Review of literature:

Gayatri chakravorty Spivak writes in her article "Can, the Subaltern speak?" "Between patriarchy and imperialism subject constitution and object formation the figure of woman disappears not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'Third - World Woman' caught between tradition and modernization."(p-80) Simone De Beauvoir has very precisely exposed the condition of woman in her most famous book 'The Second Sex'. Of course, the miserable condition of woman all over the world inspired the women of talent like Virginia Woolf to do something in this field and the result was the emergence of Feminism, a great movement in the western world in 1960. It is a movement for the emancipation of women and their fight for equal rights. The condition of woman is equally miserable in Indian society. The Indian society is basically patriarchal where a woman is given the secondary role.

The modern woman does not find any sense in such self-sacrifice and yearns for self-expression, individuality and self-identity. She is trying to free herself of the dependence syndrome as says Chaman Nahal— "I define Feminism as a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome, where it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religions group, ethnic group when women free themselves of the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes."(p-30) .Simone de Beauvoir expresses his own views on man - woman nexus --- man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria without reciprocity." (Seldom; 1988 : 534) A woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she has always been assigned a subordinate and relative position. "Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees ---. She appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex.... absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to man and not he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential.

Indian woman writers have described the place of women in the society in their works. These woman novelists have described the women’s problems, sufferings, marital conflicts and
human psyche in the life of female characters. According to K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, “Women are natural story-tellers even when they don’t write or publish.” As we see, we have three phases of woman writers group – i.e. the early phase woman writers who interested to make their writings instructive, sentimental and even romantic; the second phase who showed more elegance and felicity, and emphasized the problems of the female society i.e. love and sex, separation and alienation, external and internal crisis.; and the present era woman writers who focused their literary vision that concerned with inner feeling of an individual rather than with outer atmosphere. Such group woman writers are Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahagel, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Bharati Mukharji, Arundhanti Roy, Anita Desai, Shobha De and Manju Kapur.

Starry nights` by Shobha De portrays the story of Aasha Rani and Akshay that is based on a real life love story of two pairs of celluloid stars. It was a best seller in India after which Shobha De became the house name for a special class of people. The central character in starry nights is Aasha rani. She is dark sweet girl from Chennai. She is trying hard to become a film star. Her amma instigated her to be in the film world by hook or by crook. When she was fifteen years she has to sleep with Kishenbhai, one film producer to get the chance in film. He sponsored one film for her and also helped her to get the appropriate persons to get the roles. In the process Kishenbhai falls in love with Aasha Rani but it was too late as she already gets engaged with Akshay Arora who was a famous bollywood star rather sex symbol. Aasha Rani sent her amma back to Chennai when one day she tries to stop Akshay to bit Aasha. In later days Akshay gets bored with Aasha and as he was married returns back to his wife. The worst part is the actor reveals in one of the leading magazine that Aasha is a pornographic actress and he doesn`t want to do any role with her. Eventually she gets attached to Sheth Amirchand, a Member of Parliament and starts working under his control. After some days she goes to Chennai to do an art film. But her love for Akshay is still there so she tries to rekindle it. But gets frustrated after knowing that his love for her is only because of her stardom. She attempts suicide but failed to do so. In the process she marries a New Zealander named Jay and has a child with him. Eventually Akshay gets AIDS because of his lifestyle. Aasha returned to New Zealand and finally after many incidents decides to come back to India and make Sasha, Aasha Rani`s daughter a prospering film star.
I must admit I started reading Shobha De’s Spouse-the truth about marriage more out of curiosity than out of any literary interest. Curiosity because by no stretch of imagination could I relate Shobha De and a serious essay on marriage. I was certain that at best she must have made certain flippant remarks on the futility of marriage considering the fact that she has made a mockery of the institution in most of her previous novels. But I was pleasantly surprised. She had me hooked from Page one. Her command over the English language has always been impeccable. But in Spouse she has surpassed herself. The language used is simple yet strong. You hardly have to reach out for the dictionary to look up difficult words, so you can concentrate fully on the book and read on uninterrupted. No excess use of flowery terms either.

