Chapter II

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

The continuity of human existence depends on the making of various kinds of human relationships. No one can imagine one’s existence without human relationships. When the child is being separated from the mother’s womb, it is bound to make different kinds of relationships and these human relationships continue till his departure from this mortal world. Whoever comes in this world in the form of human being, he has to pass through the various stages of human relationships. Since a man has to play different roles from time to time, naturally he has to be evolved in different relations altogether. Human relationship is the essence of the continuation of human existence. There is no question of human existence without human relations. A man is many things at the same time, he is the grandson of someone, husband of someone, brother of someone and the similar situation continue forever in cyclic manner. R.M. Maciver and C.M. Page in their book Society, observe:

Society is the system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions of controls of human behaviours and liberties. (162-163)
In man’s existence in this vast world, many kinds of human relationships are entangled altogether. Among such relations, relations with family are extremely important. Such relations are in the form of father-son relationship, mother-son relationship, husband-wife relationship, lover-beloved relationship, man-man relationship and woman-woman relationship. There is a great importance of family in making and continuing these human relationships, because family lies in the core of all these relations. For each and everyone, family is the source of peace and happiness, progress and prosperity, enthusiasm and encouragement. Lillian Eichler Watson rightly observes about the importance of family in making human life happy and prosperous by forming different kinds of human relationships:

Of all human relationships, none are more vital and enduring than those of home and family. Love and marriage, the joys of parenthood and family ties, are the bases of all that is best in life – the supreme happiness.(239)

Among the different genres of literature in India, novels have credit for observing some of the most important trends of human relationships in compassionate and sympathetic manner. In Indian English writing, novels are basically based on such presentation in which the entire stories and plots revolve around the presentation of various kinds of human relationships.
Meenakshi Mukherji, a well-known critic of Indian fiction, comments on the importance of fiction in making human relationships live and miraculous:

Indo-Anglian fiction, which has served for so long as a file of documents of sociology or anthropology or educational theory, must now be regarded as literature, and evaluated as such. (209-210)

Meenakshi Mukherji has led great emphasis on the subject matter of the novels because she is of view that human relationships are the core subject matter of the novels. She further comments:

Since the novelist’s subject is man-in-society, his subject matter must also be the texture of manners and conventions by which social man defines his own identity. (18)

In Indian Writing in English R.K. Narayan is perhaps the first authentic novelist to observe various kinds of human relationships in detail. He makes distance from his contemporaries Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao in the delineation of different kinds of human relationships. These three novelists are the classics in the presentation of the hopes and aspirations, failure and frustrations of human being in terms of projecting various kinds of human relationships. Their presentation has a traditional and conventional outlook
and they do not go beyond the limits imposed by tradition and culture. On the contrary, the modern Indian writings in English are highly characterized by such kind of human relationships which are not familiar and frequent occurring in the past. The writings of modern Indian fiction writers in English are highly fabricated by different shades and colours of modernity – modern diseases – disrespect of elders, break away from traditional and cultural roots, ostensible display of behavior in making human relationships, etc. Modern novelists in India – Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Pankaj Mishra, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Gita Hariharan, Bharati Mukherji, Shobha De, etc., have presented human relationships in their novels in abundance. They vary from the traditional approach of their predecessors in many respects. They have total disregard from the cultural loads. They would like to define human relationship in entirely new way. Among them, Shobha De brings her to be the champion of presenting the new concept of human relationships by departing her away from the traditional and cultural outlook. In her novels, she is away from the traditional and cultural outlook. In her novels, she breaks the concept of morality in every respect. She wants to redefine father-son relationship, mother-son relationship, father-daughter relationship, mother-daughter relationship, husband-wife relationship, lover-beloved relationship and woman-woman relationship. She is more interested
in the depiction of man-woman relationship in detail. Her novels beginning from *Socialite Evenings* to *Second Thoughts* are full of such kind of human relationships which have a sense of modernity in the depiction. There is a moral discord, ethical breakage, disrespect of cultural values, etc. These characteristics dominated society. In the portrayal of different kinds of human relationships, she finds an opportunity to highlight the suffering of women, journey of women from ‘ignorance to knowledge’ and ‘innocence to experience.’ She has strong sense of feminism by showing the double standard of society in making such human relationships. Her theme of identity and recognition of woman in the mainstream of society is linked with her portrayal of husband-wife and lover-beloved relationships.

In Shobha De’s novels, husband-wife relationship, lover-beloved relationship and woman-woman relationship are extremely important. Through the portrayal of these relationships, Shobha De finds an opportunity to dive deep into human emotions and passions by projecting some of the real truths of human existence. Her almost all the novels deal with the husband-wife relationship, lover-beloved relationship and extra-marital relationship in detail manner. In *Socialite Evenings*, husband-wife relationship and extra-marital relationship are projected in realistic manner through the portrayal of the central character Karuna. The relationship between Karuna and her
husband, whose name has not been mentioned throughout the novel, is the core subject of the study about the theme of love, romance, marriage and divorce. Here Karuna is certainly the representative of modern woman. Her life and journey from ‘innocence to experience’ is quite capable of projecting of the theme of bewilderment and hollowness on the one hand and her extra-marital relation gives us a clue of freedom and openness which she would like to enjoy. Bhargavi P. Rao rightly remarks about the character of Karuna in these words:

Karuna is the hollow woman of our modern wasteland. Her kinds are sick as they are unable to face the shocking realities after discarding the veil, the protective purdah. Religion does not give them solace as in the case of her rural counterpart. She feels ‘oppressed’ in spite of her freedom. The right kind of feminism can give them solution as well as solace.(255)

The relationship between Karuna and her husband lacks the proper magnitude because it has no sense of devotion for each other, respect for each other, mutual understanding and love and affection for each other.

