

***The Metropolis as a Locale: A Politico-Cultural Study of
the Works of Chetan Bhagat, Vikram Chandra and
Suketu Mehta***

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Shweta Ahuja

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Mahendergarh

CERTIFICATE

Department of English

School of Language, Linguistics, Culture of Heritage

Central University of Haryana

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This is to certify that this thesis, entitled **The Metropolis as a Locale : A Politico-Cultural Study of the Works of Chetan Bhagat, Vikram Chandra and Suketu Mehta** is my original work accomplished under the supervision of Dr. Bir Singh Yadav, Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Central University of Haryana. It is stated that it has not been submitted for any other degree to any other University.

Date :

Signature of the candidate

Name : Shweta Ahuja

Enrolment No. : 105

It is certified that the present work, is the original work of Ms Shweta Ahuja, and has not been submitted for any other degree to any University. I consider the thesis for the submission for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date :

Dr. Bir Singh Yadav

(Supervisor)

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

India exists at two levels - Bharat of the masses and India of the elite class. The metropolitan lifestyle is a potent vehicle to highlight the existing disparity. On one side, there is a world of darkness inhabited by the poor and the under-privileged who cannot even meet the bare minimum and on the other side is a lighted world inhabited by politicians, business tycoons who shamelessly exploit the ones from darkness, making them even more poor and in turn, enriching their own grandeur. The modern Indian society, influenced by western values, is experiencing a cultural shock and drastic changes. The economic system of today creates socio-economic gaps that create divisions in society. Bharat is the Hindu name for India, but is usually taken to mean rural India or small town India in contrast with the new globalized economy of the metros and other large cities.

HYPOTHESIS

1. The present study looks into the tensions that are always felt between an individual sense of identity and the changing norms in a metropolitan society.
2. The study deals with how metropolitan society challenges the ways in understanding the patterns of politics and culture which are instrumental in creating divisions in the society.

Fiction writers have been impressive in dealing with the subtle nuances of modern life. The works of Chetan Bhagat, Vikram Chandra and Suketu Mehta are a reflective study into the changes in patterns and ideologies in the contemporary era. The study will explore the issues at hand, the complexities, the problems, the stresses, the work culture, the underworld nexus, Hindu-Muslim divide, exploitations, regionalism, and relationship between the sexes in the techno world with all its incumbent paraphernalia. The study will also focus on how the degenerative trends have been flourishing in the society besides the progressive mind-sets and consequent underworld libertine culture. The progressive and retrogressive strategies can be found existing alongside each other.

Earlier, the widening gap between the rich and the poor had vexed the sensitive moods of the great political figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. Gandhi did not approve of the western pattern of industrialization leading to the exploitation of labour class. While Nehru, also denounced the exploitation and destitution of labour, when they reached inhuman depths but both had their own ideology dealing with Bharat or India of their dreams which formed the base of free India. With the passage of time, thought process has changed, the new concepts of modern globalized world have taken its place. New policies and practices are followed by the key political figures. Indian society is on the crossroads of a new world but still skeptic and hardened. The cities have developed into metros – the new glossy India. The traditional Bharat is still very much visible in cities and villages. Bharat i.e. poor India – the slum dwellers, the ghettos of city are thriving in a westernized and modernized world, and are trying to catch up with

the new order but it has also opened up new vistas, new set of problems and issues which need an understanding, an outlet. The present study provides a glimpse of the changing patterns of society as is visualized in the works of writers under study through political and cultural angles.

DEVELOPMNTAL HISTORY OF INDIA

Indian Constitution promulgates "India that is Bharat shall be a Union of States"(8), is reflected in the article by RajivLochan. Both India and Bharat have been accorded primary status in the Constitution. The name India is derived from Indus River. The river in the North-West of the subcontinent has seven tributaries. The entire system, the main river along with the seven tributaries, was known as Sindhu which means the river body in the earlier times.

When Persian explorers came to India, they pronounced Sindhu as Hindhu, Sind as Hind. In Persian language the sound [s] is pronounced as [h]. When Greeks first reached India, they borrowed the name from Persians with the loss of [h] and named the area according to the name of river by which it was known in the west as 'Indus'. So, it was named as Indos. The name India was given to the entire subcontinent by the Romans who adopted the current name. The word India in the present form is used by the Europeans over the ages.

Bharat is named after King Bharata who ruled here and was the son of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. The country was called Bharat Varsha which was later shortened into Bharat. Vishnupurana has devoted a whole chapter for eulogizing the name and special quality of this land. B. K. Alanjali in her article states, "The

country which has to the north of the seas and south of the Himalayas is 'Bharat' and inhabitants of this land are Bharatiyas"(15).

Indian history begins with the birth of the Indus Valley civilization also called as Sindhu Valley Civilization. It can be explained with Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Lothal followed by the coming of Aryans. The two phases Pre-Vedic period and Vedic period are usually distinguishable in this era. It is in the Vedic period that Hinduism first arose, though some elements are derived from Indus Valley civilization. In the fourth century, large parts of India were united under the emperor Ashoka. It was during the time of Mauryas, Hinduism took the shape that fundamentally formed the religion down to the present day.

Islam came to India in the eighth century and by the eleventh century was firmly established in India as a political force. Many dynasties came and eventually were succeeded by the Mughal empire under which India once again achieved political unity. The European presence dates back to the sixteenth century. In the early part of eighteenth century the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate. In the contest for supremacy, the English emerged victorious. There were rebellions against the English rule but they were crushed down, especially the 1857 mutiny, and Queen Victoria was formally crowned as the empress of India.

By the early part of the twentieth century, a nationalist movement had emerged. By 1919-20 Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the undisputed leader of the movement. India got its freedom in 1947, through the heroic efforts of its freedom fighters.

THE CONCEPT OF RAM RAJYA – GANDHI

Historically from Ramayana, Ram Rajya means the land of Ayodhya where Lord Rama ruled. The land was free from wars where peace, tranquility and prosperity reigned. Hence, the term Ram Rajya came into existence.

Mahatma Gandhi had a vision for free India, which was to give the nation, a people friendly governance i.e. Ram Rajya. The Ram Rajya, he was promoting was an ideal social order where an ideal king rules over his subjects without any distinction. Truth, Dharma and Justice will rule in such a society. Both the superior class and the poorest of the poor would have an equal share in governance. He explained Ram Rajya, as he said on February 26, 1947 which is narrated by P. C. Joshi in a leading journal, "Let no commit the mistake of thinking that Ram Rajya means a rule of Hindus. My Ram is another name for Khuda or God. I want Khuda Raj which is the same as the Kingdom of God on Earth"(48).

Post Independence, he related Ram Rajya with an ideal state. Gandhi implied an ideal Rajya(state) where values of justice equality, idealism, remuneration and sacrifice were practiced. He believed that ancient ideal of Ram Rajya would be one of true democracy in which each and every citizen, howsoever good or bad would have the right for swift justice without much expense. He advocated certain rules for Ram Rajya:

- a. If one wants to see God in the form of Ram Rajya, the primary requisite is introspection. One has to magnify one's own faults and turn a blind eye to the faults of the neighbours. This would lead to real progress.

- b. Hinduism teaches us to respect all religions.
- c. Rights and duties are complementary and a citizen who is not conscious of his duties has no right to think of his own rights.
- d. A real devotee of Ram is the one who feels the pain and sufferings of the poor and the helpless. Gandhi believed that "There can be no Ram Rajya in the present state of inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get enough to eat"(8), as narrated by RajivLochan in his article.
- e. Gandhi believed that India lives in villages and that development of villages will lead to the development and growth of India as a whole. He arrayed the problems associated with industrialization and modernization. He was of the view that unless villages are made self sufficient, it will lead to mass migration, crowded cities and the circle of poverty and under development will never subside. He was a votary of Gram Swaraj.

Gandhi had his own theory for the upliftment of the poor sections and national growth. He had a great role to play in shaping the democratic, free India which was to embark on a new path – the path to modernity, growth.

His ideas were very relevant for a country, who had won its new found freedom. He paved the way for other leaders who could really use the values for upliftment and growth of free and democratic India.

SECULARISM AND SOCIALISM – NEHRU

Jawahar Lal Nehru was the first Prime Minister of free India. The new Constitution of 1950 made India a secular and a democratic state. India has a Hindu majority, Muslim minority, Sikhs and Christians among others.

Nehru was the son of a prominent lawyer and a graduate of Trinity College. The impact of western exposure was clearly observed in his thought process and actions.

The concept of secularism as defined by Gandhi and Nehru, constitute the bedrock of Indian nationalism. The process evolved through various stages of national struggle for political independence and was ultimately incorporated in the Constitution.

Secularism means equal treatment to all religions. With the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution, enacted in 1976, the Preamble to the Constitution asserted that India is a secular nation. It does not have any official state religion. The people of India have freedom of religion and the state shall treat all individuals as equal citizens.

Secularism was the intellectual child of the West. It emerged as a reaction against the excesses of religion and orthodoxy practiced in India. The idea gained impetus provided by the three major forces of the modern age—religious reformation, industrialization and the democratic revolution. The pioneers of the secular model were the Indian elites like Nehru, who derived inspiration from western thought and especially from the English industrial and French political

revolution. Swami Vivekananda, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad were also instrumental in the spread of ideas. There was also the need and compulsion to evolve a unified national identity out of its multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual diversities after India's struggle against colonialism.

Nehru was a secularist in the sense that he transcended parochial considerations and looked from a broad human perspective. His ideas were based on India's extra-ordinary variegated culture which was a product of unbroken history. He was culture and race-oriented and believed that religious outlook was enemy to the clarity of thought, purpose and solely based on emotion. In Indian conditions where there is pluralism, only secularism can be the cornerstone of an egalitarian society. For Nehru, secular means the freedom of religion, conscience, including freedom of those who may have no religion.

Nehru was more inclined towards the modernity of the Enlightenment. He believed in rationality, secularism and a scientific approach as the true means of progress while Gandhi stressed on the equality of all religions. Nehru understood that the destruction of religious superstition by secularism was the only means to a peaceful India.

Nehru was the harbinger of the socialist trend in Indian National Movement. He became interested in socialism during his student days in London (1910-1912). His initial ideas on socialism were vague and humanitarian but in his later years, he developed some concrete ideas on socialism. He was influenced by Russian socialism, Marxism and Mahatma Gandhi during the process. He did not

introduce the foreign brand of socialism in India but adopted the ideal as per the pattern in Indian society in 1955.

The essence of socialism was the removal of poverty and establishment of equal opportunities, if not equality. It had necessarily to suit the conditions of each country. Nehru wished to bring about the changes without destroying the fabric of Indian society. The society was based on cooperative efforts whereby each individual would give his best and would find full scope of his own development. Some of the features of Socialism are as under:

- a. Peaceful methods were the only methods to initiate any kind of change, be it economic or otherwise. The methods of democracy are discussion, argument and persuasion. Political democracy has no meaning if it does not include economic democracy.
- b. Liberty, equality and fraternity and the dignity of the individual was the base of national unity.
- c. Nehru believed that socialism should be followed by economic freedom which is only possible through economic planning. It was to cover not only industry and agriculture but also other sectors. It should be formulated and exercised by a central authority.
- d. Industrial base was vital for the rapid economic development of India. Heavy industry like steel, cement, machine, tools were given licenses. Agriculture production was to be raised through mechanization. Rural and cottage industries and Khadi were given equivalent positions. Zamindari

system, Ryotwari system were abolished after independence. Land reform measures were undertaken.

- e. Nehru did not favour totalitarian socialism and was aware of the inherent defects of capitalism. So, he favoured mixed economy which was a combination of free private enterprise and state controlled economy.

Socialism was an economic theory or system in which the means of production, distribution and exchange were owned by the community collectively through the state. Though, both Gandhi and Nehru advocated socio-economic transformation but there were creative differences in their approach. While, Gandhi was an idealist, Nehru was a realist. In Gandhi's philosophy, a village occupied a central position; Nehru's ideas were based on science and technology. He stressed on industries as a means for economic development. Nehru gave the concept of egalitarian society. He condemned caste system but he encouraged reservations for the minorities which he considered as a remedy for the long standing injustices meted out to them.

Thus, both the leaders were instrumental in paving India on to the path of recovery and progress in their own ways. The persuasive efforts made by them along with others transformed Bharat into a new and modern India.

LIBERALIZATION POLICY – RAJIV GANDHI

Rajiv Gandhi was the seventh Prime Minister of India who served from 1984-89. He was one of the popular leaders of India who started restructuring Indian economy in 1985. He increased the government support for science and

technology and associated industries. He reduced import quotas, taxes and tariffs on technology based industries. In 1980, he initiated a National Policy on Education to modernize and expand higher education programmes across India. He founded the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya system in 1986. This was a centrally based agency which specially focused on the upliftment of the rural sections of the society. His efforts created MTNL in 1986 which was instrumental in the expansion of telecom sector. He introduced measures significantly reducing the License Raj in post-1990's period allowing businesses and individuals to purchase goods, capital and import without bureaucratic restrictions. He is largely perceived as a man who brought computers to India. He improved the bilateral relations with the USA and subsequently expanded the economic growth and scientific cooperation with it. He revived foreign policy, which emphasized economic liberalization and information technology, which was helpful in taking India more close to the west.

The economy of India had undergone significant policy shifts in the beginning of the 1990's. This was all brought about by the revolutionary changes initiated by the new liberalization policy. Many social and other changes were markedly visible in the society which witnessed the opening up of glamorous shopping arcades and free market economy. India was given a global platform with the rejection of ideas related to national or regional boundaries. This new model of reform was known as LPG model where L stands for Liberalization, P for Privatization and G for Globalization. The model was initiated with the aim of

making the economy more market-oriented and expanding the role of private sector and greater foreign investment.

WESTERNIZATION, SANSKRITIZATION, MODERNIZATION

Besides the LPG model, the concepts of Westernization, Sanskritization and Modernization were visible, which reflected the changes coming in society with the passage of time. They provide a peep, into the culture which witnessed the impact of British rule and its aftermath in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

According to M.N. Srinivas, a famous sociologist, who explains, Westernization refers to "the changes brought about in the Indian society and culture as a result of over one fifty years of British rule and the term subsumes changes occurring at different levels – technology, institutions, ideology and values"(15).

British people when they came to India and brought with them the new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values which became the main sources of social mobility for individuals and groups. It also implied changes in dress, style of eating, manners etc. The elite had its effects all the more because they studied secular subjects with English as the medium of instruction. It opened up doors of knowledge for Indians. They envisioned the problems and practices with a new perspective. Many evil practices were questioned and many social reformers tried to educate the masses. There was the realization of the worth of liberty and freedom. It greatly affected the customs, traditions, and values of

respect and love for others. It has already made its presence felt in metros and other parts of country. Westernization triggered Sanskritization and both the processes went on simultaneously.

The term Sanskritization implies where castes placed lower in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by emulating the rituals and practices of the upper and dominant castes. M.N. Srinivas defines it as a process by which :

a low or middle Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual ideology and a way of life in the direction of a high and frequently twice-born caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant class by the local community...(6)

People adopted not only new customs and habits but were also exposed to the new ideas and values which were appearing. There was cultural mobility as a result of education. The interest of people widened in Western literature and philosophy and the vision of people changed. There was the use of liberal, humanitarian ideas and thoughts. People tried to enhance their social prestige by abandoning their own customs and adopting those of higher castes. They started adopting the values of cultured society.

Modernization involves adoption of the modern ways of life and values. Arul Kamaraj defines the concept given by Sonelser, "Modernization is a complex set of changes that take place almost in every part of society as it attempts to be

industrialized. Modernization involves ongoing change in society's economy, politics, education, traditions and religion."(n.pag.)

It is a transformation from a traditional, rural and agrarian society to a secular, urban and industrial society. It encompasses profound economic, social, political and cultural changes. It has improved the living standard of people due to introduction of scientific innovations. The technology, agriculture and industry have modernized. There are changes in the pattern of social institutions like family, caste, marriage and new forms of relations in social life are visible. Western institutions like banking system, law, medicine have been introduced. The middle class has gained prominence and has established itself on modern principles.

Both the processes Westernization and Modernization are different but are often confused. In a modern society, one tries for advancement by utilization of its own resources, opportunities and man power. In a western society, one blindly accepts the western processes and techniques in their lifestyle. In a modern society one tries to innovate and utilize its present knowledge patterns for advancement. When people of a society get better and advanced mechanisms which operate in their lives, institutions, thinking, attitudes and relationships, the society get modernized. Westernization follows the adoption of different lifestyles, cultural ways, working system and the behavioural pattern of a country. When people adopt the patterns and ways of advanced nations and follow them in their thinking, working, living and approach, it is Westernization.

These concepts and the LPG model have brought about an array of changes in Indian society. The new and refined culture has crept in and the writers

worldwide are trying to explore and visualise the transformations from various facades.

RECENT GLOBAL TRENDS – NEW MILLENIUM

A metro or a metropolitan city is a large city, with a significant economic, political and cultural centre for some country or religion and an important hub for regional and international connections and communication. It has a population of at least one million living in its urban agglomeration. It emerged after the period of economic transition which had impact on almost all the major sectors of economy. It marks the advent of the real integration of the Indian economy into the global economy. The government opened up the oppressed and controlled economy of India to make it internationally competitive. There were fewer government regulations in exchange for greater participation of private entities. It helped to establish a free market as well as fostering competition. This resulted in economic growth as exports boomed, employment surged and the quality of standards improved. There was opening up of world trade, advanced means of communication happened in big metro cities, the lifestyle changes were prominently visible in these cities. A new kind of culture – the mall culture, has emerged in the cities. The beautiful rural life of villages has been replaced by the concrete urban lifestyles which include building, restaurants, transportation, great infrastructure; and at the same time it also offers congestion, noise, traffic jams, pollution and diseases. The new lifestyle is quite attractive with streets full of lights, big malls, multiplexes and the night life of the city. Some of the traits of metropolitan lifestyle or metro culture are:

- a. There has been a general rise in the standards of living. The cities are industrial hubs. The income level of people is higher than the rural areas. The middle class has provided a big boost to the consumer culture due to the fast growth of services sector and per capita income.
- b. There is disintegration of traditional joint family system. People from rural areas and small towns migrate in large numbers to metropolitan centers for seeking better fortunes.
- c. There has been a sporadic growth in technology. The computers with an easy access to the internet and advanced software facilities have virtually transformed the industrial scenario at the global level, throwing up numerous job opportunities for the young and talented. There are call centers, malls, outsourcing MNC's which have been seeking the talented individuals and recruiting them.
- d. There is preponderance of love marriages and inter-caste marriages and still a greater number of divorce taking place. Infidelity, extra-marital relations have formed a part of the culture.
- e. The cost of living is very high in cities. As more and more people reach the cities in search of food, job and high profile lifestyle, the slums of the poor exist alongside the palatial bungalows of the rich. Due to high population, there is the problem of scarcity of electricity, water, housing, sanitation and rising poverty which has yet to be controlled.
- f. City life is characterized by the predominance of secondary constructs, impersonal, casual and short lived relations. The emphasis is on rationality. The social life of a man revolves around wealth and material progress.

- g. Cities are home to cultural heterogeneity. People belonging to different races and cultures live together. They follow different religious practices and ideologies.
- h. There has been an increase in lifestyle disorders arising out of an unhealthy lifestyle. Stress, mental tension and sedentary habits are taking their toll on humans. Many psychological disorders, work-related problems are on the verge of increase and are leading to spurt of medical urgencies.
- i. Metro cities are a witness to an increasing crime rate, thefts, kidnapping, rape cases, drug-addictions, alcoholism, cultural-conflicts, riots, rivalries and gangster operations which have become quite common.
- j. There has been a massive development of new retail formats such as malls, hypermarkets, supermarkets and lifestyle stores which has increased the employment opportunities. Malls offer a plethora of attractions – high profile shopping, eating establishment; a glitzy and glamorous environment. People are more concerned with quality and fashion and less concerned with budgets.
- k. Foreign countries have increased their investment in Indian industries. Wages of industrial labour has increased. Many international export and import procedures are being followed. Many Indian companies have also set their bases in foreign locales. Many technically qualified Indian youth are eyeing settlement opportunities overseas.

In modern situation, personal relationships are getting affected. The feeling of solidarity and warmth is missing out. The traditional values of family-relatives enjoying together, celebrations are not much appreciated by the individuals. The

younger generation is so much occupied with their personal self that they have forgotten the cherished ideals. Different sort of relations – gay relations, lesbian relations, live-in relations have become common place. Youth is distracted by the flashy lights of the western world and have shown their indifferent attitude to the societal and cultural endorsements. The socialist pattern of society has gained importance and different cultures are accepted by the society but still that faith in stereotypical beliefs is persistent and practiced which is distinctly visible.

THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL VILLAGE

Nehru envisaged a world where all the states would be equal in status and would have the magnanimity to accommodate the poor and needy of the world. The world has become a single community of interdependent inhabitants which are inter-connected by contemporary technology. It gives the vision of multicultural global village where ideas and practices can be freely exchanged and appreciated. The computers and internet have virtually made interaction and communication possible with the touch of a button. India has become a part and parcel of the globalized world and is emulating the positive and the negative tendencies of the modern culture.

The present century has been particularly rich in the variety and kinds of work that it has produced. The writers are seeking to get nearer to life as it is actually experienced by those engaged in living in it. The writers have portrayed the peculiarities of human relationships and ironies of Indian daily life in which modern and urban existence clash with the ancient tradition. The cities which are the engines of progress have become the breeding grounds for poverty, crime,

violence and disease. There is a breakdown of social norms, spiritual loneliness, alienation, frustration, disillusionment in all aspects of life. This has created a sharp divide between the rich and the poor. The rising anxieties, insecurities of the Indian middle class, questions about career inadequacy, marriage and family conflicts, are all prevalent in society. Slums are gradually increasing because of influx of the village people into cities.

Indian politics has been instrumental in spreading and supporting the criminals. Contract killings, the role of police and the gangsters, hawala transactions and the role of politicians, the virtual mushrooming of slums are all interconnected. The rural people have migrated to the cities for their advancement and have given way to the rise of slums. The political propagandists try to lure the poor slum dwelling people in order to reap maximum benefits from them. Poverty and crime share an intimate relationship. Crime has the tendency to create vicious cycles causing unemployment, economic downturns and instability. Poverty and crime together leave people with two alternatives, either to take part in criminal activities, or try to find legal but quite limited sources of income. Naturally, they are more inclined towards the first option. Poor people are socially distressed. They are impoverished and hence are more likely to be engaged in the use of drugs and alcohol, which in turn is associated with violent crimes, domestic violence and high crime rate.

With increase in education and new opportunities due to globalization, the work culture has witnessed changes. Good packages and comfortable lifestyles have worked upon the minds of individuals. So, they are working hard but along

with that they are also encountering multiple problems which can be assumed as the side effects of the high profile culture. Still, the rich are getting richer while the poor people are a little better but the gap is ever widening.

THE CONTEMPORARY WRITING

Contemporary Indian English writers explore these issues of the Indian society, but with a difference. Chetan Bhagat addresses the concerns of middle class youth in a language they can relate to and consciously strives for a mass appeal. The second chapter ‘CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLYPHONIC DIALOGICS IN CHETAN BHAGAT’, explores the modern society where the advanced technology is controlled exclusively by the group in power. MNC's have made the jobs more demanding and challenging. The pressures of student life, banking culture, the target ratios are all explored through various subsections as to how the Indian society has adopted to the new culture and how the society is witnessing continuous changes.

Vikram Chandra manages to weave multiple genres with each intertwined storyline finding its own moving, violent and spectacular resolution. He narrates the story as a potboiler capturing every detail of his characters’ lives. The third chapter ‘CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: GLITTERING VISION OF COSMOPOLITANISM IN VIKRAM CHANDRA’, unveils before us a world – an underworld interwoven with the narratives that delve into the lives of various characters with a slice of the population of Mumbai, a city that is alive in all its vibrant chaos and colours.

Suketu Mehta adopts a documentary style and relates the riots of 1992-93 in Bombay after Babri Masjid demolition. The fourth chapter 'CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLEMICAL STIRRINGS IN SUKETU MEHTA' narrates the real-life happenings and experiences of the writer himself. Indian society has a deep lure for materialism which forms the crux of many problems like cultural shock, inter-caste prejudices, caste-fights and violence. The networks of different gangs operate in society and unleash their terrors. Indian society has changed from what great leaders Nehru, Gandhi had envisioned.

The next 'CONCLUSION: A VISION FOR REFORMATION' is the final chapter of the study, relates the inferences drawn from the reading of the texts of the given writers, and also elaborates the hypotheses. It reflects on the questions and limits faced by the modern man in modern culture and society. The political and cultural constraints have in fact, toppled the nation into a new girth which requires an effort on the part of both the rich and the poor to put up a brave fight in order to embrace a new identity in the modern globalized world.

The study tries to trace various patterns prevalent in the metropolitan world, dealing with the issues and character sketches of various protagonists which are relevant to the understanding of the concept and provide a deep insight into the changing norms of the society. Each chapter is divided into various subsections to provide an elaborative and comprehensive study of various traits and characters visible in the works under study.

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CHAPTER-2

CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLYPHONIC DIALOGICS IN CHETAN BHAGAT

2.1 CHETAN BHAGAT: AN INTRODUCTION

Chetan Bhagat was born on 22nd April, 1974 in Delhi in a middle class Punjabi family. He is an author, columnist, speaker and writer. He is the author of blockbuster novels - *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* (2014). Other works include *Revolution 2020* (2011), *What Young India Wants* (2012) and *Half Girlfriend* (2014). Some of his works have made into Bollywood films. He is taken to be a youth icon and a role model by many Indians. He got his education from IIT Delhi & Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. He is voted as one of the hundred most influential people in the world by Time magazine. He writes columns for the Times of India and Dainik Bhaskar, the leading dailies of India. He left his job & settled in India to pursue his career as a writer.

Chetan was born & brought up in Delhi. His father was an army man, while his mother was a government employee in the agricultural department. He did his schooling from Army Public School, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi. Then, he went on to study Mechanical Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi & MBA from Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad. He chose banking as a career & worked in a bank in Hong Kong. Soon, he realised that he was made

up for something else. So, he quit his job and settled in Mumbai to pursue his passion for writing. Presently, he is married to Anusha, an ex-classmate from IIM. They have twin sons - Shyam and Ishaan.

His books have been the best sellers. They deal with the national problems as well as the young brigade. His *Five Point Someone* is a story of three friends who are not able to cope up with stress and work schedule at IIT. As a result, they secure low grades. Alok, Hari and Ryan try their best to make amends. They have a five point GPA grading out of ten, which means, they rank near the end of their class. The plot unfolds as to how the grades affect their friendship and love life.

One Night @ the Call Center is the story about six people working in a call centre in Gurgaon. They fall into a tricky situation with no way out. They receive a mysterious phone call from God, which changes the course of their lives and forms the base for much of the action in the novel.

The 3 Mistakes of My Life deals with three friends- Govind, Ishaan and Omi. Govind dreams of a luxurious life. He plans for opening up of a cricket shop along with his friends. Govind wants to make money, Ish is involved with cricket and he aspires to train young Ali, as he was born with a rare gift. Omi just wants to remain in the company of his friends. Life becomes difficult for them as they need to face a series of problems like earthquake, riots, religious issues, power-politics and the blunders which they commit.

2 States: The Story of My Marriage is the work inspired by the author's personal life. It is all about Krish and Ananya who belong to two different states.

They fall in love and wish to marry. The problem is the disagreement of parents, the North-South divide which is the cause of altercation in their matrimony. It forms an interesting study, how they convince each other and their parents into accepting their relationship.

Revolution 2020 depicts three childhood friends Gopal, Raghav and Aarti. They struggle hard to find love and success in their lives. It is a very difficult task to establish oneself in a corrupt and unfair society. Gopal and Raghav understand this bold truth but Gopal becomes a part of the system while Raghav becomes a fighter.

What Young India Wants is prose writing and not based on fiction. It deals with author's experiences as a writer and a speaker. The author tries to raise difficult issues facing India and tries to explore possible solutions. He invites open discussions from the audience to bring about a positive impact in society.

Half Girlfriend is the story of Madhav and Riya which is set in rural-urban India. Madhav falls in love with Riya during the college days but Riya is interested in friendship only. So, she becomes his half-girlfriend. Later, they part ways to face their set of struggles. They are finally united and lead a comfortable life.

Besides these novels, he writes columns for newspaper, where he voices his concern for the issues which are of national importance. He is also, actively involved in giving lectures in various educational institutes, government organisations, corporate houses and other related agencies.

His novels have been successfully adapted into films. *Five Point Someone* has been adapted into '3 Idiots' which was released in 2009. *One Night @ the Call Center* was made into a movie 'Hello' which was released in 2008. *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* was transformed into 'Kai Po Che' (2013). *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* has been made into a movie with the same name and was released in 2014.

Chetan Bhagat has won many awards and recognition for his commendable work. He has been presented Society Young Achiever's award 2004. Publisher's Recognition award in 2005, Time magazine's list of hundred most influential people in 2010 and Filmfare award for Best Screenplay 2014 for the movie 'Kai Po Che.'

Awards galore, many people have found faults with the type of work, the author is presenting. The critics have found faults with the expression and literary style of his work. Critics believe that some technicalities are involved while writing a work of art, which have not been followed by Bhagat. Very many impossible and ludicrous situations are integrated into the narrative. The style is humorous and full of masala is incorporated in his novels which can be easily shaped up into a film.

Still, the masses are reading and enjoying his works. He creates a familiar setting for the reader. He has created a culture of campus novels using the language which the youngsters can relate with. He has said in *Snapshot* "We have supermarkets. I want my books next to jeans and bread. I want my country to read"(n.pag.). He convinces by employing witty dialogues, illustrations, and

punches and brings around his set ideas on a particular subject. He wishes to become a vehicle for change, for reforming the society of ills for the betterment of citizens. His ideas about writing are dealt by Amrita Dutta in her article which explains, “The reason I do what I do is first to get people’s attention by entertaining them, whether it is in the form of a book or a film. And then I talk to them about what needs to change in the country. I do that by writing columns about current affairs”(7).

No author has been able to sensitise the readers as Bhagat. He has been able to touch the nerve of his readers. No doubt, his writing is much superfluous and incongruous yet, he deserves the respect and admiration for the effort he has put forth.

2.2 LOCALE

The metropolitan life expresses the changing graph of society, which has its own share of pros and cons. The modern Indian society influenced by western values is experiencing a cultural shock and political changes. Fiction is an extensive medium to represent and explore the changing faces of society in the present century. The novels of Bhagat are a reflective study into the patterns and ideologies in the present times and give a peep into the culture of metro cities. These novels give a glimpse of society where modern and new culture is catching up i.e. mall culture. New trends, lifestyle, shopping complexes, new kinds of jobs, hectic routines, stressful and complicated lives, adultery and new set of relationships can be witnessed. Some of the locations which have been described by the author and which form a part of the study are Delhi, Gurgaon, Ahmedabad and Chennai.

Delhi forms the part of study in his two novels- *Five Point Someone* and *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. Delhi lays its claim as the site of the fabled city of Indraprastha, which was the city of Pandavas as per mythology. Delhi has seen the rise and fall of seven major powers. It was founded by Tomara ruler, Anangpal who was influential in Delhi after the twelfth century. The city was occupied by Qutub-ud-din Aibak in the year 1193. The Delhi Sultanate period was from 1206-1526 AD, which was followed by the Mughal rule. In the year 1803, Delhi came under the governance of a British administrator. As Delhi became a commercial centre, British made Delhi as a capital in 1911. Since, it was ruled by the Mughals, khiljis and Tughlaqs, it presents a beautiful blend of the varied cultures which can

be observed in the beautiful and picturesque monuments and sculpture available in Delhi like Jama Masjid, Red Fort, Qutub Minar etc.