Shobha De’s journey from a model, film journalist, column writer to fiction writer is very thrilling and interesting. It is necessary to see how the persona of Shobha De developed step by step. Any great person’s character – building is assessed from the roots. Yet, Ms. De’s biography is not written by any writer. But we have more authentic life-story narrated by Ms De herself in her autobiography(?): Selective Memory –Stories From My Life. It is a matter of dispute whether Selective Memory is an autobiography or not because the very title of the book suggests that there are only selective memories from her life. She has omitted some memories, which she does not wish to share with the readers and critics. But after reading Selective Memory, one gets sufficient stuff from the book to know the real self of Shobha De. Here, the efforts are not to evaluate the book. The intention is only to present the important aspects of a versatile personality of Shobha De. One can divide her saga into five sections: Shobha De as a model, as a film journalist and columnist, as an editor of magazines, as an intellectual prose writer and as a novelist. Taking into account the complexity of life, different histories, cultures and different structures of values, the Woman’s Question, despite basic solidarity, needs to be tackled in relation to the socio-cultural situation. The impact of patriarchy on the Indian society varies from the one in the West and therefore, the Indian women novelists have tried to evolve their own stream of feminism grounded in reality. A group of Indian women novelists in their inbetweeness, hybridity of thought and multicultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious social dimensions have contextualized the women problems in general and middle-class and upper class women in particular. While the gynocritics think that too many women in too many countries speak the same language of silence, some Indian women novelists.

**Critical Analysis of the Selected Novels of Shobha De:**
Shobha De is an eminent Indian novelist, who is often known as India's Jackie Collins. She was born as Shobha Rajadhyaksha to the Saraswat Brahmin family of Maharashtra on the January 7, 1947. She completed her graduation from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai and obtained degree in Psychology. In this article, we will present you with the biography of Shobha De, a well known Indian writer.

Shobha De analyses the causes of failure of man-woman relationship among upper classes in cosmopolitan cities. She redefines man-woman relationship in which mutual fidelity and understanding is replaced by sexual freedom. In their relationship, marriage can be terminated at any time depending upon the whims of the partners. Marriage is not regarded essential in the fictional word of Shobha De. In *Starry Nights* Deb says: “who knows about marriage sharriage, I am happy as I am.” (27) Deb agrees to marry Nisha simply for the consideration of ‘daal-roti, a warm bed, twice a week maalish and daily a screw” (159-60). But he never marries Nisha even having a prolonged affair with her. There is also reference in the novel to a "typical Bombay marriage” in which “she goes her way and he goes his.” Such marriage does not last long.

In *Socialite Evenings*, Anjali has an illicit love-affairs, Anjali declares “this is the most beautiful thing to have happened to me. This is the experience I have been waiting for.” (96) The narrator’s sister, Karuna also commits adultery to revenge herself on her husband. All the women characters in *Socialite Evenings* are dissatisfied and bored women preoccupied with orgy of sex or orgasm. In the marriages described by De, the traditional concepts of material fidelity and responsibility are given a quick burial. But it is not difficult to understand why such marriage of convenience with nonsense of fidelity or responsibility are doomed to fail as Shobha De confided, “what I writ is not necessarily what I believe in” (*Selected Memory*).

All people need sex, for Shobha De it is something special, something beautiful, something shared. To her there is nothing derogatory or clandestine in sex. In fact, sex is “ a bedrock of all the relationships.” Her women discuss and practice sex with unusual candour. Rita in *Starry Nights* is very pragmatic in her approach. To Rita romance in marriage work – “shut your eyes and part your legs whether you feel like it or not. Because, if you don’t some other women will.” De’s views on marriage and sex are a big blow to the age-old institution of marriage and patriarchy.
The novel, *Starry Nights* describes almost every kind of sexual relationship. Lesbianism is one of them and it is suggested that in many ways it is superior to hetero-sexual contact. Asha Rani’s friend, Linda pulls her down on the bed and kisses on the lips then Linda says, “This is love. Understand. This is love-making what those bastards do to our bodies” (79). The word, bastard is here used for men’ Indian men in Shobha De’s novel have been painted in the murkiest colours. Her view is that “Indian men make the world’s lousiest lovers and that they are high on ego, low on performance.” (Singh and De, Uncertain Liaisons, IV-XXV) Men’s behaviour is not different from those of animals. Malini is *Starry Nights* opines that “men are all the same animals and we women such fools.” (50)

De abhors the fact that men treat woman as an object in man-woman relationship. In *Socialite Evenings*, Abey presents Anjali artificial battery-operated male sexual organs and thinks that this will satisfy her all sexual requirements. De thinks that men could not provide the real sexual pleasures to women, only a woman can do so and thus she obliquely substitute to lesbianism. But no where she has hinted that lesbianism could be a substitute to hetero-sexual relationship.