In Socialite Evenings, Shobha De, through the presentation of the relationship between Karuna and her husband and Anjali and her husband
Abe, wants to show the detoriating aspects of husband-wife relationships in the context of new emerging, living perspectives. Karuna is the victim of her own cobweb, because she feels marginalized in the hands of her husband all the time. In the presentation of Karuna and her husband, Shobha De portrays a woman who wants to run all her relations according to her own choice. There is no understanding between the husband and the wife and she feels that she has not married a proper man. Her husband is just the average Indian husband – a man of passivity who lacks imaginative inspirations. She realizes the bitter truth with him in these words:

Marriage is nothing to get excited or worried about. It is Just something to get used to. (SE 68)

Karuna detests the callous and cruel attitude of her husband. She also does not like the unromantic and passive attitude of her husband, who is always busy in reading newspapers and spend days in monotonous activity. On the other hand, she finds a real shelter under the roof of her husband for which Indian husbands are known and recognized for. She says about her dual situation without any hesitation:

We were reduced to being marginal people. Everything that mattered to us was trivialized. The message was “you don’t
really count, except in the context of my priorities”. It was taken for granted that our needs were secondary to theirs. And that in some way we ought to be grateful for having a roof over our head and four square meals a day. (*SE 69*)

The relationship between Karuna and her husband does not attend the proper height because it lacks the sublimity which is one of the required components in making husband-wife relationship successful. Marriage in their case is totally meaningless because it brings hollowness, cruelty and real domination. Karuna’s husband is a man of flattering nature, a man of duplicacies. He would like to exploit Karuna’s emotions for his happiness. He suspects her character:

You are even more of a worm that I thought. You deserve Winnie. I hope she has got a wax doll of yours. I shall send her some extra pins to stick into it. (*SE 264*)

On the other hand, the relationship between Anjali and Abe has some different problems. Anjali has a dominating partner. She controls the emotions and passions of her husband. She understands the energy, desire, and ambition of her husband. She is in search of a suitable life-partner. When she got satisfied with Abe and found Abe useless after sometimes, she
does not hesitate to leave and reject him and comes in the arms of Mr. Kumar. Here Anjali is more conscious than Karuna in her own terms. Ritu’s relationship with her husband is something different. Ritu exploits her sexual break through her female potentiality, her female charm, her female body, her romantic attitude, etc., in order to keep her husband within her reach. She controls her husband with female superiority. She tells Karuna about her strategy how she manages to control her husband:

Make them feel you have done them a favour by marrying them.
Make them feel insecure. Let them think you will walk out on them if they don’t toe the line. That is what keeps them in their place. (SE 86)

Ritu tells Karuna once again:

Men like dogs could be conditioned through reward and punishment. (SE 87)

Anyway, Karuna’s marriage is definitely on the rocks. She is utterly bored and unfulfilled by the husband’s compulsive socializing, his horrible safari suit and the gum he constantly chewed. She realizes her painful situation because she has nothing to do in spite of keeping the house well decorated. Her life becomes devoid of charm and fascination. She suffers a
lot and her extra-marital relations with Krish and Girish cannot be the result of Karuna’s lust, but at the same time, her husband’s passiveness and cold mindedness are equally responsible to force her to embrace Krish earlier and Girish later. Here the readers find the relationship between the husband and the wife breaks, because the husband fails to read the wife’s mind. But on the other hand, Karuna’s post-marital relationship with Ranbir Roy is not the compensation she desires after getting rid off her husband. Karuna is isolated from the traditional Indian heritage and its social implications. She rejects the importance of male values in her life. She is conscious of her own identity and this sense of identity makes her to realize the futility of relationship especially with male in which there is no question of love, affection, understanding, devotion, respect, confidence and trust. She and the entire omen portrayed – Anjali, Ritu, Swati, etc., are not hesitative to establish sexual relationship with many male members of the high profile aristocratic society. This is a social and moral disorder and it has been conceived and viewed by Shobha De as ‘candidness or openness’ associated with the empowerment of women in the wake of modern society. It is a reason that the relationship between Karuna and her husband and Anjali and Abe has failed to realize the proper dimension.
In her second novel *Starry Nights*, Shobha De has presents the relationship between Aasha Rani and her foreigner husband Jamie Phillips (Jay) in different manner. Aasha Rani is a typical product of Bollywood world. In the beginning, she is the victim of poverty, her rise and fall as a star can be the story of any film in Bollywood. Aasha Rani is the illegitimate daughter of some Bollywood producer or filmmaker. In the beginning, her name was Viji. When her father deserts her family she has to suffer from deprivation and poverty. In order to make her survival, she jumps into the world of low profile films, where there is immense opportunity for innocent girls like her, who have not been aware with the real facts of that world. Aasha Rani becomes a star. During her career in Bollywood, she realizes the real truths of that world. Her physical exploitation starts when she comes in contact with Kishenbhai, a renowned underworld mafia who is fond of making illicit relationship with so many women like Aasha Rani. Aasha Rani marries Jamie Phillips when she was at the peak of her career. Her decision to marry Jay makes her happy for sometimes, but her happiness could not ever last for a longer period, as she makes a decision to return to India from New Zealand. She realizes that her potential as an actress cannot be realized in New Zealand because the inborn artist in her always makes her conscious to make attempts to flower her career in the world of Bollywood.
Jamie is a young man and he is the fan of Aasha Rani. He has been attracted by Aasha Rani not because of her beautiful and sexual appeal but because of her Indian root. He proposes Aasha Rani for marriage and she accepts his proposal as a real gift. Gita Barua writes at this juncture:

The young man, Jamie Phillips, while in London, had an affair with an Air India hostess who was Aasha Rani’s fan and along with her; he had seen each and every film of hero’s many a time on video. Jamie is attracted by Aasha Rani not only because she is sexy but also because of her being an Indian, for his grandfather was posted in India during the British rule. He proposes marriage to her and she accepts it.(178)

The relationship between Aasha Rani and Jamie is a happy one because for the first time in her career she got a man who rightly understands her character, her desire, her wish, her ambition and her passion. She lives along with her husband in New Zealand for five years. She gives birth to a beautiful girl Sasha. The real unfortunate begins in her career, when she decides to return India via London in order to make attempts to establish herself as a star in Bollywood. Here also her husband Jamie leaves her to decide wherever she can go as she likes, we cannot blame Jamie Phillips at any stage for her downfall. Gita Barua writes once again:
Jamie sympathetically leaves her to decide her own way of life and to be near her ailing father who now at the far end of his life wants to own up the family he had deserted.(179)

The relationship between Akshay Arora and her wife Malini Arora has also been portrayed in the novel in order to highlight the problems occurring especially in husband-wife relationships in modern society. Akshay Arora is an established person in the film industry. In spite of the fact that he is a married man, he does not hesitate to establish extra-marital relation with Aasha Rani. Akshay Arora’s relationship with her wife Malini does not bloom because; he is the real bastard in the film industry who would not hesitate to use several women as his bed partners. Akshay Arora is ready to change his religion in order to marry Aasha Rani without divorcing his wife Malini. Aasha Rani is also ready to approve his plan. Aasha Rani says to Seth Anircand about her real love for Akshay:

You don’t understand Sethji. I love this man. I really do. I want to marry him. Bear his child. (SN 105)

Aasha Rani is the real culprit in pouring poison in the married life of Akshay Arora and his wife Malini. Shobha De in the portrayal of the
relationship between Akshay Arora and Malini, once again highlights the problems occurring in the married life in high profile aristocratic society.

