

The Realistic State of Women in Vikram Seth's select works, regardless of Geographical location or Historical period: An Evaluation

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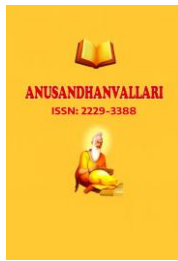
Abstract: Man is a social animal, and society is the network of collective power since its inhabitants' shared norms and regulations while living together, which resulted in their continuing affiliation. There have been many different kinds of communities in different parts of the world, and these societies have steadily evolved over time. Hunting and gathering societies, agricultural societies, feudal societies, capitalism, industrialism, and post-industrial societies are examples of historical human communities. India is a large Asian country with a diverse population in terms of language, geography, and economy. Seth's Indian-set works highlights gender prejudice and female unfairness. The female characters in Seth's previous are more free-spirited and unencumbered by stereotypes. Male dominance is enforced by traditional practices in the legal system, religion, and other social institutions. The needs of women are consistently disregarded in favor of self-reinforcing mechanisms like power in the patriarchal social structure. Gender inequality is criticized by feminist writers. They want to reinstate patriarchal power structures in the domains of business, education, and the labor force. A new period of sex equality would bring about a social revolution, since women make up half of the world's population. After experiencing horrific sexual exploitation, Saeeda wishes to keep her daughter Tasneem from living a life that is just as despicable. Because of her own protectionism, she made it impossible for Tasneem to interact, communicate, or be associated with ordinary people. This 'non-awareness' becomes a beautiful feminine trait that supports young brides in maintaining the conventional family unit.

Keywords: tradition, modernization, transition, patriarchy, women's marginalization, society

In mortal society, every gender has a vital role to play. However, a womanly life is limited to marriage and, eventually, parenting in the culture shown in *A Suitable Boy*. He has produced images of women from various societies and eras. The definition of patriarchal culture and patriarchal beliefs are ingrained in the post-independence Indian community, and it is evident that poor patriarchal societies used violence against women as a key tactic to prevent women from having sex. However, the concept of womanish characters in *Two Lives*, *The Golden Gate*, and *An Equal Music* is not limited to a specific modal character; rather, it fluctuates depending on the setting of the novels.

A woman's actuality is denied piecemeal by her husband or his family, according to Hindu moral law. The long-suffering of women is exposed in Raja Ram Mohan Roy's film, which also emphasizes how women are domesticated after marriage. It is commonly observed that women in colorful nations are inevitably married due to profitable independence that can improve a woman's financial situation; yet, Seth's creations logically shed light on womanish freedom as well. This essay attempts to analyze women's roles in Seth's novels from social, political, religious, artistic, and ethnic perspectives throughout many eras. Seth's feminine characters are comparable to those created by renowned authors such as Khushwant Singh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen.

The status of women in America has changed significantly as a result of scientific advancements and widespread education, leading to the provident independence of women. In *The Golden Gate*, women are said to



have equal standing and there is an emotional desire for marriage rather than a financial one. Thus, for both internal and external fulfillment, both men and women prefer being single and engaging in premarital coitus. *The Golden Gate* is an exact duplicate of the same American IT culture.

Vikram Seth attempts to portray and reveal womanish traits that vary depending on the location and era. An abecedarian right to equivalence was granted by the Indian Constitution, which was drafted after independence and was a copy of the British Constitution's Magna Carta. In fact, women participated in vibrant reforms and demonstrations before to independence, and their contributions were valued. Everyone desired the ideal home with the ideal woman. In Vikram Seth's new film, *A Suitable Boy*, Lata is a womanly super-eminent figure who epitomizes the growing generational divide in post-independence India. when working in council on scale. She fell in love with a Muslim boy named Kabir Durrani, and this romantic event suggests that Lata was not prepared for an arranged marriage.

Boys are preferred by Indians due to their sophisticated agrarian upbringing, and after a boy marries, he stays with his parents and helps them grow. This type of intelligence is prevalent in Indian civilization, and it varies with time and place by adhering to true creative patterns. In contrast, a girl drains family finances, particularly when she gives her husband a substantial dowry. Later on, though, she had second thoughts. Sexual strength, love, and passion seem to be offerings that the forces of daily reality require. Seth uses this as an explanation for Lata's choice to wed a man other than her true love.