It is not surprising that these men are insensitive to women’s individually, sensitivity and feelings in man-woman relationship. They can only aggravate women’s problems in their own ways. Marriages with their ilk are bound to be doomed. Karuna is *Socialite Evenings*, comes to realize that she had “marriage the wrong man for the wrong reasons at the wrong time.” And that her husband was just an average Indian husband “unexciting, uninspiring, untutored” and “not made for introspection.” Karuna sums up an average Indian woman’s marital life as “an exhausted generation of wives with no dreams left.” Marriage to whom is “like a skin allergy, an irritant all right.” (65) The story in all of De’s novels is the same.

In the eyes of Shobha De in the socialite class every woman is sick and imbalanced. What she strives to say is that a woman can not live a normal and a happy life in this male dominated society. All the woman characters are sick and unhappy. Swati I divorced. Allak is mentally derailed. Anjali turns to religion because of the double standard the male has adapted to the females. And finally Karuna and Ritu are also unhappy despite their best efforts to accommodate themselves with their male counterparts. It appears that Shobha De has revised her voice against this kind of victimization and objectification and regimentation of women. And the
day is not far when woman would realize their miserable plight and would prefer to live a life like that of Karuna.

Given an open defiance of women, the men in Shobha De’s works are usually submissive and timid from the relationship between man and woman. Their positions are usually marginalized and it is hardly any male who dominates the proceedings for a long time. It is true that Rover in *Strange Obsession* and Binny in *Sister* fascinate and overpower Amrita and Mikki respectively for a while but it is never too late before the assertive women of Shobha De bounce back triumphantly. Moreover, the author herself deprives the males from playing a significant part in her novel. Consequently we see the men whose authority has been defied and deflated by the women in Shobha De’s novels. The males in her novels are either lovable or ineffectual like Rakesh whom Amrita loves and marries but goes out so save him from the clutches of Minx rather than his saving her, or thee disgustingly hollow and hypocritical like Binny Malhotra, Rover and Ram Kaka. These however are certain levelheaded males like, Sahany in *Sister* and Karan in *Strange Obsession* who is virtuous but fail to control reality at any stage of the novel.

**Critical Analysis of the Selected Novels of Nayantara Sahgal:**

*Storm in Chandigarh*, the emotional display of man-woman relationship, gets to be a global media in pursuit of human principles on behalf of man-woman relationship. The storm is worthy representation of deeper crossroad in the lives of men and women. In fact, there is woefully lack of loving kindness in their relationships, even in their marriage. Accordingly, for this public and private lives are blameworthy.

Sahgal encounters enthralling story of broken hearts. It goes without saying it is about the broken relationships of Inder and Leela, Inder and Saroj, Vishal and Leela, Nikhil and Gauri, Vishal and Gauri, and Jit and Mara. Some of them comprehend the seriousness of situation by taking thoroughly review of their relationship and retain their mental peace and comfort in their lives.

As a matter of fact, Sahgal puts on view storm is the cult of violence that is in the form of male dominance in society. In reality marriage is the sacred and sweet union of hearts but which is translated into the dreadful torture of delicate and sensitive heart by misunderstanding and ill feelings. Moreover, the most possible answer to them is love.
*The Day in Shadow*, the graphical representation of man-woman relationship, puts on display entirely personal, extremely emotional, relentless economic pressure and political strains on various characters. The wonderful merit of this novel lies in its central vision of man-woman relationship and domestic life that brings out mounting crisis in heart. Sahgal commendably glances man-woman relationship between Som and Simrit, Simrit and her son Brij, Raj and Simrit’s children, and Sumer Singh and Pixie.

This paperback puts in black and white largely autobiographical references. It is based on Sahgal’s first hand experience. It delineates the depressing picture of a divorcee in Indian society. It brings up a sentimental account of the painful experiences of a woman, when she is caught into an emotional and physical bondage of marriage due to excessive man-woman relationship between husband and wife. Sahgal glances to the root causes of divorce, which is caused by patriarchal society and gender discrimination against social background.