In her third novel *Sisters*, Shobha De has presented the various shades of husband-wife relationship in the form of the relationship between Mikki or Mallika and Binny Malhotra. Mikki has to run her industry because her parents have died in the air-crash. She would like to save her industry for the sake of the name of her father. In order to run the industry, she marries Binny. Mikki Knows Binny Malhotra and she meets him many times before, because he was a big business tycoon. Binny displays his own luxurious lifestyle and grabs her attention. Amy, the friend of Mikki also advices her to marry Binny Malhotra. Amy says to Mikki:

The quickest way to shoot to the top is to tie up with Malhotra.
And I am being very practical when I tell you this – what’s the worst thing that could happen in that alliance? A disastrous marriage can always be put behind you darling.(468)

Marriage for Mikki is the means of solving business problems and it is not a marriage of two aspiring human beings. Mikki marries Binny Malhotra in order to protect the industry from bankrupt. She has been attracted by the uncanny aggressive manner of Binny. After her marriage, Mikki loves Binny
too much. But gradually, she becomes aware of the truth that Binny has a mistress and he is also the father of two children. Even though she is the legal wife of Binny, it is difficult for her to digest the truth about Binny. All her property has been transferred to Binny Malhotra after their marriage. Her life becomes miserable after marriage, because she has been prohibited to go to the office. It is beyond her imagination to be confined within the walls of her husband’s house. The process of humiliation of Mikki begins when she becomes devoid of property as well as she has been forbidden to become an active partner in business. Her emotion gets injured when she has been denied motherhood. She is the victim of Binny’s whimsical desires and abnormal passions. At this juncture E. Satyanarayana writes:

The process of dehumanization of Mikki begins, when all her property is transferred to Binny. Besides, she is denied motherhood, for she has to keep always fit for him. Being a representative of the oppressive system, Binny does not like Mikki’s desire to be an active partner both in life and business.(213)

There is no sense of understanding and devotion in the relationship between Mikki and Binny. As a typical Indian husband he does not give her freedom to enjoy her life. But it is the result of her own mistakes. Her choice
of Binny is her own. She chooses Binny for her own materialistic fulfillment as she realizes herself:

He had money, power and access to anybody he wanted to meet in the government. The only thing he didn’t have was acceptability in society. It was the one thing Binny craved for more than anything else. And no one was going to deny him the status of being Malika Hiralal’s husband – and the owner of Hiralal Industries.(458)

On the other hand, Binny turns to be a dominating husband. She shatters the hopes and aspirations of Mikki. His three words are enough to tell the story of his hostile nature towards his educated wife Mikki:

Listen very carefully, princess. This is no longer your father’s home and you are no longer the pampered child. You are Binny Malhotra’s wife. And you would better start behaving like her.... Buy clothes. Buy jewellery. Go to the beauty parlour. Play bridge. Learn golf. Attend cooking classes that’s all. But no questions – you don’t have the right.(Sisters 491)

In order to get rid off the imposed slavery, Mikki takes shelter in the arms of Shanay, who is her cousin. She breaks her relation in his company.
She does not find any kind of self-respect and identity. She fails to find a perfect partner, a true lover, an amicable companion in Binny. Her breakage from Binny makes her realize the futility of human relationships based on materialism, orthodoxy and lack of proper understanding, mutual respect and devotion for each other.

In her next novel *Sultry Days*, Shobha De has not dealt with husband-wife relationship. In this novel, she has presented some different kinds of new emerging human relationships. But in her novel *Snapshots*, she has presented husband-wife relationship in abundance. In this novel, there is the presentation of the lives of six girls of Santa Maria high school. These girls—Reema, Aparna, Surekha, Rashmi, Noor and Swati are the real representatives of the various facets of modern life. These modern urban women have boldness and openess and they are not hesitative to use their physical charm to lure the high profile aristocratic society. They consider their beauty and physical charm as the assets in the modern society. For instance, Rashmi is an unmarried mother. Swati and Aparna have already divorced their respective husbands. Reema considers her husband as a tool of providing material comfort. She does not hesitate to enjoy the illicit relationship with her brother-in-law. Surekha finds herself comfortable in the company of women rather than in the company of men. Thus in this novel, Shobha De
has presented the married life of Swati, Aparna and Reema in different terms and values. Asha shows the changes and transformations which are occurring everyday in cosmopolitan culture. The role of money, power, sex, lust, etc., has become much important and these things have substituted the age-old convictions, traditional and cultural values and moral and ethical sense.

Shobha De has devoted more chapters to describe the various facets of the relationship between Aparna and Prem. Aparna has a successful career but her life is totally devoid of real love and satisfaction. Aparna may be called a successful woman regarding her achievement and success in her career. But, she is always at the mercy of her partner who does not hesitate to use her as a tool and not as a real partner. In the relationship between Aparna and Prem, Prem always takes the initiative in their physical relationship. Even though the fact is that Prem is the employee of Aparna, he compels Aparna to know the real pleasure in married life in general. Prem forces Aparna to show her love for him at public places. He also forces her to show her sexual inclination all the time:

Did women ‘need’ sex? Aparna had always scoffed at the notion. No, she would say, women need love. And caring. And tenderness. Prem had stood all these ideas on their head.(5)
Reema is a married woman, but her relationship with her husband Ravi always brings suspicion and conflict. Reema’s love for money, charming life and her extravagant nature makes her collide with the passiveness of her husband. She does not hesitate to establish an illicit relation with her brother-in-law Randhir in order to satisfy her sexual needs. She is a totally dissatisfied woman in her married life. She continues the old pattern of exploitation. She treats her only daughter Shonali roughly. The greatest irony she plays that, she wants her daughter Shonali to have an arranged marriage. How it can be possible for a mother, who is herself involved in lust, could preach the lessons of morality to her daughter. Urbashi Barat remarks:

Reema’s treatment of her daughter indicates that women themselves concur in their own victimization. She believes that Shonali has a boyfriend, but she indulges the girl, even though she knows the Shonali must have an arranged marriage; she does not realize that she is thereby forcing her daughter in her own unhappy mould, in which her adolescent sexual experimentation had led to an aborted pregnancy, an early and loveless marriage, a meaningless existence.(247)
Like Aparna, Awati is a divorcee, she is not a victim, but a survivor. According to many critics, she is a mixture of Pamela Bordes and the super bitch of the American television show Operas. She is the real vamp, who is quite rebellious in her relationship with Balbir at the early stage and Nawaz at the later on. She uses men as the real tools in order to satisfy her material as well as sexual needs. She has no shame in establishing relationship with various men. She herself says about her notions and desires:

