



## Thematic Study in the Novels of Vikram Seth

Milind Abhimanyu Pathade<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sanjay Singh<sup>2</sup>

1. Ph.D Research Scholar, Research Center, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Bramhapuri Dist. Chandrapur, Maharashtra
2. Ph.D Supervisor, Prin. G.W. Arts and Commerce College, Nagbhid, Dist. Chandrapur, Maharashtra

### Abstract:

Vikram Seth is certainly one of the most versatile and fascinating writers in the modern period. Seth's remarkable career included several books of poetry, a travelogue, a verse novel, an epic novel. Each book is set in a different cultural and social landscape. He has depicted the issues related to the relations of one another. Although, the characters belong to different social classes, they are suffering from common problems. Themes and issues are constantly imaginative in the novels. The characters presented not so much through description of their consciousness, self expression of themselves. But through their relationship with others and other's view of them.

**Key Words:** Vikram Seth, The Golden Gate, A suitable Boy, An Equal Music,

### Introduction:

Vikram Seth is one of the prominent writer, novelist, and poet of modern generation. 'The Golden Gate' is the first novel of Vikram Seth published in 1986. This novel has new dimension and depth of sonnet form for narrative prose. Although he is Indian by birth but lived and educated in different countries. He is influenced by culture, custom and convention of these different countries where he spent his progressive period of time. He emerged as a new comer in the stream of Indo-Indian Literature. He has contributed and develop Indian English novel by theme and technique. Vikram seth is such a writer who allows reader to peep into the mind and consciousness of the figures by personal and family relationship. Human beings are social by birth and throughout the life remain but suffer due to some desire, attitude, lose and benefits.

Vikram Seth's first novel 'The Golden Gate', in verse, was published in 1986. His other popular novels are 'The Suitable Boy' and 'An Equal Music' published respectively in 1993 and 1999. 'The Golden Gate' secured Sahitya Akademi Award for Seth in 1994. Besides novels he published his poetry books. He has credited to his name three world famous novels, four poetry books, translation book, travel book,

libretto and biography. He has received upper rank as a writer in Indian English Literature in the recent year.

### **The Golden Gate:**

'The Golden Gate' in verse composed entirely in rhyming tetrameter sonnet. The Golden Gate comprises 594 sonnets in iambic tetrameter and follows the fourteen line stanza pattern of Eugene O'negin. The rhyme scheme of this pattern is 'aBaBccDDeFFeGG'. The novel is divided into thirteen chapters and each chapter neatly balanced in its presentation of series of communication with one another characters. This novel is a satirical romance denoting the tale of young professionals in San Francisco. Their love, lose, personal, family relationship with one another. It is narrative about San Francisco written in rhyming sonnet. There are the five main characters in the book. Each of them is defined within the parameters of his profession, personal life and whims and family and social conditions and connections.

John Brown, a protagonist is a graduate of Berkley about twenty- six year old. However he is successful in his work, feels lonely computer executive in Silicon Valley. He is employed in the high – tech computer and electronics industry and works in the area of nuclear research. Janet Hawakaya was the ex- girl friend is of Japanese descent and the only ethnic presence in the novel. She becomes his confidant and in due course once again becomes his lover. She is sensitive by nature as well as artistically gifted. Janet is one of the members in the punk band "Liquid sheep" she is drummer and plays central role in the narrative.

Liz Dorati is a twenty seven year old, high powered ex-Stanford Law School attorney. She has a beautiful appearance with vivacious, blue- eyed. John is impressed by her handwritten reply that Jan forwards to him, and invites her to meet him. They had short-live romance that is soon destroyed by personal prejudice, political differences and a pet cat called Charlemagne.

Phil was the former room-mate form Berkley. He is least conventional in the other characters Phil is Jewish and has a six year old son named Paul. Open and non- conservative minded Phil has a brief homosexual affair with Liz's brother Ed. Ed Dorati is twenty three, "intense, athletic, / silent " and caught in a dilemma between his religious beliefs and his natural homosexual preferences. All these five characters are connected to one another. Their self attitude and mind made them different from each other. Their relations have some time looks open minded, free, and bold and some time looks nerves, helpless, imbalanced. Individuality reflects in the characters of the novel. Social issues are prominently pointed out through the relationship of characters. John belongs to comfort and luxury environment, he suffers common social problem that is loneliness. Isolation becomes panic to everyone.

The novel opens here with the condition of modernity, New challenges and mentalities have appeared with the dispersed conditions of highly educated man. Instead of happy and charming mood, gloomy and hopeless mind reflection disclosed here. We being a social never live isolated although

separated. The characters in *The Golden Gate* represent their ability or inability to lead personality happy or fulfilling lives. In the text, the landscapes of the locations, social settings, the values, politics and customs, food, atmosphere and weather play important roles in the lives of the characters.

### **A Suitable Boy**

Vikram Seth's book '*A Suitable Boy*' published in 1993 and made a history in Indian English Literature. The novel contains 1349 pages and becomes the longest novel in literature. *A Suitable Boy* was a distinctly Indian novel; Seth wanted the novel to be published initially in India.

