CHAPTER – 5

A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS SECOND THOUGHTS, SISTERS AND STARRY NIGHTS

The advent of feminist thought in the beginning of twentieth century has been a landmark in the history of literature. A very considerable number of gifted women writers were encouraged to attempt their career as writers. The success of movement was so tremendous and writers’ gifts were so various that the world of fiction was utterly feminized. At the international level, this era was being admired for the common tendency to represent the world from women's point of view. The feminist writers of this era ignore the tendency and tradition of nineteenth century novelists as George Eliot and George Sand to assume the masculine superiority and to write with a masculine authority. The opinion in this decade was to shed masculine disguise and the feminist writers preferred the task of presenting the world in feminine terms. In their novels, they delineated the man woman relation including all the aspects of human life from the special vantage print of humankind. This trend and method of thinking created a new phenomenon and brought a new sensitiveness and dimension to the world of English fiction.
During the recent years, the novelists have prepared a mental background to peep deep down in characters’ personality and dissect their various activities as well as mental and intellectual traits. The impact of such tendencies in the novels is indebted to the development of science of psychology during the period after Second World War. But the works of Sigmund Freud fired the novelists’ fancy and such tendencies rooted in the heart and mind of the novelists in full swing. They wore high stimulated studying the translated the versions of famous works like The Interpretation of Dreams, Wit and its Relation to Unconscious and Psychology of Everyday. These works prepared the stable and genuine background to explain the vast field of the subconscious and unconscious. By those provocations, the novelists were enable to dwell and probe more and more within the minds of their characters. The impressive and shaking influence of Freud and other contemporary literary persons sustained the general breakdown of Victorian age and its moral attitudes. Such successful efforts were essentially responsible for the advent of new era, which is accused to prepare the background and phenomenon for moral attitude pre-occupied with sex which is one of most dominant features of inter war novels. The novelists encouraged with new force and
mental traits are considered for responsible for responsibility of the contemporary interest in morbid tendency and conduct.

Through the changed and refined mental and intellectual force, the women novelists like Virginia Woolf, Dorothy M. Richardson, Katherine Mansfield made successful efforts to change the spirit of common people so that they may question and enquire everything before accept as granted fact. They were the pioneers in the field of writings in which they seem determined to delve deep into the personality of their characters. These novelists began to device the thematic structure, which was obsessed with events and circumstances closely related to women characters. These women characters are portrayed possessing the spirit, which intends to enquire and question that characterize the conscious and subconscious mind. The characters are exhibited to be cautious of their existence. This new trend of writing was necessarily obeyed in the writings of women novelist with reference to their women characters in the novels. This feature of characterized as the self-identity of women. These terms implies that women began to aspire of their recognition based on their own merits and significance.

In the post independence fiction of our country, the novelists seem to draw their attention to delineate contemporary problems of men
and women. The feminist writers projected the various themes pertaining individual consciousness. Though their impressive writings, they did their best to change the cultural image and method of thinking. Shobha De had deep and wide perception of Bombay cinema and the world of modeling which exhibit the phenomenon in which human values are shattering rapidly. She started her career as a journalist in 1970 and later on became a well-reputed feminist writer. She emerged on the literary scene of Indian fiction dealing with the vital aspects of existence and survival in a high-class society of India. In her novels, she describes the various aspects of the environment in which new modern women may exist and seek their own identity. Dealing this ambitious aspect of human life, she provided us the novels, which are occupied with the theme of overpowering materialism, lack of spirituality and resulting inner conflict, the lack of identity of women and crumbling moral values.

In the Vedic and Pre-Vedic age, women were regarded dignified and respected if they were passive in nature and accepted the dominance of men in the society. But the women for whom Shobha De is devoted are modern Indian women who are active in nature and are shown striving for their own domination. They violate the norms and ideals established by mythic models from the *Ramayana* and *Purana* like Sita, Savitri and
Gandhari: "She becomes shy, gentle as a person and faithful as a wife and selfless, loving and thoughtful as a mother."

Due to successful efforts of feminist writers, we find degradation in our moral values because the environment, in which we live, is absolutely sophisticated and confused. In this world, we are living like the confused armies who struggle and clash in the darkness of ignorance. Having been utterly confused, we are losing human values and ideals. The female characters, in the novels of feminist writers like Shobha De, are shown being humiliated and suppressed in their social, economic and cultural life but in later on, they succeed to make impressive efforts to realize and establish their own virtues.

Following the traditional norms, the writers raise various contemporary problems in their works but many times, they don't care to give proper solution. Seeing their indifferent attitude, sometimes it may be said that they try to escape from the misery of the world. But the feminist writers like Shobha De contributed a lot to seek women's identity and search for identity had been a popular theme in the fictions. In their fiction, they delineated various problems related to women. They drew their attention to portray the problems of the place of woman in society, true belonging and place in marital relationship. Shobha De presented the
women characters choosing form the realistic world. The story and trend, which is found in De's novels, are derived from contemporary environment as well as from her own experiences. Her women characters are exhibited having strong and dominating characters and taking bold decisions so that they survive in the society and establish their domination and identity.

The western feminist movement fired people's fancy and its burning ideas changed the entire background of women’s psychology. Shobha De is regarded as a postcolonial writer who succeeded to bring an awakening of the self and who provoked women to seek individual identity. Many other female writers are driven by the motto and ideals of feminist campaign and try to experience the different traits of women’s psychology. The feminist writers like Shobha De project and explain the needs, ambitions and struggles, which inevitably accompany the miserable and unfortunate life of a woman. The feminist literature violate and condemn in which she is devoid of love, respect and authority. The colonial culture shows no interest in women's welfare and progress individually. It seems to allow masculine power to suppress, exploit and humiliate women's feelings as well as their values. They are utterly controlled and driven by male members of the family who are not willing
to accept their significance and authority in any walk of life. Feminism is
the weapon which provides protection and various rights: "It is only with
the rise of feminist consciousness that the woman began to be seen as a
survivor, a person in her own right rather than only a role of function,
growing successfully from exploitation, subjugation and victimization to
become what Margaret Atwood terms a creative non victim."²

In the twenty first century, we witness the Indian English literature
widely changed from that of found in the period when it established its
food- hold in Commonwealth literature. Today we find rapid change in
social, cultural and moral norms of the society. Shobha De seems
interested in delineating the vital aspects of existence and survival in
high-class society of India. In her novels, she throws light on shattering
human values in such high-class society. Her novels include the
description of over-powering materialism, lack of spirituality, the
resulting inner conflict, lack of identity of women and the crumbling
moral values. In her novels, Shobha De intends to portray the genuine
picture of modern Indian women. The modern Indian are born in the
atmosphere where there is confusion and bewilderment all around them.
They are shown fighting boldly for survival and self identity. In their
social, economic and cultural life, they are humiliated at several
occasions. In the end, they are exhibited compromising and realizing their existence.

Unlike other writers, Shobha De presents not only problems of women and their search for identity but enables them to find a solution of their problems. Many writers are found interested in delineating women’s various problems such as their place in society as well as in marital relationship. But they are unable to offer any solution. In the novel ‘Starry Nights’ Shobha De creates the phenomenon in which protagonist is found struggling to seek her identity. Shobha De narrates the problems of the place of woman in society. She also portrays her true belonging and her place in marital relationship. She does not leave the problems utterly unsolved. She succeeds to offer expected solutions to the problem and her woman characters take bold decisions to survive in their real life.

Shobha De draws her attention to create a suitable environment in which her protagonists may easily succeed to seek identity and find fulfillment by utilizing their different powers and capabilities. In her novel 'Starry Nights' Shobha shows how Aasha Rani, the central character survives herself from disastrous and utterly ruined situation. Having been extremely ambitious woman, her mother doesn’t hesitate to push her to the gluttony of blue films so that she may raise her physical
status. Adopting the modern attitude in her life, she followed the western conduct and manner of open sex and entered the world of cinema. Aasha Rani reaches up to the brim of destruction but Shobha De exhibits that in her critical stage of life, she did not lose heart. Through her bold and sensible efforts, she succeeds to establish a real identity. Shobha De intends to suggest that having been surrounded by many complicated and unfavourable circumstance, a woman may gain satisfaction and fulfillment.

The protagonist in the novel is ‘Aasha Rani’ who is well reputed as a beautiful film star. She is badly influenced by the unsuccessful marital relation of her parents. The unfortunate event distorted her early life. Her father doesn’t care for Aasha Rani and her mother and leaves them to suffer and to face challenges. So Aasha Rani and her unfortunate sister are unable to get emotional security. In her helplessness, Aasha Rani’s mother makes plan to settle Aasha Rani through blue film. Afterwards she was thirst in the world of cinema through sex. In the cross-world of cinema, she tries to brighten her career but she could not understand that she was leading to destroy her future career. Aasha Rani’s mothers goes in the contact of big personalities of cinema so that she may get good roles. In the opinion of social psychologists, the family plays very
significant role to form the personality. The warmth, security and intimacy that is experienced by a child is responsible to make or mar the future. Having been deprived of such experiences, Aasha Rani develops the feeling of hatred for men. She puts all the men folk in the same category and warms them to beat at their own game.

In order to fulfill her ambition, Aasha Rani goes in the contact of Kishanbhai who having been a small film distributor crossed the limit of a cultured man and exploits her physically. Later on he was fascinated towards her and gave her a place inside his heart. Aasha Rani was not destined to devote herself a particular person. Her ambitious spirit stimulated her to seek a personality, which may lead her to the top of the success. She estimated her bright future in the hands of Akshay Arora, a top star of cinema. Watching his top position in the industry, his aristocrat manners and high position, Aasha Rani was infatuated towards him. Later she realized comfort and satisfaction in his company. In order to fulfill her ambition, she goes in the contact of Akshay Arora, a top star of cinema. She realizes that it is her infatuation that draws her towards him. She is highly influenced by his top position in the film industry, his aristocratic manners and high standard of living. Having been highly ambitious, she decides to modernize her life by being in the contact of
modern and aristocratic men like Arora. In her real life, she is deprived of true love and sympathy. That is why she wants to seek shelter from someone. She has lost faith in all her relatives because they were quite indifferent to her. She doesn’t want to be driven by them because their behaviour towards her was utterly selfish. In her fancy, she could not analyze the fact that people involved in the film industry are victim of inferior tendency and outlook. Akshay Arora already married with Malini, begins to enjoy the both worlds. For the sake of marriage, Malini had given up her career as a Ghazal Singer and now she is planning to get Aasha Rani out of their marital life. For this she takes the help of her friend, Rita. In order to humiliate Aasha, Malini rebukes her bitterly but Aasha is confident of her love and blames Malini that she is responsible to break their marital relations. Aasha blames that Malini’s relation could not continue because she doesn’t greet Akshay properly and also doesn’t give proper celebration in bed. Malini concludes that all the women are fool and all the men are animals.

