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## Socio — Political and Sexual Situations in Vikram Seth's Novels

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Vikram Seth, a great Indian novelist and poet, has written several novels and poems and achieved worldwide popularity coveted with several glorious awards, nicely delineates the socio-political and sexual situations in his novels while Raja Rao mixes facts and fancy in socio-political society in the modern India, Vikram Seth projects another side of domestic life proving but failures. The romantic effect in this domestic life is lost due to the politics among the persons. Although most of his contemporary novelists like Amitabh Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Ruskin Bond are closely associated to the modern writings in English. Salman Rushdie novels are chiefly related to the story of many connections, disruptions and migrations between the Eastern and western world while Shashi Tharoor's literary creations are centred on Indian themes and they are markedly "Indo-nostalgic." Amitabh Gosh has another set of theory in his writings but Vikram Seth has another side of domestic life that is lost due to the politics among the persons.

In his novel "The Golden Gate" Seth describes the story of a group of young professionals and the relation among them. The novel becomes his mean to portray the contemporary Californian life style. It is a life of love and lust described by him, He does so with wit, restraint and intelligence. All the characters are white Americans with only one of partly Japanese descent. Even though it is not a single Indian character, it seems that Seth feels completely at home with these alien characters and in white American culture.

America is a nation where people from all over the world come and after some time shed their own ethnic dimensions to acquire a new American identity. Such an American, proves, for Seth, very helpful as the setting for his novel. The novel deals with personal relations, love loss and morality. It is also a humorous, compassionate and a very healthy understanding of human being. The difference in generations is also seen in the novel. But this difference does not mean conflict but it is in the terms of stances and desires. Seth deals with two kinds of living, feeling and thinking the older and the modern. He also contrasts sometimes the crippling freedom of the post- modern period with the old monogamous love between sexes which has become now a part of the rosy past.

The novel compasses all the important facets of human life, love, marriage, birth and death. Seth while exploring these vital issues, throws light on the problems of the affluent societies of the west, particularly the Americans. Their problems are unhappy marriages, broken homes, homosexuality, etc. But India, which is supposed to be a comparatively conservative society has not remained untouched by these problems. Unhappy marriages, broken homes, mingle parenthood, homosexuality, etc are no longer taboo

in our country. They are gradually coming in light and are bringing along with them an awareness and acceptance. Globalization, economic liberalization and a growing multinational culture as well as the availability of jobs and opportunities in Indian Urban centres have given birth to a lifestyle which worships material consumerism, comfort and freedom.

Although, The Golden Gate is all about The American character and American identity, American society is further described in 'A Suitable Boy'. The text in the ad in A Suitable Boy' initiates an interaction between two potential partners. It suggests direct contact between two individual parties. Nair comments that such freedom could rarely be allowed in the Indian context, where the dignity of family and community is at stake. Nair also points out at adjectival modifications in the Indian Advertisements based on parental and familial assessments having continual references to caste and family starts. Such go-between in the guise of families and friends or the 'negotiating parties' are not present in The Golden Gate.

In "A Suitable Boy" Mrs. Rupa Mehra hopes to

achieve the same compatibility through the marriages of her daughters Savita and Lata.

On the other hand, in the west, the interaction is established between the individuals. And these individuals stress on the details of their personal preferences.

The central motif in both 'The Golden Gate' and 'A Suitable Boy' is the quest for companion in life. In 'A Suitable Boy' Mrs. Rupa Mehra initiates the search. She performs the role of a traditional match maker, which is nowadays being increasingly played by matrimonial columns of matrimonial newspapers among the English educated Indian middle and upper class people.

"A Suitable Boy" is also a plea for religious tolerance. He says, "It is an insult to Hinduism that these people have hijacked what it means to be Hindu." Further he comments, "It is tolerance, understanding not just trying to bash your neighbour over the head because he is Muslim." The title of the book suggests that "Indian sensibility" is at work. The term 'A Suitable Boy' is actively used in the Indian market for arranged marriages where the search is always for suitable boys and girls.

The novel opens with a wedding ceremony which brings the said four families together and the novelist places his main character's straight away on his canvas. Mrs. Rupa Mehra's elder daughter Savita is getting married to Pran, a university lecturer in English and the son of the State Revenue Minister Mahesh Kapoor. Among the invitees are the anglicized Chatterjee residing in Kolkata, and the Khan family of the Nawab of Baitor, one of the largest land owners of the state. However the Nawab's twin sons, Firoz and Intaz are a lawyer and doctor respectively. But they do not fit into the popular mould of the idle sons of the feudal aristocracy. Apart from the Khans, the other three families- the Mehra's, the Kapoor's and the Chatterjee's and interlocked through marriage. In addition to the various characters emerging out of the relationship amongst these three families, Seth introduces a large number of other Characters drawn from across religions, languages, class and caste.

In the novel we find Mrs. Rupa Mehra informing Lata, her younger daughter, that she too will marry a boy of her (Mrs Mehra's) choice, like her elder sister Savita. Lata's

reaction to this 'maternal imperatives' is typical of any other young Indian girls's reactions because we find only difference on her part and no reaction. She has no attraction towards arranged marriages, but she knows very well that she must have to accept it because she can't hurt her family member especially her mother. 'Because of my family' said Lata, 'however much they irritate me and constrain me, I cannot give up my mother.

Generally, Indian women, before marriage, are brought up in such a protective and comfortable atmosphere that it requires immense courage and strength of mind to break away from that strong family bond. And if one breaks free, it is almost impossible to get back into the family. Even today it is true whereas in the 1950's the period when Seth's story is enacted, it was almost unthinkable. Vikram Seth presents a sensitive delineation of cultures of different countries at the same time. As is the role that culture and language go hand in hand, and are two sides of the same coin. The ruler who has hold over the language can early imbibe his culture among the natives. India has the first hand experience of the Mughals and the Britishers.

In 'A Suitable Boy' Vikram Seth gives emphasis on interconnection between bureaucracy and politics, between materialism and multiculturalism. He also explores many dimensions of these aspects in shifting, changing and cordoning the background. At the same time, he includes together the complimentary segments of life in available the modern world into a meaning form. 'A Suitable Boy' also depicts the issue of multiculturalism with its association to politics and bureaucracy. In the novel we come across four families which are from different religions and cultures.

Political and social institutions are accountable to ultimate well-being of the society. They are to be judged not by their status and name but by the good or harm that they do to individuals. Final welfare of the masses must be the priority of these institutions. Seth raises the validity of these institutions as they are miserably foiled to comply with aims and aspirations of common men. His sole motto should be encouraged inventiveness and creativeness of man; they should imbibe the values

Of reverence and forbearance among people. They should also promote communal harmony.

'The Golden Gate' deals with the sexual relationship that has been emblematically revealed through nature. Seth has made use of nature adroitly to elucidate characters namely Phil and Ed , whose off-again and on again homosexual relationship attracts the readers. The Golden Gate reveals the elements of international disorganization, surprise, apology, twist, and orderliness. It takes amount of life, death entrances and exists. It contains scene-stealing babies, nuclear weapons, starry skies and sparkling highways in the night It highlights the social implication of sexual relationship that plays a vital role in human relationship showing us the shape the society is taking up. It also illustrates the sexual passion of base and lowly men and distaste of women for sex. Though it directly does not deal with the sexual relationship implies in it.

Seth, here projects the emotive aspect of the relationship crossing the boundaries of nations and another mild sexual attraction is painted in the relationships which also need politics. Conclusively, we can say that sexual relationship needs politics to build a social fabric of healthy relations.

#### **References:-**

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