Chapter 7

Marital Conflicts and Domestic Disharmony

“All happy families resemble one another; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way” (AK 1).

Marital conflicts are complex and have many dimensions and ramifications rooted in various of social, economical, emotional and cultural incompatibilities. Discordant notes arising from different kinds of inequalities between the spouses, creates frictions and conflicts in man-woman relationship, resulting in marital disharmony. Though the basis of a happy marital life is the feeling of true partnership based on love and understanding, in the present age, which is characterized by deterioration of values and beliefs, even trifle issues seem to trigger ego clashes and conflicts between partners, leading to drastic consequences. Lantz rightly points out that “In the present scenario where life is becoming richer in interests, and individual differences are getting more accentuated, causes of disagreement are multiplied and frictions are apt to become more serious and consequently more likely to rupture the marriage tie” (134).

Personal relationships are closely dependent on social structures and hence social factors play a vital role in the establishment of interpersonal relationships. From birth till death, man lives out his life as a member of a society, and therefore the influence and impact of society on the human being is so immense that it cannot be dispensed with. D. H. Lawrence and T. Jayakanthan, exploring the fundamental problems confronting man-woman relationship, realize that the problems of the
society are directly and closely connected with the problems of personal relationships of individuals. The observations of David Daiches on Lawrence can also be applied to Jayakanthan and thus for both Lawrence and Jayakanthan “The problems of civilization must always be focused through the problems of personal relationships; for civilization is judged by the kinds and qualities of human relationships it makes possible”(5).

Lawrence’s *The Trespasser* and Jayakanthan’s *Samugam Enpathu Nālū Per* portray the plight of discontented and frustrated husbands leaving the wife or wives (Tamil novel) and seeking a young woman to achieve fulfilment in life. The relationship between Sigmund and Beatrice and Muthuvelar and his wives illustrate the emotional incompatibility between spouses, creating conflicts leading to marital disharmony. Both Sigmund and Muthuvelar were married quite young in their life and they feel alienated from their wives in later years. They regret that even after having been married for quite a long time they feel that they are still strangers to their wives. Disillusioned by their incompatibility with their wives, they establish an emotional relationship with another woman in the hope of achieving fulfilment in life.

Sigmund a violinist, married to Beatrice, a woman rather older than himself has been getting on in life rather miserably owing to the constant conflicts between them. Their relationship as Worthen observes “seems [. . .] to be drifting into a state of degenerating man-woman relationship which could afford nothing but a perpetual torment and disillusion, instead of vital means conducive to fulfilment” (35). Frustrated by the never ending conflicts that arise in their disintegrating relationship,
Sigmund decides to escape from it in order to enjoy at least for a few days, a romantic holiday with his pupil Helena in the Isle of Wight. He anticipates days filled with love and warmth which he thinks will give a smoothening touch to his tortured soul. But he is thoroughly disillusioned by Helena, who is not able to give him the sense of fulfilment that he desires. A woman with a strong egoistic nature, she is not able to lose her own identity even in the supreme intimacy of love. After his few days escapade with Helena he becomes conscious of the fact that they cannot get along with her because of their emotional incompatibility. Bitterly conscious of his tragic failure with Helena, he realizes while returning to London that he can neither live with his family, nor live without Helena, for if he has one he will be haunted by the thought of the other. He is in a dilemma, as he can “[...] neither justify his escapade, nor live under the shadow of a severely strained, if not broken relationship since he was rejected by his wife and his children” (Worthen 36). He is neither able to abandon Helena, nor accept and continue a degrading domestic life with Beatrice and hence commits suicide to free himself from the precarious situation.

Like Sigmund, Muthuvelar too had been married quite young and his unsuccessful marital relationship with both his wives leaves him a man deprived of wholeness. He strives to achieve it through Suguna, a teacher who works in his school, whose modern and radical views on all aspects of life impress him. He maintains a secret relationship with her for sometime and finally decides to leave his family and go and live with her in a different place in order to achieve fulfilment in this relationship. Muthuvelar is full of enthusiasm thinking of the prospects of leading a new life with Suguna, in which he hopes to achieve fulfilment. But he is
thoroughly disillusioned and disappointed, for on the very day they had planned to leave, he receives a letter from Suguna, stating her inability to accept his proposal because of certain social constraints. Muthuvelar who is conscious of his frustrated marital relationship with his wives is all the more dejected by the tragic failure of his plan to live with Suguna. Like Sigmund, Muthuvelar too feels that he can neither live without Suguna, nor go back to his wives and live a degraded life after having shown so much enthusiasm and eagerness to leave the house and go with Suguna. Muthuvelar, like Sigmund puts an end to his dilemma by committing suicide.

Lawrence's observation of Sigmund in *The Trespasser* can also be applied to Muthuvelar and thus both the men after having suppressed their souls for years in a kind of mechanical despair try to liberate themselves from the bondage, and have a kind of new birth, but are utterly disillusioned in the attempt. The irony of the situation is that in both the novels the husbands who are trespassers are not able to achieve what they desired in their new relationship due to different reasons, but in the end both commit suicide to free themselves from their precarious predicament.

