Chapter - 4

WOMEN'S CONSCIOUSNESS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In this chapter, an attempt is made to project women in their uplifting roles in the selected novels with their new recognition of identity in society. These novels depict women with respect to their linguistic, regional, class and communal dimensions and try to examine the consciousness of women in their context of reality. Kapur wishes that:

A woman should be aware, self-controlled, strong-willed, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense.1

The female images of the Christian women writers' novels mirror the existing reality of the world. The various aspects of the liberated lives of women who are with strong will are remarkable. The writers attempt to create awareness about education and career among women. The importance of self-hood and self-respect are shown in their characters. The responses of these women to contradictions of life are admirable, because they are always with a positive attitude.

4.1. Self-realization of Nuns

Bama identifies herself as a Dalit Christian woman and wishes to bring essential changes in her community. For this purpose, she dedicates her life to educate her people and encourages them to become economically independent, particularly women. Eradication of "untouchability" and "bonded labour", which brand her community, is her aspiration with an emphatic approach. She strongly desires to see their social and economic upliftment. Her autobiography first of Dalit writing in Tamil is a process of self-discovery. Crossword award winner, Bama establishes herself as the challenging voice. Karukku is significant in
changing the minds of Dalits and makes the heart of Dalit to query the existing oppressive system in their community. Bama gives a call for her people to come out from the clutches of slavery and encourages them to fight for their rights using her writing as a weapon.

Dalit Christian women have indomitable spirit to make their existence in a dehumanized society. They are proud of their dark skin and are economically liberated. Bama’s grandmother works as Kotthaal and that is evidence of her financial strength. Bama notes:

She worked as a labourer to a Naicker family, but she was also a Kotthaal - she hired labourers for them, brought them to work regularly, supervised them, and made sure they received their wages. (K, p.42)

Their physical strength shows their ability to do the hardest job for livelihood. Bama highlights the dauntless trait and wit among them. One of the incidents in *Karukku* is about rivalry over a cemetery. The vigorous Paati displays her intelligence by making arrangements to show the dead body of a young boy to his father, who is hiding in the forest to avoid the communal violence of the police. Lakshmi Holmstrom says:

And the ideals Bama admires and applauds in Dalit women are not the traditional Tamil ‘feminine’ ideals of *accham* (fear), *naanam* (shyness), *madam* (simplicity, innocence), *payirppu* (modesty), but rather, courage, fearlessness, independence, and self-esteem. (S, p.xix)

The author is proud of the changing attitudes and identity among the Dalit Christian women. In the words of Bama:

Education also gave us freedom to get away from the clutches of the landlords and lead our own lives.²

Bama stresses the importance of education which is essential to liberate women and establishes self-confidence. To realize this, she begins her career as a school teacher and sets to educate downtrodden girls. It is the means to display the
injustice by learning to write and by raising the voice. In this context, Bama remembers the service of the Christian missionaries to literate the Dalits which brings lot of changes in the day to day life.

Bama’s brother is highly educated which brings him a kind of dignity. He influences her sister to educate herself to attract the people and to make progress in life. She quotes the unforgettable inspiring words of her father:

Whether you marry or not, you must have an education and a profession so that you can stand on your own two feet.  

Embarrassment out of humiliation for being Harijan in school is overcome by Bama with her best performance at studies. All students, teachers and nuns show a friendly attitude towards her. Her education makes a way to get a job as teacher which empowers her economically.

Bama gives up the comfortable life as a teacher even if the apparition of poignant faces of her community children haunts her. The service mentality and influential life of a nun make her to accept nunship. But soon the false and disguised life inside the nunnery which is against her inner self makes her resist the system. Instead of clinging to the dishonest renunciation, she decides to reenter the outside world where she has to face life with struggle. She expresses:

I have courage; I have a certain pride. I do indeed have a belief that I can live; a desire that I should live. (K, p.104)

Though she has lost the bond with her family, she lives in society with positive feelings. Strong willed Bama decides to lead her single life independently and meaningfully by rendering service to the Tamil Dalit community. She works for the liberation of Dalits, counsels Dalit women and has a sense to bring social change in contemporary society. She says:

Even though I have walked hand in hand with anxieties, I have also recognized a strength and zest within myself, flowing like a forest stream, and this has refreshed me. (K, p.105)
She notices indomitable spirit among the Dalits to seek self respect, self identity, equality and justice in society. She sincerely admires the Dalit women who have served as inspiration to her with their love, suggestion and assistance.

Bama not only presents with rage the humiliations on her community but as a strong individual examines the situation and attempts to bring awareness. Her efforts to bring changes in the disparate lives of Dalits through deeds and writings are visible. She gives a message to her people to have true devotion towards God living with self-respect and with love and affection towards all humankind:

Bama’s re-reading and interpretation of the Christian scriptures as an adult enables her to carve out both a social vision and a message of hope for Dalits by emphasizing the revolutionary aspects of Christianity, the values of equality, social justice, and love towards all. (K, p.viii)

Bama’s dream of service is pulverized inside the comfortable seminary. So she breaks out the enforced religious system and this step gives her an opportunity to extend her prospective work for the upliftment of her community, especially the women.

The life of Bama which appears in Karukku serves as an inspiration and strengthens Dalit women to have identity of their own in society. As an effective spokeswoman, she takes a chance to address the Dalit women’s cause in the rural area of Tamil Nadu. She is associated with the task of raising consciousness in women and in asserting individuality.

Sarah Joseph’s two characters Sister Jereemia and Sister Aabelamma represent new ideas of woman’s liberty and equality within the conventional religious order. Jereemia organizes a separate Eucharistic order of sisters to get the power in the church’s ministry.
Surekha John Nelavala remarks:

Power increases as it moves toward the top of the pyramid, culminating in papal authority, which is centralized. Women are only to be found in the powerless bottom line, supporting the church and ministering in profound ways.

The excluded status of women from the privileges of ordained power makes her to realize the loss of identity to a nun. The distribution of power is also based on gender within the congregation. In order to justify her transgression of the conventional ordination of man, she brings awareness and unity among some sisters over the issue. She stresses the right of women’s equality in the male dominated structure.

Jesus was not gender-biased and gave prominence to women as apostles. He treated both men and women as human beings and no one was ignored. Such intuitive perception evokes her to get right of freedom and authority in the church’s ministry as a woman priest. The author writes about Jereemia:

She called herself a priestess. ‘I am not just a nun, but one who fulfils the will of God; chosen to fulfil the incomplete. (O, p.136)

With daring she wears the white cloak by casting away the nun’s habit even at the cost of ex-communication and celebrates holy mass. She declares:

The Holy Sacrifice will be complete only if it is offered also with the hands of a woman. (O, p.136)

She signifies participation of women in the religious denomination and their right to authorize religious rituals. She articulates against the double standard of the church’s authority and strongly denies that the nun’s Eucharistic sacrifice to God is blasphemy.
Aabelamma presents the pressurized conditions of nuns who function against their true self. She is forced to accept and continue her life within the convent. The reforming considerations of Aabelamma and Jereemia stand as provocative thoughts to the awakened soul like Margalitha.

