

# Multi Plural Society in India in Vikram Seth Novals

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**Abstract - The writer's viewpoint on society is crucial in preserving history, reflecting current society, and projecting the future. The multi-cultural viewpoint of Vikram Seth's writings is examined in this article. The themes of Seth's writings include strained relationships and a lack of faith in human aspirations. Household and social life have deteriorated structurally and functionally as a result of the political system. Vikram Seth is completely aware of the events and conduct that have undermined the social cohesiveness of the system. He provides a picture of the modern world in the twenty-first century through his works. He's also interested in sexual relationships and mutual understandings between lovers, friends, and family members. The cross milieu, cross context, and cross-cultural outlook relate to the physical and social environment in which people survive. Over the last century, moral ideals have altered substantially. People feel that living a life without commitment is a safe way of life.**

**Keywords - Multi plural, society, india, vikram seth**

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## INTRODUCTION

The term "socio-cultural" refers to two distinct domains: society and culture. A society is made up of a group of individuals who are all of the same species. And culture is nothing more than the collective conduct of a civilization. Socio-cultural viewpoints examine the language, psychology, sociology, gender issues, racism, economy, hierarchy, culture, tradition, custom, belief, and values of a given civilization. Marxism theory, socio-cultural theory, cultural psychology, and queer theory may all be used to examine these ideas. These ideas have been used to Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy in order to illustrate the view of India's socio-culture.

In the year 1934, a Russian psychologist named Lev Vygotsky founded socio-cultural theory. This idea may be used to examine how society and culture change and reshape an individual's behavior. Elders, parents, siblings, instructors, family beliefs, and the community may all influence a person's behavior. There are two layers to this learning process: inter-psychological level and intra-psychological level.

Interaction with several individuals allows a person to pick up on their language, manners, behavior, and lifestyle, and as a result, he acts in accordance with that information, which is known as inter-psychology. Intra-psychology differs from inter-psychology in that an individual may converse with himself and instruct himself. He acts based on his own understanding, desire, and anticipation. Vikram Seth shows Indian

culture and its cultural significance in a genuine manner.

Both inter-psychology and intra-psychology are reflected in the characters in the novel A Suitable Boy. As a result, the study employs socio-cultural theory to examine the Indian culture depicted in the novel A Suitable Boy. The reasonable behavior of Hindus and Muslims in Indian society may be explained using this hypothesis. The socio-cultural features of this story, such as language, race, culture, belief, political system, and prejudice, are all clearly represented with multi-dimensional projection in this novel. A Suitable Boy is a historical tale that helps readers comprehend India's social and political activities. This well-discussed work, according to Pandey, is one of the longest novels ever written in a single volume in the English language, incorporating social, political, and historical discernments.

The story is set in India during the post-independence era, and Purva Pradesh is a fictional town similar to Malgudi. The novel's setting is Brahmipur, the capital of Purva Pradesh, as well as Delhi, Calcutta, Kanpur, and Lucknow. It depicts the lives of four interconnected families in the Brahmipur district of Purva Pradesh. Seth explores the social, religious, and cultural traditions of four Indian families: the Mehras, Kapoors, Chatterjis, and Khans. The first three of the four families are Hindus, while the fourth is Muslim.

Language is extremely important in society since it reveals the community's identity. Without language no one can accomplish the highest level in the globe. Vikram Seth does an excellent job at portraying the individuals with their own dialect and vocabulary. Throughout the post-independence period, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and English were widely spoken. The author has the ability to emphasize the importance of language, thus he uses authentic language whenever the narration requires it to offer the readers a true impression. Ron Moorby, a critic, connects Vikram Seth's persona to their respective languages:

*The Kapoors symbolize the Hindi-speaking elite, who have risen through the ranks of the new political elite, whereas the Anglicized Mehrahs believe in the supremacy of convent schools, English literature, and correct etiquette. While the Muslim, landowning Khans face legislation that threatens to shatter their culture and Urdu language, as well as all feudal landholdings, the Chatterjis, quirky and rather scandalous members of the Bengali elite, revel in rhyming couplets and coddle a neurotic dog Cuddles.*

As a result, the author presents the four diverse families and their languages in order to convey the socio-cultural life of India, which is noted for its variety while being together. Seth lends the languages a regional flavor. *A Suitable Boy* often uses Bengali, Urdu, English, and Hindi vocabulary. The flavor of regional languages can also be found in English.