Delhi is the national capital territory of India; it is the largest city in India as per land area. It is jointly controlled by federal government of India and the Government of Delhi. It is surrounded by Haryana on the north and Uttar Pradesh to the east. During the British period, it was a province of Punjab. It is the largest commercial centre in northern India. Key service industries available in Delhi are information technology, hotels, banking, telecommunications and tourism industry. It has got one of the largest and fastest growing retail industries. It has a large consumer market what has attracted foreign investment.

Gurgaon city has been portrayed in the novel *One Night @ the Call Center* where Bhagat has primarily focused on it, as a business hub. Gurgaon is situated in the National Capital Region of India. It is a ten kilometre run from Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi.

The district derived its name from Guru Droncharya of *Mahabharata* fame. The village was given to him by the Pandavas and hence it came to be known as Guru Gram, which in course of time got distorted to Gurgaon. It is surrounded by Delhi and Rajasthan. During the Mughal rule of Akbar, the district was under the subas of Delhi and Agra. Then, it was divided into Paraganas by Britishers and later they held it under their direct supervision.

In its present state, it is thirty kilometres away from the national capital Delhi. During the last decade or so, the city has undergone massive reconstruction

and re-planning. It is one of Delhi's foremost major satellite cities. It is also the second largest city in Haryana and the industrial and financial centre of Haryana. It is the IT hub and has the third highest per capital income.

Ahmedabad forms the part of the novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. Bhagat uses this location as his backdrop since he did his MBA from Ahmedabad. Naturally, he used a known area to explore his ideas into a book.

Ahmedabad is the largest city in the state of Gujarat. It is located in western India on the banks of the river Sabarmati. The city has been a former capital of Gujarat and has been home to the most important leaders like Gandhi and Sardar Patel during independence. It is also the cultural and economic centre of Gujarat and the largest city of India.

The city was founded in the year 1411 by Ahmed Shah who invited merchants and traders to the city which led to its becoming a commercial trading and industrial city with textiles as its chief product. The city was dominated by Hindu and Jain merchants. An efficient system of banking developed in Gujarat which was followed in other parts of the country. It was conquered by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1573. He made Gujarat as a thriving centre of trade especially, textiles. The British East India Company gained control over it in the year 1818. Railway link was established between Ahmedabad and Bombay and the merchants and the industrial elite took advantage of the situation and supported new technology. Education came at a very late stage in the region. Gandhi established two ashrams in the city and also started his salt struggle from Gujarat in 1930.

On 26th January 2001, an earthquake centred near Bhuj rocked the city where many multi-storeyed buildings collapsed and many people lost their lives which has been related in the novel under study.

Chennai and Delhi are the two locations which have been dealt in the novel- *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*. Delhi has been earlier referred to in the chapter and Chennai as a metro city has an important place in the country. Both cities play a pivotal role in highlighting the North and South gulf portrayed in the novel.

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu and is India's fourth largest city. It is located on Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. It is the thirty first largest metropolitan areas in the world.

Originally, known as Madraspatnam, it was located in the province of Tondaimandalam. It was ruled by Portuguese, Dutch and French. The modern city of Chennai arose from the British settlement of Fort St. George. Many settlements and villages were merged into the city of Madras. It is recorded that British applied the name Madras to a new large city which had grown around the fort. The geographical limits of the city have been changed several times due to the plunder caused by Hindu and Muslim rulers. Madras progressed during the East India Company. Their period witnessed the development of trade and increase in wealth, setting up of educational institutions, ports etc. In the eighteenth century, it became an important British naval base. With its progress many companies started their operations in Chennai like HLL, Spencer and Co. etc.

2.3 THE ISSUES

Due to globalization and movement across the countries in 1990's and saturation of markets at their domestic places most of the developed countries of the world have become the MNC's (multinational companies), which have found their new locations and destinations in developing countries. It has provided job opportunities to many people. As such many people from villages came to settle in cities lured by money and rich lifestyle. This diversity included the co-existence of people from many cultural backgrounds within which are organisations created with various cultural factors such as ethnicity, race, colour, gender, physical ability etc. The metropolitan cities portray before us the traits of new culture which have found their way into the Indian society.

The issues which rock society are an integral part of the society and rooted deeply in Indian culture. They present before us a true picture of India in the new millennium where the culture of Bharat and India are intertwined and open before us a discourse about the impact of new ideologies on Indian culture and society.

Ragging Menace: Ragging is a practice in educational institutes and colleges where senior students subject physical and psychological tortures and harassment to new entrants. Physical and sexual abuses are the most common forms of ragging which has been practiced with the students. It is deplorable and shocking to watch people supporting these kinds of activities in the name of interaction. The basic concept of ragging was introduced with the idea to make juniors shed their inhibitions and acclimatise them with the new environment but the situation has become clumsy. At times, the agony and shame becomes too much for the students

and they cannot bear it and take an extreme step. On 7th March 2012, Aman Kachroo, nineteen years old and a first year student of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Medical college, Kangra was ragged by his seniors who were drunk. He was attacked so brutally in the hostel compound, that the very next day, he was rushed to the hospital where he died of brain complications. He had repeatedly complained to the college authorities about the boys but no action was taken. His death led to the introduction of new guidelines at colleges across the country to protect the students from ragging.

Highly reputed Indian colleges have a wistful history of ragging. It has become unpopular due to several complaints of serious injury to the victims and strict laws against ragging. As per directions of the honourable Supreme Court, a National Act-Anti-Ragging helpline was launched by the Indian government. The complaints and emails are checked by the helpline and action is taken accordingly.

In the novel *Five Point Someone*, Ryan, Hari and Alok are ragged in the hostel. They are made to cast off their clothes. Very inhuman treatment is meted out to them and indecent activities are performed with them. Alok is on the verge of tears, Hari is not able bear it but then, good sense prevails upon Ryan who because of his physique and body, challenges the seniors who run away and Alok and Hari are saved from further humiliation and embarrassment.

Even, the top notch IIT's and medical institutes are facing the problems on account of the practice, which is an offshoot of the modern world. It forces a student to accept the subjugation and conform to the circumstances. A student experiences loss of self-esteem and self-worth. His talents are suppressed and take

a back seat. He loses out his sense of creativity, spirit of enquiry and his thoughts lead to revenge mode which he unleashes on the next coming batch.

Examination Blues and Menace of Copying: Most students experience major stress in and around exams. With education requirements becoming rigorous, stress is also increasing. With all the assignments that need to be handed on time and jam packed schedules, students may shorten their sleep time to cope up with these demands. Students experience some level of anxiety during an exam, however, when anxiety affects the performance, it is a cause of serious concern. Too much anxiety during an exam can block thoughts, create a negative mindset and lead to panic and poor exam performance.

In the novel *Five Point Someone*, the students are being burdened by the loads of assignments, quizzes and lectures. They are on the verge of breakdown and their mental peace is disturbed. The protagonist Alok is not able to digest his failure. When he comes to know that he has been suspended for one semester and his career is ruined, he is shattered. He is a sensitive guy bowed down by the pressures at home which lead him on the verge of suicide. Even, in the novel *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, both Krish and Ananya face the pressures of studying at IIM. Ananya takes the help of Krish to find solutions to certain problems.

Another problem which is related to exams is the copying. The main aim of education is to teach certain concepts and ideas but in some cases, if you find a student cheating, it means he fails to understand the material. Cheating includes the acts of copying, plagiarism, and the use of unauthorised materials and notes.

Cheaters lose that pride which one experiences when accomplishing any work himself. They lose the chance to learn something complex and intricate. The same thing happens to the three friends in *Five Point Someone*. All the three friends want to rise from the level of five pointers and as such, they think of a plan of using unfair means to get good scores. Ryan discusses the plan which he named as 'Operation Pendulum.' Hari wants to raise himself in the eyes of Professor Cherian, the father of Neha. He knows about his shortcomings that he can't face the viva, so he falls for the plan backed by Ryan to steal the papers. Alok also, gives in as his friends are all ready to take charge. They plan out their strategy. First, they get the duplicate keys of Cherian's office through the car which was used by Neha, his daughter and Hari's girlfriend. Then, they forge out on their mission. They reach the appointed place and get hold of the question papers in Chairman's room. While, Ryan is busy, opening the seal and then reorganising it, Alok makes a phone call to his home but he fails to understand the system as to how it gets operational. The network gets connected to the few external lines and campus telecom switches the line. A green light lights up. The security guard who is sitting at the system gets alarmed and overhears the communication. He asks the patrolling guards to check the room. The three friends get caught red handed. They have to face the disco, the official enquiry and have to work really hard to clear the semester.

Copying in examinations has become a common practice. Students who do not wish to work hard find an easy way out through this medium. This way, their real talents and hidden capabilities do not come out in open and their personality or

real traits remain subverted or hidden. This is in sharp contrast to the practice followed in the idealised world of Ram Rajya where the word of Guru (teacher) was considered supreme and one could never think of cheating him.

However, copying can become a pattern or habit, if not curbed. If one cheats and gets away, he will be tempted to cheat again and one day or the other the practice will create trouble for the student. Students need to inculcate how to face the challenges of their lives, they need to acquire the art of time management so that situation like the use of unfair means never arises and stress and anxiety would be warded off.

Politicisation of Education: Indian education system is flawed as it suffers from the political influence and corruption which is meted out through politicians. The trend threatens the achievement of good quality education that could put the future of students at stake. The educational institutions are the chief agents of discovery, research, economic progress, cultural heritage, mentors of new generations and lead to social transformations.

The politicians bend the rules and regulations in order to enhance their vote bank. The policies of educational institutes are framed by the state governments. They don't understand the need of value education provided by the institutes. Every now and then, the news is heard about fake universities, where students take admission in various courses. They do not enquire information about the authenticity of the institution. The political and influential people support these institutes without any heed to the norms but the real victims are the students who lose out their valuable time and hard earned money of their parents. They do not

bother to check whether the institute is approved as per UGC norms or is it providing the basic facilities like food, teaching services, labs, research projects, staff etc as per the established rules. Whether the institute is supporting the approved course material or not; if it is at par with other universities or institutes; or the students find it too difficult to handle the courses. The students and the teaching faculty can contribute in easing out the situation where a new type of curriculum can be opted which gives students a chance to explore themselves without being bogged down by stress and tension. Recreational or stress relieving programmes can be introduced but nobody is ready to take the risk or move out from the established pattern.

Yashpal Committee report of 2009, has pointed out that Indian Universities are one of the most undermanaged and badly governed organisations in the society. If modern subjects are being introduced, modern research facilities and curriculum should also be made operational where the students come face to face with the competitive world.

Examination system followed in IIT, as narrated in the text is hackneyed and traditional. They have a very tight schedule and the students are overloaded with work. They don't have any time for self activity. Everyday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. they have to attend the lectures, tutorials and lab work. During evenings, they have to spend time in libraries. They have to work for their tests and assignments. As a character points out, "The professors kept up the pressure and the overworked students worked even harder to beat the average, thereby pushing the average higher"(23). The system still believes in the method of mugging up to clear the

exams. As Ryan declares “you know guy this whole IIT system is sick”(34). He believes, “This system, it is not fair”(35). They are faced with the problem of “continuous mugging, testing and assignments where is the time to try out new idea”(25).

Teachers are bully and don't believe in experimentation. Except for a few of them, the rest are happy with the routine set of teaching and questions. If any student presents an innovative idea, they try to suppress it. As Professor Dubey, Mechanical Engineering Department in *Five Point Someone* asked students to define machine. Since, students did not reciprocate, he himself provided the answer “It is anything that reduces human effort”(9). Ryan questions him that a gym machine doesn't reduce the human effort so there is something wrong with this definition. The teacher is not happy with the query and rebuffs him.

Ryan is depicted as an extrovert guy who is smart, creative and always exuding fresh and innovative ideas but throughout the narrative, his ideas are not appreciated by IIT'ians. Even, the lube tube project is rejected by Professor Cherian in first instance. Later on, in another lecture, he prepares a new design of a car jack to lift the chassis in case of flat tyres. He makes a modified screw jack, which one could attach in a motor on the traditional jack and hook it up with the car battery. If the ignition is switched on, the motor could derive the power but yet again it is disapproved.

Ryan had worked really hard on the lube project. He did his research in fluid mechanics, scoping and budgeting, applying, working on past research and finally derived certain positive results but he is not taken seriously.

When the students are caught in the stealing of question paper fiasco, Professors show no mercy towards them during the enquiry. They do not wish to deal with the reasons which led them to commit such a grave blunder. They were also not concerned about the family situation of Alok, who tries to commit suicide later on as he could not bear it.

The institute of the calibre of IIT follows the monotonous system where innovative and fresh ideas are side tracked. One who has done something extraordinary needs to be awarded his due credit. If the work has a potential then grants, facilities and encouragement is to be provided to the student so that he could reach for higher glories.

Although, the novelist has presented an exaggerated picture dealing with certain facts but some parts indeed, give a glimpse of the quality of education in the Indian universities. The government is involved in planning and framing the policies, they are least bothered to check out their implementation. The educationists have to be given a free hand in planning and moving education from elitist strata to mass orientation, upliftment of the infrastructure and making education on areas of choice rather than forcing a particular set pattern of options, instead value education should be introduced, focus on skill enhancement and quality to ensure employment should be catered to.

Hostel and Mess Facilities : The quality and standard of food served at the mess is really pathetic and deplorable even in IIT institutes. The novel presents a glaring picture of the quality of food served at various institutes. The food is prepared and served in unhygienic conditions. At one stage, in *Five Point Someone*, students are

served a variety of dishes- rice, noodles, french fries, toast, mushroom soup etc but the noodles stuck in the neck, french fries were cold and under cooked and tasted like coal while the soup tasted like muddy water. If this is the picture of a mess in a top bracketed institute, one can very well imagine the situation in average institutes. The students are forced to eat outside at the road side dhabas or stalls though, they have paid the full amount for mess facilities.

Even, the character Ananya in *2 States : The Story of My Marriage* complains about the quality of the food and hospitality at the mess. The authorities need to look not only at the quality and standards of teaching but other facilities and refreshments should also be taken into account as each and every aspect is associated with the reputation of the institute. In the year 2013, students of IIT Chennai organised a hunger strike to protest against the low quality of food served in the hostel mess. The news was reported in leading dailies, and reflects the glaring problems and issues of hostel and institutes.

Consumption of Liquor and Smoking: Drinks and cigarette smoking has become a fad in the metropolitan lifestyle. The drinks and other beverages are specially marketed to woo the teenage audience, although they have proposed health risks. In India, the marketing strategy adopted by the liquor brands is to publicise their product through eminent personalities. Earlier, actors from cinema and television were depicted on the labels and advertisements of the product to lure the potential customers.

Youngsters have been imitating and adopting the western culture not knowing the dangers they are being subjected to. In the novel *Five Point Someone*,

the three friends are openly drinking, smoking and watching porn magazines and movies and reading objectionable stuff. In another episode, Hari drinks to ward off his nervousness and goes for viva. Naturally, he is caught and asked to move out. Even, the daughter of Chairman, Neha is depicted as taking drinks.

For that matter, the characters in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* are openly taking drinks. *One Night @ the Call Center* presents a modern situation, when the characters are working in their offices during the night shift. They visit hookah bars, smoke and drink to refresh themselves. Going to the bars and clubs to enjoy is no longer a taboo. In *2 States : The Story of My Marriage*, Ananya is quite modern who drinks beer and enjoys life. She has no reservations adopting the modern lifestyle.

Strong measures need to be taken to educate students about the evil effects of alcoholic and narcotic substances. Simply apeing west and considering oneself modern is not the end of it. As per the orders of the honourable Supreme Court of India, smoking has been publically banned in India. The warning is indicated on the packets. Moreover, the celebrities depicting taking liquor and promoting through media has also been banned.

Financial Problems : When one is unable to satisfy the basic needs and services, one can be termed as poor. The situation arises when there is low income and an individual can't satisfy the need of survival with dignity. This leads to mental and physical breakdown. The bread earner of the house can't provide a decent meal to the family which leads to stress and frustration.

In *Five Point Someone*, Alok's family is going through a rough patch. His father is bedridden. The sister is of marriageable age, while he himself has been studying. His mother is the only earning member of the family. She works in a school and her income is meagre as compared to the expenses. Their only hope is Alok who, they think will get a decent job and will support them.

The financial situation and consequent problems can be viewed from a different angle also, like in *One Night @ the Call Center*, Priyanka's mother wants her to get married to an NRI who has successful job down there and financially stable while Priyanka wants to marry Shyam who is working in a website department and is not very rich. Similarly, Ananya's mother in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* wants her to marry an NRI. The meeting is fixed with the guy Harish and Ananya have to go through the formalities associated with it but then, she manages to annul the marriage. Krish's mother is depicted selfish as she has faced hardships throughout her life. She wants her son to marry a rich girl whose father has petrol pumps irrespective of girl's education and qualification. Still, she wants the marriage to be fixed and expects some gifts from the family. *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* deals with the deeply cherished dream of Hari, to be a rich and successful man. He invests his money in shopping mall and then in the cricket shop. The only purpose is to enhance his financial state and standard. Thus, financial status has important role to play in the modern life, though patterns and aspects are varied.

The gap between the two classes is quite distinct. The masses representative of Bharat are trying hard to establish themselves in modern culture.

The lure for foreign locales and grooms is evident but choices if proved wrong can be tough to handle. The need for financial stability is a harsh reality which forces one to commit mistakes.

Modern Psyche: The modern lifestyle is very challenging and highly demanding. There is no time to relax while the situations are becoming complex. The pressure becomes so strong that it is difficult to control oneself. Stress may be explained as a form of anxiety syndrome due to work pressure. It is caused by emotional physical or mental tension, which is visible not only in adults but also children and adolescents. Many people have called it a curse of modern life, where man is suffering from identity crisis. One does not want to be brow-beaten, humiliated and deprived of his right of independence. One is struggling to find the right direction and as such suffers from various complications like inferiority complex, obsessive-compulsive neurosis, hysteria etc. Some of the issues have been explored by the novelist by delving deep into the psyche of the characters.

Hari in *Five Point Someone* is not able to face the viva and suffers from inferiority complex. The background of his problem lies deep down his past. He felt insecure at his home. His father was a dominating personality who used to beat his wife while the mother did not interact with him. Ryan also, pines for his parents, who are busy with their business and have no time for their son. In *One Night @ the Call Center*, Shyam is bogged down by the pressures of job. He is doing all the hard work and completing the project but the boss takes the credit. Vroom has a tortured childhood. His parents have sought a divorce and often fight

with each other. Esha wants to enter the modelling world for which she had to make compromises. She has her own guilt complex.

In *2 States : The Story of My Marriage*, Krish and Ananya are unable to meet each other because of their job pressure. Krish becomes a workaholic when Ananya rejects him. He falls into severe depression while in *3 Mistakes of My Life*, as the chapter opens we come to know that Hari has tried to commit suicide. He is disturbed by the avoidance of his friend and finds himself responsible for the mistakes and takes the extreme step.

The psychological pressure in an individual is the after effect of new culture where one is facing the dilemma of identity crisis. He is not able to understand his position whether he is in a progressive mode facing new experiences each day or he is succumbing to the tortures and struggles of new competitive life.

Religious Fanaticism: A religion is an organised collection of beliefs, cultural systems and world views that relates us with the higher order of existence. Religion in India exemplifies a diversity of beliefs, ideologies and practices. Throughout the history, religion has an important role in the country. Cultural-religious diversity and religious tolerance are both practiced in the country by law and custom but this tolerance is being disturbed by the fanatics who go against religious preachings.

The rift between Hindu and Muslims forms a major part of study in *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. The novelist has over elaborated the concept of religion that it

has overshadowed the main issue of the novel i.e. cricket mania. Some of the characters portrayed in the novel are staunch Hindu believers. The Ayodhya issue has been raked in by the novelist; the Babri Masjid demolition; and the construction of Ram temple has been touched upon in the novel. The author is extremely careful and does not share his views about the issue. He exhorts the individual to be rational instead of blindly following the religious propaganda. One should believe in God but not a deaf and dumb believer. One should open one's eyes and observe the reality.

The Muslim leaders are portrayed as secular and democratic. The novelist doesn't explore their ideas much and they have been provided a short space in the scheme of narrative. The views are reflected in the form of dialogues between Omi and Ali's father, who is a Muslim leader.

It is not the case of difference in religion or a gulf between Hindu and Muslim. It is actually the gap or void in the mindset. One has to be democratic in the views and work for the benefit of mankind rather than be engrossed in petty religious issues. The ideas of divisions on the basis of religious principles, the belief in religious gurus and other dogmas are still very much dominant in Indian culture.

The incident of Godhara carnage where the bogies of Sabarmati express were burnt down in Ahmedabad has been used by the novelist to present the political situation in India where the politicians use their means to exploit the poor and extricate maximum benefits from their situation. They try to oppose one religion over other or glorify one religion over other and take it as an opportunity

to reap the benefits. In the study, the self proclaimed Hindu missionary Parekhji fuels the anti-Muslim sentiments amongst people. The character Bittoo mama loses his son in Godhara carnage. Parekhji makes him believe that his son died for a noble cause and his death should be avenged. Mama is so numbed down by grief and liquor that he loses his mental equilibrium. He gathers like minded people and fuels them to kill Muslims, where Ali's father and step mother also have to pay the price for no fault of theirs. He also guns for little Ali but Ali is rescued by the intelligence and courage of the three friends. Ali is saved but in the confusion which prevails, Omi loses his life. The riots like Godhara carnage do not result in anything productive rather many innocent lives are lost.

People who play Guruji or saints like Parekhji serve their own ends. They themselves lead a life of luxury and bliss. They lure people like Bittoo Mama by party tickets so that, he could maintain his status and reputation. Mama does all the hard work for the party while Parekhji himself enjoys on the patronage given by people. Towards the end, when the situation is grim Parekhji is nowhere in the picture as Ali's father sums up, "The problem in Indian, Hindu-Muslim rivalry is not that one is right and the other is wrong. It is...the lack of reconciliatory mechanisms"(71).

In the concluding pages, Omi, Bittoo Mama and his son are presented as martyrs. It is ironical that people like Bittoo Mama, responsible for killing so many people is being worshipped.

India is a country of fake beliefs and faith where people like Asaram Babu flourish. Asaram Babu, a saint or missionary in Rajasthan was arrested by police

on charges of sexual assault. The spiritual guru, who started preaching in Gujarat, owns many ashrams in the country. Many political leaders and business class are his disciples but presently, he is in jail, serving the sentence.

India is a secular country where all religions are treated equally. Any altercation induced or forced upon by certain misguided individuals towards innocent humanity is crime. Such types of practices need to be curbed. The actions reflected in the works present a rather grim picture of what ideal situation should have been in a country like India. The dream world of the key political leaders and freedom fighters has been shattered and poses a gloomy future for India.

Changing Faces of Women : Though the issues related to women do not occupy a substantial space in *Five Point Someone* and *3 Mistakes of My Life* but in other two novels, they provide the glimpse of society which is undergoing transformation and accepting women in their new roles.

Earlier, women were confined to the four walls of the house, looking after and taking care of the family. Her feelings, interests, aspirations and desires were all suppressed due to family responsibility and family inhibitions.

In the present scenario, the situation is different, with education and modern outlook, women have become self reliant. She is ready to come out and find her own niche. Women characters in the above given novels, portray traditional as well modern ideology as per the taste of the changing times.

In *Five Point Someone*, there is Alok's mother, who is the only earning member of the family as her husband is paralysed. She keeps track of the stock of

medicines required for the husband. She wants her daughter to get married as she won't find a proper match, if she crosses a certain age. She also has to make arrangements for the dowry to be given to the bridegroom.

Another character Neha, in the same novel is a blend of tradition and modernity. She is one character who is rooted to tradition and still expounds her horizons. She has all the love and respect for her family and it is because of this feeling, she tries to adjust with the bossy ideas of her father. She has come to know the truth that her father is responsible for the death of her brother. She doesn't want to see her father, a shattered man. She dresses herself in Indian dresses but her approach is modern. She wishes to have an open lifestyle, sheds all her inhibitions and drinks liquor. When she is caught by her father along with her boyfriend Hari, she confesses her guilt and stands by her lover. When he gets the job, she is ready to settle with him but she doesn't want for herself a tag of housewife. She wants to be a self reliant, working woman. She has done a course in fashion designing and makes herself employed.

Even Ananya, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is an independent woman who is a blend of tradition and modernity. She respects her family values but does not believe in sexual taboos. She is career oriented and has firm opinions and mindset. She is highly educated, doesn't believe in fake standards and doesn't wish to marry unless the parents from both sides give their nod. The women of today are ready to try out new vistas, experiment with new kind of jobs while, Neha in *Five Point Someone* is a fashion designer, *One Night @ the Call Center* gives a glimpse of working women in night shifts, Ananya in *2 States : The Story*

of My Marriage is a working professional. Esha in *One Night @ the Call Center* wants to make modelling her parallel career. The powerful women of today are economically sound. It is under the impact of globalisation and liberalisation – the coming of western ideas that she has come up on her own.

The dowry system has been practiced in India from times immemorial. As per Indian system dowry is the payment in cash or kind given to bridegroom along with the bride at the marriage ceremony. This includes jewellery, furniture, money, utensils and other household items which lays extra burden on bride's family. In the novel *Five Point Someone* Alok's family is struggling to find a suitable match for his sister. A match is found, the deal is struck and an engagement ceremony is arranged but on the final day, the groom demands his share of money. Alok is guilt ridden that he could not arrange the money and the marriage is called off.

Similarly, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage*, Krish's mother Kavita is portrayed as a greedy woman. Since her son Krish is earning handsomely, she wants a rich bride for him who can fulfil her demands and she should have a standard which is appreciated by her relatives. Later, in one of the episodes, Krish's cousin Minti is getting married. The groom's family demanded an accent car. They are adamant and not ready to go on with the marriage rituals, unless their demands are met. Ananya handles the situation perfectly and the marriage is solemnised.

In modern times also, women have been the victims of exploitation. Women are facing problems in every sphere of life whether employment, access to health care or property rights. Women are being trafficked for sex, harassment at

workplaces and tortured in family or society. Esha and Radhika in *One Night @ the Call Centre* undergo harassment and exploitation which tortures them psychologically. Esha has to compromise for her modelling assignment while Radhika has to face domestic violence. Neha, in *Five Point Someone* suffers emotionally on account of her father while Krish's mother Kavita, in *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* is also a victim of domestic violence.

Working women are juggling between home and job, switching their roles. In the metropolitan society, it is very difficult to survive on one salary, women are also playing the role of bread earners. They are empowered since they are earning and independent but now they have to perform the double duty i.e. to manage their homes as well as their office which is a difficult task unless the family members are cooperative. Radhika, Priyanka, Esha, Neha, Ananya-all women characters are happy to be employed, and independent.

Extra-marital affairs in the modern society have become a common practice. The novelist has tried to provide a glimpse of the situation through the character Radhika in *One Night @ the Call Center*. Radhika's husband has been in a relationship with Payal, his girl friend. He has been leading a double life. He has been enjoying himself while his wife has been dutifully doing her part. When his mother complains him about Radhika, he reprimands her. They have a strained relationship and she wanted a divorce.

Extra-marital affairs are relationships outside the marriage which continues even as one of the partners to that affair is married. A spouse may engage in extra-marital affair to fulfil a need which can be physical, emotional or mental that is not

being fulfilled in a relationship. The affairs can damage trust in a relationship, same is the case with Radhika.

Thus, women characters are portrayed in variegated hues in the novels; some are portrayed convincingly and highlight the prominent issues facing women in Indian society. The society is accepting the role of working women but the traditional notions of division of labour is still not practiced in India. The changes in Indian male mentality are visible but they are slow to catch up whereas the evil effects of west – affairs, divorce are fast to catch up.

The Use of Supernatural Elements and Superstitious Beliefs: In the novel *One Night @ the Call Center*, the part of God is conducive to the action of the novel. All the six important characters are stuck in a pit facing imminent death. Just then, a call is received, it is God who hears out from each one of them and guides and motivates them to face the situation of crisis. It is described as the inner call which is the most important call from conscience which explains four lessons, a person needs for success (a) a medium amount of intelligence (b) invigilation (c) self confidence (d) courage to face failure.

God asks them to mobilise themselves and channelize their energy in the right direction and get rid of their autocrat boss Bakshi; “A bad boss is like a disease of the soul”(234). One should not ignore the inner voice and if it is ignored, “you get engaged in your own web of comfort. And then you reach a point like today, where life brings you to a dead end, and there is nothing ahead but a dark hole”(227).

All the six employees learn the lesson, chalk out a plan, get rid of Bakshi, save their call centre and work ahead for future in the new scheme of things.

The story concludes from where it began, the lady sums up the narrative while Bhagat thinks her to be one of the characters of the story. Then, there is a bright light and lady's smiling face is visible. She has got the book beside her, a holy text and the lady is gone while the novelist lay there motionless and amazed.

Superstition is a widespread social problem in India. It is any belief or practice which is explained by something which is not natural and which is against the laws of science. Even the educated people have been observed to follow these beliefs. In the twenty first century, when we look for modern ideas and are scientifically mobile, we still have space for these fake beliefs.

2.4 NOVELWISE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

A character forms the backbone of the narrative or a work of art. The characters guide readers through their stories, helping them to understand plots and themes. Different characters have been dealt in the narrative each trying to play the part concisely in the scheme of the plot. The characters portray or reflect the traits and personalities which can be observed in common people when facing difficult situations. They present the gloomy picture of a modern man facing the struggles in a metropolitan culture.

The novel *Five Point Someone* presents different character personas which are representative of Bharat or India and are part of the modern political and cultural propaganda.

Hari : Hari's character has been efficiently explored by the novelist. Right from the beginning, he has been portrayed as suffering from some complex. He is not able to face the viva. He tries out hard to stand out and give reply to the queries put by the teachers but fails. Whenever a teacher used to look into his eyes, he felt handicapped and unable to reply although he knew the answer very well. The root cause of the problem is related with his family life, which has been sketchily mentioned in one of the chapters. His father had an army background, was a strict disciplinarian. His mother used to remain silent for days. His father used to beat him with a belt if Hari answered him back. His problem of insecurity lay in his home environment, where his parents were not normal people and they did not interact with him for days. He yearned for soothing and comforting environment of his family and felt neglected and deprived. He grew up facing the torturous

environment which complicated into a bigger problem. He could not interact with his seniors face to face or shied away from direct contact. In an episode, during the course of the narrative, he admits that he wants to be like Ryan who is confident, smart and has good physical attributes.

Hari believes that Ryan is intelligent enough to handle any discomfoting situation. He considers Ryan as his role model. Later on, in the disco which the three friends faced, prompted by his friends, he realises his self worth and understands that Ryan is not always right. He tries to overcome his speech disability in panicky and stressful situations. He successfully and satisfactorily answers the questions asked by the committee and is relieved that he has tried to defend himself and his friends whatever be the end result.

Very many people suffer from insecurities, lack of interest, loneliness at home. Hari is one of the kinds who suffer from inferiority complex but in the company of Ryan who is an extrovert, he sheds of his inhibitions and tastes success in untrodden zones which had been earlier discomfoting for him.

He is in love with Neha, but doesn't have the courage to convey his feelings to her. As a true friend, Ryan helps him out, he gains courage to propose her and come out of his shell. He goads him to take a step further in his relationship.