In the contemporary church, the rebellious ideas of Sarah Joseph’s female characters are rewarded with transformations. Now the ordination of women is permitted in the congregation. Ordination of women as women priest, offering host to the devotees and performing other functions in the church are the achievements of rebellious women who have experienced inhibitions.

Annamkutty is a Roman Catholic and develops a deep spiritual feeling towards Virgin Mary owing to mother. But she is wedded to a Syrian Christian. She is forbidden to adore holy images or Virgin Mary, yet Annamkutty’s veneration to Virgin Mary is indissoluble. Her intense reliance makes her father-in-law to allow her to follow her faith. He says:

One’s faith is important and precious to oneself. My child, you are free to put up this picture and worship it in full view of everyone. (O, p.97)

She highlights her spirit to preserve her faith on Virgin Mary as an individual choice. She never compromises by imitating the practices of Syrian Christian. She enjoys freedom of her own religious beliefs in the traditional family.

Sarah Kochamma plays the role of wife to Yohannan Kasseessa. The author brings out her creative talents for embroidery. She searches for her identity in crochet work. She is happy in her pattern of life. Female characters in this novel are distressed by patriarchal powers but as a contrast, she enjoys liberty in her
family. The author conveys this character as strong and realistic. Margalitha enters her home seeking shelter and gets consolation of Sara Kochamma. She counsels her:

> It is easy for men to walk out, unmindful of the consequences; not so for women. Men can face consequences as they come-can turn anywhere for refuge; seek help from anyone. For us? We need total privacy even to piss. Let it be. Now don’t bother about all those things. The old way of life is gone forever. (O, p.90)

Sarah Kochamma encourages confidence in Margalitha’s life to face grave problems. She saves Margalitha from being battered by enraged relatives who are against her stay in Kasseessa’s residence. She is very keen in giving a secured life to Margalitha with a teaching job. When Margalitha works at the ration shop as a sweeper, Kasseessa offers her a job in a pay-phone booth of Sarah Kochamma’s distant relative. But understanding the reality, Kochamma objects to the job to avoid public harassment. She insists her to fight for the rightful share.

Thus Sarah Kochamma is aware of practicalities and advices Margalitha not to accept illusionary sort of life to search for peace. She attempts to bring her out of her plight and virtually expresses that freedom is possible with the security of wealth or money. She stands as a contemporary woman who is conscious of practical life.

The ration dealer’s wife is reflected as an idealistic woman. The author convinces woman’s ability to understand the realities of other woman through this character. She is an independent and kind-hearted woman. This woman is moved by the desolate state of Margalitha and offers assistance to her. She sympathizes and respects her as a human being when the whole society and relatives envied Margalitha. She is broad minded and ignores Margalitha as ex-nun and is not bothered by Margalitha’s relationship with Karikkan as illegal. When the entire society offers castigating look, she owes values for humanity but not to the particular ways of the people. Margalitha is discarded as a sinner, but she stands by her side and extends her help by giving a job of sweeper in the ration shop.
Margalitha’s mother and Karikkann’s mother fail to understand the heart of Margalitha but this ration dealer’s wife is very supportive to Margalitha. Margalitha’s mother-in-law curses the unborn baby and forces Karikkann to leave the place. With positive attitude, she desires to strengthen the bond between Margalitha and Karikkann. People weave different stories of Margalitha on raising an orphan, but her heart is untouched by evil thoughts. She appears as solace in the life of Margalitha.

The confined nuns visit Margalitha with gifts for her unborn baby. It is not a customary visit, but a respect for her motherhood. They are accustomed to convent life and not bold enough to face the consequences by breaking the orderly life. They appreciate her secretly when she proves as true to her conscious. They glorify the womanhood of Margalitha. As affectionate friends, they shower love and compassion. Internally, they wish to change the scenario in the lives of religious women.

Another prominent character dealt by Sarah Joseph is Rebekka who is portrayed as a free believer. In the words of Margalitha:

Rebekkecchi was the voice of truth and justice crying in the wilderness. (O, p.199)

Rebekka condemns the hypocritical acts of private believers who deceive the people for their advantage. She boldly faces obstacles of her domestic life and protects her dependent daughters earning the livelihood without considering the disapproval of the relatives. She neglects the brewed stories of people connecting her to Naastikan George. Her struggle to feed her children is of sole importance in her life.

After twelve years, she claims herself as an individual believer of God and distinguishes herself from the church by organizing private prayer meeting. She displays independence and faces life in different angles courageously without
surrendering to the regular religious and social orders. She sustains her life to heal the poor, diseased and suffering people with her individual identity. Rebekka’s potentiality is appreciable. She projects her inner power to criticize rich hypocrites and their corruptive charismatic activities. She appears as an indomitable woman to the believers who try to suppress her.

Rebekka is the best example in this novel who follows the foot prints of Jesus by consoling and praying for the needy people. She develops a strong will power and adopts the doctrines of Jesus without selfishness. She heals the suffering people with her prayer. In her way of prayer, she urges people to pray themselves to get rid of their miseries.

The challenging life of Rebekka is remarkable. She has not tied to any religious order but she renounces everything in this world to serve humanity. But Sister Lucy’s compassionate, selfless and sleepless service to the patients is bounded to convent life. Rebekka’s ‘sacred call’ makes her to live in the midst of poor people to comfort them. She empowers confidence in women. She fills self-confidence in Silvy to face her husband Paul, rescues Margalitha from the dungeon at her home and asks her to be courageous to look after the unborn child when she anticipates Karikkan’s escapism. Jancy James writes:

As Rebekka saves Margalitha from death in the dungeon at her own house and as both develop a rapport, the author moots a new message relating to ‘calling’ vis-à-vis women empowerment.(O, p.xxix)

Rebekka’s character forwards the importance of confidence and liberty to woman. She has her own way of spiritual life and never enforces her own religious ideas on Margalitha. So the fearless Rebekka is a memorable character in the novel.

Inside the enforced norms of the convent, Margalitha becomes conscious of herself and her body. The renowned Sarah Joseph allows voicing her new thoughts
through her persona, Maragalitha and through other female figures. Clothes of nuns are considered as sacred which represent the holy members as the representatives of God. Margalitha diverges from this suffocating structure and takes off her nun's attire. She finds nothing venerable in the soiled cloth vocation.