Observing the crisis in his marital life, Akshay decides to be indifferent towards Aasha and considers Aasha’s presence destructive or tormenting. On the other hand, Aasha’s love for Akshay is real and firm. She does not have bad feeling even when he rebukes and slaps her. In this
disturbing and embarrassing situation too, she remains silent and begs his pardon. Her love transcends the earthly love but later on she realizes much humiliated and feels ill.

In her extreme depression and dejection, Aasha goes in the contact of Seth Amirchand who is deeply impressed by her. She succeeds to get sympathy and favour from him in the abundant measure. Having been a Member of the Legislative Assembly, he provides her sufficient money and also helps her to get into films. In order to establish her identity, Aasha Rani tries to take shelter in many men’s bosom because Indian women find themselves helpless in the lack of sustenance and sympathy on the part of men. They may be economically independent but their fulfillment requires protection and favour of men. Passionate feelings of Aasha could not be quenched in the company of Akshay Arora so she longs for the protection to be found from someone else. In her dejection, she recollects the days when she was a child and was provided love, sympathy and protection from her mother.

In her changed situation, she is unable to forget those lovely days spent in the company of Akshay who has now changed his attitude towards her. Once more she manages to visit Akshay to overcome him. But her friend Linda advises Aasha not to run after him and to have some
dignity in her. Following her advice, she gives up the idea to meet Akshay. But she is lost in the pleasant memories in his company. Asha manages to meet Abhijit Mehra, the only son of a top industrialist Amrish Mehra. At several steps of her life, Aasha is unsuccessful so she has become quite bored and dejected. She is losing her enthusiasm and finds herself unable to work hard in three shifts. She wishes to lead a normal life outside the film world. She does not want to be disturbed anymore. She begins to long for marriage and parenthood. Although Abhijit Mehra is deeply interested in the charming personality of Aasha but she neglects him saying that he should try to find love in his own family.

Aasha is so obsessed with the memories of happy days with Akshay that she finds herself unable to relive herself from it. One day Aasha catches Akshay suddenly and begs him to spend a hour with her. Having been humiliated, she doesn’t hope and tries to establish some sweet relation with him. She is lost in the world of imagination. She has become crazy confident of her sincere love towards him and is rigid to be the mother of his son. She is even ready to leave her career so that she may marry him. Unaware of his tendency and outlook, she makes funny plans to marry Akshay but Sethji warns her against the reality and persuades her to fulfill her whim.
In the mean time, her mother interferes in her life and enquires all about this. But this time Aasha becomes rebellious and makes it clear that she will lead her own life according to her own will. Now Aasha is frustrated from all the sides. Her plans related to Akshay have been fruitless because he refuses all the interviews and doesn’t give any explanation in these matters. Aasha makes unsuccessful effort to commit suicide, which was not the solution of her problems. Now Aasha establishes relationship with Abhijit who has created soft corner for Aasha in his heart. He is much co-operative and offers her a holiday in a distant place where they spent lovely hours without any disturbance.

To enjoy their life, they decide to depart for New Zealand where they are destined to confront his father. He was shocked seeing his son in the company of Aasha. Knowing all about them, he manages to relieve Abhijit from the clutches of Aasha. He makes successful effort to buy Aasha’s love on the basis of a big sum of amount. Aasha doesn’t hesitate to agree with the proposal because she doesn’t have real faith in Abhijit. She was utterly dedicated to Akshay Arora.

Aasha Rani is absolutely confused and troubled and decides to leave India for Wellington. Her solitary life in Wellington appears something positive when she is confronted by an admirer who proposes
to marry her. Aasha Rani has no choice but to accept the proposal. Now she is turned into Mrs. Jammy (Jay) Phillips. Now she has broken all the relations with cinema world. She is passing a pleasant and satisfied life in the company of her husband, a farmer. She never tries to remember her previous events, which ruined her career. Now she feels that she is absolutely carefree, satisfied and fulfilled being. She is willing to forget her past in India because the memory of India torments her mind. With the passes of time, she is gifted with a beautiful girl child who is named Sasha. Her hunger to be the mother of a child is quenched and she realizes that her life is filled with every happiness of the world. She is overwhelmed with the joy and fulfillment, which she acquires from her motherhood. She decides that she will establish the most beautiful relation between herself and her daughter.

Aasha Rani is unable to guess that some more complications of her life are still awaiting in future. Once her husband proposes her to visit his in-laws house. He wants to meet family members in the company of Aasha and their daughter Sasha. Hearing the proposal, she bursts out furiously saying that she never wants to go back India. She wants to keep away Sasha form the contact of her own mother. She wishes to bring her daughter up with unlimited love and affection. But Aasha has to
compromise with her husband and they come to India where Aasha finds herself in changed situation of the family. Her father had returned home driven by circumstances and she could not resist her to show mercy and sympathy towards him. She is caught in strange circumstances. She finds her mother in changed situation. She has lost her previous dictatorship and depends upon the mercy of Sudha, Aasha’s sisters. Sudha is well skilled and has begun her career in the Bombay cinema.

When Aasha was passing her days in Madras, she happens to receive an invitation as the chief guest for the Mahurat of a film from her acquaintance Rita. She goes to attend the occasion. In the studio, when she is surrounded by the blaze of flash bulbs, she becomes highly fascinated and forgets completely that she had ever been away from the world of cinema. She feels that she has come to the world only to become of film star. She is fascinated seeing the atmosphere inside the studio. The studio was filled with the people and they were trying to touch stars, they were getting near them and smelling them. She repents that she has lost all these charms and splendour of life. She compares her days in New Zealand to the present atmosphere. She seems to repent for her in hilarious state of life in New Zealand. In New Zealand she was quiet alien. She succeeded to adapt herself in the atmosphere of New Zealand
very hardly. Among many unfavourable circumstances, she adjusted herself and accepted many norms and values of life. In spite of doing all these things, she could not find the peace and harmony of life. While living in New Zealand, she was not so much worried. But here in Madras, she realizes that she was largely cheated and ruined. Now back in Madras, she concludes that she didn’t belong there. Here, at her birth place, she can enjoy all the festivals like Holi, Diwali and perform all the rituals like other people all around her. She is lost in imagination of her happy days in her family as well as charming atmosphere of the film industry.

Aasha Rani makes her mind to stay in India. She seems to be bored of the foreign life style, which is full of suspense, doubt, gloom and misery. She wants to be associated with film society while live in India. Jay, her husband, doesn’t prevent her from doing so. He sets out for Wellington along with Sasha. In his opinion, he should give opportunity to Aasha to fulfill her own desires and ambitions. He wishes to provide all the facilities to Aasha so that she may reach the top of achievements. Aasha has begun to try her fortune in Indian film industry after a long period of five years. She realizes that the atmosphere of Bombay Cinema has changed greatly. Now she is unable to find the roles of a heroine. She
gets the roles of mother or mother in laws. Seeing this situation, she is deeply shocked and begins to think of plans so that she may get main roles in the film industry. In order to fulfill her ambition, she doesn’t hesitate to have an adulterous relationship with the young producer Jojo. But in the film industry, she is unable to find peace and solace because she is informed by her daughter that her husband is making an affair with Nanny. Hearing this news, she is utterly lost in gloom and dejection. She realizes that her hopes and ambitions are fully shattered. She finds that every time there is a man who is responsible for her bad luck.

In her extreme dejection, she decides to find out the truth about her husband, Jay. Knowing the truth, she is drowned in the ditch of agony and frustration. She accepts the reality that her marriage with Jay is now over. During her journey back from Wellington, she is lost in the world of imagination. She contemplates that she belongs to nowhere in the world. Upto now she could not know how to solve the problem of her existence and belongingness. She is unable to find out her real place in the world. She want to know where she belongs, who her relatives are and for whom she lives. She wants to seek the man who needs her presence in his life. After a long brooding, she decides to land in London where she can get a job. In the changed circumstances, she is comforted
with Sonali who is a high-class call girl of London’s political and upper class society. Unfortunately, she is dropped into the hands of Tamilian terrorists. In the film industry, she observed the reality, which ruins human values and ruins the foundation of culture. Having been fully terrorized, she escaped from the horrible and turbulent industry life and came back to Madras where she receives warm welcome from her family members. In the family, she found her younger sister struggling to make name as a star. Aasha Rani becomes upset realizing that her sister is unable to establish herself as a star. Her Appa encouraged and provoked her to restart her career because Aasha Rani was hopeful and virtuous enough to establish her own identity. She was stimulated to restart their old family film studio in Madras, which did a lot to improve her career. Now she has her own existence, belongingness and opportunity by which she succeeded to fulfill her ambition of life. She got opportunity to utilize her creative power, capability and talent. Now she has become bold and strong enough to fight against all unfavourable circumstances. She never tried to escape from the responsibilities of life and to yield to the problems. She was determined to fight and struggle so that she may choose the right way to lead a prosperous, peaceful and ideal life. The delineation of such stories formulates the fact that woman novelists
portray the accurate picture of society and family. Through her personal experiences, Shobha De succeeds to project the realities, which are apparent in day-to-day life. In this reference, we may quote the Rosalind Miles: "The novels has been and is a prime era for acts of self definition both personal and social."\(^3\)

In the novel, **Starry Nights**, Shobha De is indifferent of the tradition, which former novelists adopted to delineate various issues of the society. In order to portray the harsh realities of society, she goes beyond the threshold of family and tradition. She exhibits that Indian women are trying their fortune outside the boundaries of their houses. In the novel, we are introduced with a female character who, does her best to struggle and survive in a sex-starved society. The novelist portrays the central character Aasha Rani whose soul is often stirred and the story of her sexploitation is capable to move every heart. She becomes the victim of male dominated society. Wherever she goes, she is exploited by a man living in the society, which utterly sex-starved. Through the crisis in her life, she is confronted with many producers, directors, heroes and cameramen by whom she is badly treated. Everyone is curious to cooperate and sympathies her only to fulfill his individual interest. Every time and everywhere she used, soiled and exploited.
The selfish and cruel behaviour of Aasha’s mother cannot be justified in the atmosphere of Indian culture. In fact, she is alone responsible for Aasha Rani’s misery and misfortune. She seems to bargain her daughter’s physical attraction and thrusts her to be the bed-partner of producers and distributors. She doesn’t hesitate to force her into the orgy of blue films. People of the film world were interested only in the physical beauty of Aasha Rani.

Aasha Rani seems to have uncontrollable desire for sex but it cannot be justified. It was not her natural flow. In her childhood, she is badly influenced by unsuccessful marital relation. Afterwards she was misled by her own mother. In further life, she develops the feelings of vengeance for the male world because she always watches the misconduct and tyranny of cruel male society. She herself is physically exploited by male world many times since her childhood. She has watched her mother being mistreated by her father. She hatefully remembers her childhood when she was sexually assaulted by her uncle. In her childhood, she had watched poverty and starvation. She was brought up by her single parent and that mother was so cruel that she left her fifteen years old daughter among the people of the stardom to bruise and batter her feminine. In order to make her a film star, she ruined her
completely. Her sister Sudha was very cruel and jealous of her. She watches her marital relation being shattered. In this way, she faces and endures a series of shocks one after another.