Alok: He is a soft guy who is bowed down by pressures of domestic issues. He has a paralysed father who needs medical attention. There is a sister who is of marriageable age. The only working member in his family is his mother who is a

school teacher. Alok cannot help his mother, as he himself is studying in IIT. He has forgotten all about his dreams and aspirations as he wants to help his family. He has shunned all his dreams of becoming a painter and an artist from his mind. He still carries a box of brushes and colours as a faint memory of his dreams. Throughout his life, he has been studying, diligently and nursing his ailing father. He doesn't know how to enjoy life. His whole world revolves around his family, getting into IIT, helping out his parents, supporting them financially but in his struggle he has to face a lot of hardships and has lost his true self, the real Alok.

Whenever, he does something wrong, he suffers from guilt complex because of his situation. He realises the true meaning of friendship only at IIT where he meets Hari and Ryan. He is an indecisive person. Whenever Hari and Ryan plan an adventure or for that matter some misadventure, he is unable to take a stand on his own. He teams up with them only with the guidance provided by his friends. He puts up a fight with Ryan not knowing about his family circumstances and shifts to another room. Later on, he realises his mistake and makes amends. He enjoys and takes pleasure in eating. He relaxes in the company of his friends but when he has to face tight situations, he breaks down. He has suicidal tendencies, when he gets to know that he had to lose one semester and his chances of getting a job were grim, he takes the extreme step. Luckily, he is saved and comes out from his inner lacunae with the effort of his friends who support him unconditionally.

Ryan: He suffers from his own set of problems. His parents are in pottery business. They sent him to a boarding institute when he was young and later on he

joined IIT. His parents shifted out of India and used to shower him with gifts and money. Ryan never used to discuss his family whenever prompted by his friends. His parents wrote to him but he never replied. He yearned for motherly love and fatherly touch. He believed that his parents have neglected him and they are after money and business. A child needs the love and affection of his parents at all stages of life. He wanted to feel the protective environment of his parents but he felt that, they were not with him when he needed them.

His friends, especially Hari understands the loneliness of Ryan and his relationship with his parents. Hari makes him realise that his parents, do care about him and he should understand their part. As Ryan is passionate about certain things in life, like his lubricant project similarly, his parents might have been passionate about their pottery business which left them with very little time.

Hari sends a letter to Ryan's parents under the name of Ryan which is a detailed account of Ryan's life. His parents take keen interest and reply back. The situation somehow melts down. Later, Ryan is able to get a job in the same institute as a research assistant under the guidance of Professor Veera; his father provides a helping hand and invests in his lubricant project.

Ryan is an extrovert guy, good looking handsome, body builder frame and full of jest for life. He is innovative in his ideas but his ideas are rejected by the superiors. He can't think himself to be following the tight schedule at IIT. He feels that there is no scope for any creative activity. He feels stressed out and frustrated. He suggests a plan to his friends to ease out the pressure at IIT. They would be studying for limited hours after the classes and then spend the time in outdoor

activities or movies. The whole paper and period schedule is divided amongst the friends whereby the classes of one paper would be attended by only one of them. The same one only has to prepare notes of the paper and share it with his friends. The plan fails and they all fall into the category of five pointers. They score poorly in the exams. Ryan's next strategy- 'Operation Pendulum' is also a flop show. Their planning to steal papers gets them caught and punished but it is the lube project initiated by Ryan which saves them all.

Ryan is frustrated with his life, his family, professors in the college. On account of his complexes, he is not able to concentrate on his studies. He tries to find ways to ease out of his problems but all his strategies prove to be a dumb show except for the lube project. His creativity, his boldness, free spirit is suppressed by the cold and harsh treatment at IIT. At the disco, which they face, it is Hari who becomes the saviour and not Ryan. Alok is not able to digest the news of debarring and tries to commit suicide. The situation lay heavily on Ryan but Hari comes to rescue. They study together on lube project, an idea of Ryan and try to save themselves by earning credits.

Ryan who is described as an easy go lucky guy comes to face the heat in the concluding chapters. He realises his mistakes and devotes himself to the project creatively and productively.

Professor Cherian: He is the head of the Mechanical Engineering department, is gripped under his own stereotypical ideology. He himself had been an IIT topper. He did not move anywhere else as he wanted to do the research work while his other mates who got lesser scores than him had excelled in their jobs. They headed

the software companies and he remained a Professor. He wanted his son to carry forward his intellectual tradition but his son failed to get into IIT. Unable to bear his failure and his father's displeasure, he committed suicide. Cherian's son wanted a life different from his father's ideals which he was not allowed and hence he took away his own life. When Cherian comes to know about suicide, he could not control himself and all his pain, grief, guilt comes out in the form of tears. The kind of catharsis and his guilt leading to his son's death melts him a little and he shows leniency towards the boys and makes them appear for the interviews on the basis of their project.

The sadness and frustration experienced by Professor Cherian finds a channel. When he realises what he had done to his own son, his remorse is directed towards the boys. He grants pardon to them and clears their way out.

Neha: She is Professor Cherian's daughter, a sensitive girl, modern yet homely. Hari comments, "There are two kinds of girls in Delhi... the second is the traditional type who wears salwar kameez, multicoloured bindis and large earrings"(44).

She represents a true picture of traditional Indian girl having modern ideology. She was deeply attached to her brother and she knew the bitter truth that her father is responsible for her brother's death but she loves her father too, realising that if her father discovers the truth about her brother's death, he would not be able to take it. That's why, she conceals the letter from her father.

Neha's father, Professor Cherian has been a dominating and over-protective parent who doesn't want her to interact with the boys. When she is outside at a bookshop or a store, she maintains her distance from Hari, her love interest. She feels suffocated by her home environment and whenever she gets an opportunity she enjoys her freedom. She likes drinking, cigarettes, chatting with Hari's friends and gets intimate with Hari. She genuinely feels for Hari and at a later stage is ready to take up job in Bombay as Hari is also working in Bombay.

The characters of *One Night @ the Call Center* present a glimpse of fast paced society, imbibing and following the western ideals and traits, modernising, catching up with new culture but also not letting away with the traditional concepts.

Shyam or Sam Mercy: He is the main protagonist of the novel. The plot moves from Shyam Mehra or Sam Mercy as he is called at his work place, to his getting ready for his night shift at the call centre. He worked in the website department of an ad agency before joining the call centre job. He is not at all attractive or good looking. He lacks the skill to impress or influence others. He wants to start his own business and set up a web design company with Vroom, his friend and a colleague. He is in love with Priyanka, who also works in call centre. He wants to get settled with a girl like her who can blend love and friendship. They work together in WASG- Western Appliance Strategic Group which deals with customers of home appliances, refrigerators, ovens and vacuum cleaners. It is called strategic because they specialise in troublesome and painful customers. They part their ways during the course of the plot. Priyanka gets an NRI match and is all set to marry him.

Shyam is heart broken and commits one blunder after another in an effort to get her back.

Shyam suffers from inferiority complex. He faces the extreme conditions in his life. On one side, he is not able to get his lady love back and on another front at his office, all his efforts and hard work is not appropriated. He has not been given a promotion which was overdue. His troubleshooting website which he has developed with Vroom, has been sent to the high office by Bakshi, his boss, with his own name imprints. All his efforts to lead a comfortable life have been in vain. His personal and professional life is in doldrums. He is exploited by Bakshi but he could not quit as he needed the job. Priyanka and others, taunt him for his inefficiency but his meeting with God gives him a lesson for success and boosts his self confidence. Once out of the pit, he saves the call centre from crisis along with his friends and later floats a web design company with Vroom.

Varun Malhotra or Victor Mell: He is also called Vroom because of his love for anything on wheels. He has been a problem child. His parents were divorced and still they were in contact and fought regularly. He had been working in a newspaper office as a journalist trainee. He dealt with global and social issues. His article ‘Why don’t politicians ever commit suicide’ was weird. The article said, “All kinds of people students, housewives, businessman, employees, and even film stars-commit suicides. But politicians never do. That tells you something”(49). He was a kind of activist that’s why he did not get along with his bosses. He has been represented as a person who is never serious in life. He loves speed and therefore loves biking. He is not stuck on one girl friend. His carefree attitude and love for

speed proves fatal for him and others, as the car he was driving along with his friends fall into a pit, but they are saved miraculously.

He has become unemotional and unmindful in his life because he had a tortured childhood. The constant fights between the parents made him stressed out. This made him frustrated and in the phases of sadness, he used to de-stress by driving out, dating with girls, going to hookah bars etc. He finds a true friend in Shyam and confides his mental state to him who understands his problems. At office, he along with Shyam has designed a website manual but Bakshi takes the credit himself to impress his bosses.

He is sick of his tomboyish lifestyle, and his agonised childhood, he wishes to settle down. He wants to give a new meaning and direction to his life and wants to settle down with Esha, a colleague in the call centre. He proposes Esha but she has not accepted his proposal because she has her own situation to deal with. She wants to be a model and is in struggling phase. She is not ready to commit. When Victor comes to know, the actual reason of rejecting his proposal, he could not accept the position of Esha. He rebukes her because he was seriously thinking about her. Finally, he understands the guilt and dilemma which Esha is facing and apologises to her.

Throughout Victor has been a rebel who can't accept the prejudiced idealism. He had to leave his first job because of his straight forwardness and pointed remarks on politicians. He is against any kind of racialism. When an American calls him and gives racial comments, he could not digest it.

The traits displayed by Vroom very significantly point toward the dilemmas and strains of modern life style which one experiences in life, thinking all pains and struggles will be overpowered in fast paced lifestyle but which inadvertently leads to nothing. After his meeting with God and accident, he realises his real worth, his capacity and capabilities. He knows that he has to build his future and that too a secure one. "I would work days and nights for that as long as I know that I am doing is helping build something for my country for its future"(209). For him, "Progress is building something lasting for future"(228). He gets even with Bakshi, settles scores with him. He helps the people at call centre by saving their job, quits his own job and opens a web design company with Shyam.

Priyanka: She works in the same call centre as Shyam. She is a team member and reports to Shyam as he was the team leader. Priyanka and Shyam had a serious relationship but due to some misunderstandings they broke off. Shyam is still in love with her. She also has a soft corner for him but pretends otherwise. It is Priyanka's mother who has complicated the situation. Here we witness an unusual bonding between the mother and the daughter. They have arguments about petty issues like wearing gold. Priyanka says at one stage "You know my mom and her obsessions for an NRI match for her rebellious daughter"(62).

Priyanka's mother wants her to settle down with a rich and intellectual person. She wanted an NRI match for her daughter and not someone who is doing a call centre job. Throughout the narrative, she showers a marked influence on her daughter. She is the root cause of break up between Priyanka and Shyam. Priyanka understands the nature of her mother but she is also attached to her mother. So,

when a marriage proposal of an NRI Ganesh comes for Priyanka, she accepts him leaving Shyam in the lurch. Somehow, the truth about Ganesh is revealed and she cancels the marriage plans with him.

She is critical about Shyam and prompts him to take an action against Bakshi who had been exploiting him. She wants him to stand for all the hard work which he had put in and give a befitting reply to Bakshi. She is a well-wisher of Shyam as far as professional life is concerned.

In all, Priyanka is a sensible girl but still, she disapproves Shyam because her mother wants her to do. Later, when she realises the true worth of Shyam, she goes all out for him, rejecting the claims of her mother. She is a symbol of empowered woman who is not ready to give in come what way. She stands up for what she feels for. During the course of the text-‘Past Dates with Priyanka I and II,’ the novelist presents this facet of her personality. During a date, Priyanka and Shyam are sitting and enjoying refreshments in a restaurant. There a family was sitting- husband, wife, mother-in-law and two daughters. The mother-in-law was dominating and criticising her daughter-in-law at every point while the husband was relishing his food and not at all supporting his wife. Priyanka stood up for the meek daughter-in-law and taught a lesson to mother-in-law. “Harassing woman is punishable for three years. Quick trial no appeal”(91).

She is an open-minded and outspoken lady. She drinks openly and has also a wild side to her personality. She could even sit with truck drivers and have tea. She is a determined lady who can stand out for herself as the occasion demands.

She questions Shyam about his passivity. She says, “Why can’t people stand up for themselves”(81).

She is very emotional also, as is visible in her relationship with her mother. She accepts Ganesh’s proposal because of her mother but when she realises that Ganesh has lied about his physical appearance. She could not accept the deception. She does not accept the improvisations of her mother and breaks off with Ganesh. She continues with her job and intends to do B.Ed. and get married with Shyam after two years.

Priyanka is a multifaceted personality which is displayed through her actions. She truly represents the picture of modern Indian woman who is empowered, mature and delicate.

Esha Singh or Eliza Singer: She works in the call centre and was considered the hottest chick at connexions. She had moved to Delhi from Chandigarh, against the wishes of her parents. She earns her living by working at the call centre during the night shift and goes to find modelling assignments during daytime.

She aspires to become a model. She is 5-5” and twenty two years old and is considered a little short for the fashion world. She also has participated in the fashion shows but they were low profile. She visits various modelling agencies to get new assignments. Her nature of job related to modelling is very hard as she had to make adjustments as per their demands. Her dressing is perfect. She dresses beautifully with earrings, mascara, eyeliner, lipstick etc. Her fashion sense is impeccable. She attracts everyone with her stunning looks. She supports a naval

ring. Her road to success is laid out with thorns. In order to get good opportunities, she gives into the physical advances of the sponsors and contract managers. She is not able to get the assignments even after compromising. She is guilt ridden and a tortured soul. She explains “Real pain is mental pain”(155). She is not able to accept her exploitation and rejection. She reflects, “Everyone has a dark side to their life...something you don’t like about yourself, something that makes you angry or something that you fear”(156). Vroom proposes her but she rejects it because she doesn’t want to cheat him. She confides her guilt to Shyam and other girls.

Towards the end, after her meeting with God, she comes to realise that her modelling career is not worth it. She doesn’t wish to compromise on her views any longer. She continues with her job at the call centre and intends to visit her parents’ home at Chandigarh. Exploitation of women continues unchecked in the metro cities & there is spurt in the cases of harassment against women.

Bakshi: He is the boss of Shyam and manages the services at the call center. He is around thirty but looks like forty and speaks like as if he is fifty. He has done his MBA from some university down South. His physical attributes are summed up as, “The oversized face resembled the Ravan cut-out at Dusshera”(54). Vroom believes that “Bakshi is just a silly but a harmless creature.”(59) There are cheeky lines spoken by Bakshi which are used to create humour in the narrative as he says, “... aren’t we comparing ourselves to oranges here?”(79)

He is portrayed as a character who doesn’t have the knowledge but who wishes to scale to Boston on the hard work done by others. He loads the

troubleshoot website in his own name to his superiors although he has no role in person creating it. He is bossy and dominating. He is ill managed and is deficient in handling the affairs at the call center. He has been termed as an idiot. “He is a scary one. He is like a blind snake: you feel sorry for it. But it still has a poisonous bite”(153). He also has the habit of watching porn sights on the net and makes use of his position but Shyam and his team members outwit him in the end. They blackmail him on account of a mail delivered to Esha. They arrange for a talk with the bosses & clarify the whole situation. The matter is resolved and he is shown the door.

Characters like Bakshi are a common sight in the society who wear mask to hide their true identity. In the competitive world of today, people like him surge ahead of others but ultimately they fall on ground as their mischievous acts get revealed.

Rajiv Gandhi’s liberalisation policy helped to get computers and it has provided jobs to millions at global level but to take an unlawful advantage of technology for own purposes is highly deplorable as is exemplified by Bakshi.

The 3 Mistakes of My Life gives a glimpse of life and culture which is based on false religion and values seeking a division of society, instead of planning to create a world which is devoid of division and fractions which segregate and destroy the world.

Govind: He is the main protagonist who is a true businessman, and very calculative. He is the best mathematician available in the town. Amongst the three

friends, he is the one, who maintains the account and proposes what kind of business they should start supported by Omi & Ish. Govind manages business, all orders and deliveries. Later on, along with his friends, he analyses the business at the sports shop. He is the most vigilant of the three but he commits the three mistakes which shakes his world upside down. The first mistake which he commits is the purchase of a new shop in an upcoming mall at Navrangpura but all his efforts come to naught as he loses all his investments in the shop because of an earthquake. He has taken loans, multiplied with his savings and collections from friends, all were all lost. All his hopes & desires of expanding his business are dashed to ground. Still, he gathers courage to stand all over again after the initial setback.

He repays all his loans & debts through careful planning and hard work, with the support of his friends. He gets order of sports equipment from the school and establishes his rapport.

Bitoo mama always coaxes him because of the shop which was in temple premises and lent out to the three friends but he takes care to pay his rent on time.

Meanwhile, Govind gets hooked up with Vidya, Ish's sister. He starts giving her maths tuitions as she wanted to give medical entrance exams. They plan to get medical books from the shop when they visit a parlour for refreshments. They open up and become friendly. When Govind and his friends take a trip to Australia, he realises that he is in love with Vidya. He comes back and gets intimate with her. This is the second mistake which he commits. He knows that

Vidya is Ish's sister and Ish would not like his relationship with Vidya. He takes the risk of losing his friendship.

All the three friends love cricket and want Ali to become a successful cricketer. Govind is fussy about spending money because of a hard life which he had faced in his childhood. His father had left him & his mother when he was just a child. His mother had made every effort to make him a fine gentleman. When his father left his mother alone many years ago, she kept on crying and was consoled by the women of neighbourhood. She had to suffer a lot in her life but the setbacks had made her strong. Govind grew up watching the pain and suffering of his mother. He has pent up feelings against his father & is tormented by his neglect. He has come to know that his father had a second wife across the town. His mother is taking care of the snacks business and now they have learnt to live their lives alone without him. Govind has grown up to an intelligent man who can handle the burden and responsibilities of the household. He is good at mathematics and very calculative but he is fussy about spending money. On their trip to Australia with Ali, he chalks every bit of program as to how much financial strain they can bear out. He takes care that Ish and Omi don't overplay their parts and spend on unnecessary articles.

He makes his business increase threefold and hence the gains. He successfully repays all the loans and earns good profits. He commits the third mistake in the bank when the riots break out. When Mama is on the verge of attacking Ali, he reacts, a little late which causes wrist injury to Ali and he loses his ability to strike the bat. Moreover, Ish comes to know the truth of relationship

between Vidya & Govind & he falls in the eyes of his friend. Omi dies in the struggle and Govind is left alone. Govind realises his mistake but Ish stays aloof from him. He tries to help Ali but to no avail. He consumes sleeping pills but the matter is resolved by the timely efforts of the novelist.

Govind's business instincts & self interest makes him lose his true friends but the acceptance of his mistakes & financial help given to Ali makes him patch up with Vidya & finally Ish. The friendship reflected by the three friends is exemplary. Though each one is individualistic in his approach and is different from the other but it is their friendship which eventually wins.

There is adoption of many aspects of new culture and modern values like investment in malls, training a Muslim boy, moving out to Australia but still the age old cultural practices, religious diversities and caste distinctions are surviving. In the novel there are reservations in accepting the love affair and also the stereotypical religious ideology. The thinking has not undergone much transformation.

Omi: He is a Brahmin boy. His father is the priest of the Swamibhakti temple which is owned by Omi's mother's family for generations. Omi was not good at studies. He barely cleared class twelfth exams, after repeating the maths compartment exam twice. There are gossip theories round the corner which suggest that Omi has become stupid because a cricket ball had hit him. He did not want to become a priest of the temple so he gave in for opening up of a sports shop in the temple complex. He arranges for the shop convincing his mother as the shop was owned by Omi's maternal uncle. Omi likes to enjoy with his friends and

watching cricket. He supports his friends in all their adventures. He has been going to gym of his maternal uncle. So, he also gives fitness classes along with cricket classes. Bittoo mama tries to influence him to join the saffron brigade or become a votary of Hindutva. He along with his friends attends the feast given by Parekhji, the religious guru who is an influential man. Omi is a foodie and relishes every kind of food. He seems to be under the spell of religious ideology practiced & followed by Bittoo mama and Parekhji for some time.

They enjoy together in Australia where they go for Ali's training. There Omi realises Govind's attraction for Vidya, Ish's sister. He reprimands him and asks him to stay away from her. Later, he is in great sorrow when he comes to know that Bittoo mama's son, Dhiraj has been killed in the Godhara carnage. He tries to remain calm but owing to the sensitivity of the situation, it was difficult to self control.

Riots break out as an aftermath of the incident. The three friends meet at the bank where they carry out teaching and practicing. The boy Ali is with them. The Hindu mob with Bittoo mama comes to that secluded place to kill Ali, the Muslim boy. Omi, in a valiant effort, sides with his friends in saving the little boy and in turn loses his own life.

Ishaan: Ishaan is a friend of Govind and Omi. He ran away from NDA where he was a trainee. His father works in a telephone exchange and has the modest salary. He loves cricket and has been playing it along with his friends when they were together in Belrampur Municipal School. Ish cannot handle any domination over him so he ran out of the army as he could not see himself following the orders of

someone. His father used to scold him for leaving the army. He was the team captain for all municipal schools in the area. He is passionate about cricket. He played at district level but could not make for state level. He is the best cricketer in the town. When Ali comes into picture, Ishaan sees the potential of the little child and plans to train him for free. He takes him to the doctor to inquire about his health. The doctor diagnosis him to be having hyper reflexes which strains him out after few shots. Ishaan confides to his friends and also Ali's father about the training. He takes him to Australia in an effort to procure a scholarship to train him. He believes in God and religion but is against any false propaganda. He comforts and supports his friend Govind when they lose their shop in the mall at Navrangpura. He is very protective about his sister Vidya. Once a guy follows her up, he gets a severe beating from him. Ish requests Govind to teach maths to Vidya because she wanted to sit for medical entrance exams. Govind is attracted to her and falls into a serious relationship with her, knowing well the repercussions. When Ish comes to know the truth about the relationship, he stops talking with him and behaves as if Govind is non-existent.

With his courage and intelligent tricks, he along with his friends save Ali, from impending death at the hands of Bittoo mama but he loses his friends. Omi is dead while Govind is barred from any communication because of his proximity to Vidya. Towards the end he acknowledges his friend Govind and his love for his sister.

2 States: The Story of My Marriage is an interesting study as one witnesses the rich culture of North and South India. The traditions, ideology and glittering

picture of love relationship which turns sour and finally the happy ending are all part of the scheme.

The plot revolves around Krish and Ananya, the main protagonists. They belong to different states and want to get married. The problem arises when the parents disagree. The narrative moves through the Punjabi neighbourhood in Delhi to the high brow culture down the South. It involves emotions, fat Punjabi weddings, breakups and patch ups, jerky mothers, witty dialogues to the happy ending.

Krish: The narrative opens with the character Krish discussing his problems with a psychiatrist. The author has enlisted the conversation in italics. The story moves through flash back when Krish relates his side of story to the doctor. He used to study in IIM at Ahmedabad where he first met Ananya Swaminathan, the best girl in the fresher's batch. He points out, "Good looking ones were rare; girls don't get selected to IIM for their looks. They get in because they can solve mathematical problems faster than 99.9% of Indian population and crack the CAT"(3). Both fall in love with each other after initial hassles but they have other problems to look up to, their conservative parents. Krish's parents are North Indians and practice and idolise their set of culture. Krish has done his IIT from Delhi, his mother is a housewife and he is close to her and not on talking terms with his father.

Earlier, he was in relationship with a girl, who was a Professor's daughter at IIT. He had to leave her under the influence and pressure of her father. He longs to become a writer.

He is very protective and caring about Ananya. He doesn't want her to wear shorts. They stay together in the hostel room and are comfortable with each other. He takes his time to decide about his future with Ananya. He faces the interview, has imaginary conversations with God and then proposes to Ananya.

Krish knows and understands that his mother would not accept Ananya as her daughter-in-law because she is a Tamilian. Together, Krish and Ananya plan for the meeting of their parents on convocation but the plan fizzles out. Later on, the trip to Sabarmati Ashram also sulks. When Krish comes back to Delhi to meet his mother before joining the bank, his mother wants him to meet Dolly, a potential bride and tries all sorts of tricks to convince him. Krish knows the uncanny attitude of his father towards his mother. So, he cannot altogether ignore her opinions and ideas about her future daughter-in-law. He wants to protect and save her. When he has the option about deciding between Chennai and Delhi for job, he wishes for Chennai as he would be closer to Ananya but out of guilt and responsibility towards his mother, he gives Delhi, an equal preference. It is by sheer luck that he gets a posting for Chennai.

It is for Ananya that he has opted for Chennai as his workplace. This is absolutely new surroundings and situation for him. His new boss Bala goes with the logo "Citi never sleeps, we make our customers weep"(110). Officially, the bank starts at 9 a.m. but the trainees were supposed to report at 7:30 a.m. and he used to get up at 5:00 a.m. in the morning. Krish was asked to sale out the internet stocks to the Citibank customers including the housewives. The stocks went into the loss mode and investors closed their account. When the explanations were

demanding by the high command, Krish was made the scapegoat, although he only followed his boss's orders.

Krish's relations with his father are strained. He has been abused by his father in his childhood. T.V. was not allowed at home and he did not treat his wife well. His father did not approve of his relationship with the girl of an IIT Professor. Krish releases his piled up emotions by slapping and punishing his father. In the end, the tension between father-son duo is resolved. Krish's marriage to Ananya is solemnised with the efforts of Krish's father.

The spiritual side of Krish is also given a footing in the novel. Krish visits Pondicherry with Ananya. There he goes to the ashram and meets a Guruji who helps him confront his emotional self. It helps him heal his personal problems to some extent and gives him clarity of vision.

Krish along with Ananya tries to fix up the problem of North-South divide by impressing Ananya's father. Krish visits Ananya's home on the pretext of taking tuitions for Ananya's brother. He makes every effort to guide and provide coaching to her brother. He rises early at five in the morning, dresses and goes straight to Ananya's place to teach and then to office. Finally back to home at night and yet again, he prepares his lectures for the next day. He also helps Ananya's father, Mr. Swaminathan with his presentation at the bank. He realises about Mr. Swaminathan's fondness for drinks and music. He even stays at her home and wears a lungi when Ananya is away. He helps out Ananya's mother by suggesting her name for a music concert organised by his bank officials. So, Krish wins over the family of Ananya.

One gets a picture of modern hectic lifestyle in the private sector. The idea is to exploit the consumer. Carefree attitude and no taboos as far as drinks are concerned; changes in life style, dress all are markedly visible.

Ananya Swaminathan: She is a South Indian girl who is studying at IIM. She has perfect features and she is the best girl in the fresher's batch. She likes to have non-vegetarian food and beer. She is a Tamilian Brahmin. Her father works in the bank of Baroda at Chennai. Her mother is a typical South Indian wife. She has a brother who is studying. Ananya is proud of her looks as she acknowledges that she has got many proposals at IIM. She is an economics graduate from Delhi University. She is an open-minded and flexible girl but is a bit touchy as far as her parents are concerned which is natural on her part. She has unconventional looks i.e. she has a fair complexion which does not go with the South Indian image of a dusky woman. She is unconventional in other ways also; she is a Tamil Brahmin but open to non vegetarian food and liquor otherwise restricted in their family. She is bold and defiant, wears Indian and Western dresses and is fluent in English.

She shares a comfortable equation with Krish. She boldly accepts her relationship with him. She stays with Krish in his hostel room, gets physical with him. She has a modern, independent outlook towards life. Her equation with Krish's mother is not in a comfy zone and like many modern girls, she doesn't know how to cook as she has all the time remained busy with her studies.

Modern woman has empowered herself with financial and economic independence. Ananya is a just example of that empowerment. At Krish's cousin, Minti's wedding she stands for the righteous thing; she convinces Minti's husband

that their demand for dowry is unjustified. She is a highly ambitious lady and career oriented. That's why she studied at the top institute and got herself a good placement in HLL (Hindustan Lever Limited).

Although she has been portrayed in a bold avatar, she has certain grey overtones which are not highlighted yet they form a certain part of her personality. She is open to drinks, sex and having a boyfriend, still she wants to marry only with the wishes of parents. She hides many of her personal details from her parents which she should have pointed out. She stops talking to Krish after Goa episode and indirectly becomes responsible for Krish's depression and mania. She could have followed a more honourable course to handle the situation.

Her humane side is also reflected in the novel as she wants the parents from both the sides to attend the marriage. She understands the gap between the two families but with the help of Krish, she tries to persuade her parents and also get into the good books of Krish's family. The traits of her personality have been ably represented by Krish when he admits that, "She is different. She is confident, independent and intelligent. But she is caring and sensitive too"(229).

Mr. Swaminathan: Ananya's parents are very simple minded and have a typical South Indian mentality. Like all parents they want their daughter to be happy and comfortable and want her to marry a qualified person and that too, a South Indian. Mr. Swaminathan has been a senior in the bank but his credentials and seniority have been overlooked. He is not given his due promotion instead, his junior gets the promotion. This is a setback for him. Krish enters the house to help out Swaminathan's son and provide him tuitions. Meanwhile, Mr. Swaminathan is

assigned a new task of working on a presentation which provides details about the growth of the bank but he is not very good at computers. At first, he is too shy to share his problem and doesn't ask for any help but when he finds no way out, he accepts Krish's offer of helping him out and together they work on the presentation. This intimacy makes Krish realise Swaminathan's tastes and culture. The slides are made out and Krish convinces him to go for the presentation himself which he indeed does, and wins accolades for his performance and efforts. In this way Krish wins over Mr. Swaminathan.

Radha Swaminathan: Ananaya's mother Radha Swaminathan has a love for knowledge, hatred for showing off, has earthy ways of eating food and loves carnatic music. She is looking for well bred, educated South Indian match for her daughter. When Krish comes to know about her love for music, he recommends her name for a music concert organised by his bank. She is terrified at the prospect of participation and singing songs but she yields to Krish's pleadings. She gets much appreciation for her performance and Krish is successful in his efforts.

Kavita: She is Krish's mother; a typical Punjabi housewife who has suffered throughout her life bickering and violence at the hands of her husband. She has accepted her fate and treats her son as her saviour and future. She is a link between the son and the father. She always takes sides with her son when the tussle takes place between the father and the son. She is very possessive about her son and wants him to marry a girl of her choice, pretty but minus credentials. She always points out that Krish should marry a girl having rich parents as it would add to the cumulative wealth she would bring in.

She disapproves Ananya for Krish as she is a South Indian, not a Punjabi or of their caste. She believes that “North Indians are fairer. The Tamilians have a complex”(56). She makes nasty comments on Ananya and her family during the course of the plot which makes the reading funny. She blurts out, “These South Indians don’t know how to control their daughters. From Hema Malni to Sridevi, all of them trying to catch Punjabi men”(48). During the visit to Sabarmati Ashram along with Ananya’s family, she asks questions on Dandi Yatra and Ananya’s parents get a taste of her knowledge. Things don’t work out between the parents.

Ananya takes a short trip to Delhi to fix the situation but Kavita totally ignores her at the airport. She doesn’t like Ananya’s presence at her home and leaves her alone for cooking dinner which turns out to be a disaster. Kavita comments on her not being able to cook and using her son as bait. Later when Ananya apologises she says, “Its fine, you modern girls are like this. That is why I want Krish to marry...”(195). She leaves the sentence incomplete which can be interpreted as North Indian or a rich girl. All the time she has been discussing potential brides. She discusses about the amount spent on Minti’s marriage and the money Krish can get as a groom. She tries to rationalise her statement every time. She is little greedy but this can be accepted from a woman who has been deprived of the little joys throughout her life. She has been waiting for this moment throughout her life and yearning for little riches. She has not experienced a peaceful and comfortable life and her son is her support system and she wishes to fulfil all her dreams and aspirations through him.

Krish's Father: Krish did not have a comfortable relationship with his father. He hated his father for bullying him and his mother. He was an ex-army man and whatever occupations he had tried his hands turned out to be a fiasco. He poured out his frustrations and anger at his family. He did not help his son Krish when he needed his help in marrying a girl of his choice which further complicates the matter between them.