In the nunnery, nuns are strictly conformed by the oath of celibacy. But Margalitha rummages God and desires direct link with God by denying celibacy. She finds that spirituality is possible without rejecting sexuality. She does not prefer holy cloth and least cares for worldly life in order to realize God in the religious system. Spiritual thoughts and spiritual life appear to be significant elements to serve God. So Margalitha liberates herself from the mysterious spirituality of the comfort life of the convent and appears as an independent woman. Jancy James says:

She subverts the traditional notion of 'othappu' into a movement that lays the foundation for a new liberating spirituality and a new, humane vision. (O, p.xxi)

Sarah Joseph projects Margalitha as the central female figure who faces spiteful circumstance with unshakable hope. She shows that she is not dependent on anybody and confidence gives her strength to be independent. The author writes:

She grew in relief and self-confidence each time a tear was mended, like crossing hurdles one after the other. Even frayed life can be mended, restored and taken forward. When it is too worn out to be darned, it can still be salvaged by patching it with a piece of new cloth. (O, p.216)

The cruel eyes of her own family members and public haunt her and ill treat her. Liberated Margalitha becomes homeless and hunger torments her. She is from an affluent family and has lead comfy life of convent, but wanders as a refugee and travels without tickets in the train without revealing her identity.
The individualism of Margalitha stimulates her to be uncompromising to certain commitments. Her mother offers a teaching job at her father’s school if she leaves Karikkan. She also wishes the lawful wedding of Margalitha with a prestigious rich widower, Chiramel with the title deed. Though she steps out of the convent, never desires luxurious life outside the nunnery. The principles of Christianity inside Margalitha take her to the humble life. She refuses the share of the land willed by her mother secretly. She desires to live binding to her own ideals based on religion. She has her self-respect.

The depth of religious effect is more on women and it is enrooted in Margalitha. She imitates opinions of Jesus not as mere words but as life’s principles. She starts an orphanage with aim of service, but in course of time it turns out to be a money center. Her boldness and clarity in delivering ideas make Kasseessa to see the fire that blazes within her and the strength inside her represents her as a passionate woman.

Many characters in the novel are deeply influenced by the ideal of service of Christianity. Rebekka serves the needy as a free believer; Augustine serves the distressed people in the wood, Manikyan offers ceremony to the people in the forest, Sister Lucy consoles patients with sleepless nights and Margalitha’s selfless service is shown in her mothering unborn child and orphan Nanu. Jancy James writes:

Of course, Margalitha’s final career of mothering her own baby and the orphan is the author’s faith in the power of selfless love and sacrifice. (O, p.xxxi)

The mere oath and values inside the order appear to her as service virtue in the beginning. Later she stays outside the particular format to serve humanity. She gives a new meaning to the phrase “service to humanity” through adoption of a destitute child. The dog saint, Augustine projects himself as weak though he is glorified as ideal saint. He leaves his responsibility of Nanu on an afflicted
Margalitha. Without thinking it as impediment of her life, she associates with the orphan. The author’s new way of service is represented through this act. Throughout the journey of her female experience Margalitha is self-assured.

She is bold enough to earn her livelihood and dignity of labour is not important to her, so she works as a sweeper. The contrasting fact is that Margalitha faces every situation with spirit but Karikkkan is filled with hopelessness and his conflicts force his flight from his present society. She has courage to step outside the home and to get a job to survive hunger. Without relying on Karikkkan, she manages to seek a job as a sweeper at the ration shop. Though she has led a comfortable life nowhere she disparages the drudgery as inferior. Her self-reliance is visible even in her marginal existence.

The discipline of the particular religious structure demands celibacy. But all the members are unable to follow the rules of the system. Secret love develops between Margalitha and Karikkkan consciously or unconsciously within the denomination. Margalitha presumes him as soul mate and with trust she has shared many secrets by writing letters to him within the nunnery. As a destitute, she requests him for a set of clothes and some money. But he is bewildered to extend his assistance and to some extent, he thinks it as burden to him. He intentionally leaves the purchased sari at the shop and proves himself as irresponsible to the requirements of Margalitha. He visits Margalitha’s home and the news of her disappearance gives him a sense of liberation. When he introduces her to Kasseessa’s family as “sister”, it hurts her as the meanest title. Even though he thinks that the remembrance of Margalitha is a great sin in his priesthood, he shows his affectionate love infront of her only. Many instances display him as a weak-minded person but Margalitha has a strong will and is not unstable in her individual choice.
Karikkan with human concern worries much about the corpse in the street but fails to rescue Margalitha when she faces defame at Kasseessa’s home. At all critical situations, she tackles the humiliation alone. She offers her love to him and proves as true by discarding Charmel’s marriage proposal but Karikkan suspects and queries the relationship of Margalitha and Augustine. It is prevalent in all ages that suspicious nature of man spoils a true relationship. She firmly expresses her human bond with the Jungle Saint.

Margalitha fails to experience the bliss of joy as a renouncer to her nunship and violates the system to realize God in her own way. Karikkan also tries to become a true companion to her by leaving the powerful Vicar post. But he is not stable as Margalitha, who is determined to her new path of life. She struggles alone against the turmoil all around her. With many dilemmas, he enters the socially forbidden relationship with an ex-nun. The poverty ridden family of Karikkan and his celibacy restrict his company to Margalitha. At many instances, Karikkan is presented by the author as coward who runs away from the realities. On the other side, Margalitha stands by his side and has ability to face distress. To quote Jancy James:

Fear grips him and guilt paralyses him in moments when he should have acted courageously. When Margalitha boldly offers to take him to the church for a last glimpse of his dead father, Karikkan can only mutter weakly: ‘The wages of sin is death’. Margalitha towers above him by the strength of her character and power of will. (O, p.xxvii)

They live together and this company makes him uneasy but Margalitha is happy with her love. He fears of conflicts, accusations knowing the baby in the womb of Margalitha. He searches ways to escape from the realistic life and overlooks the need of Margalitha. He flees to a distant place with his sense of guilt. But Margalitha is a practical woman; she has hold on her soul and never expects help from her partner who stands on slippery stone.
Margalitha throughout her distressed journey of life perceives herself as responsible and nowhere blames anybody for her unpleasant situations of life. Her self-dependence and self-control persuade to live according to her will. She endures persecution at her home, scandal on her stay with Syrian Christian couple and impediments in the forest and company of Karikkkan. Her determination never falters and protects her individual identity. She holds a new stand point by rejecting the discipline of the church. She creates interest in the readers by enduring all deprivations of life as invincible soul. Jancy James writes:

Sufferings and challenges empower her, broaden her vision, and fill her with true agape. (O, pp.xxvii-xxviii)

New perceptions of nuns in this novel prove the awareness of their self and their sincere effort to bring changes. They are committed to the congregation but they reveal the reality to those who are consciously unaware of that illusioned religious world.