Incompatibility due to class differences creating conflicts, resulting in marital disharmony can be identified in the novels of both these novelists. The frictions and conflicts that characterize the marital relationship of the Morels in *Sons and Lovers* is a perfect example of incompatibility between couples belonging to different social classes. The initial attraction and bliss of Walter Morel and Gertrude dwindles once she realizes the bare truth of their social and economical inequality. Lack of due propriety expected of a gentleman, coupled with economic insufficiency creates conflicts and emotional setbacks in their life. From the moment she comes
to know that neither the house nor the furniture belongs to her husband, there is a change in her attitude towards him and “She said very little to her husband, but her manner had changed towards him. Something in her proud honourable soul had crystallized out hard as a rock” (SL 13). Gertrude, a woman of the middleclass very soon realizes the folly of having married a man of the pits. All her efforts to refine him fail, as Morel, a man of the pits is neither capable of refinement, nor is he able to comprehend her high ideas. This in turn leads to violent clashes and conflicts resulting in domestic disharmony.

Mrs. Morel’s consciousness of her superior class compared to that of her husband is mainly responsible for the estrangement in their relationship. With her education and her refinement she expects her husband to be her equal, but Mr. Morel is neither able to, nor willing to rise to her expectations. She is not prepared to accept his shortcomings and forget and forgive his ill manners and misbehaviour. On the other hand she tries to mould his character and habits without realizing the consequences of her actions and behaviour and thus destroys him. Her attempt to refine and reform him have only a drastic and negative effect and always ends in a bitter battle between them for “She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfill his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensuous and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it—it drove him out of his mind” (SL 14).

In all her quarrels with her husband, it is her pride of her superior position that prevents her from trying to compromise, and she takes her revenge in various
ways. She fails to realize the incapabilities and is bent on making him rise to her expectations. She is not able to comprehend the fact that “She was too much his opposite. She could not be content with the little that he might be. She would have him the much that he ought to be. So in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she destroyed him” (SL 16). Disillusioned by his brutal and uncouth behavior, she despises and discards him and turns to the children in order in see her dreams fulfilled. She strives to achieve that higher position which she had lost through her marriage to Morel, by educating her children and elevating them to a higher class. The relationship between the Morels dramatizes very effectively the marital conflicts that create problems in the life of couples of different social classes and the disastrous effects it produces in the life of their children.

If Mrs Morels consciousness of her superior class creates problems in the Walter-Gertrude relationship, Ranga’s consciousness of his inferior position is the main reason for frictions in the Ranga-Kalyani relationship in ONNP. It also presents the conflicts arising in the life of a couple belonging to different social classes. Ranga belongs to a lower class compared to his wife, and it is this social and economical inequality that creates endless doubts and tensions in his mind. His inferior social status, coupled with financial inequality unconsciously creates in him an inferiority complex. The decision to hire a house for which he insists that he pays the rent, shows his anxiety to cover up his inferiority complex of not having a house of his own like Kalyani. Moreover he becomes more conscious of the financial disparity between them, for not only does he not have a house of his own but is also equally aware that his total income would come only to a meagre amount,
whereas the income that she would get from her own drama troop would be greater compared to his income. Kalyani who is not concerned about all these matters agrees to his proposal to shift from their present residence so as to avoid hurting his feeling. She is able to sense the fact that Ranga is becoming conscious of his inferior position and tells herself “Its really good that he never thought of his inferiority before, otherwise he would not have involved himself in this relationship” (ONNP 36).

The difference of opinion regarding growing rose plants that takes place on the second day of their marriage sows the seeds of conflict in Ranga’s mind. Ranga who is surprised to see the anxiety and earnestness with which Kalyani transports a lorry full of rose plants, considers this hobby a costly hobby like keeping pets. He firmly believes that it is mere waste of money and therefore considers it a snobbish activity that is undertaken by rich people as a fashionable enterprise. He argues that instead of growing roses and cretans, it will be really useful if people spend that money to grow brinjals and other useful vegetables. But Kalyani refutes his view by stating that growing roses and cretins may be a snobbish and hypocritical attitude to some, but as far as she is concerned she is doing it for her own soul’s satisfaction and not for imitating or impressing others. She makes herself clear by saying that even if she were to live in a hut with him, and she does not have the means to have so many plants, she will still have at least one plant in a tin container to satisfy her love for plants. But Ranga is not able to understand the genuineness of her love for roses and misunderstands her. His inferiority complex makes him think that while he has left everything for her sake, she is not prepared to lose even a rose plant for him
creates tensions in his mind. Kalyani being very frank and outspoken articulates her opinions without any reservations and is least aware that it is creating more and more conflicts in Ranga’s mind. Although she does not attach much importance to this incident, it is in one way instrumental in creating frictions in their relationship.

Ranga, though an educated man with liberal ideas is not able to accept the individuality of his wife due to his inferiority complex. He is equally aware that Kalyani is far superior to him in many respects and thus misunderstands her calm and composed nature to lack of love and intimacy. His narrow mindedness, coupled with his inability to appreciate her high ideals create tensions and frictions in her life. He realizes in the end that it is his inferiority complex that has created so many unnecessary frictions and conflicts in his relationship with his wife.