During the course of the narrative, he showered beatings on his wife but Krish could not tolerate it and he raised his hand on his father and after that, there was no conversation between them.

He hates and condemns his wife Kavita's family as they all the time convey to Kavita that she has made a wrong choice in her life. At one stage, Krish helps his father in some paper work which somehow melts the father in him. He realises that he has a responsibility towards his son. He undertakes the journey down South and meets Ananya's parents and try to resolve all misunderstandings. Finally, he becomes the man responsible for solemnising the marriage of true lovers. He suffers from inner complexes and failures which are tearing him apart. He needs an outlet to pour out his frustrations and tormented soul and the family is the one who bears the burnt.

There is also a reflection of the generation gap between the older and younger generation. Their divergent thinking, together with the changed scenario and new ideology and culture has further promoted the gulf and differences between them.

2.5 CONCLUSION

All the four books under study present a life style which is exemplified in the modern Indian society. The lives in big cities, humdrum, struggles, exploitations, divisions, cut throat competition to excel, stagnations, diversions are all very real and striking. This is a society where new culture is breeding up, in addition to age old traditions and heritage. At times, one is torn by the demands created by the two.

Five Point Someone ably points out the serious gaps in our education system. The system has been politicised, the need to come out at the top, to match the honchos in the western countries, the pressure on the students is immense. There is another front, where the students are using other medium to tackle the problems related with exams. The use of unfair means and practices is on the increase, there is general deterioration in the standards, and the real talent is in the hibernation and not given a chance to blossom out.

One Night @ the Call Center gives a glimpse of metropolitan society. The Call Centre, night life, pizzas discs, drinks have become common. The exploitation at the workplace, excessive working hours, pressure to deliver- all has been focused. We get to visualise the upbringing in the new culture - the relationship between mother and daughter, mother- in- law and daughter- in law, the divided families, the effects on children and then the modelling profession, racial dilemma, the western impact have been thrown open. In fact, there is an imprint of multicultural lives which people are experiencing. The supernatural elements have also been tossed up. The idea about belief in God and the virtues which he expects

from the man, the faith in him and coming out of near death experience has been left open to us. The unusual meeting of the writer with a lady in the train and ending with a bright halo leaves one open mouthed and speechless.

The 3 Mistakes of My Life poses serious questions about the authenticity of Hindu fundamentalists, whether they are for the betterment of society or fomenting trouble between different cultures. The Hindu-Muslim divide and sports mania form the main theme but many episodes from the real life situation form a part of the book. They seem to be forced upon- Bhuj earthquake, Godhara carnage, the religious meetings of Parekhji, love angle and as such they mar the interest of the study. The search of Bhagat to find someone who is about to take his life through internet all seem to be impossible but then, the search is rewarding after all.

The study as such brings out the polarisation of religion at the hands of the superior few, mall imbroglio, the gifted cricketer, coaching for competitive exams, lure for money- present a society which is not ready to leave the past but also diverging and inching towards new culture.

2 States: The Story of My Marriage delineates a society which is still reeling under the rift of North and South divide. The issues of women empowerment, the stresses of modern day jobs, domestic violence, failed marriages find a prominent place in the folds of the book. The common problems, the ways to handle them, the issues with parents, the work-culture, the mania all have been meticulously tackled. The serious questions related to political propaganda, the elite creating the gulf between the masses have been left open for interpretation.

The low class and middle class are trying to get sanskritised to raise their levels while elite are getting westernised and modernised. The chain reaction continues to spread but with the possible side effects. Indian society has become more prone to negative tendencies and adopting them in their lifestyle. The author has concentrated on youth lifestyle and their slang in order to highlight modern trends. He has hinted at possible reformation but provided no authentic solutions.

On one side, there is a glimpse of society which is mod and rational and on the other, the society which is stereotyped, superstitions and irrational. There is a set of multiple cultures and voices projected in the texts where each one of them is trying to supersede the other. The Bharat or India which has been envisioned was to be free from dogmas and actively charging towards the progressive and rational ideas, rampant in the new world, adopting them with élan devoid of negativities. Nevertheless, Indians are still searching for the patterns which they can relate with and also which can offer some solace to their soulful stirrings. The ideas related to changes in Indian culture have been further explored in the third chapter of the study.

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CHAPTER-3

CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: GLITTERING VISION OF COSMOPOLITANISM IN VIKRAM CHANDRA

3.1 VIKRAM CHANDRA: AN INTRODUCTION

Vikram Chandra is an Indian-American Writer. He was born in New Delhi in 1916. His father Navin Chandra worked as a business executive and leads a retired life. His mother Kamna Chandra has written several Hindi films and plays. His sister Tanuja Chandra is a film maker and screen writer. She has directed several films. His other sister Anupama Chopra is married to Vidhu Vinod Chopra, a film director. She herself is a film critic and a consulting editor for India's NDTV. Vikram Chandra is married to Melanie Abrams, who is a fiction writer. They both teach creative writing at the University of California, Berkeley.

Vikram Chandra received his high school education from Mayo College in Ajmer, Rajasthan. He attended Xavier's college in Mumbai and then as an undergraduate student, he shifted to the United States. He graduated from Pomona College, Claremont, California, with a B.A. Magna cum laude in English (concentration in Creative Writing). He attended the film school at Columbia University leaving halfway through, to begin work on his first novel. He received his M.A. from writing seminars at John Hopkins University in 1987. He has taught at George Washington University and lectured at the University of California, Berkeley. His first novel *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995) was inspired by the

autobiography of James Skinner who was a legendary nineteenth century Anglo-Indian soldier. The novel is named after a poem from the *Kuruntokai*, an anthology of classical Tamil love poems. The story begins with an element of surprise – a monkey who can type and who has to tell tales in order to survive. The audience includes Lord Yama, Lord Hanuman, Lord Ganesha, a small group of youngsters and the family which is home for the animal. There are many stories tied around and interfused with violence and passion.

While writing the novel, Chandra taught literature and writing and was also working as a computer programmer & consultant. It was published by Penguin Books in India, by Faber & Faber in the U.K. and by Little Brown in the United States. The book received critical acclaim. It won both the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book and also the David Higham Prize for Fiction. Since much of the novel deals with nineteenth century it has not been made part of the study. In 2000, Chandra along with Suketu Mehta served as a co-writer for a Bollywood movie 'Mission Kashmir.' It was directed by his brother-in-law, the Bollywood director Vidhu Vinod Chopra.

His other book *Love and Longing in Bombay* is a collection of short stories published in 1997. It has different characters portrayed in five stories which are loosely interconnected. Each story is set in a different social milieu revealing a broad spectrum of modern Indian life. The storyteller Subramaniam tells his stories to the regulars of the Fisherman's Rest. They are then transmitted to more people by one of Subramaniam's listeners, the narrator Ranjit Sharma.

The novel was published by Penguin India in 1997. It won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Eurasia region). It was shortlisted for the Guardian Fiction Prize and was included in the Notable Books of 1997 by Outlook magazine (New Delhi). The story 'Dharma' was awarded the Discovery Prize by the Paris Review & was included in Year's Best Fantasy and Horror story (St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Sacred Games was published by Penguin India in 2006. It is a nine hundred page epic story which focuses on a Sikh police inspector- Sartaj Singh and his investigation into the suicide of mafia kingpin Ganesh Gaitonde. Ganesh dies but he tells his story to Sartaj Singh in alternating chapters, confessing his deep emotions and his mobster lifestyle. The character of the city is developed as Chandra concentrates on other characters in the story.

It was published by Harper Collins in U.S in 2007. It won the Hutch Crossword Award for 2007. It was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction.

His non-fiction work about the culture of computer programming and classical Indian aesthetics was published in 2013 by Penguin India as *Mirrored Mind: My Life in Letters and Code*. It was published by Faber and Faber as *Geek Sublime: Writing Fiction, Coding Software*. The book is published in US as *Geek Sublime: The Code of Beauty*.

In June 1997, Vikram Chandra featured in the New Yorker photograph of India's leading novelists. His work has been translated into nineteen languages.

Chandra believes that there is no such thing as single story. It has seeds for other stories. In an interview with Ranjan Ghosh, Chandra claims the writer loses to be the owner of the story the minute it gets written, “In his or her encounter with your story, the reader constructs a new story. Each reader’s narrative is a unique one, related to the one you constructed but not quite the same”(n.pag.).

Some critics have opposed Chandra’s notion of authenticity by sharing the view that he is selling, the feel of being Indian as a commodity to sell his books but Chandra insists on judging the work on their relative achievements and not by the notion of Indianness and their assimilation by the West.

The stories narrated defy the conventions of their respective genres. They sustain our hope but none of them provide expected and comforting solutions. The protagonist tries to construct a coherent picture of the events but the vastness and multiplicity is so huge and perplexing; and to add to it, there are unresolved and unsolved issues where the reader is left to his own interpretation.

Chandra uses Bombay(Mumbai) street slang in his writing, which at times sound harsh. Thus, Chandra stresses on multiplicity and diversity to narrate the timeless topics of love, death and redemption.

3.2 LOCALE

The two novels under this study deal with metropolitan Mumbai, the City of dreams. Mumbai has truly charmed many people inside and outside India. Be it the tourism, be it Bollywood or the scenic beauty or the trade practices, it is the most favoured capitalistic hub of India. Mumbai is the capital city of Maharashtra located in Central India.

It is the collection of seven islands on the west coast of India. The archipelago of seven islands includes – Colaba, Mazagaon, Old Women’s Island, Wadala, Mahim, Parel and Matunga Sion. Initially, there were these seven islands separated by swamps. In 1845 the city’s swamps were filled and the separate islands turned into one large island.

The Kolis, a Marathi fishing community were the earliest known settlers of the islands. Then, Mauryan Empire gained control of islands and transformed it into a centre of Hindu and Buddhist culture & religion. Later, it passed on to various dynasties and was ruled by the Gujarat Sultanate. It became a Portuguese possession in 1534. They established a trading centre in the city. That is why, they called the place Bom Bahia, meaning the good boy, which in English was pronounced as Bombay & hence the name settled. The products which were traded included silk, muslin, rice, cotton and tobacco. By 1626, there was a great warehouse, a port and a ship building yard in the city. By the time, East India Company took charge of Bombay, it completely transformed the city. In 1687, the company made Bombay as their headquarters. By the end of 1700, it was the Gateway of India. The first Indian railway began its operations between Mumbai &

Thane in 1853. In 1854, the first cotton mill was opened. The Bank of Bombay, the oldest bank in city was established in 1840. The University of Bombay was established in 1857. Bombay stock Exchange was opened in 1875.

During the freedom struggle, it became the centre of the Rowlett Satyagraha of 1919 and the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946. After independence, the territory of Bombay was structured into Mumbai state. In 1960, it was incorporated into the dominion of the newly created Maharashtra state.

Mumbai is a composition, multi-cultural city and is the centre of India's entertainment industry; it is the fourth largest populous city in the world. One can witness posh areas like Cuffparade and Juhu and also the poverty stricken slums of Dharavi, one of largest slums in the world. It is home to the corporate powerhouses, RBI, BSE, NSE. It is the store house to rich & glorious classical heritage in Elephanta caves, Siddhivinayak temple, Museum etc. It is to be noticed that the name of the city was changed to Mumbai by the ruling party in 1996. So, both the names have been used for explorations in the chapter.

3.3 THE ISSUES

There are five stories in the collection- *Love and Longing in Bombay*. Each is titled by a Sanskrit word which refers to some principle or theme to which the story relates. Each story is framed by the works of an elderly man Subramaniam, a retired civil servant. He sits down at the bar and recounts his stories to all those present in the bar. He manages to captivate the imagination of Ranjit Sharma, who is the main narrator and a skeptic, belonging to contemporary Bombay. The common narrator throughout the work binds the stories with Hindu concept. It is a fine example of storytelling and fable weaving and then one sees a range of Bombay life and flavours and tastes of the city. The readers witness dreamers, workers, gangsters and the vast assortment of issues and struggles they face; some of the issues reveal the vast array of forces which are prevalent in the modern world.

The first chapter of the book 'Dharma' deals with proper conduct. It is the story of Jago Antia a soldier, who comes home to his parents' house to find that it is haunted.

Army Lifestyle: The army is maintained by the country which is a well trained and well equipped military service which play useful role in the defense of the country. They lead a life of discipline and are self reliant to instill in others, a desire for national service. They are given a tough training as Jago Antia had been following a hard regimen with his cadets. He was taken to be a man of exemplary courage who had lost his leg in the battle field. He was hurt in a mine attack and his right knee was twisted. He knew he had to command his cadets and there was

no time to waste. He chopped off his leg bearing all the pain. He had won many combats and many medals. He was respected by his fellow soldiers as they said, “That is why his politeness, his fastidiousness, delicate way he handled his fork and knife, his slow smile, and these Jago quirks were imitated by even the cadets at the Academy”(6).

Superstitious Beliefs: Some beliefs have been practiced in Indian culture from past times. It is largely attributed to the lack of education. Astrology plays an important role in the lives of people in India. India, being the hub of diverse cultures and traditions, is also home to myriad superstitions. Sacrifices, horoscopes, religious discourses are practiced and followed in Indian society. The belief in supernatural elements forms the crux of the story. Jago Antia comes back to his house in Bombay after experiencing an acute pain in his amputated leg. He discovers ghost stories surrounding the house. The neighbours are sure about the house being haunted. They steer clear of it out of fear. His companion and servant is afraid to follow him into the house. Finally, a person who understands about spirits and supernaturalism is called for handling the matter. He informs Antia that ghost could be some relative and Antia does what is necessary so that the ghost can rest in peace.

The second chapter is titled ‘Shakti’ which depicts the ability of the feminine creative force to establish her identity. It deals with the story of Bijlanis and Boatwallas. It gives a glimpse of complexities of love. Sheila is a very beautiful woman who comes to love a short, dumpy and an unattractive man. She has an unquenchable thirst to defeat Dolly Boatwalla who suffers from superiority

complex. The narrative discourse leads to their fights, parties, lifestyle, business, children and finally Sheila overpowering the Boatwallas into an understanding or settlement. It also serves to highlight the ego clashes in the elite gentry which form the root cause of friction.

Kitty Parties and Club Culture: A Kitty party is usually a gathering of housewives, where the party is held in one lady's house or in a hotel. It includes food, fun and gossiping. The trend has shifted now to clubs which had been earlier restricted to the elite class. Now, the individuals who belong to the middle class are seeking the membership of the club. They provide ultra modern facilities like swimming pools, dance parties, various sports to play, food and drinks. The membership of the clubs is open to the whole families. The trend reflects the intermixing of both the groups where the distinctions of caste and colour are wiped out.

In the narrative, Sheila started throwing cocktail parties and lunches where she invited her special guests from elite gentry including, Dolly Boatwalla which was a grand success but Dolly Boatwalla stayed aloof. Then, Bijlanis wanted the membership of Malabar Gymkhana as their son wished to play there but they were denied permission which resulted into Bijlanis opening up of a new club, which was called the Shanghai club. It was much sought after club but then, Boatwallas were not given membership. The club culture has been increasingly accepted in the modern cities as they provide recourse to busy individuals to enjoy their life, the way they want.

Womanly Cat Fights: The fights between Bijlanis and Boatwallas form the centre of attraction in the story. Sheila, who is a part of the higher echelons of society wages her battle to stay at the very top at all times. She is determined not to be bowed down by the games played by the other woman surrounding her. Bijlanis diversified their resources and invested into transportation and plastics besides mixies. Bijlanis think of taking over the business of Boatwallas. The children of both the families are in love while Dolly is against the relationship but Sheila through her conniving and cunning efforts, manages to become the most important woman of high society. The marriage of the children is fixed and both the families are finally together.

Domestic Help: Domestic help these days are hard to find. They come from the far off villages where living conditions are difficult. In the cities also, they face a tough life which is strenuous and devoid of charms. Like in the text, the maid Ganga, worked in a dozen houses without any break. She reached back home by 7:30p.m. Then she was busy with her household affairs. She used to live in a small Kholi and had her daughter to take care of. When she was buying a new Kholi, she took a loan from her mistress, which she had to pay back in installments. She was a widow but very courageously, handled all situations; even she married her daughter in a well to do family.

Bijlanis helped her to great lengths to ensure their maid is satisfied. In the modern scenario, double income households and large families require full time domestic help. The elite class supports the servants to maintain their standards.

Dolly Boatwalla had her servants dressed in a proper uniform. She had the habit of showing off, which was influenced by her adoption of western ideals.

Love Pangs: Love pangs are essentially felt by the youth of today. Notwithstanding the urges and frequent requests by the parents, these youngsters do not pay any heed. Sheila's son Sanjeev and Dolly's daughter Roxanne fall in love during the course of the narrative. The families are not interested in the relationship especially, the Boatwallas. Dolly takes her daughter to London, while Sanjeev loses interests in life and falls into depression. If the demands of the couple are not met, they take recourse in love marriages or run away with the partners. In many societies, love marriages in some of the communities are banned. Even, the families punish the couple who bring disgrace to the family reputation by running away. There are new cultural traits visible in society which forges a set of new relationships and also, the traditional system and taboos are still very much a part of Indian culture. Nevertheless, there is a spurt of love marriages in the present times.

The next chapter is 'Kama' which deals with sensual pleasures. A policeman has discovered a crime and is not satisfied with the investigation, so he takes upon himself to resolve the case. It puts him into danger as his actions are frowned upon by the superiors and also lead him towards unknown territories, where some startling discoveries are made.

Strained Relations: Matrimonial disputes have become a common phenomenon in the present century. The unfulfilled needs and desires in an unhealthy relationship becomes the cause of dispute which can ruin one's life.

Sartaj Singh, the protagonist uncovers the tangled tale of love and betrayal, which exists between husband and wife. He discloses the secret of Chetan Bhai Patel's private life. In the process, Singh also encounters his own demons of desire when his ex-wife re-enters his life. One feels the ache of Sartaj Singh over the breakup of his marriage as he is not able to sign the divorce papers.

Sartaj Singh recalls his past. Sartaj was a hero in his college days; while Megha, his estranged wife was rich and beautiful. They got married but Megha could not understand the nature of his job while Sartaj lacked patience in making her understand; so the differences crept in. While solving the case, Sartaj realises his mistakes which has ended his relationship with Megha. He understands that they are not made for each other and finally signs the divorce papers.

Elite Lifestyle: Elite is the section of society who is the most influential. They bear the resources of wealth, power and prestige. They are generally educated and enjoy a superior status.

Chetan Bhai Ghanshyam Patel belonged to the elite section of the society. He owned a Rolex watch valued rupees 218000/-. His flat, the sixth floor apartment looked lavish as if it was a haveli with elephant parked outside and durbans on sofas. The drawing room was large with brass lamps, furniture and hangings on the wall. There was a life size statue of an Apsara(an idol)pouring water made of marble. He owned a red Contessa car. He went for outings on weekends and had his own set of pleasures and luxuries.

Sensual Encounters: Abuse and assault have become quite common in the society. It is an involuntary act in which a person is threatened or forced to engage against his will. This amounts to the torture of victim. There is a spurt of these kinds of incidents in modern society.

The story presents, an inhibited life of Chetan Bhai Ghanshyam Patel who was murdered. His neighbours and friends shower their praises on him but he had a hidden life which is supposedly the cause of murder. He had a 'shoukeen' (enjoying and carefree) kind of lifestyle as is put forward by Mrs. Khanna. He along with his wife went to Daman, a hotel during weekends. He used to practice all sort of indecent activities with his wife. Sartaj Singh comes to an understanding that some things happen between husband and wife and they can't be explained. This is what happened in the Patel household.

The next story is titled 'Artha' which is a reflection of purpose or prosperity. It deals with the gay relationship between Iqbal and Rajesh. Sandhya is a computer programmer, who experiences painful relationship with her ex-husband and has supposed lover. Both Sandhya and Iqbal are highly individualized, turning up into close friends while facing professional ups and downs.

Gay Relationship: Homosexual love is explored in the story. It is a sort of romantic or sexual attraction between members of the same sex or gender. In the story, Iqbal and Rajesh are depicted to be in a gay relationship. Iqbal recalls that he had met Rajesh on a New Year Eve. Afterwards, they met again and fell for each other. They had fights, patch-ups and meetings in the whole year but then suddenly Rajesh is gone. Iqbal misses his company and is tormented. He tries hard to get a

trace of his partner which he eventually does, but is not elaborated in the narrative. Iqbal understands that lost time never comes back. He could not confess his relationship to anybody as the Indian society does not accept it. He remains alone with certain hollowness in his heart.

Many countries have accepted the notion of gay rights while in India also, many quarters demanded for gay rights but honourable Supreme Court of India has upheld Section 377 which criminalizes homosexual love. Gay relationships are quite uncommon in India but under the impact of western values and liberal culture, Indians are also coming out in the open. They are not shy about disclosing their identity and their preferences.

Infidelity: Infidelity or breach of faith violates the basic assumption of life trust. It can be a heartbreaking experience when the betrayal is detected when a spouse is emotionally or sexually involved with someone outside marriage. When the expectations are not met, it leads to a feeling of rage and betrayal, lowering of personal confidence and damage to self image. There are certain norms which are to be followed in a marital relationship but if these rules are not adhered to, the violation can be full of torment.

The story portrays entangled relationships. There is Iqbal, who confronts a horrible truth about his lover Rajesh, his connections with the underworld. He is shocked and lost while Sandhya, Iqbal's co-worker and friend discovers and effectively eliminates the infidelities of her artsy beau Anubhav.

Gang Operations: Rajesh had lied about his working in a post office and also about the gym. He had been involved with Ratnani, a rich businessman who had underworld connections. Police and Rajesh's brother also confirm Rajesh's involvement with the Bhailog (gangsters). Iqbal tries hard to trace the whereabouts of his partner but all his efforts come to nothing. He gets a warning from a gangster that he should not follow up Rajesh, otherwise he would also be wiped out and nobody would come to know.

Gang workers operate their network through slum areas. The poor people like Rajesh are made the scapegoats as they are the easy targets. They are made to do the operations for meager amount. If they are caught, they have to undergo the torture in police custody. The elite or business people have their own security guards and connections for their protection as is visible in the case of Ratnani.

Computer Generation: In the present world, it is almost impossible to imagine that someone can live without computers. The most that any industry has gained from the discovery of computers is the business industry. They have improved the efficiency and productivity of the quality of the work done. It can help businesses by making the staff efficient and also saving the valuable time. The interest is getting bigger and faster every day. In the discourse, Sandhya and Iqbal are software programmers. It is the source of their income and livelihood. The programme which they develop catches a snag. They work on the system, the hardware problem and also create a faster and improved version of the programme. Naturally, the money pours in and eventually, they get a new office.

Empowered Women: Sandhya is an example of modern, independent woman, who understands what she feels for, does what she really believes in, and lives true to her own terms and values. She has her own office at her flat, and looks out for herself. She is independent at all levels. She can make her own money, follow her own path and be her own best friend. She is divorced from her husband and has a son to take care of. She is very friendly with Iqbal, who is also her colleague. She is a little spendthrift as she has tastes for art and painting. She buys a painting worth rupees twenty two thousand. She has a very stylish drawing room. She is in relationship with Anubhav who is a painter but when she comes to know about his infidelity, she throws him out of the house. She is disturbed by the presence of her ex-husband but manages out well. She challenges herself with a better software programme and is successful in her efforts as she creates a better and faster programme.

Corruption at Workplace: Sandhya and Iqbal have created a software programme which has developed problems. Iqbal went to check the system in the office where it was operational. When he investigated he found that somehow the plugs were intentionally pulled out. He found the two officers – Raunakji and Manishji working late at night. There were ledgers and safe in the accounts room. The safe was with its coverings of Gods and Goddesses and there was an empty space in the middle as if something was missing. When he went to check the cables, he touched upon a jumbo, which was taken away from the safe. Iqbal could make out, that files were corrupted because of the mishandling of the two officers

while they continued with their slips and forgery in the accounts room but they were caught and fired from their jobs.

The last story bears the title 'Shanti' which means peace. Through the story we reach Subramaniam, a character who makes his presence felt throughout the narrative. The story deals with the quest of young woman for her Air Force husband lost in World War II combat mission. It narrates the love story of the protagonist who sees the woman at the railway station. She is a frequent passenger and her repeated visits to the station serve only to intrigue him and increase his obsession with her.

Cultural Riots and War: Cultural riots and World War II have been portrayed as the backdrop of the narrative. These political leaders excite the passions of people and they are the ones who get the maximum benefits out of war. The Hindu mob snatched away the life of Hari, the twin brother of Shiv Subramaniam. The World War II made Shanti lose her husband who was a pilot in the Air Force.

The political leaders like Nehru envisaged a new order in India – a secular and socialist India, where all religions have freedom and equal say but the contemporary political leaders have destroyed the spirit and feel of secularism and socialistic principles by creating differences in the people of varied cultural identities. The cultural riots and mobs further promote segregation in society which is a stumbling block in the hopes and aspirations of an egalitarian society.

Widow Remarriage: Shanti was a widow as there was no news of her husband whose aircraft was put on fire in the World War II. She had been struggling to find

her lost husband but was ineffective. While on her visits to the army headquarters, she happened to meet Shiv. Shiv gets attracted towards her and wishes to marry her but his parents and relatives do not support him. Finally, they elope and get married. They get settled in Bombay.

Indian society has incorporated and sustained the positive impact of the new culture. Widows are no longer suffering alone; they have been given a platform where they can restructure their lives. Many pension schemes and monetary benefits are provided to them. They can plan their future and remarry which is not considered a taboo in metro cities. The problems associated with widow remarriages are markedly visible, as the elders in the story are not ready to support them.

Thus, in the stories we meet the two narrators, one who is near the end of his life, the other one in the prime of his own. Chandra reels before the readers the two visions of megapolis; one is ageless and the other which is ever changing. Subramaniam evolves a vision of an older and haunted Bombay and Ranjit Sharma represents Bombay of the new information age, materialistic, pragmatic and incredulous.

The next novel *Sacred Games* is a crime thriller where Bombay's police officer Sartaj Singh seeks an opportunity to nab a criminal warlord-Ganesh Gaitonde. Chandra starts with the character of Sartaj Singh taken from previous work- *Love and Longing in Bombay*. We observe two man plot stands in the novel. Sartaj Singh's quest to discover himself is interfered with Gaitonde's memories of his established career. The book moves through various channels. It is a deep

introspection of the changes visible in megapolis which caters and supports many activities simultaneously. Some of the issues which form an important part of the study are discussed below:

Nuclear Terrorism: The narrative is planted in the backdrop of nuclear threat. Gaitonde comes to know about Guruji's plan of nuclear bomb and builds a cubicle for him to protect from nuclear possibility while Sartaj Singh and Anjali Mathur follow up the leads of the terrorists groups executing a plan to blow up Bombay. Their findings lead them to a virtual nuclear holocaust keen on destroying the humanity.

Nuclear terrorism in India will remain a potent threat as long as there are terrorists seeking to gain access to nuclear material and technologies for malicious purposes. The activities during the past years are a witness to significant rise in the profile of a security threat involving terrorism and nuclear weapons. The September 11, 2001 attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon is a clear testimony to the fact. Terrorists have made it clear their intention to get nuclear weapons. Many Islamic nations through various means are posing a threat as they have procured deadly weapons and nuclear armament which they can use to unleash the terror.

The book describes the presence of militant outfit Hizbuddeen. It is the army of the final day. They talk of the destruction of India starting from Bombay. It also deals with Kalki Sena which is getting ready for war. They wanted to set up a perfect nation according to Hindu principles, the Ram Rajya.

Infidelity and Domestic Violence: In metros, there are many more reasons, which lead to marital-discord and forms of domestic violence. These include more income of a working woman than her partner, her absence from the house till late night, being more forward socially than the males; working women are quite often subjected to assaults at home or in office.

In cities, marriages don't offer a lifetime warranty anymore. With more and more women joining the workforce, the traditional barriers are collapsing to give way to a new westernized culture. Women are aiming high, working longer hours and travelling outside for work. With both the partners working between office deadlines and house hold chores, couples have barely any time to invest in a marriage. As a result, there are more instances of extra-marital affairs in the corporate sector. Both males and females succumb to these pressures. If they are not satisfied in their marital relationship, they find options outside marriage.

The character Kamala Pandey, a representative of elite section faces domestic violence at the hands of her husband but she is bold enough to give it back in the same coin. She also attacks Mr. Pandey and gives him a fine beating. The husband is skeptic, that his wife is having an affair. Kamala Pandey is an airhostess and Mr. Pandey believes that she has been hosting the pilots at stopovers. Mr. Pandey's doubts indeed, turn out to be true as Kamala Pandey is involved with a pilot Umesh who later blackmails her.

Aparna and Amrit Rao, living in small Kholis, in slum areas are always fighting it out. Amrit Rao has extr -marital relations with a lady from whom he had children.

The elite and the slum dwellers, both are facing the same kind of issues, be at home or workplace.

Political Corruption: It is the use of power by government officials for illegitimate private gain. In Politics, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or subverting formal processes. Corruption in public administration results in the inefficient provisions of services. Government regulators and police share in bribe money which they receive from people in order to get their work done. Earlier, bribes were paid for getting wrong things done, but now bribe is paid for getting right things done at right time. Political machinery is bottom necked involved in corruption. The major source of corruption in police is the vast power vested in a police officer in day to day working. They enjoy wide powers while discharging the core functions of police, which includes the maintenance of peace and order and prevention and detection of criminal activities.

In the narrative, Bipin Bhonsle, the Rakshak candidate for the constituency of Morwade comes to meet Gaitonde, the ganglord. He wants to win an election in his favour. When Gaitonde specifically asks him about their endeavour to root out corruption, he replies, “When the whole world is dirty, bhai, you have to get dirty to do any cleaning. We can’t fight their money without tricks. Once we are in power, it will all be different. We will change everything”(244). He is ready to squander all his money to secure a win, while Gaitonde provides him the essential, man power. This is the state of affairs of politicians in India where power matters.

Later on, during the course of the novel, the Rakshaks form new government in the state. They are trying to become a party of statesmen as is

portrayed when a character states, “As state ministers and cabinet secretaries, they had toned down their ranting nationalism, but they would not give up their battle against cultural deprivation and western assumption. They promised to reform the nation”(17). People like them, have their own philosophy to project. They are much concerned about the degradation of Indian culture and values by western influence, and not about the upliftment of poor sections of society and development of nation as a whole.

Some instances of corruption amongst police force have been clearly indicated in the novel. Police collect money to be distributed among the members and to maintain for the budget of police station. They take bribes to issue a no objection certificate in case of accidental deaths. Parulkar, the Deputy Commissioner has got repairs done at his house for free. A ganglord convicted of murder, was out on parole and the police records say that he is absconding while, he is going on with his malicious activities in Bombay. They have monthly arrangements with dance bars and clubs. It is quite evident that Parulkar has been getting money from Suleiman Isa, the ganglord to carry on his nefarious activities. The system has become altogether corrupt.

The Partition Saga: The partition of India was the process of dividing the Indian subcontinent. India gained independence from the British rule in 1947. The northern, predominantly Muslim sections of India became the nation of Pakistan while the southern & majority Hindu sections became India.

The land of the Punjab was fertile and wealthy. There were Hindus & Muslims in equanimity in Punjab. Neither of the side, wanted to relinquish the

valuable land. The border was drawn right down the middle of the province between Lahore & Amritsar. So, people had to move from one side to another but that turned out to be a painful exercise. Trains full of refugees were set upon fire by militants from both sides and many people were killed.