'*A Suitable Boy*' set completely in India. The main plot line of *A Suitable Boy*, like that of '*The Golden Gate*' (1986) centers on the question of searching a suitable partner. The main strength of novel lies not in the work of matchmaking, but in the depiction of social environment of the decade after the free India. Seth manages to inter-connect in an artificial way all the larger themes of political, social and religious conflicts. Seth captures day today ordinary human emotions of the true to life characters.

The novel opens with a wedding programme that brings the said four families together on the moment; Seth allows placing his main characters. Mrs. Rupa Mehra's elder daughter Savita is getting married to Pran, Indian marriages has great tradition of arrange marriages. The culture, custom of Indian society deeply rooted in the mentality of Indian people. Marriages are arranged by the consent of elderly family members. There are many things to be suited for bride and bridegroom. Marriage willing families should belong to same religion, caste and sub- caste; otherwise they are not allowed to marry. The Indian culture is ancient and not allowed to break anyhow. Religious bondage on the social activates are mentally, publically and intensely spread in India. Love marriages are not allowed, Boy and Girl are not allowed to love each other unless the permission of religious activities. Religion plays an important role in the business of marriages. On the other side it is effective to live happy marriage life. Both families share custom, culture and understand the ritual and its value in life.

One of the main characters in the novel is Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who's only work is remaining to find suitable partner to her younger daughter Lata. Mrs. Rupa Mehra is careful to her family as Indian women do eventually. Right from the beginning, Generally, Indian women, before marriage are brought up in such a protective and comfortable atmosphere. Each part is described by a rhyming couplet. There are four families in the story; Mrs. Rupa Mehra takes over a period of 18 months to search a suitable boy to marry her daughter. A suitable boy set in Brahmpur, a fictionalized Northern Indian city on the banks of Ganga river. The novel is the example of good tradition of arranged marriage in India. In Indian marriage ceremony is institution of rituals, custom and religious practices. In Indian society marriages are not merely mean the meeting of two persons.

'*A Suitable Boy*' focuses on the experiences and entanglements of moderately reach Indian families connected through marriage or friendship, at a period of time in a India was experiencing her post – independence time. It is primarily about the social, religious and familiar customs of India and her people

with the numerous characters surveying as tools to illustrate the veracity of these customs. The novels tell the story of four families the Mehra, the Kapoors, the Khans and the Chatterjeees who are related to each other by marriage and friendship. The social setting of the Novel, is a reminder of the patriarchal society of England that assigned Sex roles and Stereotyping of masculine's and feminine characteristics. Where for women the primary role was child bearing and care of the family for men on the other hand, family's well being was the main motives.

In a Suitable Boy, Lata is a victim of this patriarchal society in 1950s that presupposed a similar marriage where she can attract bidders. She is in more vulnerable state as she has lost her father, Mr. Raghbir Mehra. Arun brother of Lata and Savita was not happy even with the elder sister, Savita's Marriage who has been marriage to Pran.

The plots of 'A Suitable Boy' are structured around search of suitable boy and this gives force and coherence to the novel. Mrs. Mehra is in search of suitable boy for Lata: Dipankar as a spiritual base, Mr. Mahes Kapoor is in search of Political base and the Nawab is in search of his feudal stability. Vikram Seth portrays the post- independence women attitude, women are associated with family issues only,

Social realism of 'A Suitable Boy' presents the social environment, its issues and obstacles and individual follows to the society.

### **An Equal Music**

'An Equal Music' is published in 1999, This is a music novel and centered on ill-fated love affair. The story is about Michael Holme, the self-tortured protagonist. Michael is sensitive and emotional character of the novel. He is permanently in mourning for his life, for Julia , a woman he deserted in Vienna ten years ago. Michael's story gradually as he goes about is daily routines of teaching , solitary practice and rehearsal, until he gets a fleeting look of Julia.-on a passing a bus-whom he had once loved and left in Vienna and has been unable to find since, The search for Julia, their meeting and its impacts are woven into other larges themes.

The novel is in the first person narrative, Thirty –seven years old Michael Holden is a second violinist on an English quarter called the Maggiore, Besides playing in the quarter, Michael supplements his income by teaching the violin to a few music students, which one of whom he is having an affair.

Two types of stability one, social and familial, and the other, mental and internal, are depicted in the novel also stressed again and again is the fact that attachment to love and music also leads to a sense of order and stability though of a different type.

The novel An Equal Music is a classic in every sense of the world. Whole novel is about the dedication of music. The characters throw their life in the service and dedication for the music. Music has been presented in the novel as noble addiction, Michael and Julia are musicians. One of the most impressive aspect of the novel is the way in which writer manages to convey music through language.

**Conclusion:** Vikram Seth was portrait these three novels in the different locations but the intensity of the theme is common to the people. Themes and issues are presented with a clear imaginative objectivity. Each novel is in different from one another and takes an older literary form in the modern dimension. The characters are defined not so much through a description of their consciousness but through friendship and attachment. Seth manages to inter-woven the characters skillfully. The novels are fully concerned to the desire of the human being.

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