The incompatibility between Prabhu-Padma and the resulting marital disharmony that occurs in their relationship in Cilla Nerangalil Cilla Manithargal is primarily due the inferiority complex that Prabhu suffers. The extravagant and prodigal son of a rich man, he is not entitled to touch even a single paisa without his wife’s approval, as his father knowing his son’s nature, has entrusted the complete responsibility to his daughter in law. Prabhu is therefore just a figure head in the office as well as in the house, and all decisions have to be approved by his wife. Even a cheque he signs has to be countersigned by his wife if it has to be passed and this is indeed a great blow to his male ego. This humiliating experience disturbs him greatly and he gives vent to his frustration and dejection by drinking and creating unpleasant scenes in the house. He develops an inferiority complex, as he is neither respected nor loved in his own house, and even his children are prevented from
getting attached to him because his wife fears that he will even spoil the children. Commenting on this situation he says:

My wife neither respects me as her husband, nor has she any love for me. But she is afraid of me because I am a drunkard. [. . .] I am like a slave my existence is slavish. None of the property that is in my name is my own. I have no control over it. [. . .] If even after this I am living in this house, it shows that I am a coward, not fit to be known as a man-a dead soul" (CNCM 148).

Prabhu, though from a very young age is in the habit of squandering money and enjoying the company of women, it is perhaps the dejection and disappointment that results from his incompatibility with his wife that drives him even now to turn to drinks and women. Prabhu hates his wife, who according to him is like a dictator who wants everyone including her husband to surrender to her. Referring to his plight he says “I am just simply a doll. She is the officer for everything, my fate” (CNCM 311). In a moment of frustration he says “I am a good for nothing, fit for nothing fellow” (CNCM 332). He is in fact fed up with his life for he neither has any voice in the house nor is he respected or loved, and even wonders why he is living such a life. He admits that he is a failure in life and really wants to leave everything and go somewhere and begin afresh. Confessing to Ganga about the failures in his life he says “As a student, I was a muff, as a business man, I am a flop, as a husband, I am unworthy, as a father, I am undeserving. I feel I should leave everything and go away somewhere, completely away from this life and begin a new life” (CNCM 332).
On the psychological level, the sexual encounter he has had at a young age also bears a mark on his character. A motherless child in the care of an ayah from an young age, Prabhu had been forcibly raped by his ayah's daughter at the age of twelve. He says “I was spoilt at a very early age. Yet I have not raped anyone, Money, money, that is the devil” \textit{(CNCM 311)}. He admits that he spent a stray life in the company of many women, but he feels really sorry for having unconsciously spoilt Ganga’s life. He feels guilty for the mistake he has committed and wants to atone for it by seeking a good match for Ganga and settling her life. Prabhu derives some kind of satisfaction and contentment in his relationship with Ganga, and through her, he is able to understand Padma from her stand, and establish peace in his house and in his relationship with his wife.

By projecting the trials and tribulations, frictions and conflicts in the conjugal relationship of couples belonging to three generations, Lawrence in \textit{The Rainbow}, intends to “highlight the stresses and strains generated by cultural and attitudinal differences” \textit{(Rao 213)}. Most critics consider the novel as primarily concerned with the theme of marriage, and the relationship between man and woman. Thus Graham Hough considers it “in the first place as a novel about marriage” \textit{(75)} and Richard Aldington is of the opinion that the novel is “built up on an exposition of his belief in marriage as the consummation of life in man and woman” \textit{(170)}. John Worthen going a step further considers \textit{The Sisters, (The Rainbow & Women In Love)} as “the story of, or rather the analysis of and judgement upon five attempts at marriage-Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna, Anton and Ursula, Gerald and Gudrun, and Birkin and Ursula” \textit{(65)}. He further states that “of the five couples, the first two
are in some sense emblematic cases and are treated more symbolically and abstractly, and in less significant relation to the society around them. Though there are crucial conflicts, the marriages are in some sense fulfilling” (65).

The frictions that occur in the relationship between Tom and Lydia, are mainly because they are individuals of different character and background. Tom’s consciousness of his inferior position compared to his wife’s, and Lydia’s awareness of the fact that her husband is least concerned about her independence and individuality creates misunderstandings and conflicts, but a power greater than their individual selves keeps them together in their relationship. Though there are frictions and periods of estrangement in their lives, they are able to achieve fulfilment in marriage by immersing themselves in the “tremendous deluge of passion that eased the tension between them” (Inderjit 110). They are able to achieve only sexual fulfilment and fail to transcend the physical plane.