The struggle and torture of partition was faced by the family of Prabhjot Kaur (Nikki), Sartaj Singh's mother. They were deceived by Prabhjot's father's friend Khudabaksh Shafi, who was a Muslim. He wanted to own the house and land of his friend, so he planned an ambush. The rest of family reached the Indian side while the elder sister of Prabhjot Kaur, Navneet was taken away by the Muslims. The family had to face a lot of hardships in re-establishing themselves.

Inter-Caste Marriages: Inter-caste marriage is mostly caused by love. In India, different religions have their own rules relating to marriage. When two people from different social groups marry, it is the case of an inter-caste marriage. If the parents do not approve the marriage, they cut off the social relations with their children. In the present times, when the youngsters go to colleges & make friends from different communities, they get along well with each other, their chances of falling in love also gets higher. There are still taboos followed in Indian society against inter-caste or love marriages. Honour killings are quite prevalent in India. Honour killings are directed mostly against women & girls. The parents & relatives believe that the victim has brought dishonor upon the family or community by marrying on her choice. Even in the twenty first century, the mentality of people has not changed and they just cannot accept that marriages can take place outside their castes.

In the novel, Paritosh Shah, Gaitonde's friend and money lender, has daughter Dipika who wanted to marry Prashant Haaralkar. He was a dedicated student, had gone to the night college. He had a permanent job & lived in Chembur and supported his mother and younger sister. Paritosh Shah was unhappy with the proposal as the father of the boy used to work in the sanitation department. She was married off to some other guy but after two months she killed herself.

Defensive Machinery: The Research and Analysis wing (RAW) is the primary foreign intelligence agency of India. The main function of RAW is gathering foreign intelligence and counter-terrorism. It is also involved in the security of Indian nuclear programme. It is also responsible for analysing information about foreign policies to give advice to Indian policy makers.

DCP Anjali Mathur has been dealing and investigating the case of Gaitonde. She is an officer in the RAW wing. The case is of national security. She asks Sartaj Singh to help her as the mission is to be kept a secret. They had a generalized threat perception that some militant group could use a portable weapon in an urban area. She discusses about Kalki Sena and Hizbuddeen. They are working on the possible role of Gaitonde and his Guruji. She comes to know that the group has already acquired the nuclear material, the payload, which is big enough and can be used anytime. Finally, following one lead after another they manage to destroy the holocaust.

The Glamour World: The world of glitz and glamour mesmerizes all but the shimmer appears to be only on the surface while the underbelly seems to have dark and ugly side. Modelling, film world and fashion industry, all have attracted the

young girls but the path is not as easy as it seems. They have to win their ways by making many compromises in their lives. They have to bear the unnatural advances of the glamour people in order to grab their chances. The glamour industry has underworld connections. Some of the girls are able to set a foot in the film industry because of the links between the cinema and the underworld. Many lesser known actresses get caught in the underworld after the gangsters take a fancy to them.

It is not easy to break into the modelling and film world, if you are not born into a powerful and influential star family. There is a need to develop the connections, the need of a godfather who will help in the smooth ride to top. The young aspirants throw themselves at their mercy to win their favour.

The character of Jojo Mascarenas, was a model coordinator, who recommended models of various agencies. She used to send the young, beautiful and needy girls to rich aspirants. She herself wanted to become an actor. She went for many assignments and tried her luck in television world but she was exploited on the pretext of a role.

Similarly, Zoya Mirza had to struggle herself to excel in the film world. She ran away from her house to try her luck in Bombay. She came in contact with Jojo, who sent her to Gaitonde. Gaitonde slept with her and in return, she was funded by him. Gaitonde helped her in enhancing her beauty and body by getting surgeries done on her. He later produced a film for her as well. Many of the girls used to work in dance bars in order to earn their livelihood. Some of them made connections with high profile people, who offered them small roles in television

soaps or advertisements, like the Delight dance bar girl Kavita got a chance to act in a serial.

The exploitation of women have been continuing for long but now, since they are working, a change is expected but the exploitation and abuse has taken myriad forms. Exploitation at work place, domestic violence, psycho-sexual abuses have reached alarming levels.

Fake Spiritual Saints : India is the land of many spiritual leaders or the ‘Godman’ whose motive in life is to show the right path. While some of these people possessed supernatural powers and performed miracles while others shot to fame owing to the charity work they did for the society. Many saints like Sai Baba, Guru Nanak Dev led a very humble life but the present age gurus have cheated their audiences at some point in their lives. They are engaged in the business of prostitution, sex rackets, arms dealing, the use of drugs etc. Asaram Babu, Guru Rampal- to name a few can be projected as saints who just wanted to serve their own purposes and accumulate as much wealth.

The Guruji in the narrative is destined with the power of vision. He is using his energies in sinister objects than serving the humanity. He is involved in nuclear terrorism and wants the Hindus to rule. He wants everything to be destroyed and believes in the formation of a new statehood based on idealistic principles.

The World of Gangsters: Gangster operations are quite active in metro cities especially in Bombay. Bombay or Mumbai is a witness to bomb blasts in 1993 and further terrorists attack on 26 November 2008. Many innocent people lost their

lives in those attacks. The cause behind the attack is to spread terror. Gangsters, while sitting outside India have been operating in India since, they have an easy access to the coastal route. They wish to excite communal hatred in people so that peace and harmony is disturbed. They wish to harm people, be it rich or poor, without any fault of theirs. They extort money, commit kidnappings and murders and serve their own ends. They want to rule the world their own way. Many Afghan and Muslim militias are overactive in propounding terror in the whole world.

In the present novel– G-company and S-company have their own networks. Both wish to extend their supremacy in their territories. They have connection with political groups and police force which make their task easier. The new advanced technology and weapons have made their systems easy to operate. They have advanced gang-arms, weapons, bombs which they can exercise of their will at any time.

The improved tools and technology are to be used for the betterment of humanity but presently, it is being used for its destruction. After the easing of restrictions worldwide, on the use of arms and ammunition, its impact has cast its dark shadows on the whole world.

The Plight of Widows: For long, Indian societies have blamed, the women responsible for the death of the spouse and hence they are ostracized from the families. They are forced to take shelters in various ashrams and centers. They are made to lead their lives with the stigma of being a widow and hence can't have access to common forms of luxury like coloured clothes, accessories, going out

and having enjoyment. Her life becomes a living nightmare but very slowly, the women are trying to come out from the tragedy of their lives. They earn and stand on their feet and carve their own niche.

In the text, Shalini Katekar's world turns upside down when her husband Katekar dies in a police encounter. She has to bear the loss and take care of her two children. The relatives instead of helping her try to extract the money or criticize her for her modern approach. She finds satisfaction in emancipating the poor women about general hygiene and health measures. She regains composure and confidence and tries to catch up with the changing times.

Thus, Indian society, as explored in the novels, is full of examples which reflect the coming changes in the modes and manners of people. Some changes which are for the betterment of the society need to be readily accepted but when they are retrogressive and harmful, they are to be shunted out. Indian culture boasts of tradition and custom like faith in God, superstitious beliefs, fasting rituals, but again, those practices which are detrimental and further promote the divisions in society, need to be avoided and instead, meaningful and healthy traditions like respect of the elders, domestic bliss, need to be glorified. The individuals need to focus on those set of principles which are acceptable and justified.

3.4 NOVELWISE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

Compelling and credible characters are essential for a successful work of art. A disturbance threatens the well being of the character, thus upsetting or undermining the thought process. The problem must carry a sense of urgency that compels the character to act. The way one reacts to the situation, the traits he reflects, the behaviour patterns which are distinguishable reflect the character's struggle or predicament or how he overcomes the opposition. The modern sophisticated guns, explosions, murders, phobias leave one totally dumb founded emotionally-wanting and in state of deep loss. The relationship which the characters express help in understanding the nature and problems prevalent in metropolitan society.

Jago Antia: Jago Antia is fifty years old and forms part of the story 'Dharma.' He is an army man who has lost his leg in the battle field. It has been twenty years since he lost his leg but as the story opens, he is experiencing a twisting ache, two inches under his plastic knee. Everybody believed that Jago Antia was invincible. "He was famous for his stare, for the cold blackness of his anger, for his tactical skill and his ability to read ground, his whole career from the gold medal at Kharakvasta to the combat and medals in Leh & NEFA" (5).

The younger generation respected him for his politeness, for his courage. His real name was Jehangir Antia. He was so confident and labourious that he could shame people who were younger to him. He used to rise up early for practice and hence he was named as Jago Antia (early riser). He was never interested in

celebrations but the cadets celebrated his birthday on the pretext of regimental battle day.

He tried to take medication for the severe pain which he experienced in his knee but to no avail. Finally, Jago Antia had to relieve himself from the command for medical reasons and went back from Calcutta to his house in Bombay. It was an old house, looked after by the keeper, Amir Khan. His parents were dead. He decides to sell his house but somehow he comes to understand that nobody is willing to take the house as some ghost stories are doing the rounds. Jago Antia discourages the thought. In his dreams, he recollects the battle scene when he lost his leg. He had himself chopped off his leg with a khukri. Then, he sees the apparition, the shape of footprints and hears voice in the house.

A priest is called to ward off the ghost who tells him that it is the ghost of a child and is very strong. It is looking for something. Only one who knows about him must go up naked and ask what it seeks. Jago Antia goes upstairs all alone and he recollects his childhood, his parents and his elder brother Sohrab. They used to play and fight together. He recalls the incident, when Sohrab was flying a kite, Jahangir pressed on Sohrab to let him fly the kite, but Sohrab did not let him do it. Jahangir tried to hold the string but in the process, Sohrab lost his balance and fell down from the roof and was dead, Jahangir was left alone. Then, Jahangir recollected his seventh birthday which was after his brother's death. The parents asked him for presents and he demanded an army dress.

Jago, at this stage sees the vision of a small child wearing the olive green uniform bearing the name J. Anita. The vision questions him where he should go,

to which Jago replies "Jehangir, you are already home"(31). He realises that he had lost himself, his childhood, his mis-shapen and magnificent life because of his guilt factor. He refurbishes himself and at that moment, the vision vanishes. The story ends on a note of comfort and satisfaction as Jago Antia is a relieved man.

Sheila Bijlani: The story 'Shakti' deals with the protagonist Sheila Bijlani. Her father was a chemist. She was very beautiful and glamorous. Right from the school days, she arranged her hair tastefully, wore a short skirt. She was a quick learner. When she grew up, she became an air hostess with Air France. Going abroad was a big thing during those times and many proposals from rich men came her way, but she married Mr. Bijlani, a USA returned electrical engineer. He was a plump and sober man. There were rumours that she married him from his money. They worked together with patience and steadiness, and earned a reputation for themselves. Sheila wanted to be admired in big circles so she started throwing cocktail parties and lunches where she invited her special guests, the so called high gentry including, Dolly Boatwalla but Dolly never attended her parties.

When Sheila joined the lunch club, Dolly was forced to go to Sheila's house. Everybody praised Sheila for the upkeep of the house but Dolly didn't praise her. The ladies were wonderstruck at the painting of Hussain at Sheila's place but Dolly didn't give any reaction. Sheila shut the door at her and it was the beginning of the enmity between them.

Sheila felt very bad at the treatment meted out to her by Dolly. She made up her mind that she would defeat Dolly. Bijlanis diversified their resources and invested in different industries, in addition to the mixies which was their original

source of income. Sheila & Dolly had been waging war politely for so many years. The Bijlanis had applied for the membership to the Malabar Gymkhana but they were denied the permission as per the directions of Dolly's husband. Then, Sheila came up with the Shanghai club. The women waited for the coveted membership but Dolly did not receive any invitation. The animosity remained between them.

Sheila's son, Sanjeev came back to Bombay after completing his education and various courses in Photography and Art & History from USA. He fell in love with Roxanne, daughter of Dolly Boatwalla. Sanjeev shared his decision, to marry Roaxanne with his mother. For the sake of his son, Sheila tried to contact Dolly but she took away her daughter to London. Sheila waited for the right opportunity to strike back. She handled Sanjeev who was under severe depression. When she learnt about Dolly coming back, she went to meet Dolly. Dolly didn't meet her but Sheila, devised that she would buy Dolly's mansion. They would buy the Boatwallas-stock, shop and house completely. Bijlanis gathered all the shares, wealth and assaulted for Boatwalla Shipping International but the takeover was pretty difficult. Still, they carried on as the source of inspiration was their son for whom they were making all efforts. Finally, they overpowered the Boatwallas by a tip given by Ganga, their common maid. Then, the matters get settled. The marriage is solemnized. A new company is floated out- Bijlani Boatwalla Bombay International Trading Group.

Dolly Boatwalla: Dolly was long, sallow woman and wore old jewellery. She was arrogant and rude. Dolly and Sheila were introduced at a party but Dolly never took Sheila seriously. She lived in a mansion that was rough and patchy. All her

maids were dressed in uniform. The maids were French mostly Keralites. Dolly had domineering attitude and the habit of mimicking others. Dolly did not treat Sheila very well when she went to the latter's house at the party. This was the start of war between the two ladies. Dolly was married to Freddie Boatwalla, owner of the Boatwalla Shipping international. Under his wife's influence, Freddie denied the membership of the Malabar Gymkhana to the Bijlanis. Then came, the Shanghai Club to which Dolly was not invited. Dolly behaved as if the Shanghai club did not exist. She maintained her composure and remained magnificent but later enquired from Sheila about the membership of the club.

All her ruthlessness and roughness is dashed to the ground when she comes to know about her daughter's love for Sheila's son Sanjeev. She takes her away to London but all her efforts are fruitless as Sheila relaunches her attack on Boatwallas with renewed vigour. Finally, Dolly has to make a compromise and give her acceptance for the matrimonial relationship.

The cat fight between the ladies for supremacy is a common phenomenon in high bred society. There are ladies who are fighting to establish their hold; also there are poor people like the maid Ganga who are working out day and night to make the both ends meet. Money is not an issue for these higher strata of society; they need just to refurbish their brand image. They squander their money on kitty parties and clubs totally relegating the needy. This Indian culture is an import of the western world and it is one of the reasons that Bharat, representative of weaker class is lagging behind the high culture of India as they are completely ignored in the society.

Sartaj Singh: The character forms a part of story 'Kama.' He is a police inspector who is in charge of investigating the case of murder of Chetan Bhai Ganshyam Patel. The body was found in a ditch. The death had occurred because of a stab wound. The blade had pierced his heart. Singh came to know that Chetan Bhai was wearing a gold Rolex watch. Shankar Ghorpade, a drunkard was arrested with the watch. He did not confess his crime and said, if he opened his mouth he would be killed.

Sartaj Singh visited the home of Chetan Bhai. It was a luxurious apartment. Chetan Bhai was a textile trader. He exported to Middle-East and America. He was passionate about his red Contessa. He along with his wife went for a drive on Saturdays. His son Kshitij was blunt and had unflinching iron in him.

The leads take Sartaj Singh to Jankidas Publishing Company and further to Daman where the Patels used to stay in a boarding house. Sartaj traces the picture of a naked woman and other proofs and comes to an understanding, that the licentious nature of Chetan Patel led to his death. He realises that Chetan Bhai's wife had to make compromises and he forced her to do certain acts and there is no justification of that.

Sartaj Singh was a fiery Sikh gentleman. His father retired as a senior inspector in police force before his death. His mother lived alone in Poona taking care of her house and garden. His wife Megha is estranged from her. She wants a divorce but Sartaj could not come to terms in accepting it. Sartaj was a hero in his college days. He had the reputation of a casanova in the college. Megha was rich and beautiful; together they presented a handsome couple but ultimately they

realize they could not live together and seek divorce. He closes the file of Chetan Bhai Patel by implicating Ghorpade who is dead by then.

Kshitij: He is the son of Chetan Bhai Ghanshyam Patel, whose murder case was investigated by Sartaj Singh. Kshitij was nineteen years old. He was quiet by nature and an intelligent boy who got first rank in the exam. The mother doted on her son. He and his friends belonged to the Rakshak group. The Rakshaks were a cultural organization who used to distribute pamphlets. They attacked those who destroyed their culture.

Sartaj meets Kshitij as a part of his investigation. He was the only son of his parents, a pre-medical student and wanted to specialize in neurology. There was some sort of rudeness or iron in him which Sartaj could feel about the boy. Sartaj discovered that Kshitij had dumped the papers and other garbage from his house to the other side of the wall twice. Sartaj carried on his investigation and came to know about the sensual nature of Chetan Bhai Patel. Sartaj reached the place, owned by Mrs. Khanna where Chetan Bhai used to spend his weekends. The lady informed Sartaj Singh that Kshitij had threatened her about divulging any details.

Sartaj Singh takes Kshitij to police station and questions him about the indecencies committed by his parents. Kshitij remains silent and inert. Sartaj is eager to know the details but he also feels sympathetic towards the boy. Finally, Sartaj closes the file and Kshitij is let off. Kshitij had to experience torture and pain for what his father had done. He filtered out only that his father was not a good man. He did not want to destroy the family reputation and did not divulge

any details. Sex crime rate has increased in the modern society. The limits have been crossed but it is not an individual but the whole family have to bear the repercussions.

Again, the narrative shifts to Fisherman's Rest and Subranamanian narrates a new story titled 'Asta.' It deals with Iqbal and Sandhya who were working together as software programmer.

Iqbal: Iqbal worked with Sandhya. Together, they had developed new software and it was accepted by Mr. Das against the bid of bigger companies. The software was giving trouble and both Sandhya and he had been working to improve the program by removing the snag. Iqbal had been in a gay relationship with Rajesh. Rajesh had a body builder personality and worked in post office.

Iqbal was not liked by Sandhya's mother as he was a Muslim but Sandhya completely trusted him. He knew all about Sandhya and her family. When Sandhya, Iqbal and Rajesh go to an arty party, Rajesh confronts Ratnani, a big man but Ratnani refuses to recognize Rajesh. Rajesh goes missing after the party. Iqbal tries hard to trace Rajesh. He along with Sandhya visit Rajesh's house where they come to know about the missing complaint lodged in police station. Iqbal visits Bhaiyya gym where Rajesh used to train but he learns that Rajesh has stopped coming to the place since long and had joined the body building club. He also learns Rajesh is not employed in post office and has been in contact with criminals. He goes to the club and Ratnani's house to enquire about Rajesh but all results into nothing. Rather, he confronts Rajesh's reality and his contacts with the gangsters.

Meanwhile, Iqbal is enduring the pain of a missing partner and he is engrossing himself in his job. He goes to Accounts Branch for system repairs and he realizes the wrongs done by Munishiji and Raunakji being responsible for the system getting corrupt. He duly informs Sandhya and the culprits are removed and system is rectified of its anomalies. Meanwhile, he also helps Sandhya in arranging the party at her house. He is loving and caring towards Sandhya's son also.

Iqbal is a true friend and a guide to Sandhya. He supports and helps her but also informs her when she is wrong. He doesn't approve of her relationship with Anubhav, the painter. He arranges for the party, and gets things from the market when Sandhya desires so. Whenever Sandhya is overworked and exhausted, he comforts her. When the system crashes out, he goes all the way at night for repairs. He misses Rajesh, his partner. His relationship with Rajesh is pure and tranquil which is devoid of religious biases. He says, "When we told each other our full names we looked at each other for a moment and noted and dismissed the difference in our religions in one smile, that was all"(198).

It is narrated in the concluding stages of the story that Rajesh is traced out but the details are not provided. Iqbal understands that lost time never comes back and he survives with a void in his heart and life.

Sandhya: She is a software programmer, friend to Iqbal. She is divorced from Vasant. She lives with her son Lalit and her mother. She has a taste for stylish living. She has Swedish sofas and couches, glass-topped coffee table, blue carpet etc. Nobody is allowed to enter the drawing room. She is in relationship with

Anubhav Rajadhakshey, who is a painter and has uncertain income. He uses one of her rooms as his studio.

Sandhya's ex-husband Vasant does not approve of her relationship with the painter. He threatens Sandhya that he would prove in the court that she is an immoral woman and not fit to raise their son Lalit. He further says that he would snatch her father's property and their son from her. Her mother who is a traditional woman also wishes that she should endure her relationship with her ex-husband however painful it may be. She endures all the pain and struggles of her life with patience and with the true support provided by Iqbal.

She is disturbed by the error in the programme, strives hard, rectifies it with the help of Iqbal and develops an improved version of the programme. She realizes about Anubhav's relationship with Viveka Gupta and throws him out of her house. As a true friend, she also supports Iqbal, goes all out with him to Rajesh's house to find him. When Iqbal is drunk, she carefully takes him to the car and makes the driver to take him to his house.

She is an epitome of smart and independent lady who can carry on her own with élan. The system improves and recovers and fetches her money. She gets a new office but she is still dating Anubhav, a future hope. The modern westernized woman of today is ready to chalk out her own territory.

In the last story of *Love and Longing in Bombay* – 'Shanti', the reader once again meets Subramaniam who narrates his own story about falling in love with a

woman whom he sees as a passerby. She is a frequent passenger and her repeated visits to the station serve only to intrigue him and increase his obsession with her.

Shiv Subramaniam describes about the year 1945, when he was just twenty years old. He had a twin brother Hari, who was killed by a Hindu mob in Delhi. Shiv had been under depression, so he was sent to his sister's place who was married to a station master at Leharia. Shiv had done his B.Sc. and loved to read novels but after his brother's death, he grew silent. He used to visit the railway station regularly and he became friendly with Frankie Furtado, the assistant station-master. On his visit to the station, he got attracted to a woman who was wearing a grey saree. She was simple and a young woman, not wearing any ornaments. "The eyes were large, there was a thick plait falling over a shoulder and now she looked down and put a hand over her mouth"(233). He comes to know that her name was Shanti Chauhan and she was looking for her Air Force husband who got lost in World War II combat mission.

Whenever Shiv came home, he would "feel his self, his soul turn and turn inwards, again and again, until it was as thin drawn as a wire, shiny and brittle"(239). He did not realize what was happening to him. Gradually, he waited for Shanti to come back. She came and exchanged stories which she gathered from meeting various people in search of her husband. They develop a bond. Ultimately, Shiv proposes her but Shiv's family is against him marrying a widow. Shiv is bent on it and with the help of Frankie Furtado, marches towards Bombay where they get married. They start this new life leaving behind all the negativity and pain.

Then, the narrative shifts to the present where an old Shanti comes into the picture and offers the narrator to have dinner.

Sacred Games is a delightful study of various characters and their traits, it has moments of intense feeling, the loss, the pain, the betrayal – but it provides a reconciliation that losses and betrayal are part of the gameplan and the struggle has to be continued.

Ganesh Gaitonde: Ganesh is a small time crook, who becomes the biggest Hindu mob boss in India. His father was Raghavendra Gaitonde who was a poor Brahmin married to Sumangala. Raghavendra along with his wife went to Nashik where he was installed as the priest of Lakshmi Narayan temple with the help of a cousin named Suryakant Shenoy. The cousin used to help the family whenever he got the chance. Then, Kiran was born who was a bright child from the very beginning. As he grew up, he felt contempt for his father who was a weak man, pitied by others. Later on, he comes to know that his father had murdered Suryakant and fled. Their family was shunned by the village. The village men came to Kiran's mother and bestowed gifts on her and became her clients. Kiran could not take the insult anymore. When he was twelve, he left his home and boarded the train to Bombay. He changed his name from Kiran to Ganesh – the survivor who always lives. He got his training from Salim Kaka and when he was nineteen years old, he killed Salim Kaka and ran away with his gold. He sold the smuggled gold to Paritosh Shah who asked him to invest his money in business.

Gaitonde ably acquires the land of Gopalmath. He builds a basti in Gopalmath where spacious and pucca kholis are built up. All sorts of people live in

Gopalmath. He gathers money from shopkeepers, traders and in return provides them security. He has good relations with police. Local people come to him to settle their matters and thus the G-company is originated. He comes in confrontation with Cobra gang and S-company. He destroys the Cobra gang but S-company and Suleiman Isa threaten him throughout. Thus, a street kid with no resources but his own wits evolves into a violent, moral, spoiled man who is protected and catered to by his band of dependent henchman.

Gaitonde knows that he would be killed sooner or later. There is no escape. So, he wants to reign like a King. Fear was part of his reign. With the passage of time, Paritosh Shah becomes close friend and confidante of Gaitonde but he is killed and Gaitonde is shattered. He marries Subhadra Pevalekar because his friend Paritosh Shah wanted him to. He becomes a father. He escapes attempt on his life twice but his wife and son die.

While in prison, he comes in contact with various persons who mould his lifestyle and personality. He meets Mr. Kumar who worked for certain part of the government (RAW). He wants Gaitonde to settle out of India and carry on his fight with Suleiman Isa. He comes in contact with Guruji whom he supplied arms. He becomes a follower of Guruji, as Guruji guides him on various occasions, even about an attempt on his life. He also, comes in contact with Jojo Mascarneas, a model coordinator and producer. She recommends many girls to Gaitonde and his fellow prisoners. She also instructs him to follow Yoga and follow a healthy lifestyle.

On the orders of Mr. Kumar, Gaitonde has to stay on a yacht in Thailand. Mr. Kumar has given all the security training to Gaitonde and in return Gaitonde has to provide information about Suleiman Isa and his operations. He develops a life-long friendship with Jojo, sharing, fighting and enjoying but they meet only in the concluding pages of the novel. Gaitonde carries on his brutal tasks and becomes more vigorous. He comes in contact with Zoya Mirza through Jojo. He is completely smitten over by the girl. Gaitonde supports her. They meet in a flat at Singapore. Gaitonde finances her rise as a model. She wanted a perfect body and figure, Gaitonde supplies her resources for her medical toning and sculpting of her body. She turns out to be a diva. Gaitonde became notorious and was a regular feature in media :

Gaitonde regularly appeared in newspapers; dallied with bejewelled starlets, bankrolled politicians and bought them and sold them his daily skim from Bombay's various criminal dhandas was said to be greater than annual corporate incomes and his name was used to frighten the recalcitrant.(30)

Gaitonde becomes fascinating for his acts of unthinking bloodshed and revenge and also for his keen sentimental generosity. He lives under the delusion that he can produce the perfect Bollywood action movie for Zoya Mirza, as he is prompted by his blind devotion to a renowned holy man. He also gets a face makeover done in order to live in disguise.

While carrying the shipment of Guruji, his men develop serious complications and die. Gaitonde becomes inquisitive and wishes to question

Guruji. Guruji goes missing. Gaitonde searches for him at various places and makes it, his mission. His search culminates in Bikanur Farms near Amritsar. There, he finds a secret chamber with missing links. He finds lots of dollars in the chamber and runs away with it. After the episode, Guruji calls him and he discovers Guruji's plan about a nuclear bomb. Guruji excites him with the idea, "every story needed a climax, and a big story needed a big climax"(838).

Gaitonde is not convinced. He builds a nuclear shelter for himself in Kailashpada and settles there. He thinks of his trusted friend Jojo who has never betrayed him. So, in order to protect her, he asks her man to transport her to his new shelter. Jojo seems disinterested and is infuriated. In a fit of rage, Gaitonde kills her but later repents. He calls Sartaj Singh, informs him of the presence of the don of G-Company. As the police party reaches the spot, he kills himself. The leads are followed by Sartaj Singh who undergoes the quest to discover why Gaitonde blew his own brains rather than those of someone else. The search is interspersed with Gaitonde's memories of his criminal career.

Sartaj Singh: The character Sartaj Singh is in continuation with the writer's portrayal of the Inspector Sartaj Singh in the story 'Kama' in *Love and Longing in Bombay*. Sartaj Singh is the Sikh police officer in Mumbai, used to being identified by his turban, beard and the sharp cut of his trousers. He is forty plus, has gone through a failed marriage and his career prospects are on the slide. Others from his batch had climbed past him but he is just pedaling away. When he gets an anonymous tip about the secret hide out of the don of G-Company, he is determined to catch the prize. Singh becomes the unwilling ear to Gaitonde's last

words and dealing with the discovery of Gaitonde's body following his bizarre suicide. Singh is dragged into Gaitonde's sphere as Gaitonde posthumously recounts his autobiography. Singh tries to determine how Gaitonde's influence has grown in India from grossly criminal to an internationally threatening don. Sartaj Singh is a good detective like his father but he is no angel. When an ambitious social worker requests help with a rival; he takes the money and beats up the target as requested. The local social worker is then able to assist him with setting up of an encounter, one of those Indian police methods where criminals are lured into a trap and then eliminated.

He helps out Kamla Pandey when she is blackmailed by her so called pilot boy friend, Umesh. He doesn't feel like helping the lady but then he yields to the orders of her mother who had asked him to help her out in her crisis.

Sartaj Singh and his assistant Katekar had known each other for a long time and he had come to rely on him but Katekar's death during the investigation tore him away. He held himself responsible for Katekar's death. He missed the family life, so he used to go to his friend Majid Khan's house for passing his time. He loved old songs and movies.

He has a wonderful chemistry with Parulkar, the Deputy Commissioner for Zone 13. He considers Parulkar as his mentor. Sartaj thinks that Parulkar is the best player of the political game. "He was a grandmaster of the subtle art of contact and double contact and back channel, of ministers and corporate cultivated and kept happy"(9). Parulkar had connections with Suleiman Isa – the underworld don

which brings about his downfall and Sartaj Singh has a prominent role to play in his downfall.

Through his investigations, he has the chance to meet the RAW officers like Anjali Mathur and others who order him to carry on his investigations on Gaitonde till further orders, as it involves the matter of national interest. On account of it, he meets Mary Mascarnes, the love interest of his life. He discovers information about the life of Jojo, Mary's sister and the dead girlfriend of Gaitonde. He also learns about the mechanizations of one Guruji, who was a known figure and the source of guidance to Gaitonde. Guruji was involved in some nefarious activities dealing with nuclear plans to destroy Bombay. Singh understands the plan and with great efforts traces the location of Guruji and finally gets him punished through Commando Operation. He saves his country and its people. He gets the much deserved promotion but the secret about the nuclear material is not revealed as it would lead to chaos and confusion. Sartaj Singh is the undisputed hero in the novel where all characters are painted pale grey against him.

Guruji/Shridhar Shukla: Sridhar Shukla was born in Sialkot on 14th February 1934. His father was an aircraft technician and an asthmatic patient. After the partition, they settled in Jodhpur and then, Pathankot. He was a famous sportsman, the captain of Cricket team. Before his eighteenth birthday, he had borrowed his father's bike to go to cinema. On his way, he had an accident and he lost function of the lower part of his body. After the accident, he was visited by the visions. He saw the past and the future and he started his journey inwards, deep within his self. He believed that, "in my injury I found myself, from the outside I was brought to

the inside”(609). He read about scientific boons, computers, had a wheel chair, which could climb stairs by itself. He disliked Muslims dominating the world and believed in the coming of cataclysms, the end of Kaliyug.

Sridhar Shukla was an international swami. He had lunches with famous personalities. He was often on TV, sitting on the wheel chair and smiling. He was a good looking man with his thick white hair sweeping back over his head. He had centers in one forty two countries. He had made predictions, many of them turned out to be true.

He called up Gaitonde in connection with arms business, Gaitonde used to supply guns in the country for Guruji. He discussed religion and philosophy with Gaitonde. He tried to convince Gaitonde about the use of weapons as it was also used by Lord Rama and Lord Krishna to destroy the evil. He was sixty four years old but still alert and active.