Do you think I don’t know how much all of you despise me? But you know what? I think you are jealous. You with your bleak little mediocre lives. Playing safe and yet cheating, sneaking on the side. I think I am far more ethical, yes, ethical than the lot of you. Look where I am and look where you are. Nowhere. (210)

In the relationship between Swati and Balbir, there is no question of real love and affection. It is a victim of physical lust, sexual sensations and she considers him to be accommodated and can be acquired from the market. The readers can find a change and transformation in the concept of these women. Shobhe De is more conscious about writing these women like – Swati, Aparna, Rashmi, Surekha, Reema, etc. These women would like to control their husbands in every aspects. For them, power control is more important than love affection. Shobha De herself writes:
Eventually every relationship is a power struggle either on an overt or subliminal level. Control over the situation has been a male prerogative over the centuries. Women’s destinies have been determined largely in that context alone. It is time they were made aware of their potential and power. Men will have to come to terms with women power.(112-113)

In her novel Second Thoughts, Shobha De has beautifully presented the relationship between husband and wife and the conflicts occurred after marriage in Indian traditional society. Second Thoughts is a beautiful realistic representation of the psychology of traditional Indian men and women. The central protagonist of the novel Maya is married to Ranjan. Maya belongs to Calcutta, a more traditional city and Ranjan belongs to Bombay, a more advanced city in terms of relations and fashions. Ranjan is the son of rich lady Chitra. In the relationship between Maya and Ranjan, there is a great role of their parents especially Mrs. Malik plays an influential role and hampers the smooth – going life of Maya. Since Maya belongs to Calcutta, it is beyond Mrs. Malik’s imagination why her son has chosen a Bengali girl from Calcutta not from Bombay. Mrs. Malik says in sneering mood:

Oh no, no. These Bombay Bengalis are different; they have lost their cultural identity. Their roots are not in our tradition. My
mother would not have been able to adjust to someone like that.

(ST 115-116)

Maya and Ranjan present two different cultures. Even though they are married through arranged marriage, there is no sense of charm and fascination in their relationship. Ranjan is deeply devoted to her mother. He enjoys hurting the emotions of her wife in order to please his mother and satisfy her ego. Maya has everything, has every comfort of luxurious life-style, but she suffers from unsatisfaction in love and dissatisfaction in life. She is the victim of her mother-in-law’s strange obsessions. Her mother-in-law does not like her at all. Maya also suffers from an unfulfilled sexual relationship with Ranjan. Her sexual desires have not been cared by Ranjan and that is why she comes in the arms of Nikhil, a much younger boy for sexual pleasure. Her relationship with Nikhil gives her more pleasure but, it is beyond the morality of a married woman who is going to be involved with the second man for sexual gratification. Her extra-marital relationship proves to be final blow to the marital bond with Ranjan in her quest of freedom.

In the relationship between Ranjan and Maya, there is no question of real love and affection, mutual understanding and companionship, self-respect and devotion and above all, they are contrary poles not made for each other. Maya tries to maintain her freedom which is not possible under the roof of
Ranjan. Ranjan does not allow her to mix up with other women of Bombay. He has stopped her to continue her job. There is no sensuous pleasure in their relationship which is regarded as one of the most important aspects in the continuation of husband-wife relationship. Aasha Khare rightly remarks about the failure of the relationship between Ranjan and Maya in these words:

The story depicts over-bearing female characters and weak male characters. It exposes the male ego, social pretences, and public facades. It is a tale of two cities, Bombay and Calcutta, which contains vivid description of the two with details of food and dresses. Sexual overtones, the chief characteristic of Shobha De’s works are over-riding throughout the novel.(283)

Thus, in the presentation of husband-wife relationship in her novels, Shobha De lays emphasis in the role of sex, money, love, affection, extra-marital relations from both sides. She is conscious of the fact that women, especially, as the wives are no more the silent sufferers like the traditional wives as presented in R.K. Narayan’s novels. Wives like Aparna, Swati, Maya, Aasha Rani, Karuna, Reema, Rashmi, Mikki, Alisha and Anjali are certainly the products of new generations who are in favour of equal treatments, equal rights and equal exposition for woman. They do not suffer silently or they do not surrender silently before their husband’s male ego.
They go beyond the traditional norms and cultural values in order to maintain their freedom, identity and social status as human beings. They do not continue the tradition of Savitri, Sita, Draupadi, Gauri, etc., whose story of sacrifice and devotion are mentioned in epics like The Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Shobha De presents that marriage is on the verge of transformation in the new era of modernity in which every social and cultural value is bound to be reviewed in new modern perspectives.

Apart from the presentation of husband-wife relationship, Shobha De has devoted much time and pages to present extra-marital relations in her novels for many reasons altogether. Her novels Socialite Evenings, Starry Nights, Sisters, Sultry Days, and Second Thoughts are full of such kind of man-woman relationship. Shobha De emerges as a true exponent of feminism because she would like to provide such things to women which have been considered as man’s profile. L. Sonia Ningthoujam rightly remarks about the Shobha De’s notion of presentation of such relations in abundance:

Shobha De’s women go all out in enjoying the status as the new modern woman. They shatter the age-old concept of the traditional Indian woman with their assertive, individualistic and carefree attitude towards life. In this new image the new women have got extreme independence in almost every field and one of
the most striking and interesting freedoms they enjoy is sexual freedom.(61)

Shobha De’s exhibition of man-woman relationship starts from her very first novel *Socialite Evenings*. In this novel, there are two female characters Karuna and Anjali, both belong to middle class morality – are not hesitative in creating so called illicit relationship with other males apart from their husbands. Karuna is a typical married woman but her married life is not happy because marriage brings futility and frigidity in her life. Having dissatisfied with her husband, she indulges in extra-marital relationship with Girish Sridhar, who offers her a role in his movie ‘Shakuntala’. Karuna grabs the opportunity and she becomes very close to Girish Sridhar. Her adultery does not end with Girish Sridhar and it extends to Randhir Roy who is a married man. But Randhir Roy teaches her how to believe in herself at the moment of pressure and frustration. Karuna’s relation with three different men Girish, Randhir Roy and Krish apart from her husband is quite suggestive because it shows the different stages in her life. Girish was a filmmaker, Randhir Roy was a journalist and Krish was a high profile man. It seems that Karuna wants to establish relationship with these three men in order to stabilize herself in the social perspectives of the cosmopolitan culture. She would like to maintain her dignity in social life by sacrificing her
morality. But she is aware of this fact also. She says to Girish, one of her lovers:

I feel all closed up and insulated. I need little time. I am discovering myself. I enjoyed his little patch of independence. I am reconnecting with my parents – they need me. I am enjoying their presence.... Don’t rush me please. (SE 60)

She realizes the fact that she cannot be happy in the context of extramarital relationship. She is of view that in Indian context, any women cannot live alone. There is no life for women without the roof of a man. Only economic or social status brings nothing in the life of woman. She realizes the fact that she cannot be happy in her relationship with Girish who was a filmmaker and has given breakthrough in the coveted film industry. She says to Girish Sridhar:

A woman cannot live alone. It is not safe. We are here today – but who knows about tomorrow? A woman needs a man’s protection. (SE 275)

Karuna’s relationship with Krish is nothing but a torrid romance and sex game. Her relationship with Krish does not continue for a longer period because she finds a sense of hollowness and timidness in him. Krish was the
friend of Karuna's husband. He is a flirt kind of man. He is already married and he has the habit of establishing relationship with many women. Finally, she breaks from Krish also. Now she has been divorced by her husband, she rejects Krish, Randhir Roy and Girish Sridhar. She enjoys the full freedom finding herself in new situations. On the other hand, Anjali who is the friend of Karuna, married to Abe. Anjali has several involvements with her male friends. She makes wild sexual adventures with the Belgium photographer. After her divorce from Abe, she looks for a wealthy companion who might fulfil her dreams by providing her sexual gratification and much money and luxurious life-style. Anjali gets such man in the form of Kumar Bhandari. Her prolonged sexual hunger forces her to have an illicit relationship with Kumar but their relation cannot everlast when the passion in her decreases.

There is another woman Ritu, who in spite of married woman is involved in post-marital relations with Gul and his friends. Gul is an underworld don and a smuggler. Ritu's relation with Gul turns her into a mere pump and show whose duty is to procure women for Gul and his friend. In the mood of utter dejection, Ritu becomes frustrated, develops habit of consuming drugs and becomes s high profile prostitute. Shobla De depicts the new women in modern society. She is perhaps of the view that independence should not come for the sake of loss of moral and cultural values. But woman like her
would like to get freedom in their private lives by surrendering themselves morally and intentionally. L. Sonia Ningthoujam remarks on such women’s extra-marital relationship in these words:

The wild adventures of these modern society women clearly reflect the tendency in the new women exposed to affluence and extra-marital relationships and their impact on their family life and children. It is a clear warning to both the wife and the husband to bear in mind the possible influence of their wild aspirations on their children and the society. (81)

The above mentioned eroticism is quite appropriate in the cases of man-woman relationship depicted in *Socialite Evening* apart from husband–wife relationship. For instance, Karuna and Anjali are not happy after being divorced from their respective husbands. Man and woman relationship is not mere mingling of bodies, it is the converying of two emotions, two souls, two hearts and two bodies.

In *Starry Nights*, Shobha De deals with the rise and fall of Aasha Rani, one of the most penetrative characters created by her. Aasha Rani is an unrivaled beauty of Bollywood stardom. She is quite frank in her approach towards life. Her relationship with producers, directors, actors, cameramen,
choreographers, high society celebrities and other non-filmy people is presented in the realistic manner in the novel. Aasha Rani learns the first lessons of human relationships in terms of sexual exploitation in her very early age, when she was only fifteen years old. Her mother Amma forced her to establish sexual relationship with many people in order to earn more and more money because Amma was a dejected and rejected wife and she herself is the victim of male dominated world. The childhood exploitation is always a nightmarish in her life because she is not able to come out from those clumsy sexual experiences of her early childhood. Her journey from Viji to Aasha Rani is quite suggestive because it involves her relationship with many men from time to time. Aasha Rani’s relationship with Kishenbhai, who was a film producer, has made her suffer a lot because Kishenbhai exploited the beauty of Aasha Rani in a clumsy manner. After experiencing physical relationship with Kishenbhai, Aasha Rani gets the heinous attitude for those high-profile people, who do not hesitate to do such things even with those girls of the age of their own daughters. When she comes before the camera for the first time in the presence of Kishenbhai, her feelings are quite typical because she faces the torrid experiences and she turns a blind eye before such people, who are emotionless for the sake of modernism and artificial life. Even though her mother wants to make her a successful film star but this
success at the sake of selling her body to someone is not appropriate. The role of her mother is quite important because she is the real culprit. She becomes dumb and deaf before her daughter’s rejection of such kind of experiences:

Kishenbhai had come over swiftly to Aasha Rani’s side and said softly, “M.D. has a room upstairs – go with him. He will feed you. M.D. is an important man. Treat him nicely. He can help your career. Don’t create a scene or anything. All you have to do is…is…what you do with me…bas. It will be O.K. Tomorrow morning I will come and take you home.” Aasha Rani had pleaded with her eyes and looked beseechingly at Amma – who would simply avert hers. (SN 247)

Aasha Rani’s relationship with her mother brings a lot of questions. Mother is the symbol of sacrifice, mother teachers the first lessons of morality, cultural values and ethical sense of life. But here, we find a real change in such a mother like Amma who has no feelings even for her daughter and even she forces her to jump into the world of sex and underworld. According to many critics, the standard of morality in Shobha De’s woman has emerged out of woman’s excessive exposure to westernized education, wealth, power and fame. There is an emerging new morality
especially in the cosmopolitan culture, which has sensed the role of wealth and power in substantial manner. Such women have no sense of morality in establishing illicit relationship with people like Kishenbhai, Seth Amirchand, Akshay Arora, Abhijeet Mehra, Jojo, etc., in order to achieve luxurious life as it happens in the case of Aasha Rani.

