginity. Vidya in TMML feels happy and proud of for her pre-marital adulterous relations with Govind. She says,

> ‘Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God,’ she said and giggled. (TMML: 201)

- **Marriage for Mutual Convenience**

Marriage of Rani and KN is one of the examples of marriage for mutual convenience.

> For her, an easy life with a wealthy man, a haven after the turbulence of her earlier life. And for him, a beautiful wife, one more possession he could be proud of. (CD: 158)

Women in traditional society have no courage to say against dissatisfaction, going wrong and breaking the marriage. Bakula’s husband in CD is useless for any good thing but she doesn’t show anything goes wrong with her.

> But you know my sister; she’s stubborn, she will never admit her mistake, she will go on pretending all is well. (CD: 53)

However, Kusuma left her husband when he raised his hand against her for the first time (CD: 108) and became deeply suspicious about all men. Conversation between Kusuma and Devayani shows fear in her mind,

> ‘You shouldn’t take presents from men.’
> ‘I’m his teacher, Kusuma. This is his gurudakshina.’
> ‘Teacher, student- they’re all the same. I’ve seen them. (CD: 108)

Devayani agrees with Kusuma’s perceptions that all men are same,

> Yes, perhaps, she’s right; it’s true, they’re all the same, whether they are students, or whether they have families. He has a wife and a daughter. And yet, the way he speaks to me, the way he looks at me…..Kusuma is right, they’re all the same. (CD: 109)
Further, Kapur shows women rebel against traditional belief and feministic approach about marriage through Astha in MW. Astha believes that it is good to be leave marriage, if it is terrible and unsatisfied.

‘It may not be a bad thing,’ she said tentatively. ‘If a marriage is terrible, it is good to be able to leave.’ (MW: 168)

5.10 Discriminations

- Gender Discriminations

There are gender discriminations in cultural, social as well as economical space. Kapur explores gender discrimination through incidents like naming ceremony. Here, the naming ceremony of the son is a very large scale celebration than the girl including caterers called, priests-elaborated puja, havan, etc. The name is given to son by same the letter as his father’s but not mother’s (MW: 68). The letter taken out for the baby’s name was ‘h’ same letter as his father’s name as an auspicious sign i.e. Himanshu (MW: 68).

Hemant pays different wages to men and women works in his factory i.e. five thousand for the men with overtime and four thousand for the women (MW: 213). Further, Deshpande shows that Pushpa’s mother took her to a vaid in her illness instead of doctor (CD: 102). As head of the family, Pushpa’s father felt guilty himself that his duty and responsibility to daughter’s health problem. Her father questioned himself,

If Pushpa had been a son instead of a daughter, would I have behaved in the same way? The answer I get is ‘no’. (CD: 103)

He realises that he would has gone from doctor to doctor, from hospital to hospital and spent any amount of money, if there is son (CD: 103). He noticed his discriminative approach for son and daughter.

- Discriminations within Women

Deshpande’s Manjari in MO notices women ruthlessness for women when she is familiar and friendly with their husband. Women show their enough friendliness but Manjari senses their suspicion about her.

I’m used to this, to the hostility that emanates from women when I’m with their husbands. Their hackles seem to rise when they see
me, a single woman, being easy and friendly with men. (MO: 149)

Deshpande shows traditional ruthless relations between Mai and her sister-in-law, Gayatri as well as Kamala (MO: 29, 30).

And Mai arguing, saying, ‘Yes, you and the children are wanted. But I won’t be missed.’ (MO: 30)

Saroja left her son’s home for suspicious about stealing her jewels and manipulating her bank account (MO: 151) and living at maternal home. Whereas, Kamala charged Gayatri about taking her son, Raja away from her (MO: 237). Mangal is not caring her mother-in-law (MO: 200).

Deshpande shows women ruthlessness for women at maternal home and relations. Shyam’s sister is trying to find security in her maternal home through dissection between her father and brothers, brother and his wife, between them and their children (MO: 252). Malu doesn’t bear togetherness of her sister, Manjari and Shyam (MO: 315).

- **Mother-daughter Relations**

  Deshpande depicts three generations i.e. Devayani, her mother Pushpa and Pushpa’s mother in her CD. Devayani and her mother, Pushpa have free relations.

  ‘Excuse me, but before we go on like this I must tell you that my mother had no secrets from me. We shared everything. So don’t keep saying that she did something without telling me.’ (CD: 57)

  However, the relations between Pushpa and her mother are contrast to Devayani and Pushpa. Pushpa suffers from epilepsy when she was a child and had become a victim of her mother’s fury. The mother cursed her daughter, Pushpa of stealing her money and jewels (CD: 106). Further, Roshni hates her mother for leaving with lover Mahesh,

  She abandoned me and went to that bastard. (CD: 169)

  Sachi in MO is curious about the details of her mother, Manjari’s life and other activities but mother doesn’t want daughter’s interference in her life (MO: 308).

  Deshpande portrays dual nature of Manjari’s mother towards woman. She wrote about women sorrow and their solutions in her story ‘Annapoorna’ but not ready to accept her daughter’s love with Shyam and her emotions. Annapoorna the protagonist of that story marries with a widower with daughter. She adjusts to all situations and work for family and to please in-
laws for the sake of husband. Therefore, Deshpande’s women try to revolt against male-centric society and women exploitations but they have no courage to face the situations (MO: 123, 124).

5.11. Women Exploitations

Devayani translates the historical book about the armies of the *Peshwas*, the *Nizam*, *Haider*, later *Tipu* and then the British all the rulers fighting with one another. In this fight the ordinary people including women always losers or victim,

…. their fields trampled on, their crops destroyed, houses burnt and looted and the women….Yes, what about the women? Who knows what happened to them? There was no mention of what happened to them… (CD: 68)

Bhagat explores the communal violence in his novel, TMML through burning Sabarmati Express at Godhra station.

‘The mob had Muslims. They had an argument with the Hindu kar sevaks and burnt everyone - women, children,’ the tea vendor said.

‘We have fifty-eight people dead and over twenty injured, as per reports from the Godhra hospital,’ the newsreader said, … (TMML: 215)

He shows women abuse for revenge in Hindu-Muslim communal violence through Bitto mama’s expressions like, mother fuckers, sister-fuckers, … (TMML: 222, 231).