He had formed a party Hizbuddeen, the party of the final day. This was the fake group, essential to Guruji's future plans. The party was funded by Muslims and used by Guruji to fuel his activities. Some of the money went to Kalki Sena which needed money for arms and recruitment. He believed that “there are choices we can make at every minute. We are bound by our pasts, by the consequences of our action”(737). Gaitonde finds a spiritual power in Guruji and gets attracted towards him and follows him blindly. In Gaintonde's view:

He was so enlightened, so far advanced that he was somewhat removed from the world of men and women. I knew that he valued cleanliness that he liked gardens and greenery, that he had vast amounts of knowledge about arcane subjects, that he liked to learn about the latest advances in technology as soon as they happened. But still he hovered a little above the earth. (738)

When Gaitonde's men fall to radiations, Gaitonde searches for an answer from Guruji but Guruji goes missing. He traces him to various places from North to South and locates his farm house. Guruji calls him and details him about the coming of acocalypse and destruction when he says:

Every golden age must be preceded by an apocalypse. It has always been so, and it will be again. For more than fifty years we have put off the fight on our borders and suffered small humiliations and small bloodshed every day. We have been dishonoured and disgraced and have become used to living with this shame. We will fight. The battle is necessary.(838)

But Gaitonde is not convinced. Finally, the sham Guru is traced out by the efforts of Sartaj Singh and given due punishment.

Jojo Mascarenas: Her real name was Juliet. She had a sister and mother. Her father was in merchant navy and died early. When she was fifteen, she came to stay in Bombay with her sister Mary who had been married to John. They lived in Goregaon. In six months, she became a Bombay girl. She took dance and acting

classes and very soon got modelling assignments. When she came to Bombay, she only spoke Konkan and some Tulu but she quickly learnt English. She was intelligent and picked up all by watching TV. John took her to meet some people in MTV who were his friends. She met producers and directors. Then, Mary caught her red handed with her husband. She took away her sister's husband who prostituted her. She had to make compromises and then she left John. She had her ways and became a model coordinator and producer. She recommended models to various agencies and put the girls in the videos. She owned a TV production company and sent the young, beautiful and needy to the rich and demanding. She was very laborious. She had her office in her house crammed with files. She had love for variety of shoes. She kept the apartment clean and was methodical in her work.

She was rough in speech. She was very rude with Gaitonde but developed a bonding with him. She was not ready to accept Gaitonde's viewpoint of nuclear fallout and wished to go back to her work. Gaitonde fearing her safety took her to the nuclear shelter but as the circumstances transpired, she was killed at the hands of Gaitonde.

Anjali Mathur: She is a DCP in CBI and attached with RAW and is incharge of investigating the Gaitonde case. She was the daughter of Jagdeep Mathur who worked for Intelligence Bureau. He went missing while following the leads of an informant. She was virtually adopted by Mathur's close friend and colleague, K.D. Yadav. Right from the childhood, she had the knack of reading and Yadav brought books for her.

She was married to a Kannadiga boy against the wishes of her family. The husband had studied economics, went on to make a career in IAS and had left her after four years of marriage. He complained about Anjali's obsession with her work.

She carries herself neatly, wearing suits and carrying dupattas. She is investigating and handling the issues of national security. When she was first of all assigned the Gaitonde case, her officials and colleagues criticized her that being a lady she could not handle the serious issues but she has proved everyone wrong through her sincere efforts and hard work. She contacts Sartaj Singh and makes him investigate all the details gradually passing and closing up from one lead to another. She even takes the help of her uncle K.D. Yadav, who is ill and suffering. She is at his bedside during his last days and understands the pain and struggle which he was going through. All her hard work is fruitful as she averts the possible nuclear disaster with the help of Sartaj Singh.

She has been portrayed as a lady of substance who is ready to undertake the challenges thrust on her. She is not weakened by the criticisms meted out to her. She remains firm and sticks to her job with K.D. Yadav as her pillar of strength.

Parulkar: He was the Deputy Commissioner for zone 13 in Mumbai. He had sloping shoulders and a pear shaped body and his uniform used to be crumpled. He was a sub-inspector under Sartaj's father but he overtook Sartaj's father and had risen through Maharashtra State Police Service. He had an astonishing and unparalleled career. He used to visit Sartaj's home along with his father for dinner but Sartaj's mother never liked him as she thought him to be an opportune seeker.

Parulkar had become Sartaj's mentor and guide. Parulkar had made a leap into Indian Police Service. As Sartaj called him "he was an aficionado of the subtle sport, he was simply the best"(9). He loved reporters and had a knack of convincing others by being jovial with them. When in his elements, he would discuss a successful operation by polishing and improving the story.

Parulkar was facing tough time with the government but he settled the issue. It was recounted that he had paid twenty crore rupees to the Chief Minister and much else to various functionaries to save himself. His unofficial earnings were handed over to Homi Mehta by Sartaj Singh who would funnel it to a Swiss account. He had links with Suleiman Isa's company. Many of Gaitonde's men had been killed and encountered by Parulkar on the basis of information given by S-Company. Big politicians and ministers had been after him due to his links with S Company.

Gradually, the government changed, Parulkar sided with the Rakshak government and back-trapped the S-company men and encountered them. Suleiman Isa got furious and trapped him via Sartaj Singh. His phone call with Suleiman Isa was tapped and leaked. He lost his reputation and committed suicide.

Kamala Pandey: When one flips through the pages of the novel, the first character to be introduced is Kamal Pandey. She is married to Mr. Pandey and is seen having a fight with her husband. She is an airhostess. The husband suspects her to be having an affair with a pilot. His doubts are very much confirmed in the following chapters, when she meets Sartaj Singh in connection with a case.

She was having an affair with a pilot Umesh Bindal who flew for Sahara. They had met at a party in Versova three years ago. The affair had begun a year after their first meeting and she had also broken off with him six months ago. Someone was blackmailing her on account of it. She had already paid them one lakh and fifty thousand rupees and they were demanding more. She had kept a list of numbers from which they had called her. She had burnt all the video tapes they had sent her.

Umesh was very attractive and handsome. Naturally, she fell for him. Although, they had a break up she was still, involved with him. Sartaj investigates and traces the case through Cozy Nook Guest House where they used to meet. His investigation leads him to Umesh Bindal who confesses his guilt. Kamala was the single spoilt child of her parents. Her parents were very rich and she maintained her own separate accounts. Umesh wanted to extract money from her.

When Kamala comes to know about the deception of Umesh, she realizes her mistake. She loves her husband and doesn't want to leave him. She gathers herself and is guilt-ridden that she has cheated her husband.

Shalini Katekar: Shalini had been married to Katekar for nineteen years. Katekar was a sub-inspector and assistant to Sartaj Singh. Shalini had a clean efficiency of keeping the things stacked. The Kholi was small and clean. They had two children Rohit and Mohit. She used to clean one house only because she wanted to be home when her sons were back from school. She had a younger sister Bharati who was married to a scrap metal dealer. Shalini was thrifty as she first of all thought of the family against her own pleasures.

She had to bear the pain of losing her husband who died during an encounter. She had to manage her household and her two sons. It took around nine and half months, for the relief amount to be released after her husband's death. His Provident fund and his savings were also small. To add to it, Bharati demanded money from her, as her husband wanted to start a travel agency but she very wisely tackled the situation and did not part away with the money. With the passage of time, Shalini joined a family welfare group and became a volunteer. She informed the poor women about health and cleanliness. Bharati's husband did not approve of her task of enlightening women about family planning measures. She was criticized but remained unperturbed. Her son Rohit joins the computer class, while Mohit bears a grudge against Sartaj Singh. Shalini transforms herself from the role of a dutiful wife to a working woman. She dresses smartly and elegantly and infuses confidence.

Zoya Mirza: She represents the leading film star of Bollywood. She is very pretty and beautiful almost 5 feet 9 inches tall. Her real name was Jamila. She belonged to an orthodox Muslim family in Lucknow. Her father was a small man who owned a small restaurant. While discussing with her brothers and father, she came to know about the fashion world. She was taller than her brothers. So, she decided and left her home and came to Bombay, where she came into contact with Jojo. Jojo recommended her to Gaitonde. They used to meet in Singapore at a flat. The flat belonged to Gaitonde's associates Arvind and Suhasini. They stayed in the upper half in the penthouse. Gaitonde spent a lot of money on her body reshaping procedures and surgeries. She was very much like Gaitonde who could change the

world through their energy. So, Gaitonde sponsored a movie for her. Then she won the coveted Miss India contest. When she became Miss India, the frequency of their meetings declined because of her professional commitments and finally, it was altogether stopped.

Sartaj meets Zoya Mirza in connection with her links to Gaitonde. Zoya is perplexed initially, but then maintains her composure. She supplies the information about Gaitonde, his telephonic conversations with Bunty, Trivedi, Sharmaji and Guruji. She also discloses that Gaitonde used to talk about Kaliyug and the approaching end of the world.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Vikram Chandra in his novels explores a range of Bombay life commanding with immense skill a city crammed with vitality and life. It is full of chaos and confusion. Virginia Crompton in *Literary Review* comments about the book of short stories, “Love and Longing in Bombay is very much set in Bombay and in the twentieth century – the nostalgic poise of the prose is blended with the sweep and chaos of modern Indian City Life.”(n.pag.)

The five stories portrayed in *Love and Longing in Bombay* are all love stories but they present strange mysterious quality. ‘Dharma’ points towards the author’s interest in ghost stories. An old soldier comes home to his parent’s house to find that it is haunted. ‘Shakti’ deals with high society, the battle between two society hostesses, each one trying to overpower and snuggle the other. ‘Kama’ is a detective story which deals with a murder investigation. Sartaj Singh handles the inquiry and takes unknown paths and leads which make him understand how the victim came to die, but also about his own life and his understanding of marital relationships. The next story ‘Artha’ deals with the love of a gay couple and the drives of a gifted programmer for perfection in her code while the gang operations form the backdrop of the story. The final story ‘Shanti’ stands apart from the others. Subramaniam invites the narrator to his house, to hear a story which in fact, turns out to be the story, how he met and married his wife Shanti.

The protagonist Subramaniam is the connecting link who is at the beginning and the end of the book. There are two set of narrators, very different from each other but surviving in the complex megapolis. Subramaniam represents

the image of mysterious and knowledgeable. He evokes a vision of old, difficult and intricate Bombay which is mature and sensible to handle any situation while Sharma represents the new information age- rash and impulsive, materialistic, pragmatic and lacking in defensive mechanisms. The blending of traditional and modern ideals is very much prominent in the stories. Many of the stories are left deliberately incomplete by the novelist. Characters look to find answers to the mysteries but many of the key elements are left unresolved and unexplained.

The writer by the employment of ordinary protagonists presents a very modern setting of his narrative. The changes coming in society, the distinctive changes in thought process, behaviour, club, parties, sexual-encounters, marital-disputes, widow remarriage are indicative of the modern trends in the society but it also reflects that old concepts have still, their roles to play. The faith in superstitious beliefs, horoscope-matching, non acceptance of widow remarriage and love affairs is a testimony to the fact. The firm base is still traditional which leads to friction and differences in approach.

Sacred Games is a crime thriller. A seasoned Bombay police officer gets a life time opportunity of catching his bait – the powerful Ganesh Gaitonde, the criminal warlord of the G-Company. The confrontation between Sartaj Singh and Ganesh Gaitonde lies at the heart of the novel. Sartaj tries to seek the knowledge of his prey but it becomes clear that the game the two players thought they were playing is in fact, a part of much larger plan, one that expands beyond the city and implicates the planet.

The novel moves through various landscapes, love life of a police officer, a widow battling poverty and urban pressures, young woman's struggle for filmdom, a woman who prostitutes other woman and ironically produces TV shows about women's sufferings, a right wing religious leader conducts an enormous sacrifice for the safety of citizens, a gangster who leads his company to victory but discovers the strange emptiness of getting what it wants, the wrenching violence of the 1947 of India, to the spectacle of nuclear terrorism.

The main storyline makes up a small fraction of nine hundred marathon pages of the books. There are numerous stories within the story. There are some chapters which are termed as insets by the author which portray characters which may not be directly integral to the plot but have an interesting back story. The novel moves along and presents a confusing plot structure. The Indian words are used in the text, although, author has provided a glossary in the international edition of the book for the readers. Still, it poses a difficulty to flip through the pages to understand the contextual meaning. Some of the subplots could have been avoided. They certainly add to the pages of the book and if discarded could have made it much more readable.

The book works at multiple levels. It is a deep introspection of the amazing megapolis which breeds, nourishes and nurtures all sections of people. Religion, underworld, weapons of mass destruction are all covered by the broad canvas of the novel. Gaitonde is drawn into the unholy world of local politicians and communal tensions. His wealth increases and his connections carry him to

Bollywood. He stumbles upon Zoya Mirza whose face and body isn't genuine but he enjoys her all the same.

All the digressions from the ideal are very much visible in the novel but still all the lives, ordinary and extraordinary flow around each other to weave a complex web which holds the last words, reach for only the 'life itself.' The fourth chapter of the study also elaborates and explores the complexities of living in the city of dreams- Mumbai.

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CHAPTER- 4

CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLEMICAL

STIRRINGS IN SUKETU MEHTA

4.1 SUKETU MEHTA: AN INTRODUCTION

Suketu Mehta was born in 1963 in Kolkatta. He was raised in Mumbai where he lived there, till 1977 and then he moved to New York along with his family and has been staying in U.S.A since then. His work *Maximum City : Bombay Lost & Found* was published in 2004 and gives an autobiographical account of his experiences in the city of Mumbai, India. He has been a writer of travelogues, memoirs, articles, fiction and screenplays of films. He joined the New York University Journalism Faculty in 2008. Presently, he is working on a book about the New York City immigrant experience. He has two sons and is divorced from his wife Sunita.

The book in question, relates with variegated hues and colours of Indian society painted boldly and exquisitely. It has the elements of social, political analysis of the history, people and culture of Mumbai. Mehta writes about the personages and their traits from two angles, as an outsider to the area and also as someone who has lived his childhood in the city and always longed to comeback on a treat. As he returns to the city of his dreams Mumbai as an adult, he experiences frustration with everyday life in the nation. He visits slum areas and comes to an understanding as to how people can crop up anywhere even alongside the railway tracks. In dealing with details about slums, he delves deep into the

politics of modern Mumbai- Hindu versus Muslim territories, the criminal and underworld underpinnings in Mumbai and the after maths of 1993 Bombay bombings. There is description of dance bars, Indian film industry, school he studied, his relatives, modelling career, lives of individuals, Jain community, and an engineer who gives up a promising career to become a poet in Bombay footpaths.

The voice Mehta employs is melodramatic with every sentence having the tinge of sadness, mixed with nostalgia for something the author had left long ago in his distant childhood. It is an exciting, perceptive and very well written personal description of the magnificent city called Mumbai. Mehta has the grit to meet the murderers and gangsters while risking his own life. The clarity of vision and his neutral insight is clearly visible which gives a stamp of outsider letting out the intricate details.

Mehta has won many prizes and awards owing to his contributions in different forms of writing. He has won the Whiting Writer's award in 1997, Henry Prize for his short story Gore du Nord published in Harper's Magazine in 1997. He has also been honoured by the fellowship of the New York foundation for the Arts. He has been awarded Guggenheim fellowship in 2007. His *Maximum City: Bombay Lost & Found* is a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist. It is also chosen as one of the books of the year 2004 by the Economist. He has won Kiriya Prize in 2005.

The book present major aspects and dominant personalities of the city and gives them each a detailed and comprehensive analysis. He has tried to portray the ugly side of the city covering poverty, over-crowding, crimes, ethnic conflict,

black marketing and also there are in depth character sketches of people surviving the dark circles of Bombay. Mehta has been criticised for writing an elitist book, told by a diamond merchants' son who has no empathy for the common Bombayite. Critics claim that the book is meant to be written for foreign audience which is told by a person who hasn't been able to cast off the American mask and hasn't descended to the likes of common Bombayite man who commutes daily by train. The dance bars and Bollywood film industry have been handled with the same terse and strict notion but the episodes of Monalisa and Honey are handled with subtle and delicate touches.

Nevertheless, the effort put in by Mehta in dealing with the large landscape of Bombay is worth admiring. He is strong willed to risk his and his family's life in dealing with the terrorists and war lords. There happens to be certain gaps here and there in writing and some of the episodes are over elaborated but that do not diminish the standards of writing anyhow which he has tried to establish.

4.2 LOCALE

In 2008, the Globalization and World Centre Group (GAWC) has ranked Mumbai as 'Alpha World City' which is third in the category of Global cities. It is ranked among the fastest cities in the country for business start up in 2009. The city life of Mumbai and its business and trading networks have been referred in the previous chapter.

In 1996, the newly elected Shiv Sena led government renamed the city of Bombay to the native name Mumbai, after the Kol goddess Mumba Devi. So, the names of the city, Mumbai and Bombay have been variably used in the study. Now, it has become the crime city of India. Many bombing incidents and terrorist attacks have tried to diminish the important citadel which Mumbai has been thriving upon but no amount of violence has faded or dimmed the image of Mumbai and its crowning glory.

4.3 THE ISSUES

The book provides a glimpse of post modern Bombay which is sprawling and vibrant. It is epic and bold, as it explicates the Mumbai world laden with gangsters, bars, night life, typical of a metropolitan city in twelve chapters. Each chapter gives an elaborative and entertaining detail about the quirks, memories and pitfalls of Mumbai. Many issues and ideologies have been experimented & questioned in the book which represents a vast array of problems attached to the city.

Many criminal organisations have become a part of India. Mafia is the term which refers to the syndicate which instigates criminal activities in India. The D-company is the name given to the organized crime group controlled by Dawood Ibrahim. The underworld and gangsters all form a part of mafia. The first part is titled 'Power', which is inclusive of five chapters dealing with multifarious aspects.

The first chapter of the book presents the geography of Bombay and then, narrates the discomforts of writer when he comes to resettle along with his two sons & his wife Sunita.

Metropolitan Lifestyle: One gets a true picture of metropolitan lifestyle in the book. People living in a city where privacy is seemingly non-existent with one or two rooms housing a dozen inhabitants, where the utilities including the availability of water operate sporadically. There are so many societies and buildings coming up, which gives one very little privacy and people can watch you

from different floors. All the dust, garbage, plastic bags are sucked in and leave the rooms unhygienic and disorganised. The material used in constructing the flat is of poor quality. Every now & then, cracks appear on the walls & urgent repairs are required. The repair work is to be done by plumbers, electricians & carpenters, all fix up their rates & mending job is done temporarily.

There are long queues for payment of bills. City is congested with vehicles & traffic. There are no open spaces for children to play. The food & water is adulterated which becomes the cause of many diseases. Theft is a very common phenomenon. Even in closed flats and houses taken care by the guards, it has become a routine practice. Perhaps, it is the linkup between the guards & the thieves which gives them easy options to grab their chances. Getting admission in the schools is also a tough task which demands channelizing of all the resources, be it money or through pursuance by a commanding authority.

The narrator encounters all these problems when he tries to settle down in Mumbai, where even finding a decent place to live in is very difficult & expensive. His children find it very difficult to adjust in the new scenario which is altogether different from the world they have grown up in.

Mehta comes from a family of diamond merchants from Gujarat which was settled in Bombay. His father and uncle moved from Bombay to USA. Mehta's mother was born in Nairobi, went to college in Bombay & then settled in New York. Since, Mehta spent his childhood in Bombay, he was nostalgic about the city but what he confronts is altogether different. He finds that people living in the city are more than the continent of Australia. He explains in the text, "With fourteen

million people, Bombay is the biggest city on the planet of a race of city dwellers. Bombay is the future of urban civilization on the planet. God help us”(3). He finds the shops along with the buildings & experiences that “Bombay is all about transaction dhandha”(15). It is a city of gold and nobody starves to death in Mumbai. It is a city of maximum and a country of numbers where every facility & every resource is available but difficult to operate and consume.

Even in the twenty-first century, the situation has not improved. Rajiv Gandhi, the former late Prime Minister had the notion that in the new century “India derives modernity, it desires computers, information technology, neural networks, video on demand”(25); but still having the third largest pool of technical labour, a third of its one billion population can’t read or write. They can develop supercomputers but can’t maintain them properly. Mehta believes that Bombay is an imitation of a western society just like Chicago of 1920’s which immediately leads us to the concept of ‘Westernisation’ given by M. N. Srinivas. India has been trying to ape west and following modern trends and western ideals but in the process they are losing their own identities and strengths which have sustained them in a highly competitive world.

The second chapter is ‘Powertoni’ which presents a glimpse of the riots of 1992-93 in Bombay, which followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. It also deals with political and underworld nexus, and how they promote religious & social distinctions.

Hindu-Muslim Riots: The riots in Bombay lead us to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, India. There was a mosque which is believed to be constructed by the Mughal

Emperor Babar over the birth place of Lord Rama (a Hindu God). The mosque was a cause of friction over the rights to gain control over it by Hindus & Muslims. The mosque was demolished on 6th December, 1992 by a Hindu mob, which led to widespread destruction in Bombay. It was a tragedy in three acts. Firstly, there was a fight between Hindu Police & Muslims. Secondly, there was a more serious war in January 1993 caused by the Shiv Sena in which Muslims were particularly identified and targeted. Thirdly, it was the revenge of Muslims when powerful bombs exploded in the city killing many people including, Muslims. Mehta discusses about the riots and various gangsters who were instrumental in burning & killing Muslims but did not experience any kind of pangs of self consciousness for the wrongs they had committed. One of the gangster comments: “Many wars begin with an act of rape, real or imagined. It is always the men who are disturbed enough by the rape to go to war”(45). The gangster Sunil is in cable industry & has several clients who are Muslims. He visits a dargah for divinely help but he has no remorse for the people he had killed or shunted out of their lives. One of the speaker comments “An eye for an eye is a terrible thing”(51). Muslims were devastated by riots but when bombings took place in Bombay, they avenged it.

Slums: A slum is a heavily populated urban disorganised settlement which has substandard housing & living standards. Most of them lack sanitation facilities, clean water, electricity & other basic amenities. Rural to urban shifts forms one of the main causes of development of slums. Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums. The link between urban slums & armed violence is fairly visible. The culture of masculinity, little faith in spirituality, different social

organisations such as gangs & militants & availability of arms pose a common sight. Domestic violence against men also exists in slums.

We do witness a pathetic side in slums. Dharavi in Mumbai is the largest slum area. India is home to the second largest Muslim population in the world. The Hindus & the Muslims in slums, live apart in separate areas out of their choice. There is a problem of pure drinking water. Much of the slum area is a garbage dump. Every person gets two buckets of water for household needs. In Hindu areas, each one of them has a tap while in Muslim areas eight or ten lanes have one. The sewers are open & very often children while playing fall into them. Some of the toilets are there in Hindu areas while in Muslim areas they are not in working condition. Otherwise also, the toilets are unclean & in unhygienic conditions, stagnant water & stench pervades the area. No municipal officer or the concerned official takes due action. So, various organisations & groups have started to somehow take control of the situation. One of the groups described in the text is a women's group 'Rahe-haq' which means the Right Path. They have started their work in Jogeshwari slums. Finally, with their efforts some of the toilets get cleaned and are put to use. The water supply in the area is improved. Slowly, they have started helping the women with legal advice. The people who are residing in slums are comfortable living there and don't wish to move away and settle elsewhere. They form a community and are attached to it.

One gets a glimpse of mass culture or popular culture in the slums. The culture of the lower groups who are subdued & exploited by the elite is clearly witnessed in these areas. The culture of Bharat as represented by masses is

dominated and exploited by elite Indians. It represents a constant struggle between the dominant & the subordinate where the dominant moulds the subordinate to maintain its hegemonic position.

Political Scenario: In India, political parties are generally woven around their leaders, the leaders actively play a dominant role. The role of leadership is transferable for generations to follow. In India, political parties act on ideological basis. They are formed on the basis of race, religion, caste etc. The leaders are interested in their own selfish pursuits. Every now and then, the news of scams follow, the Land scam, the Fodder scam to name a few. They have lost their conscience and a will to serve the nation. They have their troupes of ministers & guards and gangsters at their command ready to grab the bait.

Shiv Sena, the ruling Hindu activist party had an important role to play in the riots. The Shiv Sena was formed by Bal Thackeray in 1966, after the seventeenth century Maharashtrian warrior king Shivaji, who was an expert in guerrilla warfare. The Sena Shakhas acted as a parallel government and helped people solve out their problems. They tackled a variety of issues – trade unions, student’s movement, women’s living, employment network, cooperative banks, newspaper etc. They had the powertoni - it meant a contraction of power of attorney- the wonderful ability to act on someone else’s behalf or to have others do your bidding, to sign documents, release the wanted criminals, cure illnesses of people, get people murdered. It is explained as :

Powertoni: A power that does not originate in yourself; a power that you are holding on somebody else’s behalf. It is the only kind of

power that a politician has : a power of attorney ceded to him by the voter. All over Mumbai, the Shiv Sena is the one organization that has Powertoni. And the man with the greater Powertoni in Mumbai is the leader of the Shiv Sena himself, Bal Keshav Thackeray.(63)

He had the remote control of entire Bombay, right from the police to the gangsters when he was alive. The ministers and Bollywood stars came to meet him. In March 1995, the Shiv Sena came to power in coalition with BJP. They changed the name of the capital city to Mumbai. They instigated the riots after Babri Masjid demolition. Many Shiv Sainiks killed & thrashed Muslims during the riots. They were burnt and looted. The riots of 1992 & 1993 were a milestone as it brought different worlds together with an explosion. The monster was out of the slums. Many people were recruited as Shiv Sainiks and the task they were assigned was to kill. The Shiv Sainiks were fanatics but they were held by the principle that fanatics were needed to fight fanatics. When Shiv Sena came to power around five percent of Bombay Muslims voted for them as they wanted law & order out of stability.

The dreams foreseen by the leaders like Gandhi & Nehru, who wanted the leaders to be role models, thinking of people & nation as a whole has lost its count. Nowadays, there is Bhaiya Raj or Gundaraj blossoming under the patronage of the so called leaders & rulers.

Election Scenario: Elections in India generally, involve political mobilisation and organisational complexity, the will and the need to hold the seat of power. Politicians have their own source of money during elections which include

businessman & contractors. People generally have a notion that politicians come to them for canvassing only after five years during the election time. They listen to the problems of slum dwellers and provide certain relaxations and contributions to them. They visit slum colonies but rarely visit posh colonies to demand votes. They know that these high class gentry won't come down to support them. Eighty eight percent of their vote bank comes from slums. One very common sight that can be observed during the casting of vote is that someone steals, someone's right to vote. Money is usually paid to the voters to cast votes in favour of particular candidate or party. The workers who help the leaders during canvassing & even afterwards are suitably rewarded. They are provided special treatment and gifts. It may include- the financing, the construction of a particular building or any gifts, besides healthy amount of money. The new leaders that are coming are corrupt, which is in sharp contrast to the leaders of the previous times. They were Oxford educated and were wealthy in their own right and as such they did not plunder the riches of India to fill their own purses.

As Mehta elaborates in the text:

The new inheritors of the country- and of the city- are very different from the ones who took over from the British, who had studied at Cambridge and the Inner Temple and come back. They are badly educated, unscrupulous, lacking a metropolitan sensibility- buffoons and small-time thugs, often- but, above all, representative.(81)

The gangsters and the poor people who helped the politicians are themselves given the party tickets and they become the rulers. They illegally

occupy government lands and areas and use them for their own purposes. The dominating bloc tries to project its own ideology by taking mass cultures into the hold, the values of societies and the concept of ideal nation and statehood are the things gone by and long forgotten.

Exploitation of Women: In the developing countries, thousands of females are forced into prostitution. Sexual exploitation which is inclusive of sex tourism and sexual violence such as rape & harassment has escalated in modern society.

A Shiv Sainik in the novel who works for the party is a married man, having children. He has had affair with five women in the neighbourhood as he himself says, “Sex and death are very close in Bombay”(97). He very explicitly discusses his relationships and also deliberates upon the sexual encounters of other slum residing man and how they take undue advantage of the weaker sex. “They go after the women who are vulnerable, the very young, the children or wives of drunkards or women not right in the head”(98).

The gang rape case in New Delhi in 2012, where a twenty three year old woman was raped in a moving bus, stresses the urgent need to promote safety of women & girls in India. Women in India continue to suffer due to lack of awareness, and oppressive practices & customs. This is the dilemma & disgust of the modern cities & cultures.

The third chapter is titled ‘Mumbai.’ Mumbai is known for the blasts of 1993; 1971 war with Pakistan and the explosion of the *Fort Stikine* on 14 April 1944. *Fort Stikine* was a ship carrying cotton bales and a secret cargo of gold and

silver and also explosives. The explosives caught fire and all the precious ammunition was destroyed and all gold was lost. The chapter also traces the problems faced by people in Mumbai and the deteriorating architecture of the city.

Problems Faced by Bombayites: The Rent Act has made the life difficult for the tenants. The provisions are applicable to commercial buildings, corporation and government enterprises. Rich people reside in rent-controlled bungalows but the problem remains for the new onlookers of the flats. After the Act, the pugree or key money system was started which meant that a tenant would be bribed by the owner to vacate his flat.

There is water shortage in Mumbai. Municipal Corporation supplies water to people which is roughly seventy percent of the total demand. People have adopted the habit of stealing water passing through pipelines.

There is sanitation problem in Mumbai. People don't have the access to the basic toilets to ease themselves. Dirt, stench, garbage, plastic bags, betel spits, all can be observed on the roads of Mumbai.

Deterioration of Historical Monuments & Sculpture: The quality of architecture in Bombay is tattering out. The newly carved pillars at Elephanta caves are showing signs of destruction. The structures have been built in stones which are in sharp contrast to the original statues built by the Rashtrakuta kings. The Victorian buildings, railway terminals, university and court buildings are built on the gothic style and have their own splendour and charm while the modern architecture which is coming up is devoid of refined tastes. Older buildings are intact but the new

structures can't compete with the old stuff. The material and articles used in new buildings fall below the normal standards.

The construction is taking place at Nariman Point, the whole plan of New Bombay is all the more congested. While making, one big island of Bombay, seven islands were filled but due to new constructions the whole symmetry is being disturbed. Frequent rains are destroying the ill constructed structures.

Steps should be taken to control the situation in Mumbai. Private companies should step forward to invest in the city. Government should understand its duty and responsibility towards the citizens. The physical structure, the landscape of Mumbai needs to be transformed. "It now, has to sell brainpower: ideas, data and dreams"(137). Rules and laws should be made for the benefit of masses not for their exploitation. As the text elaborates, "Bombay is both the beautiful parts and the ugly parts, fighting block by block, to death for victory"(137). The need to preserve the heritage as well as, the need to render good services for the prestige of the city is urgently required.

In India, names of many cities have been modified. Bombay has been changed to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkatta. Similarly, there is a demand to change India's name to Bharat. This policy is being adopted to connect with the idealized past. The cities were renamed by colonisers but now the same cities are considering the name change to re-establish their forgotten identities. It is a shame that the safeguarding of the historical structures & monuments is not being implemented and there is a talk of lost identity. It is a sheer apathy that even after entering the new century, people do not have access to the basic needs. The goods

& services provided are far below the norms and lead us to ask pertinent questions about India's future- how can Indians match the quality and the competition at global level, when there is lack of basic amenities. The struggle between high & low caste continues and there is no bridging the gap even if they are reformed or westernised.

The chapter number two 'After Scotland Yard', highlights the treatment meted out to the criminals in custody. It also relates with their lives and complexes. Gang war is a common phenomenon in Mumbai where different gangs put up a fight with each other on one issue or the other.

Torture in Police Custody: While in Police custody, the suspects are not allowed to sleep. Electric shocks are provided to them. Some kind of load is tied to their legs and they are mercilessly beaten. Bullet shots are given to them close to the ears. If physical torture doesn't work special methods are used. The family is tortured and threatened and the suspects finally yield to the pressure.

Police extract information through their informers. They have a proper channel to provide information about the underworld. Police has become a non profit institution as they are provided a meagre salary, substandard equipments & inefficient lawyers to handle the court room proceedings. No doubt, Police has become corrupt. They torture people in custody. Even the ladies are not spared. They are exploited, butchered up and beaten mercilessly in jails.