Othappu shows the real conditions of contemporary women in society. It depicts religious women and women outside the religious order who identify themselves and interrogate the distressed structure as instigators to a change. Sarah Joseph has taken the task to enable women to realize their identity by presenting various female characters with distinct view points. She stresses the significance of women in her novel. Her vital thoughts make the pictures of female figures(women) in the story with a wish to change society pertaining to women’s distressed state. Feminist views of the author are embodied in this novel. She inspires women to be conscious of their rights and advices them to be self-expressive and self-reliant. Jancy James points out:

There are two obsessive preoccupations in all of Sarah Joseph’s writings: a well-defined intellectual perception of emotional experience and a commitment to disclose and dialogue the power of the female self. (O, p.xxi)
4.2. Representation of Artistic Life

In the novel *The Dead Can Not Hear*, the rebellious woman Sujatha after a long worried, disturbed contemplation decides to become an artist. Because when she was a student in school, she loved art and used to draw sketches of faces. She has no problems for her daily bread and is blessed with a roof over her head. She has contacted Nadine Mathani, a Sindhi artist at a city gallery and through her she has met an artist, Prem Mithra for guidance. He is a reputed and encouraging artist. He accepts her request and decides to teach her painting.

Sujatha turns her solitariness of life into recognition of her creativity. She decides to take the career of artist inspite of discouragement and disappointment from the orthodox parents. Sujatha explains:

There is a stubborn streak in me which now comes to the fore. I have to fight for my own rights and lead my own life. (TDCH, p.52)

She has not compromised with tumultuous wed-lock, she yearns to emancipate herself. She never turns back but visualizes her own way of living. She has not thought herself as dependent to her husband. It is true that her choice of profession as an artist is looked down by her mother. With self-confidence, she moves in a new way though alienation haunts her. Sujatha decides:

I gulp down my disappointment, but I persist. I cannot imagine having to give up what is so dear to my heart; my life and happiness depend on it. (TDCH, p.52)

She has immersed herself in search of talent and self-identity motivates her to open up to the new life. A vision to restart her life compels to explore her creativity as an artist. She re-defines herself by accepting a change in her life.

Sujatha has not allowed for self-betrayal by accepting Sanjay when he cancels his divorce and has shown his eagerness to come back. As an educated woman and assessing reality, she desires a dignified life. She consoles her parents to let her live with Uma independently. She is conscious of her self-respect and doesn’t desire to return to her parental home and denies the sympathy of the neighbors without revealing her condition.
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She courageously confronts Sanjay with her words for ridiculing her as destitute. She says:

It is you who are in for a disappointment. I will live my life the way I like. My parents and you are out of it. (TDCH, p.43)

"A high calling" draws her feelings and strong wish persists to take art as a serious profession. She doesn’t want to come in terms with her parents as a burden.

Sujatha is lively in the artistic world of paints, drawing board, and easel. Self-development is the concern which she shows for her inborn-talent. With excision from all relations, Sujatha’s new approach to life begins relishing her loneliness and freedom.

Writers convey the feelings of human beings through weaving words. Like literary persons, artists catch the emotion of human characters with their creative talent. Sujatha is attached to her painting which masters her life by eclipsing humiliations. She paints Rosanne, Uma-a servant girl, and a deaf and mute girl. These agonized girls touch Sujatha, her wrist and artistic mind display the oppression of their inner world to the outside. Her painting is reviewed as:

She is a self taught artist and it looks as though her paintings come straight from her heart. She focuses on the human face with sensitive intimacy as though striving to come close to her subject. (TDCH, pp147-148)

Painting is not only profession for her; it articulates complexities of women and makes the people aware of the issues by exhibiting her talent. With her budding ability, she gets guidance from Prem, a great artist and tries to prove herself. Faith in her own personality ignores the bitter past and instigates to chase opportunity in the field of art.

But her altered mode of life is hindered by the reappearance of Sanjay and love of Prem when he disappears from her life temporarily. Her real strength overlooks the obstacles and the insecurity and leads her to the longed pleasurable
artistic world. She probes her individuality to succeed in her dreams. She trusts her inner potentiality and says:

Believe in yourself and you will succeed. Nothing is achieved if you do not trust your own powers. One lives and learns and I am learning from my own life. (TDCH, p.92)

Solitude and painting bring a new dimension to her; she draws half a dozen paintings within two months. Her concentrated and excellent effort is due to her commitment. She is appreciated and her special creativity comes out as worthy achievement in the exhibition.

Sujatha is pressed to marry a dishonest man without any choice. Later the new way of life allows her to find a true partner, whom the author represents as an idealistic person. As guide, he inspires her with new spirits and values and teaches to make her perfect in artistic technique. Sujatha says:

I should be happy with what art has to offer me, but there are gaps in one's life that can only be filled with love. (TDCH, p.62)

She is alienated from love and care and this acerbity is replaced by Prem with his appeasement which brings cheer and joy in her. Apart from art, they are likeminded in many things.

Sujatha exchanges her thoughts with Prem Mithra, whom she believes as her true friend. His concern and care persuade her to accept a new marital relationship. She says:

I tell him about my feelings of rejection by my upper class Brahmin parents, my marriage, the humiliations I have gone through, the divorce and my husband walking out on me and then wanting to come back when my life is at last taking a turn towards happiness. And now my hopelessness in dealing with the situation. As I talk, I can see his face tighten in anger and then soften in inexpressible compassion. (TDCH, pp.93-94)
He advises to take measures to tackle her personal problems and appears as a solace to her disturbed mind. It is true that she requires inspiration from Prem but it is her instinct and self-assurance that convince to face the outside world. Their mutual understanding gives a way to delightful marital life. They respect and comprehend each other, for instance Prem allows Sujatha to divorce Sanjay. She also understands his responsibilities towards his mother after his father’s death and wishes to live with his mother.

The stay of her mother-in-law disrupts her normal life momentarily. Her past bitter experience of love casts shadow over her and she fears to lose Prem. But Prem’s intense affection, intimacy and comfort make her to discard selfishness. Her mother in law, a gracious lady with her kind touch helps to get over her insecurity.

Sujatha has a heart to listen to the hardships of others. As a land lady, she has sorted out the water problem of the tenants in the flat. Though she is broken-hearted towards her mother, she takes care at the time of her sickness. The emotion of motherhood touches her character and turns her out as full human being. She dismisses her animosity towards parents and mother-in-law. Obviously this excitement overlooks her urge to paint but after that period her wrist and mind engross in the painting work. Along with Prem, she manifests her special talent in the exhibition and represents her identity as an artist.