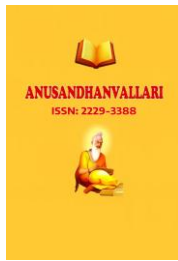
Lata had alternated between serene optimism and terrifying attacks of uncertainty for the last week. After the civil ceremony was over, she felt calm and almost happy, and a fond of Haresh than before. From time to time he had smiled at her as if he knew most needed reassurance. (*A Suitable Boy*, 1335)

Julia, a contemporary female musician, and her romance with Joe and their breakup are depicted by the author in *An Equal Music*. Seth provided her with a life companion following her breakup with her lover, justifying her actions. Neither the author nor her lover criticized her for her hasty decision. One may argue that Seth consistently portrays female figures with a great deal of individuality and without the use of artificial coloring. Seth develops a character not just from an Indian perspective but also from a logical one. Her boyfriend never held Julia accountable for her decision to divorce her husband and have an affair, and the author alternates an erogenous moment between them.

The sun falls on our bodies. She does not want the blind drawn. I run my hands through her hair, so much longer than it used to be. We make love not with tenderness but with ecstasy born to starvation.... yet in her I sense a tension drop away. She does not want me to speak, nor does she speak herself.... the scent of her body, mixed with her faint perfume, drives me into frenzy. (*An Equal Music*, 137)

During Hitler's reign, which lasted from 1933 to 1945, it was forbidden for women and Jews to experiment with drugs. There was a considerable deal of bloodshed and division during the Third Reich, when Adolf Hitler served as Germany's chancellor. The protagonist of *Two Lives*, Henny, suffered greatly at the hands of Nazi atrocities. And the women in particular suffered greatly. She also married an Indian, fostering love and mutual understanding across racial divides. The conclusion is that, notwithstanding Vikram Seth's notoriety as an Indian writer, everyone who can read and comprehend English appreciates his expertise and style of communication. In all of his writings, women from various periods and stages of life are shown, and he gives his female characters various weapons according to the circumstances of the time and location, but they are all lovely and well developed.

In communities of all ages, women's marginalization is the main problem. In the ultramodern era as well as throughout history, gender inequality is a hot topic. Tradition, transition, and fustiness are the various stages that women have gone through throughout history. Manly dominance is demonstrated through customs.



"Traditionally, marriage for women has entailed as most submissive feminine role, she submits to her husband and his family as slave," asserts Meera Shirwadkar in *Image of women in the Indo-Anglican Novel*. Traditional practices in social institutions such as the law, education, and religion are used to establish male dominance. The social order known as patriarchy is defined by the tone that upholds systems like power and consistently subjugates the interests of women. Feminist writers protest against gender discrimination. In commercial, educational, and professional domains, they want to rebuild the patriarchal power structures. Given that women make up half of all people, a new era of equality between relationships would spark a societal revolution.

Women serve as the other in patriarchal societies, which enables men to develop a positive tone and identity as manly. In the alternate coitus, De Beauvoir asserts that women, as portrayed by males, have a twofold and false image; they embody all moral virtues, from good to bad, and their opposites. He reflects his feelings and desires, his loves and his dislikes, onto her. According to Freud's theory, people are bisexual from birth. The construction of femininity and virility is not stable. Finding methods to resist and subvert the oppressive medium is the essence of femininity. They contest Freud's theory of fornication.

There has been an incredible awareness of feminism in the post-independence era, and many authors have readdressed it in response to the vibrant cries. Many authors focused on the bad living conditions of women and advocated for equal rights for women. Vikram Seth is one of the most distinctive and versatile writers of the post-independence era. He has a varied career as a novelist, minstrel, economics Ph.D. scholar, and translator.

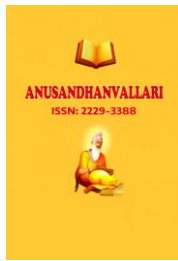
This paper analyzes Vikram Seth's portrayal of women in *A Suitable Boy* as oppressed brutes. We examine his definition of a lady. The first scene of *A Suitable Boy* is a Brahmpur marriage ceremony. The primary theme of this novel is around Mrs. Mehra's search for *A Suitable Boy* for Lata. In order to uphold the social values of the early post-independence era, such as faith, caste, and social standing, she continues to have a difficult time finding a suitable boy for her son.

Maan falls in love with him while being fully aware that he will eventually marry her due to his craving for sexual pleasure. The alleged 'younger sister' of Saeeda Bai In choosing a decent boy for marriage, Tasneem, a teenage girl whose true name is disclosed by the author at the novel's finale, is somewhat comparable to Lata. Despite the fact that neither Saeeda nor Tasneem are aware of their dads, Saeeda controls Tasneem's existence through her own patriarchal 'tone' which dictates that Tasneem must be protected from the harsh realities of this world at all costs.