It is Kishanbhai who breaks Aasha’s virginity at first time. He suspects that Aasha is not as innocent as she looks outwardly and begins to lead her astray. Although Kishanbhai is responsible for her physical exploitation but her mental torment is related to the bad experience of her childhood. Due to unsuccessful marital relation between her parents, Aasha Rani is deprived of all the pleasure, comfort, love and affection which a child gets under the protection of her parents. In the presence of Kishanbhai, she reveals the fact: “you don’t know about my childhood. I never had anything to play with-no toys nothing. He’d heard the story before. The father who had deserted them, the mother who had been left with three children to raise. The poverty, deprivation, the struggle.”

Aasha Rani is not willing to act in the hateful blue film. But it is her mother who forcefully thrust her into it. Once she reads an article concerning her acting in the blue film and becomes drowns into the ditch of repentance and deep mental torment. She thinks: “nobody had asked her whether or not she wanted to do those sickening films and nobody had listened when she’d cried herself hoarse protested.” Her mother
tries to persuade her forcibly: “Don’t be stupid. These films will not be shown in the theatre. Nobody will know you have done them. There’s a lot of money involved. I’ve committed on your behalf. Think of it like going to the doctor’s. Don’t you allow him to examine your body? These people are the same. They see bodies all the time. It does not make any difference. Close your eyes and think of other things. Thinks of your poor sister and your amma struggling to make you a big star. Do you know Sudha hasn’t paid her fee?”

Aasha Rani’s marital relation with Jay does not prove satisfactory. After coming in India with Jay and her daughter, she decides to stay here to try her fortune and to look after her family. Sasha, her daughter doesn’t want to live in India. Jay departs to Wellington with his daughter. Aasha Rani’s plans fail because in India, she is capable to get the role of mothers by which she is not satisfied. Here she is doomed to face so many calamities among which the death of Akshay is very significant. She receives telephones from her daughter who feels lonely there because her father spends most of time with Nanny. This amazing news disturbs Aasha Rani so much that she decides to leave for New Zealand. In New Zealand, her experience is very distressing when her own daughter prefer Nanny to her. She does not like the sari which Aasha was wearing and
screams to cling to Nanny. “Don’t touch me. I am not your daughter. I don’t want to be your daughter.”

Watching unusual behaviour on the part of her daughter, Aasha Rani becomes extremely abnormal and depressed. At this, her husband comes forward to console her and discloses all about his affair with Alice: “I love the girl. She loves me. And she loves Sasha. Things just worked out that way. I hadn’t planned it. I love you too, but differently. We’ve grown apart. We’ve drifting off for quite a while now. I guess it was Sasha who was the common factor. Now that she’s older and has a mind of her own. We should allow her to choose the sort of life, she wants herself.” This unbearable incident left Aasha Rani in Agony and torment and she could not gather courage to confront her family with the socking news. She is now facing the problems of her amma and appa. Having been completely broken down and lonely, she decides to land in London and lead a life of an exile. In London also, she becomes the victim of so many cruelties on the part of many people. She has to face many quick incidents one after another. Sonali gives her a job. In her second encounter, she meets with Gopal Krishan who threatens her to keep Bhaskaran in her room. Later on, she watches the murder of Bhaskaran. Lastly, Sonali makes arrangement of her return to India.
After coming back to India, she finds out that Sudha is facing a very horrible situation due to an accident. At her confrontation with Sudha, Aasha Rani finds her being full of repentance. She seems to accept that all her misfortune is the consequence of her own sins committed against Aasha. Aasha suggests her not to worry about the past. She consoles that she will not leave her company and will do her best to reopen appa’s studio. She decides to make joint efforts so that they may get success in the field. In her leisure time, Aasha Rani imagines that she can brighten her future with the help of her daughter, Sasha. She thinks that she may make her daughter a superstar. But Aasha Rani doesn’t imagine that she will bring up her daughter in the manner which her own mother adopted to bring herself up. She will not adopt the way that may ruin the prestige and career of her laughter. Throughout her life, she had faced so many calamities, disappointment including the physical exploitation and failure of her marriage, but lastly, she seems to survive with beautiful dreams for the future with the co-operation of her daughter, she possess the optimistic notion to conquer every unfavourable circumstance.

Aasha Rani who belongs to a small town and dreams to be a film star, succeeds to be sweet heart of millions. She becomes famous widely
and her position creates so many complications in her career. The analysis of her career reveals that at her peak time, she became a super heroine reigning as the queen of the film world. Having mode so many affairs, she remains lonely and yearns for a family. In spite of her married life, she is unable to enjoy marital bliss. Being deeply rooted to the film world, she finds herself unable to acquire family warmth. The novel discloses the fact that the film world is not a secure place for the women because it is filled with perfidies, glamour, crime, lies, deceits and sexual exploitation. Shobha De is well acquainted with the crisis found in the film world so she is able to portray it well.

Although the novel becomes the subject of serious critical appraisals, it should be admitted that De’s novel is capable to delineate the realistic picture of hypocrisy, degenerated values, real plight of people belonging to higher society. Such people from higher society successfully hide their real personalities with money and power. The novel seems somewhat unusual because Shobha De is a woman and we are not habituated to listen a woman talking so much about sex so freely and so frankly. But scrutiny of the novel reveals the fact that the novel gets success to depict the modern woman’s search for identity in a male dominated society. Through her bold and transparent language, she
attacks the domination of men in the society in which patriarchal order exists strongly and widely.

**Shobha De** in her novel *Small Betrayals* tells the pathetic story of Amla who is neglected and humiliated in her family because she is born as a girl. The novelist represents the best illustration of gender bias and women's victimization. Having been utterly ignored by the family members, she began to seek the opportunity when she may get her own identity and may get rid of the partiality and tyranny. In the process of getting her recognition, she had to pass a lot of miserable and distressing circumstances. Madhuri, Amla's mother also faced the same situation in the beginning of her career. When Madhuri gave birth to Amla, she was in her mid-forties. Madhuri was quite disturbed and dejected at the birth of Amla because she was her seventh daughter. She blurted out: "Why another girl? I what way did I displeased the goddess this time? I fasted... I prayed... I sacrificed... I even offered my remaining gold bangles. Another son... That's all I asked for." In the span of her life, Amla could not get the opportunity when she may pass her time in the pleasant way. Although she belonged to a large and noisy family, she was forced to spend a lonely and alienated life. Among her family members, only her father could understand the pangs of her wounded heart and turbulent
feelings. In the family, Amla had a vagabond brother named Hiten whom Madhuri loved dearly because he was a boy. In her behaviour and outlook, towards her children, Maduri always showed partiality between boy and girl. She is shown taking the favour of his son, Hiten everytime. If someone rebuked him for any ill-mannered activities, Madhuri always quarrels on his side. She never liked the abuses of her husband to his son: Madhuri would rush out of the kitchen, nostrils flared, to retort, “your only son flesh of your flesh. Blood of your blood. And this is how you treat him.”¹⁰

Due to her silent nature, Amla was endowed with the unique power of observing the things minutely. She always watched everything and happening deeply and never allowed any activity of the person in her company to go unnoticed. In this way, she was an extra-ordinary silent woman. She was a woman of pre-matured thoughts and ideas, so she began to write poetry at an early age. Having been a sincere and sensible man, her father was interested in her studies but she was unfortunate that her mother created obstacles in her way. Untimely death of her father created new problems in her life. Amla had to take a part time job in boutique and she took care of college fee and sundry expenses. Amla often felt helpless and only she longed for a company and help which was
not available to her at the time. She was bearing the load of many responsibilities. All her calamity was due to her female gender. She was often scolded by her mother acutely. “I carried you in my exhausted womb for nine long months, why? Because I wanted another son. I am not lying to you, instead I got you. The least you can do in return is to look after me now that I'm old.”

In her life, Amla had to face irritation, dejection and calamity because in the sorrowful atmosphere of family, she found no one who may co-operate her. She never intended towards immoral conduct and behaviour. That was why she could ever revolt against the partiality and misbehave in her family. When her sisters came to the house with her children, she had to play the role of an attendant. She was given the responsibility to gather resources and to look after all the family members. Amla was aiming to find scholarship, which may create new chances in her life. She wished to relieve herself from the pain and misery of life. She did not pay much attention to her sick mother because she wanted to abandon her in her sickness so that she may grab the opportunity to brighten her career.

Amla was happened to get the company of Srinivasan, a teacher, who was much co-operative and sympathetic towards her. So Amla also
showed respect and honour to him and wanted to continue her study by his help and guidance. For Amla, college had been a place of refuge and peace. Amla wanted to continue her study. In order to fulfill her ambition and to attain peace and harmony in her life, she dreamt a peaceful and suitable place where she may devote her time to study because the atmosphere of her home was quite tense and noisy. She wanted the help of her teacher to seek such favourable place but unfortunately, she could not succeed to find real and hearty co-operation on the part of her teacher, Srinivasan. Showing his immoral conduct, her teacher exploited her physically and ruined her entirely. In the search of her own identity, she had to lose her honour and self-respect.

Another story in the book 'Small Betrayals' is ‘Diwali’, which delineates Kalindi’s psychological longings. Kalindi fails to establish peace and harmony in her marital life. Although, she is utterly devoted to her husband, who is never satisfied with her dedication and performances. Having been an obedient and ideal wife, she spends her whole time to fulfill various responsibilities of the family. Although she is well-qualified woman to find a suitable job but she becomes the victim of traditional thoughts and hypocritical beliefs. She is forced to feel the suffocation within the boundaries of her house. Her husband possesses
the dominating spirit and always fights with her on trivial matters. Kalindi always prefers the comfort and well-being of her husband to her own success and bright career but he is never satisfied with devotion and fulfillment of responsibilities. She is considered as an object to be used according to the wish of the family members. She always realizes her secondary position in the family. After facing the calamity for a long period, she determined to join an office but her husband didn't like this and made the atmosphere of the house quite unbearable to her. Very often, he accuses Kalindi whenever the servant commits slightest mistake in household duties: "You have become big career woman... earning a lot of money."\(^{12}\)

In spite of so many protest and fury on the part of her husband and other family members, Kalindi continued her job and enjoyed the pleasure and satisfaction of her income. Like other wives, she was never dependant on her husband. Amidst is many contradictory and unfavourable circumstances, she succeeded be a model housewife. She made successful efforts to establish her own identity and brighten her career on the basis of her own capabilities, qualities and talent. In her own family, she never got reverence and appreciation which she deserved. Her husband always misestimated her existence and considered
her quite meaningless for the family. Watching her husband's rude and jealous behaviour, she began to exhibit her revolt and anger silently. She deliberately scatters the different household objects such as wet towel, hairbrush and chair so that her husband may be irritated. Her ambition was to gain power and fulfillment in order to relieve herself from tyranny of her husband as well as other members of the family. She began to ignore everything in her surrounding except her goal or ambition. She was determined to do everything, which was necessary to fulfill her aim. She never cared whether she was leading towards wrong or not. She might defy her husband, she might run away from her home, she might ignore everything but she was destined to attain power and other necessary achievements. She doesn't show warm welcome to her husband. Very often, her husband observes her indifferent manner and behaviour: "Everything's the problem. I'm sick of your bulging? Sick of your rudeness, sick of your threats? sick of your accusations."^13

In changing circumstances, Kalindi finds herself comfortable and devoid of burden of misbehave, misfiling and tyranny. Suresh, her husband, becomes quite upset and furious but he is unable to change her wife's attitude towards life and its philosophy. She considered marriage as the ugliest compromise in the world. Suresh decides not to interfere with
his wife's thoughts and actions. So Kalindi realizes herself as a supreme authority which never yields to anyone. One can easily observe the satisfaction, boldness and empowerment inside her. She is overpowered with force, strength and enthusiasm so she decides to celebrate the festival of Diwali in her own way without caring the resentment of other family members.