Khan the Nawab of Baitar performs the character of Zamindar in *A Suitable Boy*. Vikram Seth has depicted the harsh situations of farmers and lower-class people via the figure of Khan. The Indian political system and the Zamindari system are both presented at the same time to give a true image of India. The Marxist perspective is best adapted to exposing the farmers' living conditions. They toiled away, yet their efforts went unnoticed. They were paid a little, which was insufficient to get them through the day. The Zamindars are heirs to the throne because of their royal birth, ethnicity, and religion. The following is what Tyson said:

*Differences in socioeconomic class, according to Marx, separate individuals in far more profound ways than differences in religion, race, nationality, or gender. For the real battle lines are drawn between the "haves" and the "have-nots," between the bourgeoisie, who control the world's natural, economic, and human resources, and the proletariat, the majority of the world's*

*population who live in substandard conditions and have always performed manual labor, such as mining, factory work, etc.*

Many authorities attempted to abolish the Zamindari System after independence, and Mahesh Kapoor's actions revealed this endeavor. The Zamindari system was abolished because the land records were poorly kept by the Zamindars' appointed clerks. The clerks were dishonest, defrauding the Zamindars as well as the Indian government.

*The clerks committed irreversible fraud, which saddened India's newly formed government. As a result, leaders like Nehru fought hard and took the required steps to end the Zamindari system. All of these real-life efforts were fictionally depicted in the novel *A Suitable Boy* by Mahesh Kapoor. First, Mahesh Kapoor attempts to develop the 'Zamindari Abolition Measure,' which is a bill to eliminate vast and unproductive land holdings in the state (ASB 19).*

The landowners, known as zamindars, forced impoverished farmers to till the land. They offered them a pittance of a wage. Mahesh Kapoor attempted to seize the zamindar's land since they did not work to develop it. As a result, Mahesh Kapoor used his position to prevent Zamindars from using their democratizing power against the lower classes of peasants. He also forfeited some persons while doing his duty, such as his Baitar buddy, the Nawab Sahib. Mahesh Kapoor believed that it was a cost that he had to bear because:

*He had witnessed firsthand the lack of output and resulting hunger, the lack of investment in land renovation, the worst types of feudal arrogance and subservience, and the arbitrary persecution of the weak and the unhappy by the average landlord's agents and muscle-men. (283 ASB)*

*Despite the fact that Mahesh Kapoor and the Nawab Sahib of Baitar were of different religions, they maintained a very friendly relationship. Mahesh Kapoor stood against his personal buddy Nawab in the Zamindari Abolition field. Kapoor, like Arjuna in the Mahabharata, battles for the good of the entire nation and has never been prejudiced. As a result, he*

*enacted a new legislation that also applied to Nawabs. There are zamindars and zamindars, as Kapoor admitted. Not all of them associate their friendship with their own country. The Nawab Sahib is well aware that I am acting on principle.*

A Member of Parliament, Begum Abida Khan, the Nawab Sahib's sister-in-law, spoke out strongly against the bill to repeal the zamindari system. Begum Abida Khan, a Muslim woman, fought against a world of males and dedicated herself to protecting the zamindars' social standing. She justified her position as a Muslim MP by stating:

*We have made a contribution in every sector of life, one that will outlast us and that you will not be able to erase. We developed the universities, colleges, classical music traditions, schools, and the whole culture of this place.*

Her thesis demonstrated how the Zamindars viewed the common people as second-class citizens. Indians had previously been oppressed by British imperialism, and the farmers had been suppressed by the Zamindars in the aftermath of freedom. So Mahesh Kapoor stood up to the exploiters since his ultimate purpose was to defend the lower classes from the Zamindars' merciless hands. In the assembly, he made a strong case for the working class's plight. Although Mahesh Kapoor had high expectations, the framework had failed miserably.

Rasheed was a college student who also taught Urdu and Arabic. His father was a zamindar who was nothing more than an exploiter. His father controlled the farmers and persuaded them to work hard, but he did not adequately compensate them. He was more concerned with his personal profit than with their living situations. Rasheed, his son, confirmed that his father was influencing the employees, saying, "The zamindars make their livelihood by exploiting others' pain, and they attempt to put their sons into the same hideous mold as themselves..." If their boys desire to pursue something different, they make things difficult for them as well (ASB 364).