Tasneem, like Lata, has three suitors. Lata, at the very least, is given the option to choose *A Suitable Boy*, whereas Tasneem, on the other side, is not allowed to communicate with anyone, let alone any appropriate boy. "It is to be chosen by me, not by admirers", Saeeda declares to Mann. Under the constant supervision of 'sister-mother' Saeeda, Tasneem is kept in purdah and "spends time cutting vegetables, reading novels, and thinking about life". Ishaq Khan, the sarangi musician in Saeeda's music battalion, Firoz, the son of Nawab of Baitor, and Rasheed, her Arabic tutor, are Tasneem's three suitors. Ironically, Saeeda does not think any of them would be a good fit for Tasneem.

The musician who 'has no future' is Ishaq. Firoz is Tasneem's blood relative, while Rasheed is "eccentric by nature" and was previously married (Mala Pandurang 125). Saeeda reports to Firoz that his father, the Nawab of Baitar, assaulted him when he was fifteen years old. She acknowledges that Tasneem is "the child she had conceived in terror, had carried in shame and had carried in shame and had borne in pain", rather than a member of her family.

Thus, it is impossible for Firoz and Tasneem to have a love relationship. Ironically, despite the fact that "domesticity and its standard concerns were not object of fond contemplation for her", Saeeda asks Tasneem to



respect marriage. Having endured agonizing sexual exploitation, Saeeda wants to protect Tasneem from a similar life of shame. She prevented Tasneem from interacting, communicating, or associating with regular people due of her own protectionism.

In order to preserve the family system, this "non-mindfulness" is transformed into a lovely feminine trait. Tasneem and Lata are both conditioned to acquire this suppressed knowledge. When Maan visits Saeeda in Pasand Bagh following a lengthy visit during his father's election campaign, he unexpectedly finds his fashionable friend Firoz in Saeeda's home. This marks the dramatic conclusion of Maan's sexual and emotional involvement with Saeeda. The idea that his close friend is having an affair with Saeeda, his most alluring woman, is beyond his comprehension. The idea that Firoz might be in love with Tasneem but not Saeeda was beyond his imagination. He stabs Firoz with a cutter, fatally wounds him, and flees the Pasand Bagh because the unexpected outburst of wrath throws him off balance.

As a result, he is accused of tried murder and is still detained. When Mrs. Kapoor visits Maan, she has a heart attack and passes away that same night because she is unable to handle the humiliation and hopelessness of her younger son being detained. Additionally, there is the dramatic courtroom scene in which Firoz claims to have a memory lapse and provides no evidence against Maan. The inter-collaborative fellowship is reestablished, and Maan's release from captivity with an apology is crucial to his family's relief.

Maan's devastating experience of his mother's passing continues to fuel a "violent revolution of feeling" against Saeeda Bai and himself due to their intense romance. He rejects the genuine physicality that had previously drawn him to her and is only deeply repulsed by her. During his final encounter with her, he is horrified to discover that he no longer sees her as the sensual lady he once had intense sexual feelings for. Instead, she now has actual scars on her body. "Maan, completely unaffected by what he has done to Saeeda's family, her reputation, and more significantly, Tasneem" goes back to Prem Nivas.

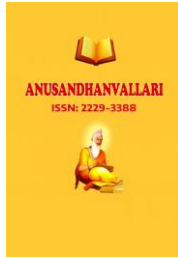
After the devastating experience of his mother's death, Maan experiences an alluring sensation of guilt that transports him to a different realm, away from Saeeda's fascination. Saeeda is more determined than ever to cover Tasneem as a result of this painful event. "She stands for the first time in her life at the open door of the house, not daring, still, to go further" when Tasneem rushes down to stop an astonished Firoz from leaving. It stops the 'spin' from the inner yard into a bigger world. Tasneem is more isolated than ever from the outside world. She withdraws into an insulating tone.

Each of the three men who had entered her life was more unsolvable than the others, and in each instance, she had silently grown to love them and endured their abrupt withdrawal. Saeeda's final line in the story is a mournful ballad, "The meeting has disappeared; the moths bid farewell to the candlelight", which emphasizes an underlying sense of womanish victimhood and implicitly accepts Saeeda's current situation. The night is marked by a few stars, and the hour of departure is on the sky.

In his novel *A Suitable Boy*, Vikram Seth addresses the marginalization of women. In the book, Tasneem and Saeeda Bai are unfit to lead the dignified lives of other women. It is true that Lata, the promoter, is unsuited to wed Kabir, her partner. Haresh is her better half of choice. However, Tasneem and Saeeda Bai do not have the choice to get married. Women in patriarchal societies are victims. There is no way for the voiceless to be heard. But "unheard melodies are sweeter", as Keats puts it.

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