‘Mother fuckers we won’t leave you. Killing your own people,’ (TMML: 234)

‘Businessman, go sell your mother,’ Mama said. (TMML: 242)
Don’t you try and escape son of a bitch. (TMML: 242)

‘Hold him back, next to this mother pimping businessman,’ Mama said. (TMML: 245)

Shyam’s grandmother from Muslim community was killed by her own people for her marriage with Hindu man (MO: 255).

Further, land of Devayani’s mother in CD is acquired by Naik with forgery. It is crime of Naik but Iqbal blames to his mother like,

‘So I was right. That son of a bitch! I could smell the forgery on that paper.’ (CD: 82)
The story of the woman who sacrificed to bring water in the tank, when her husband knew about what happened to her then he himself threw into the tank and died (CD: 68). Thus, women are abused in communal violence as well as punished and abused for the fault of their men like son, husband, brother, etc.

5.12. Women Sufferings

Deshpande shows women sufferers by different incurable diseases, problems of pregnancy, deaths in delivery, family and social victims, etc. Sindhu suffers from breast cancer (CD: 28) and Devayani’s mother, Pushpa suffered by epilepsy from childhood (CD: 62) and lung problem i.e. COPD [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease] (CD: 151). Ashok’s mother had died during child-birth (CD: 174). Kapur’s Malu also suffers from asthma (MO: 154).

Deshpande gives the causes of dying young women more than the men in contemporary society in her novel, MO (MO: 7) i.e. childbirth, typhoid, TB, snake bite, appendicitis, etc. Badri’s step-mother died soon after marriage (MO: 7) and second wife, Badri’s mother died by ruptured appendix (MO: 8). Rani and Devayani got car accident in which Rani suffered too much (CD: 244).

The patients become depress in their suffering and struggling for survival. Vasu doesn’t want to live with pain, suffering and depend on others and inviting death (MO: 112). She shrinks her canvas after Malu’s death and stopped her writings and speaks very little when it is necessary (MO: 113). However, maternal relations are inner spirit of woman. Therefore, there is only way to break her silence through her daughter Manjari’s arrival.

Husband is the central point in family and base of woman life. The death of husband destroys not only the family but wife and children. Angina-like pain with deep crying and wailing shows the grief of wife, Manjari for husband, Shyam’s death (MO: 113). Deshpande shows maternal comfort and emotional support to woman in her grief through ‘crying out of her mother’s name –Mai Mai Mai’. She shows that all human beings crying out to their name of mother in time of distress and need (MO: 113). Many of the time women sacrifice their life for family, family members including husband, in-laws as well as mother and father. Nirmala gives up her job to look after her paralytic mother and becomes jobless and struggles for survival (MO: 228).
Further, she presents that the society does not permit women to do have men’s work otherwise they will laugh and insults them for a simple and natural mistake as, a woman. The man rudely behaves with Manjari for a simple mistake while she was reversing the car. Other men laughed,

‘If you can’t reverse, why do you drive a car? Stupid women!’
(MO: 229)

Malu’s new born daughter suffers both ways, as a girl and as a child of unmarried mother from her sister’s husband, Shyam.

I guess Shyam knew he had a daughter –a daughter in whose birth no one took any joy. (MO: 302)

Deshpande portrays the conflict between inner and outer mind of Manjari (psychoanalysis). Her dream explores the need of sex aroused in her inner mind whereas she is not ready to establish such relations with Raja in her early widowhood (MO: 70).

Ashok left Devayani and says,

‘I’m sorry, Divya, I’m sorry. I can’t lose my daughter, I can’t let her lose me,’ he whispered. It was the only explanation, the only apology he ever gave me. (CD: 254)

Kapur explores the self-realisation, as

Against the world we are weak. Hunger, thirst, cold, heat, flood, famine, storms, all these things create fear. We run seeking protection here and there, but the strongest protection against the world comes from knowledge that comes from within. (MW: 95)

Chetan Bhagat also presents the women problems after marriage with children and husband in his novel, TMML. Govind’s mother is left by her husband for the second wife at town. Govind lives with her mother (TMML: 9). Bhagat shows that child responsibility ultimately goes to mother and not to father.

• Widowhood

Deshpande and Kapur explore the problems of widows in contemporary society. Pushpa’s mother observes the rules prepared for widow (CD: 107). Manju Kapur handles the issues of widowhood and the life of woman without husband through Astha’s mother and Mrs. Reddy. Mostly, these women prefer to join with religious things like pujas, ashrams, swamis and
beliefs for peace and happiness (MW: 84). Astha’s mother, a widow wants to get rid of her belongings for material possessions and burden. This is old generation thinking whereas her daughter, Astha does not feel the same way. Astha loves things to decorate her home i.e. books, lamps, carpets, cutlery, tableware, linen, furniture, etc. (MW: 86).

Another woman, Mrs. Trivedi married with a Delhi University teacher, who was twenty year senior than her. But died early and she became widow with two small children (MW: 118). Pipeelika also became widow at early age, within some months after marriage (MW: 138). Kapur shows the widowhood and their life,

The widow got up, adjusting her sari palla around her head. (MW: 193)

5.13 New Indian Women

- Women Quest for Independency

Kapur portrays that women want independency for self-identity, decision, money, help, etc. Astha changed herself in married life and birth of children as a woman who wanted only love and independence. She spent money for her children, family obligations, entertainment and holiday costs, travelling in a new business, uncertainty of business, rising prices, etc. But, Hemant spent enough money for her clothes and jewellery rather than routine life expenses (MW: 72).

Her salary meant she didn’t have to ask Hemant for every little rupee she spent. (MW: 72)

Kapur shows the women urge and quest for independency as wife through conversation between Astha and Hemant.