Aasha Rani’s relationship with Seth Amirchand brings further frustration and exploitation in her life. Seth mirchand is a typical womanizer and a rich politician. Amirchand makes use of many women belonging to Bollywood. Like many aspiring heroines, Aasha Rani feels also proud and privileged to go in the arms of Seth Amirchand. Shobha De writes:

She feels transported into a hallucinatory world. She was weightless and floating. Her head was full of colours and sounds. Her senses had been heightened to an extent that she experienced no pain even when the Shethji entered her savagely from behind and whipped her with a small leather thong. She was far away in some distant world, listening to bird calls and looking at a dozen rainbows. (SN 61)

Aasha Rani’s relationship with Akshay Arora brings out many facets of her personality. Akshay Arora is a married man but there is a sense of
hollowness in his relationship with his wife Malini Arora. Akshay Arora comes in contact with Aasha Rani at the Muhurat of his film. Akshay Arora exploits Aasha Rani too much. Her relationship with Akshay Arora is not welcome by Malini Arora. She beats Aasha Rani, but Aasha Rani freely establishes physical relationship with Akshay Arora. When Aasha Rani proposes Akshay Arora for marriage, he declines. This refusal makes her emotionally-broken and she attempts to commited suicide. She asks Akshay Arora to become Muslim religion permits two or three marriages at a time Aasha Rani is also not in favour, but for the sake of love, she is prepared to do so:

You are so stubborn and so stupid. Just forget it. Besides I don’t want to become a Muslim. I believe in my religion. I don’t want to give up my faith. I was born a Hindu. I want to die a Hindu. I want to be cremated, not buried. (SN 108)

The refusal of the proposal made by Aasha Rani to Akshay Arora is quite symbolic of the human relationship in the modern context. Man-woman relationship is so sensitive that it cannot everlast until and unless there is sense of respect, morality and understanding. In the case of Aasha Rani-Akshay Arora relationship, sex and money play a very important role and it comes under the category of illicit relationship which bounds to be failed.
Aasha Rani’s relationship with Jojo who is a film director is quite suggestive in her life. Jojo is a married man. When his wife comes to know about his involvement with Aasha Rani, she becomes crazy and she considers Aasha Rani as the destroyer of family and marriage. Jojo, a typical director, who directs not only the film but also the lives of several actresses like Aasha Rani by establishing illicit relationship with them. In each and every relationship, Aasha Rani’s body has been used all the time.

Thus, in *Starry Nights*, Aasha Rani’s relationship with many men has been projected in order to reveal the truth of high-profile and aristocratic culture which is emerging in the metropolitan cities. Shobha De brings out that there is no solution and no alternative to the problems. Indian woman like Aasha Rani is bound to suffer in the context of such relationships. Sudhir Kumar rightly remarks:

Thus, Shobha De provides no solutions as alternatives to the problems the Indian woman faces in the andocentric society. The path of liberation chosen by her heroines is also fraught with frustration, mental break-down and disasters.(197-198)

Shobha De’s presentation of human relationships has become more poignant in her novel *Sister*. In *Sister*, apart from the presentation of husband-
wife relationship in the form of Binny Malhotra and Mikki, Shobha De has presented the relationship between two half-sister-Mikki and Alisha and the relationship between Mikki and Navin, Binny and Malini in strange manner. Mikki is the daughter of rich businessman who died in air-crash. After the death of her parents, Mikki decides to run their business. She also wants to establish relationship with her half-sister Alisha who is a daughter of Mikki’s father from a mistress. Mikki is quite submissive in her relationship with Alisha who on the other hand has a sense of disrespect and irreverence. On the nature of their relationship E. Satyanarayana remarks:

In reality, Mikki, with the demise of her parents, feels lonely. The existence of Alisha, although strangers to each other, gives her a sense of solace and she is strengthened morally. It is not Alisha’s wealth that makes Mikki think of her, but her faith in human values that prompts her to establish relationship with Alisha.(212)

The relationship between Mikki and Alisha is the relationship between two opposite minds not made for each other. Mikki is educated, have a sense and she shows human attitude towards Alisha. On the other hand, Alisha has a sense of anger because she is recognized in the society as the illegitimate daughter by the father of Mikki. Mikki all the time wants to make happy
union with Alisha because she wants to make her partner in every respect. Alisha is always hostile and bitter towards Mikki. The anger of Alisha towards Mikki is the result of the family problems because Alisha thinks that she has no social recognition and status as Mikki enjoys in the corporate world after the death of their parents. L. Sonia Ningthoujam rightly remarks on the relationship between Mikki and Alisha in these words:

The two sisters remain isolated from each other as their father due to his promiscuity had them from different women. Mikki is the daughter of the properly wedded wife and Alisha the product of his illicit passion for a whore. Alisha is hostile and bitter to Mikki who had enjoyed all the comforts as Hiralal’s legitimate daughter right from her childhood while she is deprived of these comforts because her true identity is concealed which gives the impression of her being an illegitimate child.(58-59)

Mikki and Alisha are in conflict right from the beginning in the novel. They show their hunger in every respect, they want to show their uniqueness and even they do not hesitate to attract the same boyfriends. The result is inevitable-disaster in their life. Both Mikki and Alisha have a common boyfriend – Navin. Alisha becomes devastating, when she learns the fact that Navin has preferred Mikki. Here Mikki goes a step forward by discarding
Navin and proposes Binny Malhotra for marriage. Thus, the bitterness between two sisters continues till the end of the novel.

Shobha De has also highlighted the relationship between Mikki and Alisha for different purposes altogether. There are several Alishas in our society who have to suffer due to the lack of identity and recognition. Alisha is the daughter of Hiralal but Hiralal has no courage to recognize her. Alisha is emotionally bankrupt and feels insecure. She hates Mikki for capturing father's entire love. She feels happy whenever she finds Mikki in trouble. But at the end of the novel Mikki comes to rescue Alisha, when she was in difficulties after the death of her mother. The reconciliation between Mikki and Alisha is the victory of human relationship which continues between two sisters in spite of several implications. Finally, both sisters – Mikki and Alisha reconcile with each other and decide to fight for their survival as true.