The D-company and gang wars: Inter-gang rivalry is a common sight in underworld. The reason for the gang war is the struggle for supremacy.

In Mumbai, the underworld can strike anywhere. Their centres are located at Karachi, Dubai, Malaysia. All the terrorist activities are funded from outside India. That's the reason police is not able to control their activities. There is also collaboration with different terrorist groups such as LTTE in Sri Lanka, the ULFA and PWG in Andhra Pradesh. Whatever money they extort from unsavoury means and through revenue, the sixty percent of it goes to the bosses through hawala & remaining forty percent is for the gang workers & others who perform any kind of activity. These groups and companies try to convert their black money into white by opening various hotels, departmental stores, resorts, banks & investment in entertainment industry. They are also involved in drugs & human trafficking. "The boys don't refer to the organizations they work for as 'gangs', they call them 'companies' and there is indeed something corporate about the organization"(155). Boys have their own support system which is spread out in different jails. Special meals & facilities are provided to them in jails.

The gang wars branched out in Mumbai after the bomb blasts of 1993. Bombs were planted in Bombay to take revenge of anti-Muslim activities. Dawood Ibrahim the leader of the D-company, exiled & settled in Karachi, was the mastermind behind the blasts. Chotta Rajan, his lieutenant and a Hindu, broke with him & formed his own Nana-Company. The two dons control their territories from outside the country & have been at war since then.

The gangs have the best aims, the best lawyers to fight their case which is in sharp contrast to Police who are responsible for curbing the crime & do not have access to quality arms and ammunitions. Supari or contract killings have become

common in India which costs around five to ten thousand rupees. Poverty has become a virtue in India. Those who are poor, they are not pressurised by the underworld while the rich or the financiers when they celebrate the marriages, they book a low profile venue to maintain distance from the extortion bids by the underworld. They have a parallel judicial system while in India the civil cases take at least five years together to settle for want of evidence while in many cases, the final appeals take at least two years to decide “The ‘Parallel economy’, a travelling partner of the official economy, is always there, turn your head a little to the left or right and you’ll see it”(192). There is a whole lot of backlog in courts while there is an alternative system which provides help to the needy. The justice system of gangsters is speedy & effective.

The next chapter is titled ‘ Black Collar Workers.’ It reflects the grim picture of animal slaughter and the network of gangs and how do they operate.

Animal Slaughter: The area described in the chapter in Madanpura, which is also called mini Pakistan. The festival of Bakr-Eid is being celebrated and the goats are sacrificed in tandem. They are helpless and don’t even struggle to escape.

Cows & bulls are slaughtered for their meat which is after all, a controversial situation as Hindus worship cows. They don’t accept the notion of Muslims eating cows which is considered as sacred animal by Hindus. After the animals are slaughtered they are left in open in the most unhygienic conditions. Some people give this justification, that everything on this earth has been created for enjoyment and human beings and animals are a part of it. This theory does not go well for the humanists who condemn it and are votaries of animal rights.

Cruelty to animals also called, animal abuse is the human affliction of suffering or harm done towards animals. Animal cruelty covers a wide range of actions. It can be for specific reasons such as killing animals for food or fur. In Indian system, animals are also slaughtered and offered as a sacrifice to appease Gods. Even, in the metro cities these kinds of activities can be observed which reflects the superstitious and baseless ideology of Indians.

Political System and Gang Wars: The city is notorious for the presence of criminals & the workers of D-company, Abu Salem & other gangsters. Mehta meets various categories of gang workers. Each one of it has his own story to narrate, own experiences to describe. They can murder anyone even for a petty amount and they earn handsomely by following the dons order. They go to jail and the company provides money to their families. They execute people as per the orders given by their superiors. They use gun shots, knife, rods etc. for killing someone. They usually prefer a motor bike for execution. If they are caught by the Police, Police will negotiate with their bosses for their release. If the negotiations fail, these shooters are tortured & have to suffer. Some of the shooters run away to Dubai, to escape prison. They miss out their life in India, family, movies, going out to eating joints etc.

The shooters are fond of bar girls. For just rupees one fifty they can enjoy with any girl they want. They can exploit anybody by keeping the gun on the head of the family members. They are all passionate lovers, who if avoided can go to the extent of killing their beloved.

Muslim terrorists believe their work to be related to their tribe, of the universal nation of Islam. They are not governed by the boundaries of nations & states. Muslims are spread out in different countries while Hindus are restricted to India only. Muslims live by the idea that their honours have to be protected & they have to fight the evil.

The gangsters are religious a lot. They believe in God and say their prayers regularly. They are highly philosophical like one shooter Satish believes that “God is like smelling money that you have earned. There is no smell, really, but you have felt him. We are all part of god’s game”(237). Politicians & shooters nexus go hand in hand. Politicians are taken to be the worst culprits as they work behind the scene. They are not honest towards their country, job or people. This has been admitted by the gangsters. The protectors and rulers themselves become the killers and exploiters. The moral fabric of the nation as a whole has gone awry. The enlightened people need to come forward & demand for the rights they can exercise to control the disarray. The masses have to unite, necessarily to bring about a change and curb exploitation.

The second part of the book is entitled ‘Pleasure’ and deals with pleasures of different kinds which one can enjoy in a metro city. The first chapter describes the bliss of family life; the second chapter leads to Bar industry while the concluding chapter is a Bollywood extravaganza.

The first chapter ‘Vadapav-Eater’s City’ describes typical life of an ordinary citizen. The two most elusive qualities in a metropolis are intimacy and silence. During the week days people work like animals; while Sundays are meant

for relaxation & enjoyment. Power and influence work in India at every level. Babudom and netagiri are typical Indian traits which cater to the pleasures of own self at the cost of others. The personal touch and family feeling are the assets of Indians. Rich people have adopted the new culture easily as they have the means to accomplish it. They are spending money on lavish accessories but the feelings of togetherness and solidarity cannot be compensated which is missing out from their lives.

Indian children mix freely with each other. While in western countries, the feeling of personal touch & intimacy are missing. Indians have an exposure to different varieties of culture and habits which is a stamp of Bharatiyata or Indianness. They nurture their relationships and neighbourhood. Rich people go for movies, parties and other sources of entertainment but poor people do not have access to such kind of facilities. They work till late and when they come back home, they want the children to be awake so that they experience a spark of joy in their dull life which gives them a purpose to move on. During the holidays, they enjoy with their kids and live their life to the fullest.

Indians have adopted the metropolitan & westernised outlook but not the zeal of it, not the true meaning of it. They follow the pattern of long working hours and enjoyment at weekends but have not imbibed their work culture. In West, people have set time-span or limit of working hours & two days holiday but Indians have forgotten all about the time slots. They have unlimited work hours, less pay, more targets to achieve, only one day relaxation which makes them spend less time with their families in the corporate world.

The next chapter 'A City in Heat' describes the night life of Bombay. Sex workers and bar dancers are available in Bombay. The biggest whore house in Bombay is called Congress House, named after the headquarters of the Congress Party. Pila House is the name for Nepali whores. Labourers and coolies go to these places. Bachu-ni-wadi is a place for mujrawalis.

Bar Industry: The term refers to adult entertainment in the form of dances by well covered women which are performed in front of males in exchange for cash. They were usually present only in Maharashtra but later spread out to many cities. Dance bars were banned in the state of Maharashtra in August 2005.

The narrator finds the night life of Bombay fascinating as he finds everything here, "Money, sex, love, death and show business"(285).The gang workers spend huge amount of money on bar dancers. Nepali girls are good for Bhaiyas (low class people) while gang war boys are interested in bar dancers and some of them are taken as mistresses by the gang workers. All types of people gather at bar. They could be rich or simple workers. "This is one place where the classes meet, where the only thing important is the colour of your money. The amount of money which you spend correlates to the attention you get"(329).

Bar girls are brought in the bar line when they are thirteen or fourteen years old by their parents, or through an agent and they become old for the profession when they are in twenties. These girls live in rented apartments. They drive their cars and use mobile phones. They send money to their family members back home. The narrator visits a bar Sapphire, where he finds teenage girls performing on Bollywood numbers. The girls have a technique & dancing style to attract the

customers. They are dressed in traditional attires. Mehta views and discusses the lives of Monalisa & Honey which have been explored in the next part of the chapter. Both of them reflect about the changing trends in the industry as the people don't want the girls to be dressed in traditional sarees but highly provocative dresses.

Since, the ban on dancing has come to stay, many bar girls are rendered jobless & have migrated to Dubai or similar places.

The next chapter 'Distilleries of Pleasure' gives a glimpse of entertainment industry– Bollywood, modelling, censorboard, Bollywood underworld nexus etc.

Bollywood: Mehta portrays the filming of the movie 'Mission Kashmir' and how the censor board network exercises its will, to go in for cuts for the controversial scenes, the filming of 'Sangharsh' & how the Bollywood & underworld relations operate.

In Madanpura, the shooting of movie 'Sangharsh' is taking place. Tanuja Chandra is the director, Preity Zinta is the heroine. Mahesh Bhatt is the producer. People are thronging in the area to get a glimpse of their favourite stars. Many gangsters have to be employed to control the crowd. Finally, the film is made out to be shown before the censor board. The censor board clears the film with minor cuts.

The Indian entertainment industry is expanding. T.V. has also taken its due place. With the coming of a number of channels, the cable network has established

its root in every household, “There are now more T.V. channels available in Mumbai than in most US cities”(376).

As and when people enter theatre, the suspension of disbelief begins. The people feel themselves so attached to the characters or the cult figures they represent, that they take them to be icons. Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikant have a massive fan following. Indian movie goers are still engrossed in patriotism, motherhood, true love while in comparison; the western movies have found a new range. They have movies on variegated themes while Indians are floored by song, dance and action sequences.

Indian Film makers are also looking for overseas market to fetch more money. “The diaspora wants to see an urban, affluently glossy India, the India they imagine they grew up in and wish they could live in now”(378). Films are teaching new ideals, about open & free life but at the same time, romance and wedding extravaganzas are still happening. The horizons are expanding, film makers are also working on themes which appeal to NRI and also the western society, the shootings take place in foreign locales and people identify and connect with these places.

Bollywood–Underworld Connections: While the filming of movie, both the underworld and the stars are in awe of each other. The gangsters and the crowds want to see their favourite stars while the stars wish to see the real gangsters. It is reflected in the text, “Gangsters and whores all over the world have always been fascinated by the movies and vice versa, the movies are fundamentally transgressive. They are our eye into the forbidden” (374).

Many of the activities which are reflected in movies are never observed in real life by the audience. "Cinema is an outlaw medium, the flashlight into the darkest part of ourselves. For the criminals and prostitutes who live these outlaw lives, the movies are close to realistic"(375). The gangsters, the bar dancers, the common people who are not able to lead an idealized life on their expectation levels, may find solace by envisioning themselves in particular characters of the fictional world. The whole effect is cathartic. The underworld or the gangsters help in movie distribution. Pirated movies are shown on the channels by offering certain amount of money, even, the film release date can be delayed for some time. The underworld finances many films as it is the easiest route for channelising the illegal money of the dons. Moreover, if the film is a hit, it provides the fourfold gain to them of the initial investment. Bollywood gets the inspiration of subjects through these gang operations and then, are projected into the movies.

Underworld also extorts money from the stars. Actor Hrithik Roshan's father Rakesh Roshan was hit by a bullet. They wanted to extort money from his father as Hrithik's movie was a hit and he was much in demand. They also wanted the star to act in their movie. Hrithik, on his part wanted to settle his scores with underworld as "underworld and dream world in Bombay they are reflections of each other"(453). Gangsters are prone to giving extortion calls to various people involved with the film world. Abu Salem ordered the killing of Gulshan Kumar, the music magnate of the industry because he did not pay the desired amount to the don. The gangsters also have their kingpins in the industry who provide them up-

to-date information about the industry. Police is of little help as they themselves are afraid to nab the gangsters.

Consumerism: Consumerist practices are rampant in film industry. The rights of film distribution are taken over by some companies for extra profits. Other companies and products chip in film promotions, in dialogues, scenes, or some posters. The film is to be sold in various territories. The distributors lure & exploit the film makers over distribution rights. The payment to the star depends on whether the recent film of the star is a hit or a flop. The stars have to sign the contract for a film. The language used in the contract is diabolical and it is not easy to understand the intricacies of the written document. The money paid to the stars also includes the bonus, if it is a hit. The number of songs used in the music album, also works on the principle of economics. The production house sells the music rights in advance, which helps to finance the film.

The music industry has also changed. It is based on electronic equipments. Synthesisers and hip-hop have taken the place of old instruments. The tunes and tactics of different cultures like African rhythms, samba etc are integrated with traditional music and instruments.

Religious Controversies: Hindu-Muslim conflicts, religious issues, all sorts of controversies find a channelisation through the movies. They either try to excite or subside the curiosity of the audience. 'Mission Kashmir' is a movie about the conflict in Kashmir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra along with, Abhijit Joshi is working on the script. Amiabh Bachchan & Shahrukh Khan are to play the lead roles. When the script is written, the Kashmir issue & other associated problems like economy,

the rebellions- all are sidetracked. Extra care is taken not to hurt the sentiments of any community. The movie has to pass through many channels before it is released. If it has critical issues, it has to be passed through censor board to get the certificate. Or, it has to be cleared via politicians or the government panel.

Vidhu Vinod Chopra, the director, wants the film to propagate the ideology of 'Kashmiriyat' where both Hindus & Muslims are allowed to worship in the same country. But, both the actors are not ready to take the calculated risk & hence back out. Then, he signs on Sanjay Dutt, Hrithik Roshan & Preity Zinta to play the lead roles. The film opens up to a mixed reaction from the crowds. The songs are enjoyed in Pakistan even. Similarly in the movie 'Sangarsh', trouble is created by the censor board but it is cleared of with minor cuts. Mahesh Bhatt, another director is working on a film about Hindu-Muslim riots. The film is about his mother who was a Muslim & his father who was a Gujarati Brahmin, a producer of B grade movies. Bhatt knows that he has purpose in life although he feels sick of the industry – "We are distilleries of pleasure"(408). The film is named 'Zakhm' & faces a problem at censor board. They raise certain issues & want to give it, an A certificate. The film is passed from one ministry to another since, they believe that the film may instigate communal riots & hatred. The producer & the director work through, day & night, to get the film steer through various political & bureaucratic channels. The film is screened in the presence of government officials. Certain scenes are re-shooted & the film is finally released. It also wins an award in the category of the Best feature film on National Integration.

This is a sham world. At one stage, the film is not cleared due to commercial constraints and in the next stage, it wins an award for upholding integration. The internal politics and indifferent approach, the callous attitude of officials, all reflect the negative role of so called, Indian technocrats.

Film trade magazines have an important role to play in declaring a movie hit or a flop. These writers deal with the strugglers. Out of the hundred girls who approach the films world only ten are selected and undergo a series of exploitations. Not just the actors, the scriptwriters, musicians, dancers also work as strugglers. One such struggler is Eishaan who left his flourishing business in Dubai & came to Bombay to become a hero. He changed his name as it was a fashion to change the name. He took on acting, action & dance classes. He was offered roles in C grade movies & television serials but he declined the offer since he wanted to be part of A grade movies. He is a devout follower of Goddess Durga. After waiting for a year, he was finally offered a B grade movie, and that too, a religious one, which he finally accepted. It is a low budget movie & the makers do not have enough food to feed the actors and the unit members. Although, it is a religious movie but all the traits of masala films are incorporated. Eishaan is caught between orthodoxy & modernism. Finally, he leaves his struggle & goes back to his family business. The lure of Bollywood has captured many hearts but one needs to be practical in life. No doubt, it is glamorous but full of risks and insecurities.

The last part of the book has four chapters which point towards the problems and facilities available in Bombay. There is also a reflection that all classes of people blend together reflecting multiple cultures & personalities. It

portrays the shifts & struggles of common man, rich people & the virtues they relish and identification of the narrator with the city.

The chapter 'Sone ki Chidiya' highlights certain features associated with the citylife which provides a clear perception in understanding the real nature of Mumbai.

The Feeling of Togetherness: Mehta points towards the associative & unified attributes in the city of Mumbai. Every type of service is available in the city. There are carts where old notes are exchanged for the new. There are groups of letter writers who perform various types of services for literate as well as illiterate but these letter writers are experiencing losses in their business because of the availability of modern technology such as mobile phones. The new culture has created hurdles in their business but they are strong people who have the will to survive despite complexities & obstacles in their lives.

“Bombay is a fast paced even hectic city, but it is not, in the end a competitive city”(529). People here do understand the meaning of the term adjustment. In a crowded city like Mumbai people have to adjust, be it, in trains, buses or buildings so the competition never arises for them to reach their destination. If somebody is pushed out of a moving train, he will be pulled inside also. It has been described as a cattle shed, when the station arrives, one must be in a position to move out before the complete stop of the train because if one delays, a rush of people will get inside & one will be swept back. People enjoy their groups, playing cards, eating food, singing together. All can be witnessed in a simple compartment of train; if one is getting late & train is leaving from platform many

hands would come forward to grab you. They would adjust & make space for you. They are neither Hindus nor Muslims but people who are conscious of the problems which one have to face on account of missing the train. This is how the real Bharat survives the ordeal, which is visible in the lives of common man.

The children in homes understand their responsibilities towards their parents & family. They understand that they have to earn their living, when the parents get old. Seven or eight members of a family live in a small one room or two rooms flat but they have space for everybody. They share the attribute of togetherness with the community. If there is a marriage in the household, the entire neighbourhood gets together in rendering any sort of help.

Negative Attributes: Besides, the attributes of togetherness, some negative aspects are also visible. Still, people have stereotyped thinking and do not appreciate inter-caste marriages. As per the construction norms in western countries, new multi-storey buildings are coming up in Mumbai but the quality of material used, is inferior. The illustrations provided in the brochure sound convincing but in reality the construction is poor & substandard material is used. Drinking water is not available in slum areas & people have to make a payment to get water. Drainage system is not adequate.

A struggler like Babbanji, has to face hardships in Bombay. It is not an easy life to withstand the tortures of a metropolitan city. There are long queues & lines even for the basic necessities. One has to really struggle hard to carve a niche for himself. The problem of begging is rampant. People can earn & work, still can be seen demanding, an easy access to income. Whatever they earn, they consume it

for liquor. One arrives in a big city with a vision of charisma and brightness but it is the few significant ones who get the opportunity to realise their dreams.

The next chapter 'Memory Mines' describe the childhood memories of author's school days. He visits the school and reconstructs his childhood as an adult.

Corporal Punishment: It is a form of physical punishment which involves the deliberate infliction of pain for the purpose of reforming or disciplining the wrong doer.

Corporal Punishment is banned in schools but schools in Bombay still continue with the practice. There are reports of child thrashing. The writer cherishes the memory of childhood in his heart.

The next chapter 'Goodbye World' describes his visit to the house of a Jain family, a diamond merchant who is renouncing the world by taking diksha. The chapter is in sharp contrast to the earlier ones where slums & common life has been reflected pragmatically. It explores the lifestyle of the elite strata of the society. The family of five is renouncing the world to attain moksha. The ceremony takes place lavishly. They are squandering their wealth to attain their new roles of sages. They need to collect food from various homes & walk barefoot on the road, which is a difficult task. Still, they are persisting and are adapting to the new life. The women have gone their separate ways and are not mentioned but the boys are not comfortable in their new roles. Leaving a life of worldly pursuit and adapting to the life style of a sage is indeed, a very challenging & difficult task. The way they squander away their wealth, the royal robes and ceremony

reflect, the lifestyle they have supported. The elite strata have their own ways but to think of renunciation in the modern times is remarkable and praiseworthy.

The final chapter 'A Self in the Crowd' is dedicated to the narrator himself. The narrator yearns to find his true home, he craves for his identity & he is at peace in the end, when he traces it up within his family.

Importance of Family: Mehta highlights the virtues of family, his wife and two sons. He understands that it is not just the parents or the grandparents which matter, but the extended family is equally important - uncle, cousins, aunts etc. He finds his reasons to go back to USA, "The Battle of Bombay is the battle of the self against the crowd"(580). It is a city of many dreams which conglomerate to form a mass dream. The individual dream survives and makes way for one to survive & struggle in the city. He discusses the question of survival as, "The battle is of man against the Metropolis which is only the infinite extension of men & the demon against which he must constantly strive to establish himself or be annihilated"(580). The writer opines that people of the city will merge with him and they will identify with him in reflecting his opinions & attitudes.

4.4 NOVELWISE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

Different character personages provide a peep into the glamorous world of Mumbai. The characters are real life sketches and a source of revelations for frantic, tragic, gruesome, selfish, lively, entertaining emotions which form a part of modern society.

Bal Thackeray – A Symbol of Tiger: Bal Thackeray's father was a teacher by profession. He was also a social reformer and a writer. His mother wanted him to become a government servant but his father wanted him to be an artist. He started his career as a cartoonist at the free press Journal. In 1960, he launched his own cartoon weekly. His cartoon weekly turned into a forum for the 'sons of the soil', the Maharashtra Movement. People started reading and writing to his weekly. So in 1966, he formed his own political party- the Shiv Sena, after the seventeenth century Maharashtra warrior king, Shivaji who was an expert in the guerrilla warfare. Thackeray insisted on the original name Hindustan and hated calling it India and attributed the name India to Jawahar Lal Nehru for his love of Muslims after the partition, who were calling it as India. He insisted, "Hindustan is the original name and proper name for the country"(109).

Thackeray believed in the industrial dynasties. Much of his money came from the leading businessman of the city. He adopted a diabolic policy as far as religion was concerned. Shiv Sainiks went after acclaimed painter, M.F. Hussain for his nude paintings of Goddess Saraswati. They believed that Hussain has displayed Muslim fanaticism. He has depicted Hindu Goddess in nude while he could not show disrespect to Muslim Gods but Thackeray and his Shiv Sainiks

changed their cultural attributes in case of Michael Jackson. Jackson came to India for his performance after getting the blessings of Bal Thackeray. Then he categorically stated that Jackson represents certain rules in America which one should accept but he did not accept the cultural values of other religions and other communities. He protested against the celebration of Valentine's Day. Sena stormed on the stage at a concert by Ghulam Ali, a Muslim. No Pakistani entertainers could stage a concert in city. "The sahib's diktat comes down: No Pakistani entertainers can stage a concert in their city, no Pakistani sportsmen can play. The gentry of Mumbai suffer the shutting down of the concert without a peep"(94).

Bal Thackeray felt pride in giving details. Many politicians, film stars and high-profile people came to meet him with their problems. He was running a parallel government and meted justice to them. He did not favour crowding of Mumbai by outsiders especially, Bangladeshi Muslims. He had a role to play in 1992-93 Bombay riots and Babri Masjid demolition.

In March 1995, Shiv Sena in coalition with BJP came to power. The new government looked at "problem plaguing the city, the infestation of corruption at all levels of the bureaucracy, the abysmal state of Hindu-Muslim relations, and took decisive action. They changed the name of the Capital city to Mumbai"(66).

Bal Thackeray and his party were implicated in the aftermath of riots after Babri Masjid demolition. An independent commission headed by a retired judge, Sri Krishna conducted an inquiry. When the report came, Thackeray charged upon

the judge of being biased against Hindus while he himself was biased against Muslims. It has been clearly related:

The Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray, like a veteran general, commanded his loyal Shiv Sainiks to retaliate by organized attacks against Muslims... the attack on Muslims by the Shiv Sainiks were mounted with military precision, with lists of establishments and voters lists in hand.(87)

In the Sri Krishna's report thirty one police officers were named for killing people, seventeen were charged in 2001 but none of them was put on trial. Cases against Thackeray were also got ridden of as he was arrested and let off within forty five minutes. What they represented was a mockery of justice.

Bal Thackeray died in November 2012 but his policies and ideologies still persist in Shiv Sainiks. He tried to expand his political base by adopting Hindutva agenda and believed in anti-Muslim views. Bombay being the economic capital of India could have excelled as an important global city but its infrastructure is still in poor shape. Bombay was a cosmopolitan, modern and multi-ethnic city but Thackeray's ideals changed the city, as he converted it into Mumbai and not just in name alone. His party had used violence to ban or disrupt events. He had a major role to play in Bombay riots & instigating communal classes.

The political leaders have to be role models for the upliftment of the weaker sections and nation as a whole. They are to refrain themselves from giving biased & prejudiced opinions against any community as India is a secular country.

Dawood Ibrahim & D-Company: The gang war in Bombay is the fallout of the bomb blasts of 1993 in which bombs were planted in Bombay to take revenge on anti-Muslims programs. Dawood Ibrahim, the don of the D-company, settled in Karachi was the master-mind behind the blasts. His lieutenant Chotta Rajan who was a Hindu, broke with him and formed his own Nana company.

Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar was born in Ratnagiri on the Konkan coast in 1955. His father was a Police constable in the crime branch named as Ibrahim Kaskar. Dawood started a small business in Nagpada in Central Bombay.

Haji Mastan, a gold smuggler was dominating Bombay at that time but he was humble by nature and always thought of the poor. Then, he was taken over by Pathan gang, Karim Lala from Afghanistan. Dawood Ibrahim came into conflict with Pathan gang chiefs. They murdered Dawood's brother and Dawood avenged the death by killing them. Then, he moved to Dubai and started his gold smuggling business. Later, he was involved in extortion, real-estate and film-financing business. He was joined by Chotta Shakeel, the head of gang operations in Bombay.

Chhota Shakeel: He is referred to as Seth or Haji Saheb or pawn takla by his friends because he is bald from the front. His father worked as a technician at the docks and later on as a ship painter. His mother was involved in sorting grain. Shakeel started out with repairing T.V. then, he got himself involved in counterfeit watches, debt recovery etc. Later, he started smuggling gold. He was followed by customs people but owing to his connections he fled to Dubai. He has a family and is a very helpful man by nature. He wanted to be a military officer but all his

designs could not materialize as he risked his life in Bombay, so he moved to Dubai. The don uses internet and electronic media for collecting information. He is fond of reading spy novels. He believes in the power of youth which can be nourished for future. He compares politicians and criminals :

The difference is that all the criminals do their work on screen, which the public can see. Politicians work behind the scene, which the public can't see. It is the same, whether you work from behind or in front of the screen. Politicians are bigger criminals than us. We fight among ourselves, but these people are ruining the whole world. Today the Shiv Sena have ruined Maharashtra. Good government has been done in the Congress rule.(266)

He reflects about the scams & scandals in which the politicians are involved. He asserts that they do not have a plan for future.

He opines that extremity and religion have their own separate territories and usually do not criss-cross but he does acknowledge that some steps should be taken for safeguarding religion and everyone is to be involved with it at some stage or the other. He believes that "The gangwar will never end. Enemies die, but not the enmity. An enemy dies and another is born"(267). In his view Chotta Rajan split from the D-company not because of the bomb blasts but because he became a traitor.

Underworld has their opinionated minds and networks which operate throughout the country. Mumbai has been the centre of all action in terrorist

activates be it riots, blasts or Taj hotel attack. Their system is working because of politicians and mafia-nexus. Criminal gangs enjoy the patronage of the politicians of various parties and protection from government functionaries. Although, the dons have changed their locations and territories but their terror is still visible in different forms.

Chhota Rajan- Nana company: Chhota Rajan split up with D-company and started his own-Nana Company after the Mumbai bomb blasts. He swore to eliminate all those involved in bomb blasts. The dons control their organizations from outside the country.

The real name of Chhota Rajan is Rajendra Sadashiv Wilkhalje. He was born in 1960 and was named as Chhota Rajan to distinguish him from his mentor Bada Rajan. He was a small time black marketer of cinema tickets. He made his mark by avenging the murder of his mentor. He arranged the killing of several important members of Pathan gangs. He was appointed as the head of gang in Bombay by Dawood Ibrahim, when Chhota Shakeel had to run away to Dubai but Chhota Rajan broke up with D-Company.

The Gang war presents a common phenomenon, as one gangster leagues & joins other gang due to change in policies and practices which culminate into gang wars on one pretext or the other. This reflects the urgent need of the gangs to establish their supremacy in various territories.

Ajay Lal: Ajay Lal, the police officer has the look of an intelligent boxer. His hair is short; he is well dressed and well spoken. His personality is like that of an army

officer. He is happily married and has two kids. Ajay Lal's wife, Rita gave up her career and her dream of studying abroad after their marriage. She is satisfied raising her kids but the pressure of being a wife of policeman is not easy to handle. Ajay is a hard cop who is known for his encounters and gruesome interrogations.

Ajay as a policeman came into service in 1981. He had worked in various areas around the city. His father was a producer who suffered losses in film industry. So, he joined the Police Force. He believes "in the uniform there is power"(168). He doesn't drink and doesn't take bribes. He has a clean reputation. He desires to go abroad to study terrorism. He wishes to see how other democracies fight the internal enemies. He feels there is global network of terrorism which is widespread and which involves Muslims gangs. He foresees "... a global linkage of the Muslim militant organizations- in Afghanistan, in Chechnya with the Muslim criminal gangs in Bombay and in Russia" (170). They want to cripple India via Bombay. Osama Bin Laden is taken as their messiah or a saviour although he was the second richest man in Saudi Arabia.

As a parent, Ajay Lal is concerned and worried about the safety of his children. Security guards are provided for the safety of children when they go to school. The freedom of children is curtailed. Ajay is also not able to spend quality time with his family.

This is the enigma of a common bureaucrat. There is an expectation & the will to conquer but the planning and defences are faulty. There are no adequate safety systems for all those people who risk their lives for the country. Many top

officers and shooters lost their precious lives in the terrorist attacks because of faulty and substandard equipments.

Monalisa–Bar Dancer: She is a Gujarati girl. Her father & brother are diamond cutters. Her real name is Rupa Patel. She has studied till tenth standard in a Gujarati school. They used to stay in a village. The family moved to Bombay in a jopadpatti(slum). Her mother had an affair. The father came to know about it and he divorced his wife. He took along his two children to the village. Later, he remarried and left his children to their mother. Monalisa was deeply attached to her father, but she stayed in Bombay. The mother was busy in her affairs while Monalisa used to do all household work. She was made to leave her school. She watched television and got interested in dance shows. She participated in dance programs and boys were after her. Her mother got her engagement fixed but she called off her marriage and was severely beaten. Her mother was working as a waitress in a beer bar so, she put her in bar dancer's line. She was seventeen years old at that time. She strongly hated her mother.

When the author meets her, he tries to understand the girl, Monalisa as an individual. She has cut marks, and cigarette burns on her hand. Her hand is surgically attached. Presently, she is twenty years old. She is very smart and attractive. She is working at Sapphire, a bar and the author is attracted towards her dancing style, she being the tallest was different from others. She has had her customers from all over India and abroad-America and Dubai. She goes for shopping, discos, pools, drinks etc. She is full of self confidence. She wears a

sacred black thread in her neck which shows her faith in Goddess Meldema of Sundernagar.

She came in contact with many people. Some of them used and exploited her. She had serious relations with Samar and Minesh. Samar is the grandson of a don and he wanted to marry Monalisa but family was against it but Monalisa left him because he was teenager and had no money, still she kept friendly relations with him.

Minesh loves her deeply but she is not willing to marry him. He is not at all good looking and balding. He is thirty two years old and chews tobacco. He is a law graduate and is involved in exports business. He refers to bar line as, “the industry. He and the other regular customers are as much a part of the industry as the bar dancers or owners. ‘All the men who go there are dissatisfied with life or have an inferiority complex’.” (328)

He wants attention from his family which is not provided to him, so he finds a via media where he spends money & girls come up to him. He does not want Monalisa to enter the film industry and modelling since they exhaust people sexually, mentally and physically.