‘You were the one who thought I should work.’
‘But now you need not, dearest, I am making enough money.’
‘I want something of my own,’ murmured Astha.
‘What?’
‘My own money,’ though she knew it was contrary to the spirit of good marriages for a wife to hang on the things and say they were her own. (MW: 148)
‘Please, Hemant. I am thirty-six. I need to be independent. I am always adjusting to everybody else’s needs.’
‘And the money?’
‘We could use what my mother gave.’
‘You know I have invested that for the children, and in five years the amount has grown nicely.’(MW: 227)

Manjari wants to drive the new car for her feelings and satisfaction. However, Raja is not ready to give a chance to Manjari not in her worry but for the car. Raja instructs Rashid to go with Amma, ‘Don’t let Amma go out alone.’ However, she warns Raja,

‘I have a licence, remember.’(MO: 161)

Manjari urge to leave alone with the car to know her own way and time.

I’m quite capable of looking after myself,… (MO: 162)

Gayatri supports Nirmala to establish her Yoga classes for her survival in a jobless situation. Therefore, Nirmala and Manjari decide to give name ‘Gayatri Physical Fitness Centre’ (MO: 229). Thus, Kapur and Deshpande present women quest for independency through Astha, Manjari and Nirmala.

• **Women Struggle for Survival**

Deshpande and Bhagat present women struggle for survival especially widow and divorced women. Manjari in Deshpande’s MO is a widow living alone and struggling for survival and hold on the house in continuous intruder attack and nuisance. Manjari’s house is located at the corner and commercially significant place. The people who want to buy it are making nuisance her on phone (MO: 76). She frightened in this situation and feel loneliness. She recalls the memories of her struggle with the man and closing the windows even in suffocation and rechecking the bolts again and again (MO: 145).

Manjari refuses her father’s help and struggles for self support, to earn money, to survive, kept all thoughts away. She has no time to brood, grieve and devote for basic works like eat, sleep, wake up and work for son, Anand and herself. (MO: 213). She changes herself to fight with the situations. Manjari says to Raja,

‘Yes, I’ve changed, Raja. I couldn’t have survived if I hadn’t changed.’ (MO: 69)
Manjari tries to learn computer basics for survival (MO: 148). She goes for work and leaves Anand with neighbours (MO: 211). They care Anand and Manjari wants to give them money for caring her son. However, Ba refuses as,

‘My son will die of shame if he takes money to feed Shyambhai’s son,’ Ba said. (MO: 212)

Chetan Bhagat also depicts the woman’s struggle for survival. Govind’s father left his mother with Govind at early childhood (TMML: 6).

Further, Sindhu is talking about her mother’s struggle with their problems. She has no time to care her children. She continuously struggles with problems like no rain or too much rain, the festivals, rituals, shraddhas, thread ceremonies, weddings, etc. (CD: 118).

- **Property Rights to Women**

Religious literature says, women have no rights to own property but she herself is a property. Iqbal quotes the Kannada saying about land, women and gold that ‘All crimes are committed for these three things’ (CD: 86). Kapur also shows that women have no rights to spend money even-though they earn. Astha earns her money which Hemant spent without asking her but she wants to buy something, she cannot because of Hemant’s refusal as,

‘It’s too expensive, these people are all cheats.’(MW: 165)
‘See?’ said Astha. ‘Old prices.’
‘How can you believe him? They all lie.’
‘I also earn. Can’t I buy a box if I want, even if it is a little overpriced?’
“You earn!” snorted Hemant. What you earn, now that is really something, yes, that will pay for this holiday.’(MW: 165)

Asthag says,

But their money spending was decided by him, not by her. (MW: 167)

Men always control over women, their money, body and everything. Manjari is a widow has own house at important place in the city (MO: 138). The people try to frighten her and get ready to sell this property to them.
He’s waiting for me. …..what if he’s hidden himself somewhere in the room? (MO: 130)

‘An intruder in the bedroom. He tried to kill me.’ (MO: 131)

The unknown person on phone call warned Manjari,

‘We don’t want to hurt you, but…’……, ‘You’re a woman, don’t forget that.’ (MO: 167)

She realized that it would threat to her body which he pointed her femaleness and greater vulnerability (MO: 167).

Property right to women is one of the important demands of feminist movements in India and abroad. Deshpande also handled the issue of women property right after divorce. The law says that wife has right to ask for fifty per cent of property of family. This is good thing for women and their children that they wouldn’t become homeless beggars at the moment their marriage is over (CD: 160).

Kapur shows the women property rights at their maternal home. Sangeeta’s parents gave room her and reserved, permanently. Astha wants this room for her painting but Hemant and his parents are not ready. Astha says,

‘Nobody is using it.’

‘But it belongs to Sangeeta, she may feel insecure. You know how touchy she already is.’ (MW: 156)

RK in MO has positive approach towards distribution of property equally within brothers and sisters (MO: 140).

• **Multiculturalism**

Deshpande explores cultural differences between north Indians and Maharashtrians for used languages and pronunciations. Rani is Sindhi and Roshni’s grandfather from UP and grandmother is Maharashtrian. Deshpande reports that ‘North Indians can never pronounce Sanskrit words correctly.’ i.e. De-va-ya-ni - that’s four syllables. Div-ya-ni -that’s three syllables (CD: 166, 167).

Kapur explores the cultural variations. When Pipeelika went to her Muslim-in-laws, she entered in different culture and customs as,
Aijaz’s mother accepts Pipeelika as her daughter-in-law and gives her a jewellery box and says, ‘For my eldest son’s wife’ (MW: 136).

Chetan Bhagat also presents the multiculturalism with three friends i.e. Govind (Marwari), Ishaan (Hindu) and Omi (Brahmin). He presents the bounded relationship between Hindu and Muslim in India as like as ‘reconciliatory mechanisms’ between husband-wife (TMML: 71).

- **Liberal Feminism**

  Deshpande explores the expectations of woman from in-laws through Mai’s stories popular in magazines, especially the growing number of working girls and women. They have enough money to buy these magazines and time to read it in trains and buses. These educated middle-class women readers have interest in dreams of their in-laws, love and marriage with the right man to take away from their dreary lives including pawed, harassed and chivvied at both home and outside. The daughter-in-laws and sister-in-laws would be respected and loved in their position of power (MO: 123).