The conflicts that take place in the conjugal relationship of Will and Anna is primarily due to clash of egos. Once the initial ecstasy of marriage disappears, individual differences surface and lead to a series of conflicts in which each tries to dominate the other. Conflicts are inevitable in any living relationship between two people, but when one partner tries to dominate and subdue the other it results in drastic consequences. When Will interferes with her freedom and individuality, and is determined to impose his will on her it creates deep rooted frictions in their life. She realizes that Will is trying to force his will on her and she is equally becoming aware that her life, her freedom is sinking under the silent grip of his physical will. She says “[. . .] You put a horrible pressure on my head, you don’t let
me sleep, you don’t let me live. Every moment of your life you are doing something to me, something horrible that destroys me. There is something horrible in you, something dark and beastly in your will” (TR 171-72). Will and Anna fail to achieve a balanced relationship and therefore frequently indulge in destructive conflicts. Commenting on the situation Lawrence says:

So it went on continuously, the recurrence of love and conflict between them. One day it seemed as if everything was shattered, all life spoiled, ruined and desolated and laid waste. The next day it was all marvelous again. One day she thought she would go mad from his presence, the sound of his drinking was detestable to her. The next day she loved and rejoiced in the way he crossed the floor, he was sun, moon and stars in one. (TR 154-55)

There is a greater indulgence in passion, yet the moments of reconciliation are short lived. Inderjit points out that “the ceaseless, shattering conflicts continued, but still they loved each other. And the passion that was there got consumed in fierce and unknown battles between them” (114). The love between Will and Anna is not as successful as it is in the first generation, because they are not able to readily reconcile themselves to the contentment and consolation that marriage offers as Tom and Lydia.

In the case of Ursula, the modern, emancipated woman who ascribes great importance to her individuality and independence, the relationship with Anton does not offer satisfaction and wholeness. Though she is initially fascinated by him, she realizes in due course that he lacks individuality, and is incapable of comprehending
her high aspirations. She is also conscious of the fact that he can respond only at
the physical level and cannot react in a wholesome manner for establishing a good
man-woman relationship. Ursula’s rejection of Anton exemplifies the fact that she
is not committed to sex and prefers to retain her individuality and achieve her goals,
whereas the couples in the previous two generations are more committed to sex
and marriage and hence abide in the conjugal relationship. The main purpose of the
Ursula-Anton relationship is to illustrate the fact that whatever limited salvation
the earlier generations had found in sex, for Ursula the modern woman, sexual
relations alone do not offer salvation. Though Lawrence insists on the importance
of sex in man-woman relationship, sexual consummation alone will not lead to
complete fulfillment, for if sex becomes an end in itself it leads to disastrous
consequences. Thus *The Rainbow* does not offer sex as a solution to the problems
of modern civilization, on the other hand it affirms that sex is not and cannot be the
answer to the issues raised by the complexities of modern civilization.

If *The Rainbow* portrays the marital relationship of three generations to
illustrate, the problems confronted in this relationship, *Parisku Po*, also attempts
to depict the same by presenting the marital relationship of a few couples who are
closely related and associated with each other. While the Mahalingam-Lalitha
relationship and the Sarangan-Lalitha relationships are given predominance in the
novel, the Narasiah-Balammal relationship occupies only a secondary position in
the novel. Yet it is definitely more important for the present analysis, as the views
that Narasiah expresses on man-woman relationship are of great significance. The
Narasiah-Balammal relationship illustrates the marital disharmony that occurs in
their life as a result of the accidental adultery that the husband commits. Balammal the daughter of the rich Seshiah, has married Narsiah, the person who has been brought up and educated by her father, and who is now a head master. Narsiah who loves his wife, is a man who is greatly devoted to music, dance and other arts. He stages dramas not for any monetary gains, but because it is his aim and goal in life to produce good works. Balammal who knew about her husband's involvement does not interfere in his activities and does not entertain any doubts about her husband. She somehow has a feeling that a man who has a wife will not go after another woman. Narsiah himself does not in his wildest dreams ever think that he is capable of committing such a mistake in his life. But unfortunately the minute Balammal sees her husband with the dancer Ganga, in her bedroom, she reacts in a violent manner and leaves the house determined never to come back.

Narsiah realizes that his wife will never come back and is full of remorse for what has happened. He is equally aware that he is a slave only to Ganga's dance and to her artistic capabilities and not to Ganga the woman for her beauty and charm. To Ganga Narsiah the man who admires her dance and who has rescued her from the enticing and spiteful eyes of the other men at the dance hall, appears so great that she submits and surrenders herself without realizing the consequences of the act. But Narsiah knows for sure that "as a man, as a husband he had never loved anyone except Balammal. If his life is to exist with marital dharma, it is possible only with Balammal. She is the base for his life and this is the truth. He had lost himself to Ganga only for her art. [. . .], but Balammal has punished him by making him spend the rest of his life with Ganga" (257).
Narasiah’s long sermon to his daughter-in-law just before his death is important for understanding Jayakanthan’s views on this relationship. According to him marriage is an inseparable bond that is based on love, sympathy, sacrifice, patience and forgiving nature. It is a combination of all these aspects in the right proportion that enables two people to live together life long. It is not a prison to subdue and dominate and rule or punish the other, for it is a relationship beyond punishment or separation. He stresses the fact that man-woman relationship is a bond, which if realized in the right sense makes it impossible for the partners to punish or divorce. He laments that in the present situation, the husband or wife is able to do so because the sacred bond of marriage has lost its power and strength, and is now cheapened like a business contract in which the partners withdraw the contract once something goes wrong. He says “Now a days this bond has lost its greatness and hence it is possible to punish and get separated from each other. It has been deteriorated to the state of a business contract. The basic reason for this is that such husbands and wives do not love each other fully in a wholesome manner” (PP 267).