Rosanne unshackles herself and happiness emerges in her life when she marries a decent man, Sunil. She is touched by his kindness and understanding and feels herself as whole human being. The love showered of Sunil, makes her to forget the slum and suffocated past life and turns her attitude to live with confidence. She foresees her future with thoughtful feelings which bring bliss in her life.
Uma is an essential part of Sujatha’s life. She is smart and is capable of handling things independently. She manages marketing and domestic work. In comparison to Sujatha, this young girl is aware of the existing system and day to day happenings of the society. She persuades Sujatha to think for the future and suggests her to marry Prem by understanding his conduct at the first meeting. At the same time, she prospects her coming days if Sujatha moves to a new home. Thus she shows herself as sensible and intelligent. She is self-reliant without expecting assistance from anyone at her young age.

Alice Saldanha depicts the changing attitudes towards the imposed values of society through her characters’ need for self-fulfillment. The author points out two self-willed girls, Shaila and Marina. In the novel, Shaila is portrayed as self-willed girl. Ignoring her brahminical family background, she marries a Christian boy. She disregards his poverty and problems. Her husband’s parents are broad-minded, accept her without reluctance and never enforce their religious practices. She is happy at her decision and has adjusted to the unfamiliar family with their love. Marina, sister-in-law of Shaila, adopts herself to the sophisticated joint family. She also represents her own choice in the selection of her life-partner. She assists her family business and gives space to realize her identity.

The novelist presents the genuine character of the mother-in-law. Sujatha’s mother-in-law maintains cordial and concrete relationship with her. She approves her son’s choice of Sujatha as his wife without a word. Convincing of her love for Sujatha, transforms her into a new person. She is very understanding and allows no friction between herself and Sujatha.

Shaila’s mother-in-law, Annie D’Souza is a home maker. She financially supports her family by keeping a couple of paying guests in the congested apartment. In the case of deciding her daughter’s marriage, she seriously thinks of her future in a rich joint family. She approves the marriage of Paul and a Hindu girl, Shaila without any denial and vacates the paying guests from the home to
make place for the newly wedded couple. Without any disparity, she cares the need and happiness of Shaila. She is very sensitive and a practical woman. In the case of deciding her daughter’s marriage, she seriously thinks of her future in a rich joint family. Marina’s mother-in-law is also an outgoing type and mingles with people freely.

These characters are adapted to the new situations. They are experienced and are moved to the feelings of women without any prejudices. And the author gives importance to the expression of women’s love relationship and their liberty in selecting their companions.

Sujatha proves herself as not the victim of helpless situations. She is an inspiring character to the world of women. Decisions of her life shun the black clouds of shackles. Thus the intention of the author is shown through female figures like Sujatha, Rosanne, Uma and Shaila who reject the various confined sufferings in society. Sujatha says:

We had different backgrounds, different kinds of sufferings and now we have different kind of happiness.  
(TDCH, p.154)

In olden days, women acknowledged themselves as dependent on men. But this novel, projects the novelist’s findings of women with verve. She traces out the will power, self-awareness and self-dependence which unfetter them from the injustice in all walks of life. The author impresses by making her characters commit to brave resisting acts and exploring their happy life on rejecting the difficult consequences.

Mridula Martis represents herself as a contemporary educated, professional liberated female figure in her autobiography. The progressive image of this woman displays the self-confidence.
Our feelings (emotions) revolve around our perceptions of our self-interest. We assume that our feelings are telling us something from which we can learn... that our feelings mean something worth analyzing.\textsuperscript{5}

Mridula Martis is an economically empowered highly educated urban woman. Her strong desire to learn dance persuades her to give up the job in a reputed company. The spirited woman moves to London to fulfill her dream. The author throws light on the individual development of a woman by recognizing her talent for dance. She defines herself as she involves in pursuing her passion for dance.

Mridula has worked as a Charted Accountant in a multinational accounting firm. Successful career in the life of the author makes her to represent the contemporary woman who stands as an empowered replica. She has a respectful position in the corporate world, and opportunity to visit new places and people. This routine life makes her to reassess it as dull. Her conscience insists her to realize her alienation in this materialistic environment.

The passion for dance which she finds as enthusiastic draws her away from the mechanical life style. Her father's challenging navy job inspires her and she wants her expression with the people. She is least bothered of her corporate profession in front of the dancing art which coaxes her to quit the job and she concentrates on the process of individual development. She has loved to dance from her childhood and writes:

\begin{quote}
I've always loved to dance. My parents used to say, that from the time I could walk, I would dance. Only two vital ingredients were required: good music and a crowd to pay me attention. The youngest in the family is always the maximum attention seeker. (TDFES, p.15)
\end{quote}

She has inherited this art from his father who is familiar with Ballroom and Latin dances. The profitable world undermines the field of art. Dance is not only an art to exhibit talent; it is a kind of solace. It is realized in the words of Mridula, for instance whenever she is depressed with hard work of the office, dance is a relief to her.
Mridula’s dream is to train herself as a dancer and to teach dance to others by opening a school. She is aware of this talent and aims for it at the age of twenty seven, because her academically oriented family has not provided space for that. Her concrete plan influences her colleagues in the office and to some extent even they try to search the art. The interests which are in them like for directing films, playing cricket and becoming a writer are brought out. It is difficult to leave a secured job to take a step to accomplish an illusory dream. But the positive attitude of Mridula makes her to focus on achievement with dedication.

The initial disinterest of the parents and the well wishers does not affect her firm mind. She is encouraged to think:

The timing has to be right and the desire has to be strong, so strong that you can taste it. (TDFES, p.19)

Promotion, lucrative career with a bank balance all appear void in her path of attainment of the ideal. The aim so strongly built in her mind is compelled by her self-determination, individual freedom and confidence leads her to discover and recognize her skill as dancer. Her attachment to the dream and the instruction of the mentor make her to be successful.

Mridula has known and has trained in the classical and traditional forms of dance in her childhood. Christian family background and wedding ceremonies in Mangalore make her mind to discern western form. Though the father is concerned of her future, he has not interfered in her decision. Her preference for art has not allowed her to think of her personal life. Her lost love, Aas wishes to come back but she concentrates on reaching her goal. She decides to attend private dance classes in London. Andy, owner of the dance class, helps her to meet a teacher Peter Badlock who trains her as a trainer.

It is easy to dream, but actualization of a thing is impossible without the effort. She has had her father’s financial aid, KK and Mo’s assistance and Big V’s
help. Inspite of their support, the culture which is alien to her creates apprehension as revealed in episodes such as when she rings up her friend at the airport, travelling in the local train and facing strangers. Lonely, she handles every situation with courage and overcomes discomforts.