  Deshpande presents the parameters of middle-class and its attraction for lower-class people especially to girls. Malu wears pyjamas instead of petticoats when going to bed at night, no more crawling into bed at night, reading until asleep, etc. Medha’s dressing table is with full of women’s cosmetics i.e. lipsticks, lotions, perfumes. Manjari and Malu examine things like lipstick, high heels, razor, etc. in absence of Medha (MO: 156) but Manjari is more curious than Malu. However, Malu is genuine about use of these cosmetics for women and conscious about her mother’s beauty.

  ‘Why doesn’t Mai use lipsticks? Why is Mai so old fashioned?’
  (MO: 156, 157)

  Manjari angrily replies,

  ‘Mai is beautiful. She doesn’t need to use lipstick.’ (MO: 157)
The writer distinguishes the level and style of middle-class and lower-class life. Malu used ironed clothes and put it in cupboard whereas Manjari’s clothes are un-ironed and left on the dresser in the passage. Deshpande records another remark about middle-class i.e. woman servant (MO: 157).

Bhagat shows typical Indian wife through Arati’s thoughts about herself as,

‘Why am I different? Why can’t I just be normal – satisfied to be at home, waiting for my husband?’ (RT: 220)

Liberal feminism allows women to sell their body. However, the men customers expect women features at their own ideas for satisfaction. Therefore, women have to be modified their body features for men pleasure at expected level of satisfaction. In patriarchy, satisfactory pleasure from women naturally produced at teenage. Therefore, actress Rani in CD tries to loss her weight like her daughter at eighteen. Especially, her hips to appear slim on screen (CD: 212). Rani believes that the role for women actress showing victims like raped or prostitute is most powerful (CD: 168).

Kapur presents the role of women in business deals and its impact. In liberalism, women became a part of business deals as not owner but stimulator. The businessmen arrange women for the partners in business but the women role in business deals are facilitator and most probably for sexual facility to men businessman. Astha’s husband Hemant found the facility of girl arranged by the dealer for him (MW: 213).

Chetan Bhagat explores the positive view of men about girl’s education. He presents that Ish wanted her sister, Vidya is in need of maths tuition to prepare for medical entrance (TMML: 38). She is not free to attend the classes outside the home alone. However, Vidya leads her relations and well-prepared to attract Govind. She dressed well with white chikan salwar kameez, bandhini orange and red dupatta with tiny brass bells at the end, extra make-up and lips shone (TMML: 83, 84). She self-consciously, rubbing her lips with her fingers and says,

‘It’s lip gloss. Is it too much?’ (TMML: 84)

However, Govind neglects her proposal,

I pulled my gaze away and looked for autos on the street. Never, ever look at her face, I scolded myself. (TMML: 84)
Here, girls are not free for their life management but Vidya leads the situation in love with Govind and he runs away from the situation. Bhagat shows that woman leads the situations in pre-marital man-woman relations. Govind gives four reasons to deny her proposal,

‘I will give you four - (1) I am your teacher (2) you are my best friend’s sister (3) you are younger than me, and (4) you are a girl.’ (TMML: 88)

Further, Bhagat shows well established pre-marital relations using safe and protective techniques. This is new, modern and practical approach towards the man-woman relations before marriage. They are fully aware of their bodies. He presents the liberal man-woman relationship through Vidya and Govind as,

‘It’s safe anyway, I used a condom,’ I said as I shifted my cushion for comfort. (TMML: 206)

Bhagat also explores the similar sexual relations of Arati and Gopal in his novel, RT (RT: 220-223).

Individual liberal feminism presents the influence of capitalist market forces and promotes women to sell their body for money and luxury. Bhagat gives an incidence of girls market which operated by invisible persons especially for upper-class society.

‘Girls, if they want to have a good time. I have a man, Vinod, who can arrange that,’ MLA Shukla said. (RT: 135)

Gopal in RT uses two call girls to manage a committee member of college inspection (RT: 269). Gopal says to Arati, ‘Rich people do this’ (RT: 281).

Liberal market provides scope of women career. However, body market is influencing there space for accommodation in professional world. Fashionable appearance of girls makes their space otherwise they thrown back to the origin.

… only three girls, who – given their lack of fashion sense – had to be from engineering college. (RT: 145)

Gopal says to Arati,

Arati, you really believe this? You are a practical girl.’ (RT: 197)
The people from Varanasi fix their love first and then process for marriages through traditional ways like matrimonial advertisements. This is moulded way of liberal adjustments within modernity and orthodox traditional ways.

‘On one side of the paper will be matrimonials. People from Varanasi love fixing marriages. So he will put ads for local brides and grooms on that side. Free at first, and charge later. Maybe some job ads too’. (RT: 198)

Arati tries smoking for craze, she says,

‘Give me puff.’
‘Are you crazy?’
‘Why? Just because I am a girl? True colours of a Varanasi man, eh?’ (RT: 201)

I passed her the joint. She took a few puffs. ‘It doesn’t seem to have any effect on me,’ she grumbled. (RT: 201)

Though modern girls are liberal, they are not speaking directly about their proposals with boys. Their conscious are built in the privilege of traditions and customs favour to patriarchy and men dominance. They are not clear their expressions and keep boys in confusion. Gopal feels about Arati’s expressions as,

*What exactly did she mean? Why can’t girls be direct? Don’t worry about it? Is she just being formal? Or did she mean it is okay I kissed her, and that I need not worry about it ever again? Most important, had we closed the chapter or opened a new one?* (RT: 209)

Girls keep their relations with boys, liberally but they have no courage to show these relations to the society. Arati establishes her relations with Gopal but in secret (RT: 214). Bhagat symbolically use the term ‘sand-witch’ and the clutches of ‘eater’ to show famine victim which can be interpreted as woman eager to have free from clutches of traditions and customs in favour of man (RT: 215). However, they are not free from men control. Arati frightened about her another boyfriend, Raghav, if he knows about her relations with Gopal and says, ‘That I am in another man’s room for so many hours, he will kill me’. Gopal also supports her fear and says, ‘He will kill you if he finds out it is me’ (RT: 216).