Shobha De, in spite of presenting the poignant relationship between two sisters, has also presented the relationship between man and women in different perspectives. More pages have been devoted to the presentation of relationship between Mikki and Navin, Alisha and Navin and Alisha and Dr. Kurien. There is the presentation of a sense of love and lust in the relationship between Mikki and Navin. In the beginning, Mikki loves Navin and seems to be ready for the union with him. But when she finds Binny,
more suitable for her business, changes her preference and decides to discard Navin and allows Binny to come in her life. Here she gives preference to materialism because her preference of Binny is the symbol of her preference to wealth at the place of emotion. On the other hand, Alisha’s relationship with Navin is the result of Alisha’s hatred towards Mikki. Alisha wants to establish relationship with Navin because she wants to insult Mikki by accepting Navin who has been discarded by her sister Mikki. E. Satyanarayana rightly says:

She (Alisha) moves closely with the men whom Mikki rejected.
She traps Navin and indulges in fornication, not to satisfy her carnal yearning but to show Mikki that she is not inferior to anyone. She misses no opportunity to insult her sister. In fact, Alisha serves as a foil to Mikki.(215)

The relationship between Alisha and Dr. Kurien has been presented within the setup of Shobha De’s typical presentation of man-woman relationship. Alisha gets involved with Dr. Kurien who is a married man and has children. Her preference of Dr. Kurien makes her crazy because she is now emotionally, psychologically and sexually dissatisfied in her life. She becomes a drug addict, busy in intoxication, develops strange relationship with several other men because she become the victim of her own cobweb.
Here she follows the footsteps of her sister Mikki who has married Binny Malhotra who is already a married man. Thus, both these sisters, who want to trap men for their own satisfaction, in reality, they have been trapped in their own made cobweb. The relationship between Alisha and Dr. Kurien and Mikki and Binny Malhotra does not everlast because such relations are bound to fail which have no sense of morality, social values, a sense of respect and understanding and devotion to each other.

According to the well-known critics, lesbianism has been mentioned in *Kama Sutra* and other rhetorics. This kind of relationship cannot be put under the category of adultery or insects or illegitimate. Of course, it is abnormal and against the natural human relationship but it has nothing abnormal regarding human values. There can be healthy relationship between woman and woman. If woman fulfils her sexual desires by involving herself with sexual encounters with other women-is there any harm in it. Amrita has natural inclination but Meenakshi has passionate inclination. According to most of the critics, Meenakshi’s lesbianism is the result of psychological breakdown, unsympathetic behavior of her mother, distorted feelings of her father which put strong hatred in her mind for the male dominated society. Minx’s mother herself acknowledges her own fault in the making of Meenakshi’s personality:
My daughter is the severely disturbed child of a disturbed mother. She suffers from delusions, she tells lies, she makes up stories, the number of schools she has been expelled from have their own tales to tell. (203)

Shobha De, by presenting the relationship between Meenakshi and Amrits, raises question regarding sex. According to the feminist theory, sex does not mean sexuality which stands for only erotic attraction and passionate intermingling. Sex is the real act of getting sublime pleasure. It has no restrictions as it happens in the case of Meenakshi and Amrita. There is no guilt, no discomfort and no attitude of remorse in the mind of Meenakshi in her relationship with Amrita. Meenakshi herself says:

Why does it make you sick? Why should it? Because I belong to the same sex? Is that my only sin? There is nothing abnormal about my feeling for you.(44)

In Sultry Days, apart from the presentation of the relationship between husband and wife in the form of Deb and Nisha, Shobha De has also presented several other relationships which are extremely important in the plot-construction of the novel. Sultry Days deals with role of power and prestige and money and influence in the making of human relationships in
modern times. It is a unique kind of novel in which human relationships have been observed from men’s perspectives. After knowing the reality of her husband Deb, Nisha decides to spend life in her own terms and she frankly blames Yaswantbhai for the changes she noticed in Deb. She is now independent and she seeks to have a link with a common man and common woman especially people belonging to the middle-class. She has sympathy in her mind for those people also who are underprivileged and underdogs of society. She reveals her mind about her relationship with common people when she has come to see Deb in the hospital:

   All sorts of pictures flashed through my mind; I thought of the wives who wake up at 5 a.m., to start cooking for their husbands so that the lunch could be ready at 8.30 – the time the dabawallah arrived at the doorstep to pick up the lunch box. And I wondered what sort of lives these couples had? Did they communicate or merely talk.(866)

   Nisha’s relationship with Yaswantbhai is completely changed when she discovers the new personality of Yaswantbhai. Yaswantbhai a well-known underworld don. He has been involved in several criminal cases. He has also habit of keeping several mistresses. Shobha De has masterfully projected the relationship between Yaswantbhai and his mistresses boldly.
For example, the relationship between Yashwantbhai and Pramila has been presented in fascinating as well as compassionate manner. Pramila is a woman and she got divorce from her husband. She belongs to Nagpur. She comes to Bombay in order to seek new life. She is also a poetess. She has also left her two daughters and now she realizes herself ‘free’ in every respect. She is free from the cultural loads of the married life and she has now no responsibility to bear the burden of motherhood. In Bombay, she comes in contact with Yashwantbhai and become one of his mistresses. She becomes the victim of Yashwantbhai’s lust. He uses her body for his sexual gratification. There is no real love and affection between them. The real conflicts start when Pramila becomes pregnant. Yashwantbhai threatens her not to give birth and he asks her to hide the pregnancy. Here the typical woman like Pramila who has come in the metro from the small town in order to discover new heights of life has been presented. There are several Pramilas in our society who unfortunately come in contact with several Yashwantbhais who victimize innocent women by showing their dreams in sunlight.

The relationship between Pramila and Yaswantbhai deos not everlast because it has no sense of morality, cultural outlook and social sanctions. Pramila decides to expose Yasawantbhai; she takes the help of Nisha and her mother in exposing Yashwantbhai’s real character and his intention publicly.
Her existence in Bombay makes her to understand the reality of fast-changing cosmopolitan culture which is supposed to be the main theme and motive of projections of the novelists.

Shohba De’s much appreciated novel *Snapshots* deals with a variety of human relationships. The six main characters of the novels Aparna, Rashmi, Reema, Noor, Swati and Surekha are involved in several kinds of relationships in the novel. Apart from the presentation of the relationship between husband and wife, Shobha De, as it is always usual with her, discusses the extra-marital relationships which have become the feature of modern society. The novel consists of fourteen chapters in which the relationships of these six women with different men have been portrayed in fascinating manner. Apart from presenting the relationship between husband and wife between Aparna and Prem, Reema and Ravi, Shobha De has also highlighted the pre-marriage and post-marriage extra affairs of these women in detailed manner. Aparna is a married woman. She has good relationship with her husband Prem in the beginning. But during her marriage and after her marriage also, she is not able to leave her link with Rohit because her past memories always hurt her too much. These past memories come in her mind chronologically. Urbashi Barat remarks on the relationship between Aparna and Rohit in these words:
Her thoughts and memories swing back and forth without regard to chronology. This is of course typical of the way in which the human mind works (as Virginia Woolf pointed out in “Modern Fiction”) but it is also characteristic of De’s technique here, to enable her to indicate that the individual can never free herself from her past, and that there is in fact no dividing line between past, present and future.(249)

Aparna’s divorce from her husband Prem is the result of her link with Rohit. Even after her marriage she was not able to break up her memories with Rohit. The same condition we find in the case of Reema, Reema is also a married woman. She is illicitly involved with her brother-in-law. She enjoys more in the company of brother-in-law and less in the company of her husband. On the other hand, the relationship between Rashmi and her customers is more vital to her. She is the part of high-profile prostitution in which there is more play of the game of money and lust and there is least use of emotions and human sentiments. She wants to possess manly power because she wants to show the world that she is not inferior in the world of glamour in terms of physical response.