The concept of love has been drastically misunderstood and bullying is understood to be love and hence the urge to punish and divorce rather than pardon and live together dominates the partners at the first opportunity. Narasiah asks “What is the great difference between this partnership in business and the Partnership in marriage? Marriage is not a contract that can be ended or separated. Yes, that is the practice of this nation. Only the problems should be addressed and not the basic truth of marriage (PP 267).
Trying to explain his position to his daughter-in-law he tries to generalize certain aspects that are necessary in order to have a good man-woman relationship. He emphasizes the fact that:

[...] a wife is not merely a woman who gives physical pleasure, but someone who is above that. She is really a mother to her husband, in fact even greater than the mother, because a mother is only a mother, but a wife is not only a mother but a wife too. A woman who occupies this position should not feel jealous of a woman who just satisfies the husband physically, and go to the extent of breaking this great relationship. (PP 267)

He clarifies his view that this attitude to pardon should be extended only to a husband who commits the fault only once and that too accidentally and not to husbands who are bent on leading a bad life. Illustrating this he points out that:

No body laughs at an expert circus artist when he accidentally commits a mistake and slips and falls. Similarly it is really cruel when people punish a man who is leading his life according to social laws, when he once slips from the normal. Problems are inevitable in life and it is really an uncivilized behavior for partners to punish each other. (PP 268)

He is also of the opinion that this attitude to forgive is not applicable to the wives alone, and husbands also should have the capacity to forgive a wife who has accidentally committed adultery. They should be able to love their wives to such an extent that they should be able to pardon them and live together.
The frictions and conflicts that are presented in the relationship of the two couples, Birkin and Ursula and Gerald and Gudrun in *Women in Love*, are mainly intended by Lawrence to expound his strong conviction of the necessity to achieve a perfect union with a woman—a sort of ultimate marriage. The two pairs are compared and contrasted in a variety of ways to illustrate his concept of an ideal man-woman relationship. Cavitch points out that “through the method of contrast, Lawrence attempts to portray the two relationships, each relationship explains the other and it creates a sense of order. While Ursula and Birkin are associated with life and renewal, Gerald and Gudrun are associated with perversity and death” (62).

The relationship between Birkin and Ursula is consistently depicted as good inspite of all the quarrels they have on various aspects of life including love. Differences of opinion regarding love and its importance in life is one of the main issues that leads to frictions in their relationship. But the conflicts are intended only to illustrate their individuality and independence and they are able to reconcile their differences and achieve fulfillment in their relationship. The conflicts and quarrels are thus “a catharsis which purges on the differences causing surface conflicts between the two lovers, but leaves the permanent bond between them unbroken” (Macleod 82). Birkin yearns for a complete fulfilment in marriage and looks upon it as the means of entering into a definite communion with the partner. Lawrence, through Birkin, is in favour of a kind of mystic marriage in which he upholds the principle of balance in which there is neither total submission, nor total domination by either of the partners.

The conflicts that occur in the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun are
primarily because of their ignorance of the real meaning of love and their assertive wills. Their relationship is not born out of genuine love but based on mere physical attraction and passion. Both Gerald and Gudrun do not have a healthy attitude either towards love or marriage and hence their relationship is fraught with violent assertion of the wills to dominate each other. Their inflated egos allow no room for any kind of compromise and each tries to dominate the other. Thus their relationship does not offer any scope for “separateness and singleness of individuality for it insists on fusion in passion” (Maclead 123). She also observes that their relationship cannot endure because both are expecting too much of everlasting romantic passion and are least interested in peace or simplicity from the other and hence are not capable of achieving equilibrium. Gerald and Gudrun are neither able to fully respond in love, nor do they really love each other as theirs is a tie of companionship of convenience, and not a vital, refreshing bond.

*Kokila Enna Cheithuvital*, very effectively presents some of the marital conflicts that create domestic disharmony in the life of Anantharaman and Kokila. In the preface to this novel Jayakanthan observes that when he wrote this novel, he thought that he was just presenting the marital problems of one particular couple, but after the work was published he was surprised to realize that “almost all the couples belonging to the educated, middle class were able to identify themselves with some angle of the story or even with the fundamentals of this story” (Preface 4). Jayakanthan admits that this story does not deny the fact that conflicts are natural in any living situation, and therefore man has to resolve these conflicts in order to lead a happy life. The unhappy marital relationship that exists between Anantharaman and
Kokila is primarily because of the dual nature of Anantharaman, who does not recognize his wife as a person with an individuality of her own. Anantharaman, a journalist is a distinguished man with revolutionary ideas, but in his personal relationship with his wife, he is a degraded, prejudiced man who is even suspicious of his wife's loyalty. To the outer world, he is a modern man who preaches socialism, opposes orthodox beliefs and who is full of enthusiasm to create a new world based on equality, but in his personal life, he is not able to digest the independence and individuality of his wife. He is very much conscious that it is his dual nature that is creating domestic disharmony and he admits that he is a divided and multidimensional person, as he is a different man in the house, and a different man to the outer world. According to him duality of personality is neither ideal for unity in life nor for the unity in the society. In a kind of confession he tells the readers "I am a different man outside: inside a different man: a different man in my office: a different man to my readers: a different man in my own life: a different man to my wife: a different man to myself: Oh! How fragmented am I" (KEC 27).