- **Physical Appearance**
Physical beauty is male desire about female. It changes all aspects of women life. For that, girls are more conscious about their body features like breasts, length and colour of hair, hair on skin, size and shape of nose, face, lips thickness, etc. Kapur shows the women’s beauty and physical appearance through smooth white waxed arms, glittering jewellery, beauty parlour done hair, etc. (MW: 177). Similarly Deshpande also shows importance of physical appearance and preparations in her novels, CD and MO as,

And Mina would be the fairy godmother who would, with a wave of her wand, give it to them, by plucking their eyebrows, waxing unwanted hair, softening their skin, cutting and shaping their hair. (CD: 215)

Gayatri, though not beautiful, was an attractive girl – slender, tall and vivacious. (MO: 10)

Medha says,

I had to go to the beauty parlour to have my hair done. (MO: 249)

The beautiful and well prepared girls believe that women provide beauty parlour facilities are the ‘Fairy Godmothers’. Sometimes, this extra preference of physical beauty inculcates nervousness and depression in girls’ mind. Deshpande’s Manjari felt that she should side kicked and never be heroine and no any boy love to her because her breasts are small, legs too hairy, face too broad, lips too thick and nose too blunt (MO: 184).

In liberal society, woman like Rani in CD can sell ‘body appearance’ for pleasing men. Woman has to be maintained body to fulfil men satisfaction for their market demand. Rani’s struggle for her career as actress, she must have marketable physical appearance and not expected motherly figure.

‘I was only twenty, but I was a mother,’ she said. ‘They did not want me.’ (CD: 72)

Therefore, Rani invests her more energy for these things rather than her natural responsibilities i.e. child care, wealth, family, etc. Long hair is one of the important features of women’s physical beauty (CD: 17).

Rani visits to Bombay for her hair and nails done properly. She was rich and glamorous woman. (CD: 29)

Chetan Bhagat portrays the men-women conscious about women beauty and its market values,
…. she turned fifteen, the whole school started talking about her. Statements such as ‘the most beautiful girl in Sunbeam School’, ‘she should be as actress’, or ‘she can apply for Miss India’……. (RT: 21)

He explains the vested impact of women beauty on men behaviour through Arati’s presence in the cricket stadium.

Batsman would miss the ball, fielders would miss catches and jobless morons would whistle in the way they do to give UP a bad name. (RT: 22)

Women should maintain their beauty through body appearance i.e. long hair, fair skin, shaped figure, etc. for pleasing men though it is hard to maintain. Arati in RT wants to cut her hair but her friend Gopal denies,

I should cut my hair, so hard to maintain,’ Aarti said. ‘Don’t,’ I said firmly. (RT: 22)

Further, she supports his instruction and submissively informs him,

I’m keeping it long only for you. Bye!’ she said. (RT: 22)

Deshpande explores the physical appearance and beauty of daughter is more essential for marriage (MO: 248). Roshni’s awareness about her beauty indicates this essence has central position in her early childhood. She compared herself with parents for fairness, beauty, etc.

Both my parents are so good looking. Oh, you should she my Papa! And here I am, the ugly duckling. (CD: 166)

Rani suggests to Devayani about treatment for her physical appearance,

‘Yes, go to Mina and tell her to give you a proper, full treatment. Hair, face, hands, feet, massage ….she does massage? Anyway, tell her you want it all.’ (CD: 240)

The mother, Mai blames her daughter, Manjari for her appearance like Vendhali, ghodi, gabali, etc. It indicates that they are more conscious about beautiful appearance is essential in marriage market. Mai’s appearance is neat her way of wearing sari, the pleats hanging in straight lines, the pallu either tucked in at the waist or falling carefully over her shoulders. Whereas, Manjari is not careful about her dressing like without button up dress, hair come out of plaits, etc. (MO: 183).
Chetan Bhagat shows that girls are more conscious about their physical appearance and beauty from early childhood for future careers. He explores this approach through Arati in his novel, RT. She wants to become airhostess and careful about her physical appearance,

‘No, fat girls can’t become air hostesses,’ she said.
‘You want to be an air hostess?’ I said. (RT: 16)

Conversation between Arati and Gopal at school shows deep conscious of Arati about physical appearance from schooling,

‘You won’t have enough food for yourself.’ I said.
‘It’s okay. I am dieting. I don’t want to be fat,’ Arati said. (RT: 17)

However, Deshpande presents dominant emotions than the physical beauty in male attraction towards female (MO: 107). Further, she depicts the women beauty in physical strength of woman like body of athlete, the gymnast in action, the dancer when dancing, the swift, only just coordinated movements of a child’s body when playing instead of luscious curves of the female forms (MO: 23).

- **Bold and Active Women**

There are some strengthened and empowered women in CD: 1) Sindhu is a lecturer for thirty years (CD: 40), 2) Kshama is the Principal of a famous school (CD: 39), 3) Savitri is architect, and 4) Devayani is English teacher runs tuitions and translates the books, as a script writer. Devayani also handles the problems at home like financial problems, Appa’s death, Amma’s illness, etc. However, Devayani sacrifice her life and not get married (CD: 53).

Deshpande shows stronger and resilient women i.e. Gayatri (MO: 160). She learns English, Sanskrit, Kannada languages and read the literature after marriage at matriculation (MO: 11). Manjari learns to drive car, computer operations, etc. for survival. She has more courage even in nuisance of unknown criminals for selling her house. She stands alone in this critical situation and doesn’t want to die whereas her mother Mai lived in normal family in protection but she wants to die in her illness.

Deshpande shows the strength of deaf and dumb woman,
Years later, I met a deaf and dumb woman who communicated skilfully, fluently, even elegantly with her fingers, her hands, her eyes, indeed, her whole body. (MO: 234)

Rani learnt driving at eighteen and bought her own car using her money earned from her first hit movie. She is an independent and successful woman (CD: 33, 34).