Vikram Seth conducts a thorough investigation into the mental health of the Zamindars and the judges in the court. Through his storytelling, he persuades the reader to consider the Zamindari Abolition Act argument. With the arrival of the Chief Justice, Seth's manner portrayed a courtroom:

*The seats were brought forward as the Chief Justice looked to the left and right. The numbers of the many conjoined writ petitions listed [for judgment] were called out by the*

*Court Reader. The Chief Justice absently riffled through the huge bundle of typed sheets in front of him. Every eye in the courtroom was on him. He took a sip of water after removing the lace doily from the glass in front of him.*

*He flipped to the last page of the seventy-five-page judgment, leaned to one side, and began reading the judgment's operative portion. [The Purva Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act does not infringe any provision of the Constitution and is not illegal.] he read for less than half a minute, clearly and rapidly. The primary application, as well as any associated apps, is closed. Parties should cover their own costs, in our opinion, and we order accordingly].*

Vikram Seth accurately depicted the scenario, which was beneficial to the lower working class and detrimental to the royal Zamindars. The upper class landowners believed the congress party and its adherents had taken their crown. Following Gandhiji's death, the Congress party, which had won the first election, fought to keep the mob under control. However, they were effective in granting freedom to the lowest classes. During the 1950s, India's lower classes made up the bulk of the population. As a result, Nehru and other independence fighters fought hard to provide total freedom to the lower classes.

The upper class in India participates in a variety of festivals. People from the lower castes are not permitted to attend or enjoy those festivities. Lower caste persons are often neglected in Indian marriages. Hindu weddings include several rituals, and all of the family members are invited to attend. The wedding ceremony is lavishly celebrated by aristocratic families, whereas the poorer classes are unable to partake in the banquet offered at the marriage hall. Hareesh, Lata's husband, invited Jagat Ram, a shoemaker, to his wedding without understanding it. Lower-class people's living conditions were pitiful, and caste prejudice prevented them from mixing with the upper-class people. Jagat Ram was in attendance during the wedding. Veena's husband, Kedarnath, spotted him and invited him to join them. He asked Kedarnath to give Hareesh Sahib a little shoe box wrapped in brown paper as a gift and to congratulate Hareesh on his behalf. Jagat Ram was well aware of his own limitations and decency. He was only there for a brief time. He got back from the wedding as soon as he could. In his piece *Secularism* in Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, Neelam Srivastava writes:

*The novel's treatment of caste is another example of how tradition is pushed out of the public arena and into the realm of the private. Though its position in the workplace is called into doubt by the acts of the character Haresh Khanna, it plays a crucial part in all of the novel's marriages.*

Weddings, festivals, and other events are mostly for the upper crust of society. Jagat Ram, a scheduled caste member, was well aware of all of these facts and promptly departed the location where the higher class members were enjoying the feast celebration. Jagat Ram and Kachheru were humiliated since they were from a lesser caste.

The Ramlila was well-known at Misri Mandi, a well-known Brahmipur location. Jagat Ram contended before the Ramlila committee that upper castes played the heroes, while lower castes and reserved castes were only permitted to play lesser roles. In the next year, however, Kedarnath advised that the lower castes might perform all roles. It was Jagat Ram's first foray into politics, and he knew nothing would be resolved. He had been through a lot since he was a youngster. He became a philosopher as a result of all of his experiences in this world. The world, according to Jagat Ram, was a place of violence and cruelty, and the exclusion of individuals like him from religious ceremonies was almost the least of its horrors. The socio-political situation of the late twentieth century is highlighted for the readers through Jagat Ram.

Despite the fact that many female freedom fighters had given their lives in the war, women were unable to readily leave the house during the post-independence period. Kachheru's wife was also silenced. With a wonderful representation of female characters, Vikram Seth portrays the plight of women in Indian culture. He portrays women of various classes, including Kachheru's wife, Muslim women, and Hindu women, not just as mothers and daughters, but also as prostitutes. Feminist theory is needed to evaluate society in order to assess the social state of females in the novel *A Suitable Boy*. Wikibooks explains:

*Feminist theory is a means of examining society through the prism of gender inequality. The emphasis here is on male and female power. Feminist philosophy examines women's responsibilities in society as well as the continual conflicts they confront. The rights of women, including economic, sexual, reproductive, property, and voting rights, are at the center of this style of thinking about the social world.*