Monalisa lives two lives. One is at the dance bar and the other, when she is some other girl-watching television, going to discos and sleeping all the day. She has her own flat at Juhu. She has adopted another girl, Muskan at the bar who is thirteen years old. She talks in bambaiyya accent. She has the suicidal tendencies which run in the family. The narrator gets her to meet the fashion photographers to

click her pictures to get some modelling assignments. “Monalisa is caught between these two worlds, the one she aspires to but can never be accepted in and the other, which she wishes to leave but which keeps pulling her back”(369). She aspires to win the Miss India crown. She wants to become a fashion designer or open up a boutique but she doesn’t know if she can really do that.

The Sad Story of Manoj/Honey: Honey is a man, Manoj who dances dressed up as a woman. The narrator refers to him as, “Honey is a woman who was born as a man by mistake”(346). He is a Sindhi, born in Bombay and is twenty five years of age. Manoj was drawn into the bar line by Sarita Royce when he performed at a dance party & was well appreciated. Manoj’s mother used to smuggle appliances to Singapore. His father collected receipts from theatres for producers & did not want to depend on his wife. Manoj studied till eighth standard in a school at Khandala. His father did not like his son dressed as a woman but finally he reconciled and was dead soon after. Honey worked in different bars before finally settling for Sapphire, he was sixteen years old at that time. Honey was innovative about dancing. He has performed for celebrities like Stevan Segal & others. He has customers from Africa, Jakarta, Mauritius etc. and even Chhota Shakeel, the don. His relatives created problems for him but he managed them. He has bought flats for family and a shop for his brother.

Honey got into drinks, drugs and marriage. It started with vodka, then corex bottles, which he gulped eight to nine bottles a day. After that, he left Sapphire for another bar as he had a fight with a customer at Sapphire. He was married to a Pune girl, Jyoti. He has been married for four years but doesn’t love her.

He wants to go back to Sapphire as his earnings have dwindled. He has worked for nine years in Sapphire. He used to guise himself as Honey, so there are rashes and bruises on his skin. He has to pluck hair from his face. His wife helps him to dress up as a woman. Manoj keeps two personas of his, separate. Some people think he is a gay or a eunuch but he dresses as Honey because of economic necessity. When he is in bar, he is feminine & when he is with his family, he is masculine. He never blends the two roles, that's the reason that he has managed to hold in the bar. He feels that he has not fallen in love; that helps him to maintain the twin personalities. He believes "Love is the blade that cuts down the ladder towards your goal in life. In this line we have lost our identity. And a sense of your identity is essential to being able to truly love"(360). With the passage of time, Honey is losing the looks. He has put on weight. There are solid lines on his jaw. His skin has become messy with pimples & tweezing of hair and he is taking diet pills to lose the weight. People know his identity and have accepted him.

He goes back to Sapphire. His earnings increase tenfold. He is happy with his customers who take her to be a new bar girl. He is in a happy phase of life as his wife is expecting a baby. He also, has his passport by the name of Honey. He has had gall bladder operation and finding it difficult to dance. Now, he wants to come out of the guise of Honey to establish himself as Manoj. He realises that the industry is changing and he could not match with the newer concepts.

Bar dancing has been banned in Mumbai with effect from 2005. There have been protests by the dancers for their relocation & now they have shifted their bases to new locations.

Sanjay Dutt-A Film Star: Sanjay Dutt is indicted in the court against TADA charges. He has already served in jail for two years. Ajay Lal, one of the cops mentioned earlier interrogated him. Dutt shares his experiences of living in prison. All the film industry turned his back on him. He started taking drugs during his boyhood days. He lost his mother and wife to cancer. He sought treatment to his addiction.

He had extreme fascination for the guns. During Bombay riots, he wanted to protect his family. So, he consulted with the don and arranged for AK-56 rifles. In return for the favour, the don used his garage for the supply of guns, which were used in Bombay blasts. Various conspirators were interrogated and then the name of Sanjay Dutt was raked up. The gangsters tried to destroy the guns & gun powder at his place but some proofs were traced up and he was arrested. He was at the peak of his career when he was jailed. He believes that he was arrested at the behest of Sharad Pawar who was a rival politician to Sunil Dutt, Sanjay's father.

While in prison, he had to eat jail cooked food & was put up in a lonely cell. He became friendly with the beings of nature- birds and ants. Later, he felt acute loneliness & banged his head on the wall. He was given medical treatment & was shifted to a cell with twenty one hard core Sikh militants, who were very protective about him. He studied their lifestyle, met many shooters & how they were picked up. When he was released from the jail, he shared his experiences with the film world who expressed their desire to translate those experiences into movies.

He realized that these terrorists were God fearing people and not all were strong, physically. Sanjay rationalised & changed his lifestyle and lost his body

weight. He believes that these gangsters are honest people. In the courtrooms, the head master approach is generally practiced by the judge.

Presently, Sanjay Dutt has been convicted of illegal possession of arms relating to the 1993 Mumbai blasts case and has been sentenced to five years imprisonment, which he is serving. Dawood Ibrahim's links with Bollywood have never been a secret affair. Police investigations have forced mobsters to keep their activities subtle, otherwise many Bollywood stars openly displayed their mafia connections.

Babbanji-A Poet: Babbanji is a young poet from Bihar who meets Mehta in a writer's salon. He doesn't understand English and writes in Hindi. Mehta helps him to get a job but wherever he goes, his reputation of a Bihari creates a hurdle. Nobody wishes to take him into a job and they make fun of his education which they consider as fake. Biharis are considered as thieves. Babbanji makes a very pertinent remark, when he says as to why Hindi is considered a liability in India whereas, in other countries they promote their national language while in India people are adopting other's language and considering it as their status symbol.

He is not even seventeen years old. His father is a college lecturer in geology in a small Bihari town of Sitamari. He wanted his son to become a scientist. Babbanji had won science competitions at school level. Later, in the college, a girl fell for him and on account of the circumstances, which conspired he decided that he would leave science and will concentrate on writing. He went back home and wrote to his parents that he was leaving home and when he would return he would achieve something. He sat in a train for Bombay and suffered great hardships on his way but finally reached there. In Bombay, he did not eat anything

for three days & then started working with booksellers. He got rupees fifty per day. He used the money judiciously on food and other basic necessities. Whatever was left, he spent on buying books.

He availed public utility service. In the toilets there, is mad rush. There is no privacy when one takes bathe. There are clashes over water. He sleeps in open air and has no attraction for flats & cars. He finds open spaces comfortable for establishing relationships. “On the footpaths you can establish relationships, friendships. The footpath is the friend of the poor” (519.)

He believes that shayris are good for entertainment while poetry deals with truth. In his free times, he roams around the city and imbibes the rich culture, tastes & translates those experiences in poetry.

On the insistence of Mehta, he writes a postcard to his father. His father, a man in forties comes running to him as soon as he receives the letter. The father is impressed by his son’s skill in writing. He wishes that his son should get enroll himself in Ph.D. He wishes to return back taking along Babbanji with him but Babbanji has certain reservations but finally he is convinced. Babbanji feels he would not be able to forget Bombay as it has given food for thought, material for something to write on.

Bihari is a community in India which gets the least respect. Biharis are trapped in a cycle of their own making which is based on low self esteem and respect. This reputation they have earned because of the fake institutions and fake system which have been on roll in the region but now practical and progressive

Bihar has moved away from the shackles of discrimination. Most of the students, the intelligentsia selected in Indian Administrative Services are Biharis.

The Ladhanis-A Jain Family: Suketa Mehta meets the family of Seventibhai Ladhani, the patriarch of the family. The family has five members- the father, mother, a nineteen year old son and seventeen year old twins- a son and a daughter. They are rich diamond merchants with lavish house. They want to renounce the world in order to attain moksha(eternal freedom).

It took years for Seventibhai to reach this decision about his future course of action. He has stopped the use of allopathic medicine, petrol and electricity. He began a course with Chandrashekhar Maharaj about the Jain teachings and started taking his family along. His children were taken out from private schools and given the education in dharma. The children can read Jain scriptures and the languages Sanskrit & Prakrit.

The extended family of Seventbhai was not allowing them to leave but they had to accept it. The man and woman would go their separate ways. The monks have to travel for food gathering. Whatever they gather from different kitchens, they blend it together and eat it cold. They would be walking and observing the five vows - no violence, no untruth, no stealing, no sex, no attachments. They will wear white unstitched piece of cloth. The hair of their heads will be pulled out every six months. They can't bathe also. They can do a light wipe of the skins.

The family is taken out to attain diksha in an elaborate manner. There are drums, beats, people and elephants. The family is scattering rice, gold and silver coins. The guests are being fed for seven days & on the eighth day everyone has

been invited for a great feast. Jains are very strict in their diet plan. They believe in minimum harm to the planet. They don't take onions, garlic or potatoes in the food.

There are two sects in Jainism. One is Sthanakvasi fold which does not believe in worshipping idols. The other is Deravasi sect which is the idol worshipping sect. Ladhanis belong to Deravasi sect. Sevantibhai & his family are given new names. The silk robes which they are wearing are changed & the next morning they embark for a new journey. Sevantibhai has kept an insurance policy for his children if they wish to return back.

After seven months, Mehta again meets Sevantibhai. All the hair on his face head & lips has been pulled out manually in order to make the body strong. He has been reading Jain manuscripts. The boys do not seem to be very happy. The games of the children are of different nature like labelling the books, washing clothes once a week etc. Sevantibhai doesn't miss Bombay and he acknowledges that. The writer finds the life of Ladhanis rigid. They are against modernism, western education, consumerism etc. but still they are enjoying the freedom to live, the life of mind while others are busy in promoting their own selfish interests. Sevantibhai is free of all tensions of life; he has attained his win over death.

Ladhanis have chosen a very difficult life to live being a part of metropolitan society. It is hard to lead a nomadic life devoid of luxuries. The path to renunciation is fraught with problems but their effort is commendable. Whether they are successful or not is altogether a different story.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Suketu Mehta has exhibited an enthralling and riveting tale of an exhilarating city called Mumbai. One envisions a spectacular Mumbai which is powerful, impressive, intimate, subtle and heartbreaking inclusive of rendition of the moving and vibrant portraits.

William Dalrymple praises the book, as he relates to Soumya Bhattacharya:

Maximum city is the remarkable debut of a major new Indian writer. Humane and moving, sympathetic but outspoken, it's a shocking and sometimes heartbreaking book, teeming with extraordinary stories. It is unquestionable one of the most memorable non-fiction books to come out of India for many years and there is little question that it will become the classic study of Bombay.(n. pag.)

Each section of the book unfolds before us a picture of a world which is crushing and tottering out due to the extraordinary weight of sham culture & politics of a few who have the will to lead, to dominate through legal or illegal methods. Polemics of multiple cultures and ethnic strains are markedly visible in the modern society. One tries to adjust and cope with the struggles and dreams but complexities usher back as monsters ready to gulp down the victims who cannot escape or find recourse to their problems. They have to make compromises and undermine desires which lead to identity crisis. They have no option left as

political leaders, police, bureaucrats, technocrats, gangsters all like leeches are ready to squeeze and suck their blood.

India has a multiparty system, where there are a number of national and regional parties. The formation of coalition governments in state or centre reflects the transition in Indian politics towards smaller and narrower parties. The victory of Shiv Sena in the elections is a testimony to that but the leaders and party members are looking for their own profits, no one cares about national concerns. In politics, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by flouting and subverting formal processes.

There is a lack of homogeneity in the Indian population which is the cause of differentiation amongst people which is based on religion, region, language, caste and race. This has led to the rise of political parties with agendas catering to one or a mix of the group. If one religion is appeased by a party, the rival party will support other religion. In all circumstances, it is the masses who suffer.

Politics-Underworld nexus and Bollywood-Underworld relations have virtually become a reality where each one of them is dependent on the other for the fulfilment of its needs. Politicians hold their dominance on account of the gangsters while gangsters procure money out of leaders. Bollywood movies are funded by dons while the artists are secured from any kind of threats. Their interdependence is quite apparent.

People living in slums become an easy prey for they serve as the baits to be used by the influential. They are sitting on the two edged sword where they are the attackers and they are the victims.

Bar dancing was a profession for many girls with help of which they supported their families. With the ban on the bars, it is a great task for the government to rehabilitate these girls. Meanwhile, the girls have found other sources for earning and leading their lives as it comes.

The problems of living in a metro city are varied and manifold. Water problem, sewerage system, power supply, gas connection, slums, the poor construction material of flats, temporary roads-to name a few have reached alarming levels. One has to stand in long queues and wait to fulfil these necessities or bribe somebody to get the work done. The rich are getting richer while poor are still staggering. The gap is huge and pervading. Elite have their own ways. They can squander away their wealth whenever they like and also have the resources to get it back. Like the Ladhanis offer renunciation to attain equanimity with God. They already have insurances on the name of family members. It doesn't matter whether they would be successful in their efforts or not but they have nothing to lose if they return lack.

The novelist has used the Bumbaiyaa or local dialect to relate with the city life and it adds to the sense of identity with local people.

The writer misses his world and realises the true culture of Bombay but he also understands the fact that home is where the family is. It is not necessary that

the roots where one is born, be an idealized environment. The dream world of Bombay is not as vivacious as it used to be. The western culture has fractured its roots whereby new tendencies and ideologies are trying to fill in those gaps. The golden dreams are not so golden, it can become nightmarish also. The study of the dream world of Mumbai and issues related with it lead us to the concluding chapter of the study.

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CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION: A VISION FOR REFORMATION

Indian authors have established and carved their niches in the minds of Indian and Western readers. They have a very unique style of writing characterized by satirical comments, fluidity of language and a melancholy touch. The changes from socialism to individualism, spiritualism to materialism reflect a transformation from tradition to modernity. Indian fiction from its beginning has witnessed socio-cultural, economic and political changes from colonial to post colonial era. The novelists shifted their stance from public to private sphere, dealing with pangs of anxiety, alienation, detachment, involvement, guilt, restlessness, loss of faith and values, curse of industrialization and materialism, growing hostility among people which all have been explored. The writers, honestly and systematically reflected the revolutionary changes in human outlook, personality and lifestyle. They envisaged the coming of new system, new social order with extraordinary possibilities. Thus, the writers started exploring a plethora of writing styles and themes. Some of the writers settled abroad and divided their time between India and abroad have contributed immensely to the rapidly developing genre.

Two of the writers under this study Suketu Mehta and Vikram Chandra are settled abroad while Chetan Bhagat has the first hand experience of living and working outside India but he seems comfortable enough to resettle in India and has established himself as a prominent writer.

The second chapter of the study which deals with Chetan Bhagat relates that he has inaugurated a new era of English fiction which exposes the life of young technocrats working with multi-national companies, enjoying the culture of malls and multiplexes in metro cities. In his first novel *Five Point Someone*, he questions the Indian education system, its value, importance and relevance. It fails to provide opportunities for all round development of human personality. Bhagat, being an insider both at physical and mental level, exposes the experiences where the expression of independent knowledge is not given due importance even in an IIT institution. These institutions despite being seats of learning are not conducive towards establishing security and happiness in the minds of youngsters. The negative tendencies of depression, suicide, immorality, ragging all reflect the sickness in education system.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted an education system which followed the age old cultural values of the country. After Independence, Gandhian legacy was not followed properly by those in power. They used his name for promoting their own political will but his ideas were generally ignored. The people who were in power were so charmed by the western education and ideals that they did not change the colonial pattern of education. Anything that was rooted in Indian culture was snapped by the politicians from the education system. All moral and cultural links associated with secular outlook were trashed down.

In the novel *One Night at the Call Centre*, Bhagat shifts his stance from IIT campus to professional call centers. He tries to reconstruct the working conditions of workers who are forced to survive in the oppressive work culture. It conveys the

depressing consciousness of each character. The message is clear, that life is full of challenges and one must face it with inherent faith in God and humanity. The transfer of materialism can be steered clear only through spiritual realization. The narrative moves through two spheres private and professional. Both these worlds collide and fragment without any trace of synthesis.

The power structure determined by money has radically changed the world order. Life is being governed and guided by consumer choice. There is an American domination of economic power which is affecting the sensibility of those who are working in the call centers. Rignald Bibby in his work *Fragmented God* argues that “religion has a neatly packaged consumer item taking its places among other commodities that can be bought or bypassed according to one’s consumption whim” (32).

There is exhaustion and disgust with the filth of the corporate sector, Vroom in the text convinces by saying, “Our government does not realize this, but Americans are using us. We are sacrificing an entire generation and servicing their call centers”(199). There is criticism of the psyche of politicians who remain indifferent to the sentiments of public. The government needs to follow the working of the call centres and other private enterprises, rather than ignoring the hard realities, the western countries extolling and exploiting the less developed or developing countries.

The mall culture is fully exhibited in the novel. The protagonists are observed roaming around and spending time in malls enjoying, rejoicing, dining and shopping. They have acute modern fashion sense and tastes, visit discs, hookah

bars, smoke, drink but are also bogged down by work pressure and demanding lifestyle. They represent western traits but somehow down the line, their attitude and thinking is traditional. They still cherish their family values, customs and ideals, irrespective of their status in the society. The divisions between Bharat and India are not yet marked clearly and their positions are highly vague and rudimentary as there is continuous exchange between the two.

Bhagat deals with the psychology and life of weaker sections in the novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*. There is passion for business and cricket which gradually mingles with religion as is depicted in the relations of three friends. The three friends take the role of a mentor of a Muslim boy. The boy improves under the training but one's consciousness is gripped in community prejudices. There are no reconciliatory mechanisms in Hindu – Muslim rivalry for which the boys have to pay the price.

The novel explores the problems of unemployment, frustration, religious frenzy, poverty which can only be tackled with persistent and planned efforts. The religious saints and politicians are actually promoting the politics of discrimination and corruption. He advises the weaker sections to come out of vote bank politics or sham religious culture which are spreading communal hatred, prejudice and divisions.

The fourth novel *2 States : The Story of My Marriage* shifts the focus to the issues of family, marriage and personal relationship. The two states denote the two dimensions of the personalities of the main characters, Krish and Ananya, their personal selves and the social prejudices existing in the minds of the parents of

both communities. In the novel, Bhagat explores the possibilities of new modes of feminine consciousness. He provides his women their identity and voice and liberty to express their own choices. She dresses in her own way, is intelligent, drinks, relishes non-vegetarian food, open to sex, even though she belongs to a Tamil Brahmin family. Ananya maintains a rare balance while Krish is not able to control his passion.

The exposure to multi-national companies has opened the route to multi-racial marriage but then, they destroy the traditional structures or there is a tussle between the old and new. The scene shifts from one region to another finally reaching conciliation. The marriage takes place with the blessings of the elders.

Besides the main theme, Bhagat also tackles the issues of work culture in the multi-national companies. The money politics is practiced here also. The manager tries to grab the clients and their accounts by providing inaccurate information about particular schemes. If the schemes flopped out the blame rests on the fresher's. Ananya's father, who is not so fluent in the use of technology, finds it hard to compete with the youngsters and yet again the dirty politics, within the organization overruling the rules and his promotion is ignored. The fragmented world of phobias, nervous back down, frustration, materialistic pursuits all have been convincingly portrayed. Bhagat constructs the image of dynamic, intellectual and confident women who has the distinctive traits of femininity, modern bent of mind and the ideals of Indian womanhood.

In this new millennium, information technology and globalization have changed the established patterns of behaviour and modified the structures of

professional life, personal life, values of morality, economic structure and the commitments of life conditions. New challenges and ideals have paved the way for the new arenas to reconstruct the human experiences in the new world order. The novelist has tried to focus on these ideals which are prevalent in metros.

Bhagat ridicules the politicians for manipulating the sentiments of common man. The common man, the representative of Bharat is bogged down by poverty, unemployment. In an effort to sanskritise or modernise himself, he becomes a pawn in the corrupt system and becomes a part of it. The system where the rulers are few and the poor are many. The reformation is possible only with the reformation of economic structure.

Although, humorous and autobiographical in his depiction, Bhagat appeals to young readers about various social ills and incongruities that disturb the foundation of the society. He stresses on the need of education for the upliftment of the masses. His argumentation and presentation appear sketchy and unrealistic in some episodes but on the whole he has attained a cult position in India because of his best seller novels.

Vikram Chandra has presented a spectacular Bombay which is powerful and witness to the daring terrorist attacks. It represents an endlessly remarkable and striking possibility of human encounter. In the third chapter, Bombay or Mumbai emerges as a city shot through violence, outraged with distinctions of religion, ethnicity and class and which is haunted by love and desire to which there is no recourse.

In *Love and Longing in Bombay* one gets an insight into various types of cultures and society existing in India. The reader discovers rich women at the very top of the society and also sees into the life of a servant, who belongs to the opposite scale of society. The author conjures up a hybrid discourse of India with glittering Mumbai - sophisticated people, exclusive class, arty parties and on the other side, there are gritty policemen, love angles, the struggles of common man and gay relationships.

Mumbai is a city that evokes many images. The ghost story reflects the unfulfilled desires of an army man who has literally forgotten to live and enjoy his life. His cherished dreams and reality, erupts itself in the form of a phantom. Elite class is fighting amongst themselves to savior their prestige and reputation but it is not that possession of wealth means an escape from worries or stresses in their lives. They have their own series of complexities inching towards them while the working class is working hard and bearing with their own sort of struggles to face the competitive world. Both the elite and weaker sections are struggling, chasing their own dreams, the disparities which rule their world merge together to create the glittering metropolitan world of twenty first century. Present generation man has been imitating western lifestyle of living and adopting their vision of comfort. The society has become little liberal, more prone to sexual indulgences and loosening of morals is exhibited. The martial relations have become stressed and man feels at a loss, in lacunae to which there is no ending. Gay relations, extra-marital relationships, incestuous relations, sex crimes have become prevalent. The established system has rotten out. The so called reputed, elite intelligentsia is

groping into darkness and the poor people are following their footsteps. The whole system is bounded by chain of corruption but despite all that, it has enriched the society with more elaborative gender roles, freedom to live in one's own way, acceptance of different cultural traditions by people and more liberal interactions within communities. Still, one can find the caste-class distinctions, rejection of inter-caste marriages, communal hatred etc. It points to the glaring fact that the society is trying to acclimatize with the new values but the traditional element cannot be rooted out.

Sacred Games is a thriller related with crime and detective story. The confrontation between Sartaj Singh and Ganesh Gaitonde forms the crux of the whole novel. Vikram Chandra declares at one place that he wanted to get a sense of the place as people lived in it, in the turn of the century. So, he has tried to keep his characters close to reality like Sartaj Singh sitting around in a traffic jam which is quite a common site in the metro cities. One experiences various points of view and variety of ways of looking at it and it catches something along the way, the lives of the people who reside and live in Bombay. It has interweaving narratives and voices which reflect the role of money and corruption in the society. The city of Bombay, itself becomes a character in the book.

Chandra has incorporated stunning images of a world which is sitting on the edge of catastrophe. Gaitonde, a Hindu don is drawn into the unholy world of local politicians and communal tensions. Gaitonde's origins are painful and explain why and how, the dreadful injustices of small town life shaped him to be a monster that he has become. His wealth increases and he becomes attracted to the world of

Bollywood and glitz. He is a failure in relationships. His family, friends- all leave him one by one, taken away by cruel jaws of death. He finds solace only in his true friend, Jojo which is beyond any physical attraction. He falls prey to gurus and Machiavellian governments who use him to meet their own purposes. He understands the horror which is about to explode and wants Jojo and himself out to survive the ordeal but something else is destined, which leads to conclusive ending.

Sartaj Singh is disturbed by his stressful life. He has undergone divorce and wants a direction in life, which is provided by Mary. He helps reveal the mystery of nuclear bomb while Gaitonde, Parulkar move out of the picture. The partition saga is enlivened before us, the escapades which the people have to face while shifting their places. It is deeply emotional and touching and provides a glimpse of the changing times.

Thus, one needs to keep pace with the changing norms in the society, in order to be part of the modern world. One who does not strive or make efforts for continuous growth or development lags behind or is disillusioned. The part played by Babbanji is an adequate example of simple living, who tries to catch up with the fast paced world but his struggles are never ending.

The fourth chapter which relates Suketu Mehta's ambitious project *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* presents the divergent facets of the city life that are interlinked – the dreams and misery, violence and corruption, the filth of the underworld and the glitz of Bollywood. It is a narrative non-fiction work which fuels the imagination of the readers.

It starts as a personal journey which is a learning exercise. Bombay is a city enmeshed in communal violence, gang activity and police brutality. Mehta becomes a part of the lives of gang members, police officers and members of extremist political parties establishing a relationship with them. Mehta meets people who are drawn to extremities. Ajay Lal, Satish and Sunil live on the extremes of violence, Monalisa and Vidhu Vinod Chopra thrive on the extreme of spectacle, Honey is on the extreme of the gender; the Jains go beyond the extreme of abandonment. The people live out the fantasies of normal people and their work affects all other spheres of their lives. They can never leave the work at the bar, or the police station or the political party office. His interactions with many of the protagonists of the Bombay bombings and resultant riots are horrifying. He meets the malevolent Hindu extremist party Chief Bal Thackeray which gives a revealing insight into the corrupt underbelly of the city. The meeting with Chotta Shakeel, Mumbai mafia don and a close associate of Dawood Ibrahim is a shocker. The gangster is believed to be behind terrorist attacks in Mumbai. He becomes very close to a Mumbai bar girl Monalisa. It points towards the access he had to each of his subjects. The story of teenaged, street dwelling poet, Babbanji is heart evolving and touching.

The survival of Indian nation depends on Indian culture abided by values. Indians are slumbering down in a state of mental enslavement. Leadership is circumscribed by caste, region and religion prejudices. In the vote based politics, there is little scope for strong role models and national credentials. This has led to the growing anger and discontent against those who are controlling and governing

the political, economic and geographical situations, as this brings about a weak system at the centre. There is a remarkable difference in the attitudes and relations among city people and rural folk. The pace of agricultural revolution does not match with the pace of cyber revolution and hence the migration takes place. The resources promoted in India need to contribute to the growth and sensibility of common man. The cancerous growth of corruption in politics, police and other arenas contains the seeds of the destruction of the society. The rights of minorities, weaker sections and lower castes need to be protected. There is lack of the responsibility of the government towards the growing corruption.

All said and written, Mehta's vision in dealing with India's image is of someone who is settled abroad. He suffers from the elite symptom and only reflects the dark side of the picture. No doubt, the life of a poor man is a continuous struggle in the metropolitan area but all is not wrong. The positive impact of globalization can be witnessed. The poor people are trying to adopt new ways and raising their standards. There is shift in the status of women as they are working in the political, business and social areas. There are changes in the familial relationships, particularly among males in terms of the right of the wife to work outside and there is sharing of household work by both partners.

Neglected and poor members of the society like Monalisa and Honey are earning for their survival. Jain family have their own culture to follow. Police, politics and mafia the nexus exists to demean the common people who are exploited. The problems in the cities are en-massing as the population is increasing but then the structure of Indian society is undergoing a metamorphoses due to

westernization, industrialization and politicization and the society is quickly gearing up to emulate and adopt those changes.

Thus, the impact of globalization and new culture is far reaching. It has taken a leap into the world of common man who is also sensitized by the spectacular phenomena happening in the world, in the cities. These people crave for new streams or channels opening in front of them. Some of the channels are legalized and follow the norms of the society while the others are illegal methods which provide them an easy access to money. They need to follow their inner voice to identify the right ways and means.

The metropolitan world has provided stiff competition to the traditional market. Now, one has access to quality product and that too at low prices. People lobby themselves for big brands available at one place which has blown the shutters down for small indigenous markets. It also holds out promise of improved productivity and higher living standards as many Indian companies are going multinational. It has thrown up new challenges like growing inequality across and within nations, volatility in financial market and environmental deterioration.

It has increased the recognition of human rights. The unprecedented mobility and interaction of people from different countries have dented local cultures of people the world over. Transnational work force and large scale immigrants are dispersing different cultures in various countries leading to a unified world culture which is a mixture of various regional cultures. As a result, people are coming closer to sharing similar values, aspirations, attitudes and

lifestyles. Local culture, spiritual practices and core social values are getting replaced and a new meaning, a new sense is being given to human life.

Earlier, well defined religious practices were blindly followed but now the spirit of reasoning has weakened the established practice. Moreover, interpretation of different cultures has inter-mixed the religious practices. Like Diwali, Holi festivals are observed by non-Hindus as well.

Women have challenged the male domination in all spheres. Males were supposed to be the bread earners but today women are working in all spheres of Indian economy. Western culture has given new meaning to the life of Indian youth. They want to lead an independent life with both the partners working, the dynamics of the Indian family system is also changing.

Many changes are visible in the contemporary society as the world's culture is shrinking and expanding at the same time due to pervasive technological advances that allow for instantaneous sharing of culture but critics are afraid that the growth of global village will enhance conflicts and fragmentation between cultures and lead to cultural domination by more developed or superior countries. Westernization is not necessarily an imposition of culture but an opportunity for less developed country like India to incorporate their culture with the western culture. Globalization is the process of natural evolution and progression of how people interact and profit from advanced capabilities to communicate. The vision created is of the multicultural village where ideas and practices can be freely exchanged and appreciated. The cultural exchanges are for the betterment of the

society or an individual not for promoting cultural monopoly. The need to accommodate the positive trends has to be practiced.

The fictional discourse was earlier understood to be governed by the singular perspective of a dominating character. All the fictional details exhibited a unified world view presented in the work of art. All other voices were subordinated as the character assumed to carry the ideas of the writers. The major function of this kind of writing is to expose and criticize the subjugation of man by man in any form. Then, the writers concentrated on the decolonization of the social groups oppressed in the name of class, caste, gender and race. This kind of fiction is purposive and political as it involves giving voice to plurality, multiplicity and heterogeneity in life. Similarly, various characters under study represent multiple voices and mass appeal. The complications faced by different characters in the metro cities are perplexing and tiring and reflect multiple problems. The problems faced by people, be it elite or low class are all the same but the difference essentially lies in the ways of tackling the situation. An individual who finds himself isolated has to work to strike a balance between modernity and tradition. It is just the difference in the approach, mind sets, power system and money value which has created the divisions. The gap can be bridged by following the secular, socialist approach, where divisions of religion, caste-class regulations and poverty alleviation procedures can be followed; and equal opportunities to the poor and weaker sections can be provided or we can say the ideal Ram Rajya can be created. As R. Balashankar narrates what Dr. Veerappa Moily, former Law and Justice Minister reflects in his book *Shri Ramayana Mahanveshanam* about Ram Rajya :

At the heart of epic there are three distinct cultures; the Lankan culture of acquisition, pleasure and power, the Ayodhya culture of artistic and academic progress and the culture of Kiskindha... mostly tribal and backward in terms of development in the modern sense. Initially, there is a friction between the three cultures. However, when they become allies of Rama, and fuse into one great culture- the culture of Ram Rajya. (n.pag.)

Literature has always been suggestive and evocative. It aims at awakening the dormant spirit of people, irrespective of form and style. The common man's expectation of Thomas More's *Utopia* in post-independence India has ended up in smoke when politicians, bureaucrats, anti-social elements and cultural propagandists indulged in malpractices. The greatest danger to the unity comes from those ideologies which seek to divide the people. Indian population need to have access, to quality education to channelize their minds in the right direction. They need to foster a culture, not religious or political context for a future for peace and prosperity. It should not be destroyed in futile exercises of political one-upmanship. This attitude will lead to minimizing the rural-urban divide and also bring about a renaissance of the nation. The metro culture has brought about astonishing changes in the lifestyle and culture of people as is glorified in the texts. The key is to adapt the favourable ones and work on it. A strong India or Bharat lies in the hands of people who believe in the service of the nation as the service of the self, where the identities of Bharat and India are merged into one.

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