Deshpande presents the bold and warrior women through her women characters i.e. local queen and Malatiajji. Local queen in the story had challenged the British and fought against them. Finally, the British defeated her, but she became a legend. (CD: 68). In another example, during the border row with Maharashtra, when anyone spoke Marathi became enemy, their house had been attacked. Malatiajji fights with Kannada people when Aba hits by a stone. She abuses and singling out men in the crowd, asking them

–did they know what they were doing? Go home, she said. And they did.’ (CD: 189)

‘Aba always said Malatiajji was a Maratha warrior disguised as a middle-class Brahmin woman.’ (CD: 190)

Bhagat’s woman protagonist speaks and keeps contact with boyfriend, boldly. Vidya in TMML boldly expresses herself after her adulterous relations with Govind when he became sentimental as,

‘Hey, I’m the girl. Let me do this part,’ she said. (TMML: 202)

Arati in RT also speaks with Raghav and Gopal at midnight of her birthday on phone (RT: 69). Gopal says,

*Why did Raghav have to wish her at midnight? And do birthday wishes take so long?* (RT: 69)

She travels with Raghav three hundred kilometres for festival at IIT Kanpur (RT: 72). She went to sit on his lap but Raghav stops her (RT: 101). ‘They embraced. Raghav lowered his head as he brought his face close to hers’ (RT: 102). However, there is competition between the boys i.e. Raghav and Gopal to keep relations with Arati. Gopal excitedly says,

*If Raghav did anything with Arati, I would fucking kill him.* (RT: 73)

I thought I would vomit. (RT: 102)
Malu discusses with her elder sister, Manjari about her physical relations with her husband, Shyam, freely.

‘Jiji, what you do –is it dirty?’ (MO: 267)

Deshpande and Bhagat depict two love triangles: 1) historical – two women and one man and 2) present – two men and one woman. Sharmishtha and Devayani loves with Yayati reported in CD (CD: 36) whereas, Chetan Bhagat presents the boys, Gopal and Raghav loves with Arati.

Why don’t tell them you took my girl, you asshole, I wanted to say. Or that you are so jealous of my success that you planted a stinker article? (RT: 182)

….. Well, soon I will make your girlfriend mine. The girl you stole from me.’ (RT: 244)

The historical love triangle shows victim and control over women whereas Bhagat’s love triangle presents woman liberation. In first case woman is victimised and in second case man is suffered.

• **Rebellious Women**

Deshpande portrays debate between Devayani and Tara to present complexities between traditional views towards man-woman relations and modern feministic approaches. Traditional people believe that women are dependent on husband for their live. Therefore, Tara thinks that old traditional minded people thought that the wife should permit husband to come back home after abandoning their relation for certain period. However, Devayani rejects this dependency and acceptance to husband after such kind of abandoning (CD: 97, 98). Deshpande shows women rebel against traditions through drinks with parents (MO: 63). The conversation between Manjari, her father and Raja shows,

I went out swiftly to Baba at that and asked him, ‘Baba, do you mind my having a drink?’

‘Why should I?’

‘This … this… orthodox Brahmin thinks I shouldn’t be drinking. Not in your presence, he says.’ (MO: 63, 64)

‘But you’re a woman, you’re a daughter.’ (MO: 64)

Raja accepts Manjari as his drinking companion on Saturdays. However, Raja asks a question to Manjari when she expresses her dream of having own car: ‘But why do you need a
car?’ Manjari challenges him about his traditional views about woman and instructs him not to argue again.

‘What do you mean why? I bet if I were a man, you’d never have asked that question.’

‘Not that argument again! It’s stale and sick. Give it a rest, woman. (MO: 65)

Raja is not ready to accept Manjari’s decision of to do job as she is over aged. He argued that she is not capable to get a job in competition with youngsters. However, Manjari is confident about her capabilities and says,

‘Life is full of possibilities’, ….. never ending.
I can turn my car into taxi, for instance. (MO: 65)

But Raja replies,

‘Who’d trust a woman driver?’ (MO: 65)

Raja tries to highlight her limitations. Deshpande lined out the limitations of women rebel against traditional cultural setup. Further, Kapur’s Gayatri adjusts herself with in-laws and performs all religious rituals as elder daughter-in-law and a widow. She not only performs puja and rituals but also wants to go Kashi with her husband’s ashes become her desire (MO: 57, 81).

Deshpande shows rebel of daughter to establish relations with boy.

I went him and kissed him on the lips. A brazen declaration, not only of my love for Shyam, but of my defiance of Mai. (MO: 186)

Manjari’s father opposed her for marriage at early age and promotes for further education. However, she defence with him about his marriage with Mai,

‘You’re too young,’ he said.
So was Mai when you married her.’(MO: 187)

According to Baba, Manjari is passionate and rebellious woman (MO: 203). Deshpande shows father acceptance for daughter’s rebel for genuine urge of self selected life partner. Father says,

I thought my daughter’s life was mine to shape. In my worst moments, I think Jiji’s actions were an act of rebellion against this, against me. (MO: 241)
Manjari rejects the feminine appearance i.e. wearing saris and long hair. However, she felt that it is useless but men easily know (MO: 284). Kapur also presents rebellious women who fed up with the ideal Indian womanhood.

Well, Astha was a woman, and she was sick of sacrifice. She didn’t want to be pushed around in the name of family. She was fed up with the ideal of Indian womanhood, used to trap and jail. Excuse me, stop the juggernaut and let me off. I have had enough. (MW: 168)

Asthia falls into confusion between women responsibilities at home and participation in social movements on the streets. She becomes restless and could not sleep that night (MW: 189, 190). Manju Kapur portrays Astha’s expressions about her personal plight with violence around her through paintings (MW: 297).

Chetan Bhagat shows the eager of modern women to come out from the cage prepared by traditional customs. Vidya lies to her parents to break her custody from early childhood, five years.

‘What makes the cage? Your parents, right? Do you have to listen to them all the time?’