Karuna, in *Socialite Evenings* is also the protagonist who faces the similar situation in her career. No one comes forward who may co-operate her to make her life fulfilled. Her unfulfilled desires suppressed and suffocated her deeply and violently and she could not succeed to find the remedy of her longing. She became rebellious against the whole system, which was against the well being and progress of women. Having been the product of disastrous, distressing and painful environment, she has become empowered and forced by courage, strength and virtue. Now she does not need any co-operation and aid from anyone around her. She decides to take her decisions herself so that she may acquire and finish the quest for identity. She is capable and virtuous enough to make herself happy, comfortable and fulfilled. Now Karuna is absolutely changed in spirit and attitude. During her early career, she faced only discontentment despair, dejection and depression and she didn't succeed to come up her
expectations. Having been utterly unsatisfied and unsuccessful in her efforts, she adopted the way to struggle and revolt against unjust and improper social order favouring the particular group. She doesn't hesitate to walk on the unreasonable ways in the eyes of society. Karuna comes before us in a new incarnation; she is bold, powerful, and virtuous enough to defy the partial social order and to establish her own identity. Karuna’s sister is suppressed at her hidden qualities and reveals: "You were always the strange one, right from childhood. I couldn’t ever figure you out. I used to think, you were slow or vain or both. But there was always something secretive going on inside your mind that none of us know about. You weren't like the others."

At different stage of her life, Karuna reflects her varied phase and form. In every phase of life, she is found dejected and discontented. In her life before marriage, she shows hatred and jealousy for herself due to her origin in a middle class family. She aspires to be the product of a well-reputed, aristocratic and noble family. After her marriage also, she could not quench her thirst to gain worldly possession and reputation. No one could understand and realize her hunger for smartness and worldly power, her helplenesss at her miserable condition and indifferent behaviour of the people around her. Such distressing condition in her life
compelled her to be disorderly and undisciplined during her school days. So we see that Karuna has been a different girl, a different wife and a different woman so that she may seek opportunities to know about herself. Her family members were often puzzled at her extra-ordinary manners and behaviours. In order to express her rebellious nature, she adopted the modeling profession, which was an attempt to establish her own identity. Having been humiliated at the hands of Anjali, she begins to defy and reflect everyone so that she may take her own decisions free from all the influences. She decides to brighten her career by going to U.S.A., which seemed to her hopeful and supporting. Having been drawn towards the fancy of America, she seeks opportunities to make her whole life fulfilled. In her excitement of new experience, she comments: "This was going to be my brave new world trip. I was going to find out about myself. America was supposed to be my experiments with adulthood. I wanted to take charge, assume responsibility and find decisions."\(^5\)

In the changed circumstance of America, she decides to forget everything behind her and prepares herself to adopt the new phenomenon. She falls in the company of a filmmaker who stimulates her to take her own decisions. She agrees to break the engagement with her boy friend and is utterly drawn towards the possibilities, which are capable to
change her fortune. After coming back to India, when her boy friend visits her to know her decision, she blurted out: "You know-SPACE. I need my own space...I need to find myself."¹⁶

With the rise and fall of the situations, she could not resist herself to marry her boy friend. To her calamity and agony, she was trapped in the net of marriage, which gave a heavy jolt to her ambitious nature. She could not continue her quest for identity on account of her own capability. Now she begins to long for her identity. With her unfulfilled desires, she remains hungry for her fulfillment. She finds herself unable to shake off the bondage of marriage. She is not willing to accept the model of an average Indian wife. She does not like to accept the moral and social norms imposed on her forcibly but she realizes herself helpless in her miserable and tormenting circumstances.

In such a gloomy state of mind, she tries to relieve herself from her suppressing phenomenon and takes refuge in books. Her depression increased when she had to face termination of pregnancy and undergoing of hysterectomy. Her extreme detection and suppression made her utterly upset. Her physical and mental turmoil and disharmony became unbearable to her. Having been completely disappointed, she begins to look for new opportunities and decides to take up a lucrative job by
which she succeeds to earn sufficient money. Watching new hopes in her life, she becomes more industrious and starts to analyze herself with fresh attitude. She concludes that real pleasure of life is found in the freedom of thought and action. In order to acquire peace, joy and harmony in her life, she begins to stick on to the part time job, staying with her parents, fulfilling their needs like a good daughter. Disclosing her independent and ambitious spirit, she comments: "I was looking forward to in my life at that point it was the freedom to do what I wanted."

Karuna had an ambition to enjoy the freedom that is why she rejected the proposal of marriage. She wished to retain her happiness at any rate. She can defy so many norms and ideals if it prevents her from enjoying the freedom and pleasure. Her constant suffering in the beginning of her career empowered her with strength and capability and in changed circumstances; she became over confident and overpowered to decide her own destiny at any rate. Her firmness and determination is apparent when she argues: "But mother, why does security rest with a man? I feel confident now that I can look after myself... I am at peace with myself." Although she wishes to enjoy the company of others who are near and dear but for this sake, she does not agree to destroy her career. She intends to keep herself away the society, which makes her life
miserable and disappointing. She realizes that solitary journey of her life will provide her peace, comfort and satisfaction. Her extra-ordinary behaviour creates so many changes in her activities and feelings, which contributed a lot to decide her bright future. Having been influenced by her appealing sensibility, Ranbir admits: "You are now disgustingly self assured and revolting self sufficient."\textsuperscript{19}

Shobha De provides another novel 'Sisters' whose protagonist Mikki also struggles hard in the quest of identity. In the lack of cooperation and favour within her family and society, she goes through the ordeal of self-assertion and realizes that right kind of freedom and pleasure of life can be derived by taking her decisions own. She is caught in the dilemma whether to be loyal to her family as well as society or to fulfill her individual interests and various needs essential in the course of life. In the novel, Shobha De draws her attention to delineate the inner turmoil of the character. 'Sisters' is an interesting story of two wealthy women who belong to an aristocratic family. They are ambitious enough to compromise with the situations. Their interests and ambitions are colliding with each other so they are involved in an unending rivalry. Mikki, the protagonist is much aggressive and enthusiastic to struggle against the constraints found on the way of a woman and succeeds to
establish her own identity an account of her own struggle and firm decisions.

The untimely death of Mikki's father forced her to leave America and take the charge of industries in Bombay. Mikki had to look after her father's business, which deprived her from her personal freedom. She was too young to bear the heavy charge. In spite of so many complications, she could not relieve herself from the responsibility. Having no alternative, Mikki decides to lead the sprawling industries and take over the tycoons. Alisha, her father's illegitimate child provides her consolation in her lonely and disharmonious life. Mikki had to save the industries from going bankrupt. In order to make her life and position secure and undisputed, she goes in the contact of Binny, a middle-aged man. She decides to be his wife in spite of her deep intention to be independent and liberal. She is still against the inhuman sub-ordination of women and views that they must not be confined within the four walls of the kitchen. Having been bound in the matrimonial relation, she feels pride inside her but she is not willing to lose her freedom as well as her independent feelings.

Mikki was adopting the role of a traditional woman but in her heart and mind there was a sense of revolt not to submit her before someone
else. After sometime, Mikki found that Binny has married only to get her property. His device to marry her even when he was already married. He began to dominate her in many ways. His interference in Mikki's personal life increased day by day and he began to cheek her from taking active part in business. She was bearing his dehumanizing behaviour calmly but he demanded absolute surrender on the part of his wife Mikki. He told her that he needed a wife who stayed at home and looked after her husband obediently. When the situations became unbearable to her she was bound to rebel and defy showing her displeasure and fury, she comments: “I can look after you and look after at least a part of the business. We could work together... I won't have to wait for hours to see you.” Now Mikki began to aspire to get freedom that was why she began to protest against Binny regularly. She does not wish to lead a life which is beyond marital bonds but her aspiration and ambition was impossible to be fulfilled without protest and defiance. When Shobha De's heroines are denied the personal freedom, they are shown turning rebellious. Binny fails to understand and fulfills his wife's feelings and desires so she decides not to co-operate her in the course of life. She cease to consider herself Binny's life partner and makes her mind to define her own destiny and identity.
When the torture and misconduct on the part of Binny becomes unbearable to Mikki, she was forced to create so many complications and challenges which compelled him to ask for divorce. Mikki had to snatch her father's property from the clutches of her husband Binny. In the last part of the novel, Mikki comes before us as a transformed and refined woman who succeeds to snatch her properties from Binny and proves herself as an ideal, matured and successful woman who is capable to look after her business, to take care of her sister Alisha and to establish her own identity by enjoying the freedom of thought and action.