Mridula’s enthusiastic and committed involvement in gaining techniques of dance is noteworthy. It is evident from her single minded dedication in counting the beats, learning various steps of dance, writing the notes and practicing the steps. Notable fact is that she pursues that art of dance not only as a dancer, she picks up moves of both man’s and woman’s to perfect herself as a teacher.

Mridula has worked in the midst of men as a Charted Accountant which is mainly recommended for men. On the educational part, she has selected a tough academic course. Even in her choice of contemporary dance, the man’s role is major but she masters it carefully. She also documents the stunning performance of contemporary and tango performance of an exquisite lady named, Sandro in this dance factory. Without inclining to unsatisfactory jobs which furnish costly clothes and material things, she steps forward towards her strongly built wish.

Mridula learns various forms of dances like tango, rumba, salsa, tap, jazz and ballroom. She enjoys in this world of dancing and her encouraging teacher appreciates her:

You’re a natural dancer and your mind works fast, so I do not have to repeat myself. Let’s hope that you are able to do as well with the rest of the classes. (TDFES, p.58)

Peter hardly praises his students, but her appreciable performance of zig zag steps with leading the follower raises mysterious expressions in him. He thinks to give his own notes to her. He insists her to learn dance turns and steps for herself. This suggestion is realized by Mridula only when she comes across a poet who learns tango. Whenever she is unaware of the next step, she simply dances following the leader with confidence.
Peter takes her help as assistant to teach the beginners. The diversity of students like the shy and an interrupting guy Michael, the bald gentleman with smelly breath, the unusually behaved man, the Italian girl and a wife who drags her busiest husband to spend time with him help her to acquire teaching techniques. She bears with them and being a professionalist, she knows the significance of patience for an artist. Her devotion impresses Peter when a slow learner, a mother who has attended beginners’ class with her daughter, expresses her gratitude to Mridula for teaching her dancing steps. Inspired by the stamina of Peter, she plans to have sing song sessions for children in her dance class, so she attends music classes of Esther.

Mridula’s teacher, Peter is a gay and sometimes she is teased as a Lesbian Assistant. Ignoring these irritant situations, she masters the dance steps instantly. In the course of self-discovery, she moves away from the automated life. She celebrates such immense change in her life with the tattoo of a dancing couple on her shoulder and the tattoo of the leaping girl with arms outstretched that resembles herself. She expresses:

She looks graceful, without a care in the world, and perhaps just a little like me. (TDFES, p.125)

Determination and liberty beckon her to be successful in an elegant life. She tries to increase the confidence of the women’s community with her achievement and holds herself as a mirror of inspiration. As a professional dancer, she enters a unique world.

Mridula with her intuition decides to start the dance school in Bangalore and selects a building at Victoria Layout. She deals alone with the estate agents and carpenter to furnish the dance class room. Financial arrangements are made by her with savings and loan from her father. On the inaugural day, the realization of her dream is communicated by her. Su advises her to accept Aas and his love, but such things never hold her back from reaching her determined aim.
Mridula engages herself in planning for dance courses and her article in the newspaper attracts clients. Besides all apprehensions, she works hard with courage and gets reward without any regret. She creates the world of elegance not only to the employees through corporate workshop, but also to various people like shy software professionals, army and navy officers and aspiring models.

As a model for those who dream to achieve their goal, she gives words of advice as follows:

If you do what you love and love what you do, your passion will shine through and that is what makes it work. But this conviction has to course through your veins, you have to feel it in your heart and know that this is what you were born to do. (TDFES, epilogue)

Mridula’s self-fulfillment is realized with the supporting members around her. Through her versatile talent of dancing, she establishes her identity as a dancer and a dance tutor. The book, There is a Dance for Every Song mirrors the strong willed woman’s journey from the day of her joining dance school in London and her effort to establish a school in Bangalore and female experience to actualize the dream as the central aspect.

4.3. Realistic Life of the Downtrodden

The women in Sangati are celebrated by the writer Bama. Because they are enthusiastic, shrewd and practical. Their hard working life both at home and outside is unparalleled.

In Sangati, many strong Dalit women who had the courage to break the shackles of authority, to propel themselves upwards, to roar (their defiance) changed their difficult, problem-filled lives and quickly stanch their tears. (S, p.vii)

The opening chapter of Sangati attracts with a lovely idiom “Munavadu ponnu muthamellam ponnu” that means the joy in the birth of a third female child
is equal to the showering of gold. It has proved by Bama who is a third child in her family. And she deserves to be praised in the field of feminist writing. Her career as a teacher let her to have a comfortable life. Without any compromise, she strengthens herself with assertive attitudes and economical independence. Positive attitudes motivate her to lead her life with new resolutions.

Bama appreciates the restraining efforts of her community women. She stresses them to have self-respect and self-identity. So she writes:

But women have minds of their own, too. They have their own desires and wishes. (S, p.122)

She claims women should be educated and aware of their own rights and potentiality. She suggests that equality between male and female is sustained only through socialization of our children which should begin at home. Fortitude and valiant view fortifies her to lead life confidently.

One of the boisterous characters in Sangati is Velliyamma Kizhavi. Her discourse of village’s customs and taboos provide the insight of Dalit community. The studious grandmother’s deliberation creates eagerness in Bama to have new perspective of life detached from unusual experiences.

The managerial personality of Vellaiyamma as a Kothachi is astounding. She is skilled in arranging all sorts of labor and allocating work to them. The pragmatic woman is capable of leading her life alone as Kothachi. This pragmatism in her makes Bama to be aware of realities. And with her service mind, she is identified as a midwife in the village. Bama praises her views as follows:

She always believed that a woman should stand on her own feet, no point licking the feet of the man. She participated in village debates and cases, said whatever she felt. And she was a good administrator-employed people from different streets, got the work done and saw to it that they got paid. Her practical wisdom was based on experience.
Chapter 4

Women’s Consciousness in Contemporary Society

Bama remembers the energetic Vellaiyamma Paati throught her literary work. She has her individual identity as a social worker by delivering babies. After disappearance of her husband, Gayindan she continues her life as a dutiful mother of two daughters like Mariyamma in *The Daughters of Alaha*. Vellaiyamma is an independent woman and gives description of the prevailing customs and rituals of her own community. Expecting a privileged life, she has converted to Christianity. Bama accepts the story teller Vellaiyamma as a role model.

Sammuga Kizhavi is an undaunted female image, who perceives Dalit woman’s deprivation at every walk of life and engages to get the denied privileges with valour. This self-assured lady challenges the male domination through comic activities and her dynamic character offers fear to upper caste men. Though Vellaiyamma and Sammuga Kizhavi belong to the older generation, their strength and confidence are indomitable.