‘Of course not. I’ve been lying to them since I was five.’ (TMML: 103)

Further, she proves contradictions between traditional approaches of parents to control over and passion of daughter wants to break it (TMML: 103). Girls prefer freedom unconsciously than short proposals for empowerments. Vidya spent more time for establishing relationship with Govind instead of preparation for medical entrance, independently against her parent’s control. She conveys him her inner feelings through her appearance, dress, pictures, letters, messages, poems, etc. She drawn cartoon of boy lying on bed,

To my maths tutor/ passion guide/ sort-of-friend,
I cannot fully understand your loss, but I can try.
Sometimes life throws curve balls and you question why. There may be no answers, but I assure time will heal the wound.
Here is wishing you a heartfelt ‘get well soon’.
Your poorest performing student, Vidya. (TMML: 112)

Govind says about Vidya’s proposal,
‘…. And I didn’t hit on her. She hit upon me,’ I said. (TMML: 172)

Thus, Bhagat presents men acceptance for women’s leadership in love and relations. Further, Vidya declares that she is mature and eligible to get enjoy and freedom,

‘You are older than me and a hundred times better than me in maths. But, in some ways, I am way more mature than you.’ (TMML: 184)

‘I am turning eighteen. I can do whatever I want,’ she said. The loudspeaker of a campaign auto continued in the background. ‘I can vote in that election,’ she continued, ‘I can have a bank account, I can marry, I can...’ (TMML: 184)

She declares that she is happy to loss of her virginity as pre-marital adulterous relations with Gopal. This declaration shows her rebel against traditional bounds of men control over women and their reproductive system.

Chetan Bhagat shows the breakage of internal bounds between man-woman relations in his another novel, RT. Traditionally, woman feels her complete life only with man i.e. husband. However, Arati denies this traditional approach of woman towards life and says,

‘I have a boyfriend. Doesn’t mean it is my entire life, okay?’ (RT: 146)

Bhagat also presents that his women characters are telling lies to their parents for different reasons. Arati in RT is telling lie to her mother that she is on duty, double shift when she is with Gopal.

‘Mom?’ she said. ‘Yes, I am still at work. Double shift, what to do?’ (RT: 217)

Further, Manju Kapur depicts the lesbian relationship between Pipeelika and Astha (MW: 222-223, 231).

5.14. Points for Discussions

Identity of heir by father and immovability of property rights in inter-racial, -caste and -ethnic groups are fundamental identities of patriarchy. Saroja not claims maternal house and declares patriarchal rights and possession to her brother. Property right come by heir is rejected,
if the son married with girl from different caste. Woman believes that man is the *annadata*, breadwinner and respectable.

Deshpande and Kapur show the essence of father and husband in woman’s life. Men hesitate to interact with woman living alone whereas fatherless daughters have problems even after marriage. Further, they show the child essence for woman not only for survival but her status. However, son is more essential for family heir, property rights and religious rituals. It ultimately inculcates and promotes the urge for son in married couples and society at large. Therefore, they perform religious rituals before and after marriage, gives birth number of girls in waiting of son and man marries with more women and harasses them. Hemant in Kapur’s MW have no difference between boy and girl. However, Hemant wants son for his paternal heir as he is only son. Kapur explores maternal demand of son from their daughters for well being in their in-laws. They feel that family without son is incomplete therefore society is more conscious about the baby’s gender as the great point of celebrations for birth of son.

Deshpande and Bhagat explore men control over women as father, husband, brother and son in patriarchal society for purity of race and caste even in extra-marital relations. Kapur, Deshpande and Bhagat present women belief and support to male centric society. Men always try to get credit of success to own even women contribute their efforts. Traditionally, society believes that drudgeries are women works whereas men know everything about money, land, property, business, etc. However, new generation women are aware about their rights.

Kapur, Deshpande and Bhagat use the clothes, jewellery, accessories and traditional symbols like *kumkum, mangalsutra*, etc. to show femininity in their novels. There are different meanings of jewellery, clothes, ornaments, etc. wearing by unmarried girls and married women. Bride wears specially prepared wedding *sari*, the *mangalsutra*, the silver toe rings, etc. It also varies according to events, economical classes and social-religious background. Bhagat’s Arati adjusts fake gold jewellery matching for status. Further, Gopal’s father wants to sell his wife’s jewellery for Gopal’s engineering coaching classes and Gopal also reject traditional approaches like wearing sari.

Deshpande skilfully portrays the development of feminine sense in girls mind with changes in their body. Bhagat’s Vidya is conscious and worried about her menstruation after she has sexual relation with Govind. Deshpande and Bhagat show women sentiments for their
children through Savitri and Dhiraj’s mother. Kapur and Deshpande present that women are more sentimental than men.

Traditionally, marriage is fundamental essence to woman in our society for companionship, security, status, etc. However, Manjari rejects these common understandings. Kapur shows religious conscious about marriage however Janardhan Rao in CD rejects the horoscopes and accepts natural livings for happiness in married couple. Deshpande and Kapur portray remarriages, inter-caste and -religious marriages, love marriages as well as marriage failures. They present acceptance for daughter-in-laws from different community but son-in-laws and rebellious daughters are rejected, especially by their mothers. Deshpande, Kapur and Bhagat show age difference as younger bride than groom as well early age girls’ marriages. However, Deshpande’s Raja breaks this thumb rule and married with Rukku, a Tamil girl older than him.

Deshpande and Bhagat show that bride should suitable to groom, younger, innocent, unspoilt, simple, virgin, convent educated, homely, fair, height less than the groom, smart and beautiful, good teeth and no glasses, from own caste, language, good and loving family, etc. Deshpande shows the importance of virginity for marriage whereas Kapur presents importance of its evidence for good wife-husband relations. Deshpande’s Manjari willingly accepts virginity whereas Bhagat’s Vidya denies this principle of virginity and proud of her pre-marital adulterous relations with Govind.

Deshpande used ‘quilt’ as a symbol of love and family togetherness in MO. She depicts that physical union through sex along with love is complete union of two human beings with complexities of marriage between poor girl and rich boy. She depicts extra-marital relations with inferior men approach towards the mistress. Deshpande presents free and friendly relations between sister and brother and mother and daughter. She shows mother’s dual nature through Manjari’s mother who wrote about women sorrow but not accepts her daughter’s love and emotions.

Women love to cook and feed others. Women prefer specific work assigned to them i.e. cleaning, washing, cooking, etc. for business also. Kapur presents freedom of middle-class women i.e. Astha from drudgery work at home through maidservant Mala. Kapur depicts the hard work, negligence and plight of slum girls, etc. Bhagat also shows similar association of women with domestic works. However, modern women realise the reality of about unpaid labour
at home and try to find the career in liberal market space in men’s world like beauty parlour, cookery show on TV, etc.