Swati, who has also been divorced from her husband, is more involved in illicit relations with other people. She is such a lady for whom passion and
glamour are more important than her human emotions and sentiments. Her relationship with Nawaz continues even after her marriage with Balbir. But her relationship with Nawaz does not provide any kind of comfort in emotional terms as well as moral terms. She reveals her mind:

Do you think I don’t know how much all of you despise me? But you know what? I think you are jealous. You with your bleak little mediocre lives. Playing safe and yet cheating. (210)

After breaking from her husband Balbir, she gets physical fulfillment in the arms of Nawaz but her life is still the victim of moral deprivation, anguish and anxiety. Shobha De shows that no human relationship continues in this world which lacks the role of emotion, devotion, understanding and respect. Urbashi Barat writes:

No relationship is fulfilling in Shobha De’s world, least of all the sexual, though material prosperity may be attainable. (248)

Like her another novel *Starry Nights* also, Shobha De has presented woman-woman relationship for many reasons. For instance, Surekha does not find herself easy and usual in her relationship with men. She finds more comfort and satisfaction with other women. Shobha De’s projection of woman to woman relationship shows how modern society is growing and
altering day by day in the wake of modernity. Woman like Surekha follows the footprints of Meenakshi and Amrita by involving herself with other woman physically, emotionally and psychologically.

Madhu Malti Adhikari remarks once again about the conflict between tradition and modernity in the formation of human relationship in the novel:

In *Snapshots*, the six friends disregard male power totally by negating the norms of traditional female behavior prescribed by patriarchy. In fact, they establish that the things men can do, women can do better. Being strong physically and intellectually, they hold the reins of power firmly in their hands. Shobha De very rarely allows her female protagonists to become powerless creatures. In her novels, it becomes increasingly evident that man’s power-status is fragile and his position can be destabilized consciously. His loss of power is undeniably visible through his incapability to dwarf, maim or victimize women for his personal gains. The females of *Snapshots* create their own moulds and music.(257-258)

In *Second Thoughts*, Shobha De seems to return to the basics of Indian culture by portraying Maya, a typical Bengali girl in very conflicting
situation. Shobha De, apart from portraying the relationship between the husband and the wife in the form of Ranjan and Maya, she is also interested to portray the relationship between Maya and Nikhil which seems more natural and realistic and less imaginative. She is not able to accommodate in Bombay, because all the time her mother-in-law passes comments on them. Ranjan is not able to relate with Maya because of her orthodox mother who is the typical representative of mother-in-law. Ranjan lacks the real emotion and passion. He fails to fulfil the physical demands of Maya. It is a reason that Nikhil Verma finds a place in her life. Maya establish her relationship with Nikhil Verma. Her attitude changes and she finds new joy in her life. She expresses her joy in these words, “I wanted my insides to perform a wild dance while a mangy camel sauntered down the beach carrying me atop”. (ST 74)

Nikhil Verma encourages her to do something spontaneous in her life. He stops her to brood. He carries her to the beach of Bombay, which is the symbol of free-life and spontaneity. Maya’s relationship with Nikhil is quite natural because she is a dejected wife, such a wife who has a very passive husband who does not care for her emotional fulfillment. In the beginning, Maya does not long for sexual desire with Nikhil. She likes having Nikhil around her. Her loneliness has been eradicated by Nikhil’s presence in her
life. Nikhil inspires her to get something new in life. Nikhil wins the confidence of Maya and takes her to the beach and shows new way of life, “It was a kiss that involved Nikhil’s entire being. A kiss so focused, so complete”. (ST 268)

She unburdens her heart before Nikhil. She says to Nikhil, that she is married to Ranjan through an arranged marriage because of the wish of her mother. She explains her views before Nikhil:

Now here we were locked together in a relationship that did not satisfy either of us. He obviously longed to be on his own, leading the life he had become so accustomed to as a student and then as a promising bank executing bank executive living by himself. And I longed for the perfect romantic companion-if such a creature existed at all outside my imagination. (ST 252)

Nikhil is the typical representative of aristocratic culture. He grabs an opportunity by establishing physical relationship with Maya. On the other hand, Maya thinks that her dreams are realized in her relationship with Nikhil. But fate plays the domineering role in her life when she discovers that Nikhil has illicit relationship with many women and she is one of her victims. Nikhil takes the advantage of limitations and weaknesses of such women who are
living bored in their married life. Alka Sexena rightly comments on the relationship between Nikhil and Maya:

Nikhil takes advantage of the limitations and weaknesses of lonely ladies and Maya is just an addition to his endless list. For him, such relations are only a stop-gap arrangement before the formal, recognized nuptial.(269)

Maya’s dream has been shattered once again because she has been trapped by Nikhil. Her relationship with Nikhil does not everlast, because she is not a cheap kind of women. She was in search of true companionship for herself. But she has been caught in the cobweb of extra-marital relation which is bound to be failed. She would like to find an alternative for her husband in Nikhil but Nikhil is a typical womanizer ready to exploit the opportunity.

In the projection of human relationships in her novels, Shobha De has made an attempt to study the human behavior in the context of fast-growing and fast-changing Indian society. In India, human relationships such as husband-wife relationships, lover-beloved relationships, mother-son relationships, mother-daughter relationships, man to man relationships and woman to woman relationships are seen and observed in pious perspectives.
There is more role of devotion, love, affection, mutual understanding, respect for each other and less role of materialism in the formation of these relationships. But, Shobha De has portrayed in different perspectives by showing here the basics and values of morality and social norms are changing everyday and everywhere. Her characters like Karuna, Meenakshi, Mikki, Alisha, Maya, etc., on the one hand and on the other hand Prem, Yashwantbhai, Ranjan, Nikhil, Binny, etc., are not able to achieve the sublime heights of human relationships. They fail in the real freedom of their lives because they have no faith in the piousness of their relationships. Further, Shobha De has discussed many burning issues—the role of new women, the existence of new women, freedom of women and above all, women in our ‘new’ society by portraying different kinds of human relationship.