The novel is a successful effort to increase awareness against the partiality, tyranny and domination of men by which Indian women are tortured. This kind of sensitivity and awareness is the consequence of the feminine movement. The real implication of feminism is to give to new direction to creative literature. Before the advent of feminism, the literature seemed to favour men so many women writers realized the need of separate literature that may understand the feelings of women and may speak for the feminine issues and experiences. Such feeling and issues had been earlier misunderstood and distorted in the male dominated society. The women writers give detailed description of the traditions spreading in the patriarchal society. Having been deeply influenced by
the theory and ideals of feminism, women characters in Shobha De’s novels are struggling hard in the quest of their identity. Women, in the modern society, have ceased to be a silent sufferer and have become a hard-core rebel breaking the age-old traditions and ethics of the male-dominated society. Sometimes this protest crosses the limit of morality and women are found out having extra-marital relations. In the novels, Shobha De, many times, is interested in delineating the stories of her own life. Despite so many criticisms, De succeeded to earn name and fame beyond expectation because one can criticize her and hate her but one cannot ignore her. In fact, her novels are popular enough to draw the attention of widespread readers “both men and women from sixteen to ninety.”²¹ In her works, Shobha De appears to be provoked by pervasion hot sex that is why critics don’t agree that she has feminist learning. But Shobha De attacks on these criticisms saying that “It is important for women to talk about it. Our mother endured it silently because it was a taboo subject. Nobody was interested in women’s view on sex. Whether it was erotic poetry or prose, the perspective was always that of man. It is only now that women are expressing the way they feel about this most elementary... aspect of conjugal life. It is a kind of catharsis.”²²
In all her works, Shobha De expresses her warm sympathy for women who are always found struggling for their self-made identity. They want to come out of bondage of domesticity and marriage. Her novel ‘Sisters’ is devised to assure the freedom to live a life of a women’s own choice. The novel is an explosive and fine study in the traumatic experiences of a woman who is bound to confront various complex human situations. The novel covers four years of Mikki’s life and delineates the psychic conflict of a woman protagonist who is caught between a personal self and a society self. She has to take care of her father’s business and at the same time faces and overcomes her inner turmoil. The novel deals with complications, corruption and immorality of the business world in which two wealthy and socialite women are drawn towards unending rivalry due to their ambition and lust. When Mikki heard the news that her father was dead in an air crash, she was only twenty one years old. During the first stage of her life, she was enjoying the bliss and luxury of America but she could not resist herself from taking the charge of her father’s business, which had become on the verge of collapse. She finds herself unable to have the responsibility of any burden that can deprive her personal freedom. But being helpless at
her father’s death, she has to lose the colourful life in America where she enjoyed the first taste of her life.

When Mikki learns that she was a sister of Alisha, her father’s illegitimate child, she becomes quiet sympathetic to her and makes her a partner in the business. Alisha was born of a mistress four months after Mikki. At the first information about her half sister, Alisha, Mikki feels betrayed. None had told Mikki about Alisha before. At this occasion, she creates very bad notion taking her father, “Her father, always distant, now seemed a total stranger. A stranger, who’s led a sneaky double life.” Miki realizes deeply stricken with wonder but she makes successful efforts to control the situation and tries to make friendly relations with Alisha. She also decides to help Alisha but she proves to be quite unfriendly and non co-operative. She seems to be filled with jealousy and hatred towards Mikki. The situations are not favourable inside home as well as at her father’s ‘Hiralal Industries’. Her father was unable to be sufficient careful for his industry and took it to the bankruptcy. He “had made some hasty decisions during the last two years and borrowed heavily. He also got involved in ventures floated by entrepreneurs of dubious character. He lost a great deal of money on his
Malaysian adventure. In other words, H.I. can be described as close to bankruptcy.”

Mikki takes the responsibility to look after her father’s ruined industry and soon realizes that she is surrounded by some unwanted people. Shanay, her cousin, advises her to borrow her fiancé, Navin but Mikki, without any delay, realized that Navin is a putty in his mother’s hand and she is repelled by his lack of self-respect. She immediately breaks the relation with him and seeks other alternatives to improve the condition of the industry. She further realizes that Ramanbhai, her father’s trusted employee, is also cannot be relied upon. He was trying to conceal many necessary facts related to the industry and also he was leading her astray by giving many deceitful explanations. He argued: “Had you been a son, your father might have taken you into his confidence from a young age and guided you properly from the beginning. But as a daughter, all he wanted for you was a good husband—that is all.... My advice is – leave these serious matters to me. I am there to handle them. Trust me. I will guard your interests like a father. But you will make things difficult for yourself if you do things without consulting me.”
When Mikki is aware of the fact that “there are enough vultures waiting to pounce upon” her, she decides to choose a life partner who may help her in looking after the empire of her father. Having been impressed by a middle-aged man, Binny and his aggressive manners, she chooses to marry him. Being a daughter of a famous industrialist, she becomes the dream of many men who were eager to marry her. But Binny, at the first stage of marital life, proves to be hopeful. He succeeds to teach Mikki about the other side of her personality. Amy, an old hand and friend of Mikki tries to show the proper way to succeed in life and encourages her to choose someone else to marry: “May be he lacks finesse… refinement… nevertheless Malhotra type men are better…. An older man… an experienced one. And together you’d make quite a team.” Mikki doesn’t care for this suggestion and is firm on her decision to marry Binny. This novel is quite different from the other novels of Shobha De because other protagonists of her novels are found struggling to free themselves from the clutches of married life but here in ‘Sisters’ Mikki willingly is involved in the marital relation. It is significant to note that despite having independent spirit, she becomes to be enamoured of being a wife but this situation doesn’t change her entire spirit and she still hates to bear inhuman subordination of women. She
also hates the idea to confine women between the four walls of the kitchen.

Binny is quite helpful to Mikki and pays full attention to fulfill her wishes and needs. Mikki, having been educated in America, possesses revolutionary and progressive thinking and Binny seems to respect her notion and ambition. That is why, in the beginning Mikki Loves him deeply and succeeds to draw love and affection from her husband who is well experienced and aggressive. In the company of husband, Mikki is well satisfied and she becomes filled with an insight to lead her real life. She realizes that she is utterly secured in her company. This sense of security and pride found in her spirit is apparent by the explanation given by the narrator: “She felt liberated, uninhibited and aroused to the point of primitive abandon. If this was what her man wanted, if this was what made him happy, should give it to him. She would give him bit of herself, her body, her mind and her soul. She was in love with him. And he was finally hers.”

Such kind of submission on the part of Mikki is very remarkable because it is a traditional attitude of a woman which ensures superiority of men and which results into the exploitation of women. Mikkki finds out that Binny is already married and he had married to Mikki in order to
keep his image in the society. But Mikki is not worried all about his past life. But when Binny becomes indifferent to her, she begins to feel disturbed. Her life becomes hellish because all her property is transferred to him and the process of her dehumanization begins. She is not allowed to enjoy the pleasure of motherhood. Binny hopes that Mikki should be always ready to welcome him and to be fit for him. Mikki wishes to be equal partner in life and business but Binny proves to be representative of oppressive system and dominates her wildly and makes it clear that he needs a wife “who stays at home and looks after me... our women stay at home and make sure the place is perfectly run. They fulfill their husband’s every need and look good when their men get home in the evening. No office going.” Mikki doesn’t like such kind of behaviour on the part of her husband but she has to submit because she doesn’t want to ruin her career. So she tries to persuade her husband saying: “I can look after you and look after at least a part of the business. We could work together....I won’t have to wait hours to see you.”

Mikki feels the complications of her practical life, which throws light on the harsh realities of a woman in a patrician society. Her protest against her husband reveals the awareness among the women who struggle hard to free themselves from the unjust behaviour of men. The
novel is filled with the moral dimension because at one side, the protagonist never thinks of extra-marital relation and at other side; she is not willing to tolerate unjust behaviour towards her. She does not give any importance to the materialistic pleasures, which lacks the freedom of self. Shobha De introduces us with the women who are not careful for economic constraints, they are only desirous to seek personal freedom. Shobha De’s women are involved in unethical activities only when they are denied their personal freedom. They protest this kind of unjust behaviour and become rebellious to men all around them. Having been deprived of this freedom, they are found breaking the marriage oaths and making extra-marital relations. In this respect, Shobha De gives explanation and justification: “It is not enough to have mind of your own, if you don’t have income to match… with this economic freedom has come assertiveness, confidence and refusal to be treated as doormats.”

Mikki is seen aspiring for affection and understanding from her husband but she finds out that he is not a husband with whom she can share her life. Mikki is ready to surrender herself before her husband if he cares to notice her needs and criticalities, if he is willing to listen her complaints and if he may be different enough to fulfill her existence. All her dreams to enjoy the pleasures of marital life is shattered when her
husband suspects her chastity and dares to turn her out of his home. She tries her best to ensure him about her morality saying that “Binny… I love you. Only you…. I can’t live without you.” Mikki’s relation with her husband goes beyond limit when Binny demands divorce. So Mikki loses all her hopes to pass her life in the company of Binny whom she loves dearly. Now Mikki is struggling hard to save her father’s property from the clutches of Binny. Mikki breathes the sigh of relief when she finds that Binny along with his illegitimate family meets his death. By this incident, Mikki learns a lot and becomes a changed woman who has deep insight in the life and in the way of living. Now Mikki is changed into a well-matured woman who is filled with all the human values. She becomes quite co-operative and friendly to her half sister Alisha who proves utterly non co-operative to her.

Alisha remains unfriendly and filled with jealousy and hatred to the last stage of novel. In fact, she is quite incapable to learn something from various events of her life. While Mikki is aware of her future and by her encounter with several men, she succeeds to learn a lot and grows into an independent minded woman. Both of the women were doing their best to find fulfillment in their life but both of them adopted the different method. Alisha’s bad treatment and her misunderstanding ruin her widely
because she went into the contact of the men whom Mikki had neglected before. Her intention was only to show that she was not inferior to anyone. Mikki was caught in the trap of Binny knowing that he was unmarried but Alisha made relations with many men knowingly. On account of her immoral relations with many men, Alisha becomes drug addict. Mikki’s enemies poisoned Alisha’s ears against her so the matter became worse and Mikki could not succeed to improve relations between them. Main reason of Alisha’s hatred and ill feeling is that she feels herself neglected by her father. In order to show her superiority before Mikki, Alisha who is insecure and loveable young woman, begins to adopt immoral ways and distort the figure of human values.

Mikki finds out that adopting unjust and wrong way and behaviour, Alisha succeeds to turn into a rich heiress. While she herself looks after her father’s industry which is a difficult task for her. Mikki always tried her best to improve relations with Alisha while Alisha is found struggling hard to get name and fame. In the quest of securing prosperity and physical possession in her life, Alisha never cares for Mikki and her warm feelings towards her. Mikki and Alisha happens to be united only after the death of later’s mother. Now Mikki succeeds to make her understands the real situation and to win her heart in her favour. At this
stage, both the sister becomes capable to understand each other’s feelings and their need to co-operate each other. Mikki succeeds to remove all the complications of their mutual relation. Alisha’s wounded feelings are healed now because Mikki skilfully conveys her motherly affection to Alisha. Both the two sisters crossed through many vicissitudes but ultimately they are united and re enjoying the occasion: “The sunlight came pouring into the room through enormous bay windows of Mikki’s – and Alisha’s – beautiful home, bathing the two sisters in its golden glow. Mikki surrendered to its warm embrace as her fingers played tenderly with the silken tresses of her sister’s hair, and she drifted off into a light sleep full of dreams... the future shimmered tantalizingly before her half-closed eyes... and Mikki reached out her hand to touch it.”

The end of the novel is full of pleasure and satisfaction when both the sisters succeed to find their identity on the basis of their own virtues and capabilities. Through their wide experience and deep insight, the protagonist gets the fulfillment without losing her dignity. The misunderstanding on the part of her sister Alisha troubles him greatly but lastly, she is changed into a sensible woman and both of them succeed to find their goal of life.
It is apparent that Karuna, the protagonist in ‘Socialite Evenings’, aspires for her fulfillment and wants to come out of her miserable condition, which goes against her interest. She “acknowledges the fact that (she is) a victim but... refuses to accept assumption that the role is investable... The basic game of position there is repudiating the victim role.”