Mariyamma and Maikanni represent the new generation of Dalit women. Inevitable responsibility is left to the elder daughters of the Dalit’s family. They restlessly work hard to earn and attempt to bring up the younger ones at home. Mariamama works as labourer in digging wells to earn better wages which shows the sturdiness and stamina of a woman. The most impressive character of Bama is Maikanni. Her accountability and commitment towards family surprise the author. Bama remarks:

If she was required to work far harder than her years demanded, she also behaved with a commonsense far beyond her years. (S, p.75)

Her sensibility rescues her from becoming the victim of a man when she visits the wood to collect thorny twigs along with her friends. She is shrewd and works vigorously to look after her kin as a young woman. Vigorous Rendupalli is also admired for her energy, courageous outlook and ability to work harder with independent life. So Bama says:

My life has been different even though I am a Dalit by birth so, actually, these women give me the courage to regain myself. 7
In the midst of untiring work like weeding, transplanting rice, cutting the crops at harvest time, gathering firewood and household work, Dalit women look gay some with teasing and laughing. They forget their tiresome work by singing songs and dancing. For instance Bama states:

Maikkanni too, knew all sorts of songs and her mother was excellent at stringing together tunes and words. It was delightful, always, to hear her sing. (S, p.78)

Treasure of songs among women is a gifted talent to express human feelings through lullabies, valuations, rorattu (lullaby) songs, oppaaris (dirge) at the time of death. Bama recognizes their creativity in weaving rhymes depending on the situation.

The author proves the customs and rituals of the community where woman has preference. At a girl’s coming-of-age, she is made to take rest inside the kuchulu (a little hut built away from the household) for fifteen days denying all tedious work and this occasion is celebrated like a festivity where the girl receives a lot of gifts.

Bama picturises the custom wedding in which bride and bride groom draw up water from a well and pour it directly into the pot. She interprets it as the symbol of sharing work to married couple. All the cooking is done by women themselves at the celebration of marriage. Community is unknown of the evil practice called dowry. In contrast, a bride gets some amount of money from bride groom. Wearing “Tali” is not mandatory; a widow doesn’t have obligations of wearing white sari. A common thing in this community is, a widow can remarry without any bindings and a woman is free to come out of a suffocating marital life. Bama expresses:

In our communities we don’t abuse women who live apart from their husbands. And we do allow second marriages....
(S, p.94)
Women actively participate even in the funeral rituals with men and sing dirges. If a woman dies, they give bath to the dead body and attend the burial at the graveyard without any restrictions. Lakshmi Holmstrom writes in her introduction:

These tell of rites of passage: a coming-of-age ceremony, a betrothal where gifts are made by the groom to the bride, a group wedding of five couples at church. The book is rooted in everyday happenings: of women working together, preparing and eating food, celebrating and singing, bathing and swimming. In this way, a positive picture is built up of certain freedoms which Dalit women possess: no dowry is required of them, for example; the symbols of marriage such as the tali do not have such a binding significance as in other communities; widows are not discriminated against, and may re-marry if they choose. (S, p.xviii)

In the author's Dalit community, women enjoy economic independence without depending on the men. Bama encourages every woman to live without yielding to anyone and realize her identity and states:

It is we who must uphold our rights. We must stand up for ourselves and declare that we too are human beings like everyone else. If we believe that someone else is going to come and uplift us, then we are doomed to remain where we are, forever. (S, p.66)

In village meetings, we can see the women who curiously watch how disputes are justified. They are aware of the misuse of government money and young boys act of joining party politics without earning properly. Bama inspires women to participate in politics and exhibit their power to the world. In Dalit community, the female baby is approved without contempt and cared with best attitudes. Dalit women are not so immodest to end the life of female infants like upper caste people. They have the freedom to swim and bath in the outdoors.
Bama and her mother try to fill confidence in the minds of women and assure them to lead life away from fear. Bama’s courageous words are as follows:

It isn’t for nothing that they say to one who is terrified, that anything dark is a pey. If there isn’t courage in our hearts, we lose our strength and become good for nothing. If we are brave enough, we can dare to accomplish anything we want. (S, p.58)

At present, the life style has changed without sparing women to play the role of hard worker. Education and employment offer individual identity to the woman. She should not accept life by believing in fate. She has to realize the independent existence. She has to tackle the complicated situation boldly with strong mind and heart.

Bama as a minute observer glorifies the women of her community. Representing inhibitions, rebellious nature and a unique personality of every woman, she wishes to evoke the spirit of autonomy among women and to work for the cause of women. The restless Dalit women’s rebellious nature, their eagerness to face the problems in life and their self-confidence enable them to overcome adversities in society. Bolder approach of Dalit women to the actualities of life catches the attention of the readers. Thus this novel as a whole brings out the feminist picture before our eye. It occupies a significant place in contributing both to the Dalit movement and to the women’s movement.

Bama’s self-portrayal of her life’s moments is evident of her courage. She is celebrated as confident Tamil Dalit Christian women. She expresses in her interview:

Though I had lived with them I discovered, as if for the first time, that many of the women had achieved so much in such difficult situations and they had so much to offer. They had survived a great deal of hardship, faced poverty, caste atrocities and untold misery. But brushing all that aside, they had gone on with life. Even I don’t have that kind of courage.
Chapter 4: Women’s Consciousness in Contemporary Society

Mariyamma in *The Daughters of Alaha* enthralls the readers with her vivacious quality. Ineluctable torments in the world make women to preserve their life at any cost. Mariyamma without her husband’s assistance supports her family members and settles in the most desecrated and deserted place on a terrible rainy night. She proves that a woman is able to deal every critical situation with endurance and with will power. In the words of Parvathi Aithal:

> Aanie is proud of her Grandmother’s achievements and ability. (TDOA, p.146)

Mariyamma’s self-portrayal through the novel mirrors her daring attitude at disturbing situations. She has mounted Thangani hill at the darkest hour to get some quantity of rice. When companion Kocchathi has left them to return, her boldness helps her to tackle thieves in the midst of the road.

Mariyamma has her individual identity in Kokkanchara. She takes care of her bed-ridden son, Francis and is always active in physical work such as planting field beans. Her alertness and intelligence are evident when she converts to Surayee rejecting Roman Catholic faith at the time of Chericchi’s marriage. Because Shemman marries Chericchi without any dowry and his status is high in the society. With a hope to prosper the whole family, she accepts practices of Surayees. She gives importance to the survival and takes her decision when situation demands.

Kunjile goes through bitter experiences but such helpless circumstances make her to become independent. Brushing aside all disturbances from the males who try to suppress her financial liberty, she draws strength and continues to work with new insight of life. She seeks her identity with self-determination and performs her responsibility to the family. Her strength is patience which makes her to confront absurdities.
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In the heraclitus deluge with which the novel concludes the entire group is wiped away from the face of the earth, except Annie, who is till the eight year old. The moment of epiphany strikes her like a double-edged sword- she is the sole possessor of Aalaha’s prayer which will exorcise her from her predicament as a woman; she is also the sole possessor of her people’s subculture and damnation.  

