

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Gita Mehta a prominent Indian woman novelist wrote two novels- *Raj* (1989) and *A River Sutra* (1993). Compared to other Indian English writers, her contribution to Indian English Literature is very less, but remarkable. She has obtained a significant place in Indian English Literature. Both of her novels reflect Indian culture, traditions, customs, beliefs, myths, superstitions, etc. Her first novel *Raj* is a historical novel. The novel is a saga of historical, cultural, social and political affairs of India. Gita Mehta succeeds in interlocking history with fiction in this novel. The novel contains four histories- British India, feudal India, nationalist struggle and that of the protagonist's own personal history. In the novel *Raj*, she portrays the character of Jaya, who is a princess of Balmer, a deserted fort in Rajasthan. Jaya, born as a princess of Balmer, married to the Sirpur Prince and becomes a Regent Maharani of Sirpur, later as Maharani and finally enrolling as a candidate for the election to lead her own Sirpur. Though the novel situates in a colonial and post- colonial period, it reflects a modern point of view. Jaya Singh belongs to a patriarchal society with rigid social norms and conventions. But she is not strictly raised in the Purdah system. Maharajah Jai Singh appoints teachers to give Jaya traditional education. Though she is given lessons in rangoli, music and other traditional matters, she also undergoes training in horse riding, hunting and Rajniti. Gita Mehta projects Maharajah Jai Singh's character as a representative of modern age. He breaks the thousand years' tradition of Purdah for the sake of Praja during famine. He displays a vision that sanctions individual freedom, breaking away from foolish tradition for the sake of society itself.

The novel explores many traditions and rituals but the writer while describing these things is balanced and objective in her place. Many a times she criticizes traditions like Sati, Widowhood, and Purdah and at the same time she reveals the truth that these are the traditions in India which are followed by the Indian society since ages. The novel also contains the myths about these traditions. Through her novel she shows that Indian people preserve their culture even in the colonial period. She expresses her positive as well as negative opinions through the characters and keeps herself objective. In the novel she describes many historical details in the colonial and post-colonial period. The novel also contains the details about freedom struggle fought under the leadership of Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Bhagat Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru, etc. These freedom fighters commence various movements like Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Simon Commission Go Back, etc. The novel covers the period from 1897 to 1950. In the novel Gita Mehta shows close resemblance between historical characters and fictitious characters. The skill of interlocking history with fiction is magnificent.

*A River Sutra* is also remarkable for its technique. In this novel Gita Mehta describes Indian culture, tradition, etc. In this novel she depicts many myths on which the culture and tradition is based. The novel comprises six stories: *The Monk's Story*, *The Teacher's Story*, *The Executive's Story*, *The Courtesan's Story*, *The Musician's Story*, *The Minstrel's Story*. The novel ends with the chapter, *The Song of the Narmada*. It seems that it is a collection of short stories but it is a novel which interconnects these stories with each other. Each story of the novel focuses on the different themes and the ways of human life.

In both the novels Gita Mehta uses the same technique. In *Raj* there is an interconnection of history and fiction and in 'A River Sutra' that of the stories. The novel *Raj* is divided into four books: 'Balmer', 'Sirpur', 'Maharani' and 'Regent' and these four books are divided into chapters. In *A River Sutra* the six stories are divided into sixteen chapters. In *Raj*, the fourth Book contains chronological order because it describes many historical and political events in British Raj. Every chapter of this Book starts with an epigraph which reflects the central idea of the chapter or the novel. In *A River Sutra* also she uses this technique. The novel starts with an epigraph by a great Hindu poet Chandidas, which focuses the central idea of the novel. Through the epigraph the writer says that human experiences are the only truth of life and nothing beyond it. All the stories of the novel reflect the central idea of an epigraph. Gita Mehta uses the same technique for these two novels.

The settings of these two novels are also significant ones. The novel *Raj* covers the vast space from India to England. The novel situates in some imaginary as well as real states and cities in India such as Balmer, Sirpur, Dungra, Bombay, New Delhi, and Calcutta. The novel also focuses on the theme of East-West encounter in Indian and British traditions and cultures sometimes Indians are attracted towards foreign culture and many a times Britishers, as colonizers, impose their culture on Indians. There is a mixture of Indian and British culture and traditions in the novel. The novel 'A River Sutra' situates on the banks of the river, Narmada, the holiest place in India. The river Narmada is very significant as the characters in the novel after committing sins come on the banks of the holy river, Narmada for salvation. The novel comprises myths about Narmada River and through these stories the writer expresses the philosophy of life. The

novel also reflects various shades of love and the whole novel focuses on the human heart's secret that is capacity to love.

In the novel *Raj*, Gita Mehta uses third person omniscient narration in which all the details are described by the writer but she is detached from the novel. She uses this technique for describing historical as well as political events in which such events are accepted as they are. In *A River Sutra* the writer uses first person as well as third person narration. In this novel the narrator plays the role of a 'Sutradhar' because he connects all the stories with the help of some myths and customs. The purpose of the writer behind using flashback technique is to create the atmosphere which is suitable to each story. Mehta makes ample use of symbols and images in this novel. The novel also includes stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile etc.

As an Indian writer Gita Mehta uses many Indian words in her novels. She uses these kinds of words intentionally. The words reflect the intimate feelings and emotions which are considered more valuable in the Indian context. Mehta uses such words to give a local flavour to her literary work. The titles of both the novels reflect Indianness. The title *Raj* itself suggests the ruler-ship which is significant for Indian Kings and British Empire. The title *A River Sutra* suggests that 'Sutra' is a thread which links the stories, characters together.

Gita Mehta in her two remarkable novels uses different techniques and handles different themes. She reserves a prominent position among Indian English Writers. She mainly focuses on History, Culture and Myth which we found in all post modern Indian English Fiction. Being a diasporic Indian English Writer she is much more fascinated by

Indian Culture and myths. She also highlights the history of modern India in her novels. Memory plays a crucial role in her fictional works as her all the narratives are based on memory.