Karuna's father is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideals and decides everything for his family even laughter. He doesn't want his family and its members to go beyond his wishes and control. He become highly aggressive when his wife proves to be offensive and opposing. He never forgives any members of the family if he or she commits any fault or takes any decision, which goes against his preconceived ideas. Consequently, Karuna rebels epically against the domination of a cruel father who takes every decision according to his own whim. Karuna does not want to accept any relationship with his father so there is lack of communication between her and her father. She has been the victim of social tyranny and her mother as well as other family members are well acquainted with it. With the passes of time, there has been created a chasm between her and her family members.
Karuna decides to come out of her victimized situation. She doesn't care for anyone who thinks or acts against her. She is determined to rebel against any authority, which creates obstacle in the fulfillment of her ambition. In this way we are introduced that Karuna, the protagonist, is in the process of "transformation of the personality, centering upon personal, rather than patriarchal space." After a long period of struggle and suffering, Karuna succeeds to learn a lot from the complicated situation of her life. The misery and conflict of her individual life enabled her to recognize the gulf between the claims of selfhood and those of society. She learns to defeat time by standing outside it. She succeeded to surpass many rivals and adverse situation, which intended to destroy her career. She got success to create social position, which enable her to brighten her future.

Shobha De, in her novel 'Snapshots' provides us the description of women who struggled hard to form their individual identities. They are presented in order to conform any set standard of womanhood. These women have succeeded to establish full control over themselves. Very often, they are found in the situation when they can ignore the male authority. In the novel, we can observe the experiences of six women—Swati, Aparna, Reema, Noor, Surekha and Rashmi. They are explored
living a magnified life, which is full of freedom and bliss. All of them are exhibited enjoying freedom of thought and action and having capability to establish their own identity. These women pass their lives on following rules and ideals which constructed by their own intellect. While living in a patriarchal society, they do not seem adopting the partial and dominating rules set up by tyrannous males. Shobha De seems following the traditions of other feminist writers who do their best in order to protect women's values and interests. The traditional form of marriage, family which is widely and deeply influenced by women has change greatly. In order to give place to refined social order, women’s domestic and non-domestic duties, responsibilities and activities have changed in the considerable measure.

Shobha De’s novel ‘Second Thoughts’ enables her to be a sensitive writer. On the basis of her other novels, the critics comment that she does not have insight to reveal the hidden qualities of her characters. In her works, she does not make effort to prove her characters. They blame that she is incapable to express their motivation and feelings. Her seventh novel ‘Seconds Thoughts’, relieves itself from so many allegations and proves to be an excellent one. In this novel, we find the love story which shows the combination of sweetness and bitterness. Like
other novels, it doesn’t introduce the phenomenon found in high society of the world. It prefers the background and situations found among middle class society. The analysis of this novel assures that Shobha De should not be labeled as *Queen of Pornography*.

The protagonist of the novel is Maya who is a middle class Bengali girl and she becomes engaged in matrimony alliance with Ranjan, a foreign returned Bombay-based young man. Maya is born and brought up in Calcutta and is fascinated towards Bombay more than being a wife of Ranjan. In order to fulfill her ambition, she lands in Bombay in the company of her husband. Her association with her husband shatters her hopes and dreams because she found out that despite his stay abroad, he could not adopt modern way of living. He proves to be utterly orthodox in his conduct and behaviour. She wishes to enjoy fulfillment and bliss in someone’s lap but it was not possible in the company of her husband who is extremely traditional and indifferent towards her. Throughout the novel, Maya seems to seek her identity and sometimes she never hesitates to get the help and communion of others.

We are acquainted with the shattered dreams of Maya when she reaches Bombay on a sultry May evening. Her first visit to Bombay surrounds Maya with gloom and melancholy. Generally, it is considered
that marriage provides glamour, fascination and freedom to young girls. But when the ceremony is over, they have to face unknown harsh and bitter realities which are unavoidable. Ranjan proves to be non-co-operative to her aspiration and Maya feels surrounded with complications of her life. In the beginning, she was attracted towards “Bombay but was taken aback when she sensed that Bombay smelt of desperation and deceit.”

During her life in Bombay, Maya very often faces desperate situation. When she spent few years of depression and dejection in the company of her husband in Bombay, she decides to deceive Ranjan and to offer herself to Nikhil. But later on, she realizes that she has deceived herself because he too could not provide her expected affection and fulfillment.

Maya is aware of the real situation prevailing in Bombay life when she almost trips over a dead man. At this she is shocked in horror and doesn’t believe what was occurring before her. The crowd of people didn’t give any heed to the dead body. Thus the life in Bombay becomes boring for her and she creates a feeling of hatred for it. She had fancied to enjoy the bliss of Bombay in the company of Ranjan. She hoped that “Marrying Ranjan would make her a part of it immediately Maya knew she’d be bonded with Bombay forever.”
Ranjan is a devoted son of Mrs. Malik who takes most of the decisions of Ranjan’s life. At her first meeting with Ranjan’s family, Maya is filled with enthusiasm and assures them to fulfill their expectations. Mrs. Malik, Ranjan’s mother doesn’t approve the proposal of Chitra, Maya’s mother that Maya will pursue a career later in life. Ranjan’s mother makes is clear that she doesn’t have the view that a woman should work outside the home. Ranjan cannot think what is beyond his mother’s expectation. He declares: “I am earning well enough to support a wife and family. I believe it is a woman’s duty to run a good home.”38 He further wants to know the notion of Maya about it. Maya feels entirely broken but finds herself unable to explain it because her uncle interferes saying that “In any Indian family, the husband’s comforts always come first. Everything else follows.”39 In this way, he stops the matter from being distorted. On their way home, Maya’s mother tries to console and comfort her saying that the issue will be raised after marriage: “Let them first say ‘yes’. Then we can bring it up. And now stop chattering uselessly.”40

Observing their explanation minutely, Maya is shocked deeply but when she watches various fascinations of Bombay, she is enamoured by it. The brightening and charming scene of Bombay evokes her curiosity
to be a part of Bombay city. When Maya steps in Victoria Terminus, she realizes that she had not committed any error to choose Bombay city. She doesn’t feel any guilt for her meeting with Nikhil, a college going neighbour. She could succeed to embrace Bombay city only by marriage Ranjan, so she is confident that her marital relation with Ranjan will be fruitful. “Marrying Ranjan was like marrying Bombay, and she thought she was the luckiest girl in the locality, who had bagged a foreign-educated Bombay based groom.” In her novels, Shobha De represents the real situation found in urban society. She does not talk about the phenomenon, which is used to be in future. She delineates the happenings, which occur at present time. It is apparent that Second Thoughts’ is a realistic representation of a family whose members have traditional attitude. Their notion is contradictory because on one hand, they boast of being the product of twenty first century and on the other hand, they are closely associated with the age-old norms and traditions. They are not willing to bring any change in their conduct and behaviour. Men and women both are utterly orthodox in their various activities. They are proud of their progress in the present generation but in marital relation, they believe in traditional beliefs to make women slave and dominated. Men and women of the family believe that women are to
serve the wishes of their lord and master. They are to abide by the whims and fancies of men willingly or unwillingly.

The situation between Maya and Ranjan is the same as we find in ‘Unveiling India’ by Anees Jung. In Unveiling India, Anees Jung introduces us wife and husband who belong to rural atmosphere. They are portrayed seated in a cart parked on a desert track. The two riders of the cart of utterly conservative but they have changed the wheels of the cart. Now the cart has two massive Dunlop tyres. Having orthodox attitude, the husband doesn’t allow his wife to unveil her face. He is not willing to consider her as his better half. She is not allowed to speak openly. So the husband has replaced his wooden wheel by the wheels with Dunlop tyres only. He still is clinging to age-old norms and tendency of his culture. In her novel ‘Second Thoughts’ Shobha De conveys us about the same mental traits when we find that Ranjan who has studied aboard and has passed his modern life in Bombay has extremely orthodox notion and imposes so many restrictions on her wife and her movements. She finds herself unable to enjoy the pleasure of city visit. She cannot enjoy freedom in her own home. In the house she cannot talk to others on telephone because STD facility on phone is locked for her. Ranjan keeps Maya under her control all the time and often scolds her for not
performing her duties properly. He doesn’t allow her to use the air-conditioner. By portraying so many weakness and faults in Ranjan’s psyche, conduct and manner, Shobha De introduces us the real plight of middle class urban family in which woman has to struggle hard to find her identity.

Shobha De narrates that parents of Maya as well as Ranjan consider themselves modern and smart but having contradictory personality, they have traditional beliefs. Mrs. Malik, Ranjan’s mother is over smart and modern and Ranjan is brought up in a modern city, but he is in favour of arranged marriage. Despite being modern, Mrs. Malik’s dream for her future daughter-in-law is apparently orthodox. She comments: “If you ask me, it’s always wiser to get a girl from a socially inferior background…. A wealthier wife spells doom. The husband loses all control over her and she ends up having the upper hand. Such a marriage can never work which is why we were so careful while selecting the right candidate for Ranjan.” The indifferent behaviour on the part of Ranjan troubles greatly. She often thinks that if Ranjan is so conservative in his conduct and manner, why he did not choose a Bengali girl from Bombay. Once she openly blamed him for this and he replied: “Oh no, no. These Bombay Bengalis are different they have lost their cultural
indentity. Their roots are not in our tradition. My mother wouldn’t have been able to adjust to someone like that." Maya is well aware of the fact that Ranjan behaves rudely and indifferently because he has the sense of superiority hidden inside him, which is based on his background. This feeling of inferiority distresses her greatly and her eyes are filled with tears.

Maya belongs to an educated middle class family from Calcutta and she is trained as a Textile Designer and cherishes in her heart a dream to become a journalist so that she may change the world. Outwardly, she is highly attractive with her “skin tone as warm rich, golden brown, like sunlight dancing on the Hooghly, gleaming jet, black hair and large dark eyes.” Ranjan is also an attractive and healthy young man of twenty-eight who has a degree from America and holds a good post in a Bank. He has a small and beautiful flat on the fourth floor of a building in Bombay. He is fully devoted to her mother who becomes satisfied choosing Maya as her daughter-in-law. At the time of marriage Maya, Ranjan and their parents all are happy and satisfied. At this occasion Maya thinks, “Marrying Ranjan was like marrying Bombay. She thought I was the luckiest girl in my locality.” Maya begins to lead a luxurious life having all the comfort and pleasure. She lacks no worldly possession yet
she is not entirely satisfied with her lot. She often meditates over the reason of her dissatisfaction. In her utter confusion, she turns rebellious and plans to break her marital relation.