*Rich Like Us* is the fine exposure of corrupted mentally of politicians, their selfish desires at the cost of nation’s democratic ideology and worthy principles. As a result, we lay our finger on man-woman relationship in this narrative, where the readers meet up with the wave of artificial silence. In this grand narrative, we come across man-woman relationship among various characters due to their abiding faith in freedom. Some characters are deprived from the freedom; they expose their emotional anxiety, hidden fear and widespread insurgency, where politics brings some compulsions on their personal lives on the huge screen of vast human mind. This is the major cause to create vicious hate in the mind.

Sahgal places in our hands man-woman relationship through the narrative consciousness of Sonali. She presents man-woman relationship between Sonali and Ravi, Ram and Mona, Ram and Rose, Mona and Rose, Ram and Marcella, and Dev and Rose. Actually, love-hate relationship proposes human being towards the doors of shameless compromise with the vigilant consciousness and severe compulsion. It brings the powerful weapons of the thwarted ambition, turbulent passion and changing aspirations.

Sonali, the true embodiment of man-woman relationship, is the centre of the novel. Her life is the spontaneous reflection of single-handed struggle, which matures her long-term vision and active attitude. She struggles with her inner self and her noble ideas. Therefore, she faces multifarious problems, mental traumas, poignant anguish and frustration due to intense hate from tyrannical politicians, insensitive bureaucrats and even corrupted atmosphere.
*Mistaken Identity* is a faithful commentary on man-woman relationship. However, the painful rejection, ultimate betrayal and cruel reversal are the acid tests of this relationship. It is an eloquent expression of pleasant and unpleasant moments. It leads human being to a great purposive activity, without which life would remain incomplete.

The storyline provides several characters in search of identity and social conventions that are at crossroads. They face many multifarious problems, emotional conflicts, mantling frustration and inner stress in their lives through man-woman relationship. That offers the way to their real identities.

Sahgal presents man-woman relationship between Bhushan and Razia, Bhushan and Willie-May, Bhushan and Sylla, Bhushan and Nauzer, Bhushan and Yusuf’s daughter, Bhushan and his father, Bhushan’s father and mother, and followers of Gandhi and comrades. However, man-woman relationship gives birth to the ultimate union of the opposing forces. There is a union of different religions, social backgrounds and political ideologies.

**Brief Review of Critical Opinions on Shobha De and Nayantara Sahgal:**

De’s fictional world is quite different than her contemporaries. C. P. Surendran denounces De by putting that “she has completely changed the idea of literature by increasing interest in English pulp-fiction.” Sunil Sethi feels her novels “choked with listless lust and witless dialogue.” He again describes that her novels as “bodice ripper.” A noted critic David Davider considers that the novels of De as attempting at “discovering India through Indian eyes.” Furthermore, De considers her main concern in the novel is treatment of women’s questions. She voices her protest against the double standard. She has been charged of promoting promiscuity, further she puts: “My books only reflect the reality of what is happening in the society.”

Sahgal’s fictional world has its origin in humanity, morality, understanding, and generosity. It binds towards the new humanism for the welfare of society. In reality, it is the great arena for her fictional world. She has been witness of the turbulent period of Indian history. “Constituting the very heart of the matter, politics functions as the germinal nucleus fermenting the human story” (Bhatnagar 13). She endeavours to humanize Indian politics in her storyline.

To this analysis it provokes the means towards human by penetrating pains and pleasures, and sorrows and joy. Sahgal has for ever and a day attempted “to live upto the values of freedom and a broad humanistic approach to life and its innumerable pains and pleasures” (Rao 1976: 5).
Thus, it acknowledges the origin to the literature. “Human element is the hidden source of inspiration in Mrs. Sahgal’s celebration of life” (Sharma 1995: 206).

Sahgal accomplishes to engineer concrete ground for marital and political relationship. For her “politics is just a part of her humanistic concern” (Asnani and Chadha 1992: 67). She offers life-size characters with the prime object of socio-political life.

Sahgal does not assault on the individuals or particular personalities, sooner than human tendency. Besides, human relationship is the emotional shade that is the “hidden source of inspiration in Mrs. Sahgal’s celebration of life” (Sharma 206).

Sahgal’s immense accomplishment being a novelist “lies in her ability to project the image of contemporary Indian socio-political scene in an intensely moral frame” (Rao viii). Accordingly she thrives to propose the impartial justice to the personal and the impersonal worlds. All the same, in both the worlds she demonstrates the fountain of humanity that is love. “Love in and for the essential human community as a sanctifying power in human life” (Sharma 2005).