The marital discord and domestic disharmony that are prevailing for the past ten years as a result of their mutual hatred and clash of egos, creates such an unpleasant situation that Anantharaman even wonders why the marriage tie in India is so strong that one cannot come out of it, escape from it even though at times it strangulates the individuals involved in the relationship. Kokila who had admired Anatharaman for his intellectual capabilities aspired to be his intellectual companion and had agreed to marry him. But all her hopes and aspirations are disillusioned, for she had only wanted to surrender and sacrifice herself to him out
of love, but never wanted to be defeated and degraded by him. The only peaceful
time for her in this life is when her classmate, who is now a pilot comes to see her
daily. Though initially Anantharaman does not mind it, later he starts doubting her
and even tells her that she will one day leave him for the other man. The bitter never
ending quarrels that occurs as a result of their frustration and disillusionment go to
such an extent that both are fed up with this bond and feel that there is no point in
continuing, and hence Kokilla quits the house. In her absence Anantharaman is able
to realize that he has been very bad to her.

When Anantharaman is transferred to Delhi he requests Kokila to spend the
last four days with him, so as to give an impression to the house owner that there is
nothing wrong between them and that after he leaves for Delhi she can choose to do
as she pleases. But those four days seem to be the turning point in their life as both
ignore their egos and try to be as good as possible to each other. They realize that
these days were the most peaceful days after the past ten years of strife. They are
now aware that most of the problems that were created in their life were a result of
the predominance of their egos and their uncompromising attitude. Though both
long for the company of the other they are not willing to openly declare it. The
novel ends with both Anantharaman and Kokila realizing their mistakes and accepting
the relationship. Jayakanthan in this novel intends to communicate his view that, in
the relationship between man and woman there should neither be domination nor
subjugation by the partners, but both should try to resolve conflicts and attempt to
achieve a balance by acknowledging and respecting the individuality of the other.

*Lady Chatterleys Lover* and *Sundarakanda*, the novels of Lawrence and
Jayakanthan explore in great depth the theme of man-woman relationship and attempt to redefine this relationship from a different perspective. The institution of marriage is seriously questioned and the novelists try to portray some of the major issues that have drastically affected this bond in the present social scenario. In both the novels the main story is used to analyze the social background and its effect on this relationship. If the themes of the “Social world” and the “Lyrical world” (qtd. in Tripathi 30) are interdependent in *LCL*, in *SK* the “Social consciousness” and the “mythical consciousness” (Chellapan 38) interact in a significant manner to illustrate the plight of man-woman relationship.

The most controversial of Lawrence’s works *LCL*, has evoked wide spread criticism both positive and negative. While some critics have appreciated it for the effective manner in which the issue is addressed, others have violently criticized the work and condemned it as mere pornography. In this context the observations of Mark Schorer are of great importance as it gives new meaning and significance to our understanding of the real problems presented in the work. Schorer identifies the presence of two worlds, the “Social world” and the “Lyrical world” and states that the two worlds are made use of to illustrate the two themes - “love theme” and the “social theme” (qtd. Tripathi 30) that are closely interdependent in the novel. He observes that “there is a systematic alteration and juxtaposition of the two themes and this is not accidental. There is a purpose and the purpose is not mere contrast between the two apparently disconnected themes, because one theme derives significance and meaning from the other”(qtd. in Tripathi 31). He also states very clearly that “in the love theme, emotion and impulse are the integrating principles
of life. The wholeness of living vitally is portrayed, [. . .]. On the other hand in the society theme of which the later Clifford is a part, has money and power as the integrating principles" (qtd. in Tripathi (32).

_Sundarakandam_, a revolutionary novel by Jayakanthan, is as K. Chellapan points out "yet another exploration of the theme of man-woman relationship as a central social problem in modern Tamil Nadu and gives it a wider, universal perspective in relation to the Sita archetype" (38) to emphasize the problems confronting this relationship. Chellapan also observes that in the novel the "Social Consciousness" and the "Mythical consciousness" (38) are closely interwoven, and they are made to interact in a significant manner. Schorer’s observation of the presence of the themes of love and society can also be identified in this novel, as problems related to love and the effects of socio-economic factors affecting man-woman relationship have been discussed at length in this novel.

If _LCL_, portrays the conjugal problems confronting Clifford Chatterley, a Post-Industrial capitalist, _SK_, presents the marital conflicts and the resulting disharmony that takes place in the life of Sukumaran, a Post-Independent capitalist. Both Clifford and Sukumaran do not attribute great significance to the importance of this relationship and consider money, power and success as the integrating principles of life. Clifford who belongs to the rich, upper class represents the Post-war industrial capitalist, who successfully revives the profitability of the Chatterley mines, is a man who does not attach much importance to personal relationships. Sukumaran too like Clifford belongs to the rich class also does not give great concern for personal relationships and is purely money minded and business motivated.
Commenting on the character of Sukumaran, K. Chellapan observes that he is “a capitalist-and love to him becomes an affair of the body and he is associated with all evils of capitalism-alienation and sex as the antidote and everything including running the newspaper and his relationship with Meena or even Sita is only business” (39).