The scrutiny of the novel reveals that the main reason of Maya’s miserable condition is her unfulfilled desires. In fact, she is crushed between Nikhil and Ranjan. Maya is a beautiful and experienced girl of twenty-three who has none except as Nikhil, her boy friend. Maya finds herself helpless because she finds no one who can help or guide her and she feels abandoned and horribly isolated. In spite of all positive qualities, Ranjan fails in making love. He ignores Maya’s sexual desires absolutely. On the other hand, Nikhil, Maya’s lover, is “good looking, confident, sporty, cocky, flirtatious, lazy, spoilt and quite irresistible.” After her marriage, Maya realizes something missing in her husband’s well-equipped house. With the passage of time, Maya begins to receive many shocks to stir her violently and deeply.

In the company of Ranjan, Maya receives so many shocks that played significant role in her career. She experiences her first rude and negative shock when she sets out to enjoy their honeymoon at a boring hotel in Mahabaleshwar, a hill resort near Bombay. There Ranjan conveys his hidden fact saying: “But the love making that followed was
always a letdown or I have tried to make friends with them... but it never worked.”47 In another situation, when Maya is in love making mood, Ranjan doesn’t co-operate and says, “I am not ready yet Maya.... You will have to be patient. It is going to take time. I can’t. I just can’t”48 Such shocks disturbs her beyond measure. On another occasion, when she tries to take initiative and to snuggle up to him in bed, Ranjan jumps back as though he had received an electric shock. He begins to breathe heavily and asks her not to behave like a cheap woman like a prostitute. He considers such love making a big laugh or a sort of nonsense. In his opinion eating, sleeping, doing office work and attending social obligations are sufficient for a successful life. While Maya who is never satisfied with her lot and always realizes something missing from her life remains complaining. She is deprived of sex life, which she considers essential for her fulfillment because without sex life she will be deprived of bearing children.

Maya is satisfied in neither her parents’ home nor in her in-law’s home. She remembers her days of childhood when her mother made her cautious about her nakedness and changing contours. On reaching puberty, her parents stop hugging her. Her mother assures Maya that she has become a young woman and they command her not to let anyone
come in her touch. One day Maya’s mother comments: “I have no worries where Maya is concerned. She is not like other girls. She is very pure and unspoiled.” After marriage, her husband didn’t allow her to get sex satisfaction which shows his incapability in this sense. In his opinion, sex has no importance in any man’s life. He argues, “If one’s mind is busy and one keeps oneself active, there cannot be time to worry about sex.” Such attitude and tendency on the part of her husband distresses her violently.

At other occasions also, Maya is dissatisfied. Her husband neglects her other desires that may make Maya contented. Maya proposes to go out and explore Bombay at least on weekends but her husband doesn’t allow her to do so. He seems to laugh at several wishes produced in Maya’s mind. He argues that such demands are childish and futile and suggests her that a married woman should be involved in dealing with responsibilities. On another occasion, Ranjan disapproves of her proposal that she should seek a job because she has a degree in textile designing. She argues that Bombay is like New York or London and she is fit to work here. He also comments that this proposal is against my mother’s wishes. During night, Ranjan enjoys deep sleep but Maya remains awake due to her mental agitation.
On many occasions, when Maya puts her feelings sincerely before Ranjan, he never tries to understand them. Once Maya pleaded: “Ranjan, I have been so lonely... all alone in a city that is not mine. In a house I don’t still feel I belong to.” He becomes quite non co-operative and says that such ideas are the product of a sick mind. At a time when Maya buys a beautiful gift, Ranjan becomes annoyed saying that today is not my birthday and it is the waste of money, which he doesn’t like. He warns her not to buy such precious things in future without his permission. At this Maya feels helpless inside her and realizes that she belongs to no one. Neither her parents nor her husband belongs to her. Having been deprived of sex and children, she doesn’t belong to them also.

Ranjan wants that Maya should grant his mother as her model. Once Maya proposes that she would like to utilize her free time so that she may do something positive and constructive. At this Ranjan wants to know how a housewife can have spare time to do such things because there are so many responsibilities in a home. At other place when Maya wants to be contact of some familiar women in the city, Ranjan strictly forbids her to do so. He argues that those Bombay women have no morals and are utterly lazy and spoilt. He suggests her to remain in the contact of her mother only. Once Maya happens to buy Basmati rice and Ranjan is
highly annoyed and blames her that she has become extravagant. He commands her to find out from his mother where she gets supplies from and buy the same brand. He ignores Maya’s artistic skill at the time when his Boss Tom comes to his home and appreciates the artistic touch inside the house. Ranjan boasts that all these decorations and art are the consequence of his mother’s skill. Knowing all these rude and ill-mannered activities, Maya becomes stunned and then stirred. When Ranjan is in his office or at tour out of the office, he never cares to talk to Maya on telephone but he often contacted his mother with loving and caring conversations. So it is apparent that “Ranjan is the lone son of his parents. He is totally moulded and shaped by his mother. So the mother becomes his God. He fully confides in her.”

Ranjan doesn’t want to be involved in so many complications of life. He doesn’t want to know about Maya’s previous life. It can be said that he remains self-centered and self observed throughout his life. As for worldly life, he thinks it enough to have a good job for income, a flat to live in, food to eat and a woman as wife to take of the household things. So after marriage, he does not bother to talk to Maya about his childhood, his adolescence, his highs and lows. Ranjan has sympathy, love and affection for Maya but his sympathy was that one which is shown to
physically handicapped or the helpless people. While Maya is capable to be self-dependent. She wishes to enjoy her happy day in the company of her husband. Having been warm and young she wishes to “step into one of the lively pubs, playing jazz and sway to the music, lose themselves a little in its carefree atmosphere, stroll along one of the many beaches, eat at road side snacks”\(^5\) and so many other enjoyments of mutual life.

We may conclude that Ranjan fails to satisfy Maya’s physical and emotional need. So she begins to seek satisfaction and fulfillment through Nikhil. Nikhil is 5-6 years junior to Maya and lives at the fourth floor in her neighbour. He doesn’t have interest in studies but he is expert in love making. In the very first encounter, Nikhil succeed to impress Maya. Maya allows him to call her whatever he feels comfortable. Maya conveys the fact: “But Nikhil most definitely affected me and one part of me did not approve. This was ridiculous- a newly married woman daydreaming about a neighbour’s son. Disgusting and shameful.”\(^5\) Maya observes her husband’s indifferent and self centered behaviour and at the same time, she imagines satisfaction, fulfillment and bright future through Nikhil’s association so she is caught in Nikhil’s net.

Nikhil begins to impress Maya in many ways. Sometimes he offers her to go out for riding and sometime offers to help her in household
works. At first, he offers her a cassette of songs in which he has praised her. Maya who was not cared by her husband takes interest in the song and conveys to Nikhil that she loves his songs. In the beginning, Maya ignores his proposal but later, after a deep and long meditation, she is involved in such activities. Nikhil succeeds to take her out at several places with the help of flattery and exhibition of love and affection. He succeeds to persuade her to receive telephone. One morning he calls on Maya with flowers announcing his birthday. At this occasion, he pulls her into his embrace without giving any time to think or react and doesn’t leave her before accomplishing the act of love making. In such activities, Maya is cautious of her guilt. She remains silent and keeps her eyes shut so that she may be free from any responsibility of the act or prove her innocence later. On reaching this situation, Maya becomes cunning and tricky. She begins to take help of false argument in order hide the fact that she was in love with Nikhil. This married woman begins to make extra marital relation while her husband is alive. Being asked about the flowers, she tells that they are for mother. When Ranjan asked why she did not receive the call, she told that she had gone out to buy the flowers. This incident indicates towards fall in their marital relation. Here Maya suffers because she mistakes non-existent self for self. She suffers
because she realizes that nobody and nothing belongs to her. Nikhil mistakes pain for pleasure. In his opinion, sensual pleasure is real and does his best to achieve it. Ranjan suffers because he thinks that what he knows and does, that alone is true and important.

Although Ranjan and Maya are tied in the marital relation as a well-planed manner, it proves a mismatch in which both of them have the feeling of disgust for each other. Both of them have certain mental picture for their spouse but it is chattered because of their certain mental habits. Maya’s desires are thrown aside rudely by rude words like: “There are certain rules. You have to abide by them whether you like them or not.” Maya wants to give proper response but her scream remains hidden in her throat. Maya’s emotional desires are hurt immensely when Ranjan remains quite indifferent to Maya and her desires. The over-indulgence of Ranjan’s mother in their relation makes the matter distorted. Ranjan not only allows her mother to interfere but becomes too eager to discuss the domestic matters with her as a religious routine. During her meeting, Chitra observes that Ranjan is a very dutiful and loving son. This comes to be true. Ranjan proves to be a loving and dutiful son only. He fails to achieve those skills and virtues for which he may be called a loving and dutiful husband. Duty doesn’t mean to provide food, home and money, it
also includes to offer respect and affection to one’s spouse. At the first communion, Maya finds out that the sex between them is a very completed issue. Having been failed in this respect, Ranjan begins to terrify Maya because she is afraid that she will be unable to bear children. This failure of her life will leave her all alone because her own parents and in-laws also don’t have any belonging to her.

In the lack of sex-life with Ranjan, Maya prepares herself to be happy with the physical demonstration of affection by Ranjan. But she is well aware of the fact that only this is not sufficient for a successful marital life. After ten days’ necessary Journey, when Ranjan comes back from Calcutta, Maya begins to love making by snuggling and caressing up to him, Ranjan jumps back “as though he had received an electric shock. He had lain trembling in bed for a long time, his breathing heavy, his eyes screwed shut.” Maya realizes acute pain in her heart and mind and puts her head on the pillow disappointedly while Ranjan begins snarling showing his indifference toward her. So it is clear that their relationship remains unsuccessful at many grounds.

After one year of unsuccessful marital relation, Maya begins to realize extremely dejected and alone. Ranjan continues his non-communicative attitude, which puts Maya in violent complicated
situation. Now Maya can take refuge only in the kitchen. At various exciting phenomenon of nature, Maya becomes moved but her high spirit at these occasions appears to be ridiculous to Ranjan who tries to quieted her scolding in his usual tone: “Why cannot you be still. You know? Just still. You are always so restless, it’s tiring to watch.” In the association of Ranjan, Maya fails to achieve all the pleasures and enjoyments of a married life. Ranjan never cares to do anything together. He never thinks to enjoy watching popular hit comedies or going to eating places in her company. Maya longs to visit sea shore. She becomes enamoured with a lot of exciting things all around her. But Ranjan remains always serious involved in the evening newspaper. Maya wishes that Ranjan should more enthusiastic about sharing the city in her company. She suspects that Ranjan considers her his rival or he doesn’t have sufficient faith in her. Once she gather courage to question something about their disturbed relation but he doesn’t heed to her properly and argues: “Of course I trust you but my mother is my mother. I have known her longer than you. These things take time.” Although they were living in the same house and under the same roof, they were passing time like strangers. One can easily guess the emptiness found in their relation: “Hot week day afternoons were to be suffered silently and stoically with just the whirl of
noisy ceiling fan to stir the warm air around.” Maya is not allowed to enjoy air conditioner according to her will. It was to be swathed on only after dinner, for a short while. It may be switched on only when Ranjan is occupying the room on weekend afternoons. Ranjan minutely observe the family budget and instructs Maya to learn something from his mother.