Deshpande portrays uneven responsibilities between men and women, son and daughter, boy and girl, and husband and wife in CD and MO. Men are engaged in highly responsible and prestigious work whereas women are busy in secondary and inferior works. Women found their happiness in submission, not only to husband but also to families as well. Their women are hard worker with coordination, devotion, teamwork, etc. However, men want children but neglect responsibilities. Kapur and Deshpande present women quest for independency in their novels. Further, Deshpande and Bhagat present women struggle for survival especially widow and divorced women.

Kapur presents inhumanly men views towards women and women slave. She presents place of Indian daughter-in-law at home and pregnancy is complete womanhood. Husband like Hemant wants his wife more attractive and sexy, for that he brought sex manuals and sexy clothes in MW. Deshpande and Bhagat explore inferior views of common man about laywoman in MO and TMML, respectively. Indian man considers that lovely relations with woman are wastage and stupid things. They use abusive and derogatory words to women and give less importance to women contributions. Deshpande and Bhagat show the women use for pleasure and fun in their novels.

Some of the mother-in-laws are accepting the rebel of their daughter-in-laws willingly and some reject and advice them to follow the traditions. Kapur presents burdens of daughter’s education, character, health and marriage through Astha. Deshpande, Kapur and Bhagat show that men give importance to women education, acceptance and respect to women for their intelligence.

Deshpande, Kapur and Bhagat show importance of religious rituals to purify, find good husband, bear son, success in examinations, etc. Bhagat presents sentimental, emotional, weak and superstitious women. Kapur explores the Indian culture at marriage i.e. chanting mantras and seven steps around the fire. She depicts cultural restrictions to woman like not allowed to call her husband by name, not touch other men. Deshpande shows that the small town people believe and follow traditional customs which discriminate women whereas metropolitan poly-culture is more liberal and give more freedom to women. Kapur presents gender discriminations
in cultural, social and economical space. She shows that women have no rights to spend money even though they earn i.e. Astha. Men always control over women, their money, body and everything. Deshpande and Bhagat show women abuse in fight between rulers and communal violence.

Beautiful physical appearance of girl is man’s desire which changes all aspects of women life. Kapur, Deshpande and Bhagat show the importance of women’s beauty and sophisticated appearance in their novels. Therefore, women who provide beauty parlour facilities are become the ‘fairy godmothers’ for girls. Deshpande shows women nervousness for their too small breasts, hairy legs, broad face, thick lips and blunt nose. Rani prefers her physical appearance in the sense of men instead of ‘motherly figure’. It shows the market values of physical appearance in reference to men expectations. However finally, Deshpande focuses on women beauty in physical strengths instead of luscious curves of female forms.

Kapur presents modern men and orthodox women in search of good husband for their daughters whereas Deshpande’s women are modern and men are orthodox.

Deshpande and Bhagat explore physical needs of man-woman and natural desires with complexities between physical need and social constrains in their novels. Deshpande shows women sufferers by different incurable diseases, problems of pregnancy, deaths in delivery, family and social victims, etc. Women sacrifice their life for family including husband, in-laws as well as mother and father. Further, Deshpande and Kapur explore the problems of widows in contemporary society.

Sindhu, Kshama, Savitri, Rani and Devayani are strengthened and empowered women in CD whereas Gayatri and Manjari in MO are stronger and resilient women. Bhagat’s Vidya keeps contact and adulterous relations with boyfriend, Govind whereas Arati speaks with boyfriends at midnight and travels three hundred kilometres with them.

Deshpande explores the expectations of middle-class women from in-laws through Mai’s stories. They are interested in dreams of their in-laws, love and marriage with the right man to take away from their dreary lives including pawed, harassed and chivvied at home and outside with respect and love in their position of power. Deshpande presents the parameters of middle-class and its attraction for lower-class especially to girls, Manjari. Deshpande records another remark about middle-class i.e. woman servant in MO. Bhagat explores the dwarf positive view
of men about girl’s education. His girls are not free for their life management but Vidya leads the situation in love, establishes liberal pre-marital relations with fully aware of their bodies, using safe and protective techniques.

Though modern girls are liberal, they are not speaking directly about their proposals with boys and keep boys in confusion, Arati and Gopal. Bhagat uses the terms ‘sand-witch’ and ‘eater’ to indicate woman eager to have free from the clutches of traditions and customs in favour of man. Arati frightened about her another boyfriend, Raghav.

Liberal market provides scope of women career but body market influencing the space for accommodation. Market forces allow and promote women to sell their body and its appearance for money and luxury. Gopal in RT uses two call girls to manage a committee member of college inspection whereas, Kapur presents the role of women in business deals and its impact. Men customers expect women features at their own ideas for satisfaction. In patriarchy, satisfactory pleasure from women naturally produced at teenage. Therefore, actress Rani in CD tries to loss her weight like her daughter at eighteen, especially, her hips to appear slim on screen. The historical love triangle i.e. two women and one man in CD shows control over women whereas Bhagat’s love triangle i.e. two men and one woman in RT presents woman liberation. In first case, woman is victimised and in second case man is suffered.

Deshpande, Kapur and Bhagat reject the husband dependency of women. Their women fed up of ideal Indian womanhood and reject the feminine appearance. Deshpande shows father’s acceptance for daughter’s rebel of self selected life partner. However, Kapur’s Astha falls into deep confusion between women responsibilities at home and participation in social movements. She depicts the lesbian relationship between Pipeelika and Astha in MW.

Further, Deshpande shows limitations of women rebel against traditional cultural setup through Manjari whereas Kapur’s Gayatri adjusts herself with in-laws and performs all religious rituals. Bhagat’s Vidya prefers freedom unconsciously than short proposals for empowerments. She declares that she is mature and eligible to get enjoy and freedom and happy for loss of virginity in pre-marital adulterous relations. This declaration shows her rebel against traditional bounds of men control over women and their reproductive system.

5.15. Resume
These novelists cover the influence of 21st century issues along with historical traditions and customs. Therefore, these novels show women issues presented in the previous chapters and give insight into liberal approach towards man-woman relations. The writers give importance to natural human desires and rebel against men control over women and their reproductive system. However, the concept ‘Fairy Godmothers’ shows importance of women beauty through physical appearance for their routine and achievements. The findings of previous discussions are given in the next chapter in the form of conclusion.

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