Annie tries to discover the issues in women’s lives and their efforts to make a living. Such a young girl attempts to save the natural existence in Kokkanchara. She visualizes the love of Kunjan Compounder and Kunjile as soul centered and never abuses their relationship. As much as possible, she extends her assistance to the family by her small earnings. At the end, she is the possessor of Alaha’s prayer.

She is aware of family’s complex and disastrous situations. Even then, she never thinks of her own progress. In generous sense, her desire is represented. Women’s writing has an ambition to create a world, where no woman should suffer from hunger. The fulfillment of such a wish is visible in this writer. (TDOA, p.149)

The novelist mirrors women as powerful while men as slothful. Women of Kokkanchara make their earnings themselves and discharge their duties to the family as responsible persons. Kunjile works as midwife. She starts lunchbox and Appa businesses which inspire all women of Kokkanchara and give place for the establishment of small scale industries of Appa. Chiyyamma and Chinnama sew buttons for the military shirts, laces to the dresses and make bridal head dresses. White Kunjara and Dark Kunjara engage themselves in chit funds business. White Kunjara is represented in a negative way as a deceiver and makes profit in her own way. She gives importance to money which is essential to lead her luxurious style of life. Even Kocchurodu assists Kunjile in her lunchbox business and works as laborer at construction places. The faith in Alaha’s prayer generates and assures them to lead a fearless life which is documented by the author. Through many sided interwoven tales of women, Sarah Joseph encourages the emergence of a
strong woman. As a woman, her response to the environment is depicted in the novel.

4.4. Recent Images of Urban Women

A Mumbai writer, Eunice De Souza expertly captures the life of a married woman, Simran and her widow life in the metropolitan city. Simran, Maya and Deblina are emancipated female figures with self-awareness. They explore the relationship of woman with men where they find lack of intense love. Liberal thoughts influence them and transgress the conventional attitudes and limitations. They try to preserve their self-hood and cope up with the practical possibilities.

Marriage with Dev is a beginning of new life to Simran. She stands as an educated urban woman who is aware of her own personality. She denies the impractical shackles of woman and is conscious of her freedom. Her independence is visible in her need to conceal from her husband small activities such as buying things for herself.

The psychological isolation of Simran in the form of writing letters to her dead husband is comparable to the alienated character of Maya in Anitha Desai’s Cry, the Peacock. She explores the failure of sexual relationship through reminiscence of her husband. She declares herself as “a strong woman protagonist.” In her marital life, she has forced into motherhood by various ways of medical and miracle man. She is gutsy and daringly works out without quitting. In a column on the new woman, she insists Maya to write about herself as a dynamic woman than Eve of the Bible.

Her liberal views make her to wish intense love and equality within marital life. She looks forward for a friendly relationship with a life partner and rapport. In the complexities of life, she manages the bitter situations and controls her rage. The death of her baby, Sara turns her to suffer utterly. But she represses her
emotions and behaves in a perfect manner with relatives and friends realizing the reality. She co-operates with her mother-in-law who is a battered woman with conventional attitudes.

Enunice De Souza describes the pathetic condition of widows and highlights the people’s attempt to injure a widow by shaving her head in Mumbai city. Simran never faces such hard social bindings. She balances herself without entering into the depressed state and takes relief by writing to her dead husband and Deblina. Her urban life makes her intuitive; she is aware of inner thoughts of her intimates and has adapting nature to every situation without any risk. For instance inspite of age difference, she is glad in the company of her neighbor, a nineteen-year-old boy called Rishad. Deblina tries to convince her to stay in London, but she never escapes from the present situation and confronts the life being human in Mumbai.

Deblina is a student and a privileged lady, residing in London. The western culture and education alter her thoughts and empower her. She advises Simran to get rid of her alienated world and inspires to have confidence to face reality. She portrays the changing attitude of women in the present society and their ability to overcome various pathetic conditions.

Maya projects herself as a contemporary woman and moves freely in society. Being a feminist, strives for the cause of women. Vibrant and acute qualities are associated with her. At an occasion, Simran interrogates:

‘Are you wildly, desperately thinking about your sorrows?’ I asked Maya the next day.
‘No’, she said, ‘should I?’
‘Apparently all women do.’
‘I’m not all women.’(DAS, p.101)
She boldly faces men and openly speaks with them in a friendly way. Vimi also holds the image of a contemporary girl, who aspires mutual understanding and equality within wedlock.

Characters like Simran, Maya and Deblina are noteworthy for giving the picture of liberated women. Urbanization, feminism, education and modern thoughts establish them as self-conscious and self-esteemed individuals with denial of conventional roles. These three characters at different levels anticipate a perfect relationship with men. Basically women try to seek utopian world in marital relationship. It is suggestive fact of the author that depending upon so much for happiness in marriage and sexual relationship appears as foolishness. This novel shows woman's sharing of their relationship with men is not the best relation in the contemporary world. Eunice De Souza represents a common view of today's women with accomplishment of self-hood and detachment from suppressed social values.

In *Danger Lok*, the middle-aged lecturer of English and poet, Rina Ferreira is an economically liberated woman of mainstream culture. She is a single woman and shares her purchased flat in Queen's diamonds building with the two colored parrots. She is emotionally liberated and uncompromising to any unbearable situations.

Eunice De Souza discusses the lives of women in the bounded set of urban society. The living together relationship of Julian, luxurious life of the girl on the first floor with her boss, Mrs D'costa's with her daughters and the single independent life of Rina reveal the changing life style and women's capability to lead their individual life beyond the limits of imposed norms. The maid servant's
struggle and hard work emphasize the lower class women’s need to educate their children and attempt to unfetter them from the precariousness.

The author traces the awareness about feminism, sex education among girl students and women. She brings out the ideas of some women writers which assist women to be conscious of their situation and promote them to be courageous.

The secluded life of Rina with self-existence, modernized style of the girl students at colleges (smoking, irregular to the classes), the first floor girl’s bold way of life, working woman, Vera’s balanced life with the traditional in-laws and urban woman with many debacles are captured by Eunice De Souza which make every woman to familiarize their situation in everyday life. Through her character sketches the author discharges her duty of making the women to realize their identity without depending on others.

The progress of the society is possible only by considering the importance of women. This consciousness has to be raised among people through socialization. The women characters with their independent income and status try to seek identity in the society. They make contemporary women to realize the power of empowerment and personal choices in life. Resolution to find a new meaning and way of life is visible in these writers’ portrayal of women.
Notes


7. Ibid., p.117.

8. Ibid., p.116.