Ranjan’s love and affection for Maya may be compared to that for a pet which lacks any passion and warmness: “It was a greater devoid of any passion. An impersonal friendly sort of gesture which always left me feeling like a well-trained dog being rewarded for his good behaviour.”

Their relation inside the bedroom cannot be regarded that of a wife and husband. They were living in the bedroom like brother-sister or flat mates. Occasionally Ranjan offers brotherly peck or something other. Ranjan narrates his unsuccessful involvement with few girls in America. He confesses that it was very difficult for me to make relationship with any woman. “I tried, I tried Maya. But it didn’t work.” Maya’s life becomes lonely and depressed because she finds herself unable to seek the company of someone who could fulfill her needs and wishes. In her family, she cannot share her miseries. She has so many problems in her life but finds no one with whom she can gossip or discuss her problems. She realizes that her life is useless.
In order to reduce her mental agony, Nikhil Verma enters in her life and succeeds to bring new meaning to her boring and desolate life. She begins to realize the rays of light spreading to offer pleasure and hope to her. Nikhil’s association and understanding quenches Maya’s thirst for love, affection, satisfaction and fulfillment. Now she wishes to express her newfound joy violently: “I wanted my insides to perform a wild dance while a mangy camel sauntered down the beach carrying me a top.”  

In the company of Nikhil, Maya gets the chance to see visit Bombay closely and she is capable to do adventurous trip to satisfy herself. Now she gets chance to realize tingling excitement. In the absence of Ranjan, Maya takes advantage of it and feels herself as a bird and allows her spirit to soar. Although she is well aware of guilt that having been married to Ranjan, she is making relation to Nikhil, she resolves to overcome her guilt and live in the present. She is found justifying her sin by false argument. It is remarkable fact that in spite of her ambitious and sensuous spirit, she doesn’t wish to make sexual relation with Nikhil. She only wants to be surrounded by Nikhil. She wishes to feel good with Nikhil’s association. Watching indifferent behaviour on the part of Ranjan, she realizes herself like indoor plant. She further argues that a plant needs sunlight, water, fresh air etc. In the same
way, she also needs someone who can take care of her and understand her feelings and needs.

Nikhil teaches Maya the lesson so that she may be bold enough to think positive and favourable ideas. He forbids her to be a silent sufferer. He stimulates her to rebel furiously and aggressively. Having been highly influenced by Nikhil’s provocation, Maya begins to feel a kind of revolt for her husband. She leaves the telephone ringing knowing that it was from Ranjan. At this she reacts: “I heard him ring off finally and felt triumphant as though I had defied his edict and got away with my little rebellion.” Sometimes she tries to disturb Ranjan when he is busy in receiving phone calls from his mother. She wishes to be lost in the world of imagination in the company of Nikhil but she realizes restriction from Ranjan and his mother. She is unable to break relations from Ranjan absolutely for whom she feels very feeble attraction. Due to this traditional upbringing, she becomes extremely helpless and uneasy. She is well acquainted to the fact that she had married Ranjan in order to leave Calcutta as well as to leave her parents who didn’t try to give her emotional peace. She also knew that she had married to satisfy the needs of Ranjan’s family and his mother, Mrs. Malik. She is never hopeful from her own parents. She discloses the fact: “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 executive, living by himself. And I longed for the perfect romantic companion if such a creature existed at all outside my imagination.”

Nikhil continues to come nearer and seeks every possible way to increase love and affection between them. At the time of his birthday, he is found standing at Maya’s door with a bouquet of pink carnations. Ranjan’s mother happens to suffer a heart attack and Ranjan leaves early that morning to attend his mother. Nikhil doesn’t give Maya a chance to resist or anything and cover her mouth with a kiss: “It was a kiss that involved Nikhil’s entire being. A kiss so focused, so complete.” Maya is entirely thrilled at his touch and surrenders herself to his wishes and commands. It seemed as if she were willing to swallow and suck him into her womb absolutely. She wishes to make him her own and realizes the dryness changing into moisture. She realizes herself quite comfortable and her life worth living. But in the meantime, Ranjan returns from the hospital to drop Maya into the phenomenon of despair, gloom and repentance.
Maya’s mother-in-law is brought home to be looked after by Maya and Ranjan. Ranjan fully devoted to her while Maya has created a feeling of hatred for her. She longs for the days when she can enjoy time in the company of Nikhil. Now she can only think about those glorious moments. She is absolutely lost in the thrilling experience got by her communion in the company of Nikhil. She is fully prepared to rebel against Ranjan and awaits for the time when she can do it. Although she knows that Ranjan would be furious at her decision but in order to give her relief, satisfaction and fulfillment, she was rigid on her decision because he was like a man who does not need marriage, romance or sex.

By this delineation, Shobha De wishes to focus on the reality of people who have same vice and virtue as Nikhil. She represents Nikhil as a man who represent a category of people having distorted mental background. Having been the product of modern generation, Nikhil seems to have pre-conceived notion of marriage. He longs to spend single night in the association of a married woman who is frustrated by her marital relation. But so far as his own married life is concerned, he believes in arranged marriage. Maya is informed by Nikhil’s mother that he is going to be engaged. Maya receives a severe shock and pain on the news because she was dreaming her happy and glorious days in his
company while he is already in Delhi wooing his would-be-bride. It is not true that Maya is unaware of Nikhil’s illegal and unfair relations with other women. In fact she gets a kind of pleasure and satisfaction in his association. He has created such relations with various married women who are bored and frustrated. He doesn’t consider any fault by creating unfair relations with other married women. He considers it only a short-gap arrangement before the formal recognized nuptial.

Now Maya is introduced that she can continue her wild chase any more. She has to adjust in her old frustrated and depressed atmosphere in the company of Ranjan and his mother. Now Nikhil disserts her to thrust her to live in her miseries all alone. Maya is deeply shocked and becomes motionless and speechless because all the magic, thrill and romance of her life is lost. Now she can only imagine her happy days which distresses her now. Ranjan becomes furious at Maya’s disobedience because her to be a docile housewife who is supposed to discharge her household duties and not waste her time in idle gossip. Now the songs composed by Nikhil don’t give her any consolation. They only irritate her as they remind her affairs that were unfair and illegal. Maya has become a lonely lady forever. Now her happy days have been replaced by loneliness, discomfort and dejection created by Ranjan and his mother.
Now she has to be clad in her mother-in-law’s discarded saree and has to obey her conservative husband. When she enters the kitchen and watches the spilt soup, she meditates over it because it was the scene very familiar to her before her happy days. Now this thick white chalky mucous in the form of liquid looks very familiar and funny to her. She feels that it is: “like a baby’s puke coagulated snot, or something I had been before somewhere, not so long ago.” Now she brings herself in the habit of adjustment with her married life. It is apparent by the closing lines of the novel: “The more I stared at the spilled soup, the funnier I found it. I knew I would have to make it again from scratch. So what? I had all the time in the world now.”

Through the scrutiny of the novel, we may conclude that women of the modern society wish to take bold steps against dominating and partial system of the society; they are bound by certain values right from childhood so they find themselves unable to break present norms. One can ignore the reality of life. There are stark realities in every one’s life and one has to be accustomed to live with them. If someone goes beyond the norms, he or she can remain in the pious card that binds them in matrimony. A woman is destined to adjust and sacrifice throughout her life, if she is given some freedom in a very restricted manner. Having no
other alternative, she has to learn sacrifice and adjust otherwise she cannot lead a respectful life. Maya, the protagonist of the novel decides to accept to be surrounded by loneliness and sadness. She begins to adopt all the norms and system of a married life. In this way, she can survive the sultriness of not only Bombay but also of her marriage. Her deep experience in a traditional society forces her to bring second thoughts so that she may improve rest of her career.

Shobha De who is mature in wisdom and experience, insightful and alert succeeds to give the novel new heights. She portrays the psyche of an Indian married woman who is caught and crushed between traditional norms and order of the society. All her wishes to find her own identity is ruined by her whimsical husband and her conservative minded mother in law. Here Shobha De explores new horizon, which is based on reality of life.

The thorough analysis of Shobha De's novels reveals the fact that she suggests to demolish the mythical and iconographic images which are imposed on women by patriarchal traditions. She is also in the favour of providing composite energy of protection and production. She also wishes to provide freedom to enjoy and utilize their power and capabilities according to their own decision and intellect. Shobha De
condemns various patriarchal ideologies, which are manifested in history, philosophy, culture and arts. She openly attacks on massive oppression and exploitation against woman.

All the women characters in Shobha De's novels are shown making struggle in order to seek identity and equality with men. They are always willing to throw off traditional roles of wife, mother and daughter. They are always doing a lot to realize their self and ensure their fulfillment. Through adverse and complicated circumstances, they never hesitate to fight and attack so that they may get recognition and identity on account of their own powers and capabilities.

The extreme freedom ensured for Shobha De's women make them sometimes immoral and indisciplined. Very often, they become the victim of hollow relationship. Such situations are responsible for leading them towards revolt in the family and their marital relations. Their emotional hollowness leads them towards the word of imagination and meditation. They are shown alienated from the world outside but at the end of the novel, they are confronted with someone who sustains them and their wounded feelings to realize their potential. In the state of complete dejection and disharmony, they are encouraged to discover their hidden virtues and capabilities. Shobha De introduces us with women
character like Mikki, Maya, Pramila, Karuna, Aasha Rani, Kalindi, Sushma etc. who belong to upper class families. After facing the calamity and misfortune in the beginning, they emerge as dynamic and liberated beings. They make us realize that they are no way inferior to men. They are enthusiastic and powerful enough to surpass men in many fields. They defy men and ignore to bear men's domination in every walk of life.

De's women characters defy the traditional values of patriarchy and rebel against the social system in which they are provided secondary position. They struggle to surpass men and evaluate their own potential so that they may establish their individual identities. Having been given full freedom of thought and action, they take their decisions on account of their own interest and intellect.
Works Cited

1- Alladi Uma, Woman and Her Family. New Delhi: Sterling, 1989, P.2
6- Ibid. P.53.
11- Ibid. P.145.

16- Ibid. P.55.


19- Ibid. P. 305.


24- Ibid. P.48.


26- Ibid. P.11.

27- Ibid. P. 58.


38- Ibid. P.11.

39- Ibid. P.11.


43- Ibid. PP. 115-116.

44- Ibid. P. 4.

45- Ibid. P. 195.


47- Ibid. P.50.

48- Ibid. P.53.

50- Ibid. P. 257.


53- Ibid. P.97.


57- Ibid. P.39.


59- Ibid. P. 100.

60- Ibid. P.251.

61- Ibid. P.52.


64- Ibid. P.252.


67- Ibid. P.289.