Clifford a physically handicapped cripple and Sukumaran, a psychological cripple lack tenderness and genuine love and possess wrong ideas about man- woman relationship. There is neither physical nor emotional intimacy between Clifford and Connie and Sukumaran and Sita for different reasons, yet both Clifford and Sukumaran want to retain the marital relationship for the sake of social status. Connie’s relationship with Clifford offers her only mental intimacy, and though she initially devotes herself loyally to looking after her husband, she is oppressed and disillusioned by the aridity and emptiness of her life. Contemplating on the kind of relationship between Clifford and his wife, he realizes that their relationship lacks the desired intimacy. He wants to say something to his wife about the kind of life that his disability forces upon her, but he cannot bring himself to do it for “he was at once too intimate with her and not intimate enough. He was so very much at one with her in his mind and hers, but bodily they were non-existent to one another, and neither could bear to drag in the corpus delicti. They were so intimate, and utterly out of touch” (LCL 17).

Clifford is also able to realize that lack of physical intimacy is disintegrating Connie’s life and so he does not mind her extra marital affairs, but is only particular that it should not affect their permanent relationship. Sex to Clifford is just a physical
activity and he does not attach any emotional significance to it in man-woman relationship. It is "merely an accident, or an adjunct, one of the curious obsolete, organic processes which persisted in its clumsiness, but was not really necessary" (LCL 12), and therefore the occasional sexual connections do not matter for he gives importance only to the life-long companionship. He says to his wife:

[... ] It’s the life-long companionship that matters. It’s the living together from day to day, not the sleeping together once or twice. You and I are married, no matter what happens to us. We have the habit of each other. And habit to my thinking is more vital than any occasional excitement. The long, slow, enduring thing [... ] that’s what we live by [... ] not the occasional spasm of any sort. Little by little, living together, two people fall into a sort of unison, they vibrate so intricately to one another. That’s the real secret of marriage, not sex; at least not the simple function of sex. You and I are interwoven in marriage. If we stick to that we ought to be able to arrange this sex thing as we arrange going to the dentist; [... ] (LCL 41-42).

Clifford’s vulgar suggestion that Connie can involve herself in a love affair and even have a child by another man, which he is prepared to accept and bring up in his house shows his attitude to love and sex in this relationship. He will not object to his wife’s adultery only if can be assured of her love and companionship. He tells Connie that “[... ], the casual sex thing is nothing, compared to the long life lived together? [... ] If lack of sex is going to disintegrate you, then go out and have a love affair. If lack of a child is going to disintegrate you, then have a child if you possibly
can. But only do these things so that you have an integrated life, that makes a long harmonious thing” (*LCL* 41). Clifford seems to have a terrible fear that Connie will leave him and therefore does not mind his wife’s adultery provided it does not affect their relationship. But he needs some assurance from her and for this “all he wanted was for Connie to swear, to swear not to leave him, not to give him away” (*LCL* 103).

Towards the end of the novel when Connie asks for a divorce, stating that she wants to live with Duncan Forbes, Clifford tells her “For my part, since you are my wife, I should prefer that you should stay under my roof in dignity and quiet” (*LCL* 276). When she continues her request for a divorce, saying that she is expecting a child, Clifford makes his stance clear and tells her “I want my wife and I see no reason for letting her go. If she likes to bear a child under my roof, she is welcome and the child is welcome: provided that the decency and order of life is preserved” (*LCL* 276). But when he hears from Connie that she is actually bearing the child of his gamekeeper Mellors, and not that of Duncan he is shocked to know that his wife had been carrying on with a man who belongs to the class he hates. He tells his wife that he never thought that she would cheapen and stoop to this level and communicates his intention that he will not give her a divorce. He says “No! You can go wherever you like, but I shan’t divorce you” (*LCL* 278). His decision not to grant her divorce is final and he shouts in a harsh voice “I shall never divorce you” (*LCL* 278).

If there is lack of physical and emotional intimacy between Clifford and Connie as a result of Clifford’s physical handicap, in the Sukumaran-Sita relationship,
this is created by Sita’s determination to abstain from any kind of physical involvement with her husband. Sukumaran, like Clifford is a capitalist for whom “money is very very important for life” (SK 100), and he does not attach great significance to the importance of genuine love in man-woman relationship. He marries Sita because he thinks that she is the right person befitting his status to be his wife. When Sita wants to know why he is particular to marry her, he says “For your beauty, intelligence, for my status you are the best person to be my wife, you are the best person to be my wife and that is why I wished to marry you” (SK 97).

Their relationship is a strange relationship since Sukumaran simply buys her by settling a debt of four lakhs that her father has incurred. In the course of their conversation before their marriage when Sita asks him what he would have done if she had not given her consent for the marriage, he says in a harsh voice “I have already bought you. Prepare yourself to agree for this proposal and live happily. When fathers are running about with daughters and dowry, I have bought you by paying four lakh rupees” (SK 104). Sita is thus able to see her husband only as Ravana, the man who has captured and imprisoned her, without her consent. Even before their marriage she tells him “You need not sacrifice anything for my sake and I also cannot sacrifice anything for your sake” (SK 101).

Sukumaran, like Clifford wants only to have symbolic possession of his wife and is even willing to find out her lover and allow her to have him, once he realizes that there is no scope for any kind of compromise with Sita, who is determined not to accept him as her husband. He feels that he had made the biggest mistake in marrying her, and feels sorry for her and wants to help her. Seeing her attitude
towards him he even doubts whether, she is in love with anybody and very patiently
asks her about it. He tells her “You can tell me anything without hiding. Take me as
your friend, if there is anything like that too, I will be happy. Don’t spoil your
life” (SK 202). But without replying to his question, she immediately asks him for
a divorce. Sukumaran like Clifford is not willing for a divorce, and asks her to
promise that she will not ask for it, because it will affect his social status. He says:

No! Sita, that alone is not possible. Please, You remain as you please, but don’t want divorce. I cannot tolerate that, never. On what ever account, you should not entertain such an idea, then my status and pride will all go. Then I will commit suicide. Let not that alone happen. You should promise that . . . that you will never ask for a divorce, please Sita, please. (SK 203-204)

When Sukumaran realizes that Sita does not have any such lover he wishes that Sita develops a relationship with Dr Sridar. Sukumaran’s statements to Meena, his mother’s nurse with whom he has been having an illicit relationship shows that he is prepared even to ignore his wife’s adultery provided she continues to stay with him. The views he expresses are highly controversial and cannot be digested by any Indian husband since the codes of Indian morality, strictly stipulate fidelity only for the wife. He tells Meena:

You cannot prevent someone from falling in love just because they are not husband and wife. I am a bit modern in such matters. Take it that it is not possible for the husband and wife to love each other; they should conveniently find out a person and have a secret
relationship with that person. What other way is there? We have to view this on humanitarian grounds. At the same time we have to safeguard the relationship between husband and wife in the society.

(SK 287)

It is in this context that there is a reference to D. H. Lawrence by Jayakanthan. Explaining this point he asks Meena whether she has read D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, to which she says that she has not read it, but has only heard about it and knows that it is a notorious work. Sukumaran on the other hand has a different opinion of the novel and says:

No, No, It gives expression to a man’s psychology that too to a rich man’s mind. Lady Connie is young and beautiful, Lord Chatterley is an old man. He is even prepared to accept the fact that his wife is somebody’s lover, but then, he is not ready to accept the fact that his wife loves a shepherd. Can you understand the psychology of that lord?. (SK 316)

Sukumaran is convinced that “Lady Sukumaran’s lover is in every way of the higher order”(316), and only wishes ardently that it materializes. Trying to explain the situation further Suhumaran tells Meena:

Socially, since she is already my wife, am I not responsible for her happiness and sorrow?. Now I will tell you why I thought of Lady Chatterley’s Lover. If later she develops some secret relationship with a man of lover status and problems arise due to that, so I would wish her to have a friendship with men like Dr Sridar who have a status...
Sukumaran like Clifford is also prepared to accept his wife’s adultery, provided she maintains a status in her affair and remains with him as his legal wife. He tells her towards the end of the novel:

I have realized a thousand times that I should not have married you. I have not got anything from it, but only lost my peace of mind and comfort, yet I don’t worry about it. Even now, though our own life is not related to us, I only wish to be helpful to each other. I don’t want a child to be born to me through Meena. But at the same time if you have a child by someone, I will accept it and present it to the world as my child (SK 351).

In both the novels the heroines, Connie and Sita reject their husbands though for different reasons, and free themselves from the bondage, to lead a life that they desire. Connie’s relationship with Mellors, her husband’s gamekeeper offers her emotional and physical fulfilment, that she lacks in her relationship with her husband. Their initial affair is simply a growth of a secret relationship between two people who are separated by the barriers of class and condition. When Clifford is bent on not granting her a divorce, Connie decides to leave her husband and start a new life with Mellors. The novel ends with Connie and Mellors apart, yet preparing not to flee to Mexico or Italy, but to begin a new life together on a farm in England.

Jayakanthan, though he does not clearly state of a relationship between Sridar and Sita, makes references to this effect by some of the characters. Sita herself in one context wonders whether she is in love with Sridar, and whether it is right on
her part, she being a married woman to think so. Referring to the relationship between Sridar and Sita, Ramdas tells Mariyam “If both of them mutually like each other all that Sita has to do is to get a divorce” (SK 293). Jayakanthan is of the opinion that a marriage that is not based on equality and love is imprisonment and therefore Dr Sridar, whom Sita admires for service and love is Rama. Mariayam’s observation that this Sita who rejects her legal husband, and considers someone whom she later met as her Rama is the “Sita of Kalikala” (SK 289). The novel ends with Sita rejecting her husband when she comes to know of his illicit relationship with Meena, and trying to begin a new life in the hope of meeting the real Rama, for according to her as well as to Jayakanthan “Ramanhood cannot be attained by mere possession, but can be achieved only if the husband possesses human qualities” (Chellapan 55) that are necessary for establishing a good man-woman relationship.

The reference to Lady Chatterley’s Lover in Sundararakandam, makes it clear that Jayakanthan has been directly or indirectly influenced by this novel to a certain extent. An analysis of some of the novels of the two novelists reveals that they have attempted to portray some of the problems, and challenges confronting man-woman relationship in the present social scenario.
Works cited