Mrs. Rupa Mehra, Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor, Lata, Savita, Veena, Malathi, Veena, Kachheru's wife, Begum Abida Khan, Saeeda Bai, and Meenakshi Chatterji are all shown as flawless 1950s ladies by Vikram Seth. Feminism theory appears to be fragmented when it is discussed without regard for patriarchal culture. In *A Suitable Boy*, the patriarchal structure plays a major part. Patriarchy Portrayed In Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*: Vasanth and Rajesh discuss the male-dominated culture in their essay, *Patriarchy Portrayed In Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy*:

*Patriarchy is a social structure in which men have main power and dominate responsibilities such as political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and property ownership. Fathers or father-figures have control over women and children in the family sphere. Some patriarchal civilizations are patrilineal, meaning the male bloodline inherits property and titles.*

In a male-dominated culture, women face several challenges, all of which are solved by their family members rather than by outsiders. Women in both the high and lower classes are expected to follow patriarchal society's customs, traditions, and beliefs.

Vikram Seth predicted that upper-class women will be oppressed as well. The Indian patriarchal system, as well as their own gender, oppress women in the guise of mothers-in-law. Women in India, whether they are of lower or higher social rank, suffer at the hands of their mothers-in-law. In the story, Veena and her companion Priya were the Indian daughters-in-representatives. law's Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, the Revenue Minister of Purva Pradesh, had a daughter named Veena. Veena and Priya were both suffocated by their mother-in-laws. Veena sobbed to Priya about her mother-in-brutalities, law's saying, "When she sees I'm not sad, she becomes more wretched" (ASB 245). Veena's mother-in-law was overjoyed at Veena's humiliation. In India, no daughter-in-law finds a way to escape her mother-in-law's grasp.

*Priya was the daughter of Agarwal, the Home Minister, and although marrying a lawyer, she had no freedom in her joint household. She was required to reside inside the confines of the house and was only allowed to leave for customary occasions such as weddings and temple visits. Her father-in-law, Rai Bagadur, considered going to market to be immoral employment. He never went to the market with*

*his daughter-in-law. As a result, Priya felt like she was in a cage and envisioned herself as a trapped panther. As she moved up and down the roof, she imagined herself as a caged panther.*

Priya despised living in a joint household after her mother died and she had lived with her father in a little house. She was raised in a nuclear family, therefore the joint family situation was quite foreign to her and difficult for her to adjust to. She never said she didn't appreciate staying at Rai Bagadur's house. The author wrote a wonderful description of the house:

*Because it covered three continuous small homes, joined lengthwise at each of the three businesses, it had a long roof... A number of storerooms and servants' quarters were located on the ground floor. Ram Vila's elderly grandpa, the Rai Bahadur, resided on the floor above him, as did his father and stepmother, as well as his sister. The puja room and the communal kitchen were also on this floor (which the unpious, even impious Priya rarely visited). The rooms of the three brothers' families were on the top level; Ram Vilas was the middle brother, and he inhabited the two rooms on the top floor of the middle home. The roof, with its washing lines and water tanks, was located above this.*

Priya lacked the strength to communicate her dissatisfaction with the joint family and her wish to live in a tiny house with easy access to every room. She went through a lot when she first joined the Rai family. Whether she liked it or not, she had to live in her husband's house, and this was the position for women in India.

Even though Mahesh Kapoor was a well-educated guy, he was nevertheless unpleasant to his wife. A man's genetic nature and culture regard a woman as a lesser sex. Because man's harsh disposition is genetic, this concept naturally blossomed in his mind. Men have always subjugated women in society for millennia. And this enslaving mentality is present in every man, regardless of his age. Cultural psychology, according to Richard Shweder, is the study of how cultural traditions and social practices control, express, and modify the human psyche, resulting in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion rather than psychic oneness for humanity. As a result, every male believes he is superior to women. And this way of thinking is passed on to the following generation. As a result, whether illiterate or literate, lower or upper class males, women are seen as second-class citizens. This societal feature is prominent across India, and via the characters of

Mr. Mahesh Kapoor, Rai Bhagadur, Rasheed's father, Varun, Maan, and Nawab Shahib, Vikram Seth has projected the cultural psychology of man.

Mr. Mahesh Kapoor never let his wife leave the house and limited her social interactions. He was happy to see her concerns, so he purposefully wounded his wife by scolding her for no reason. By enduring mental tension and restless physical labor, Indian women demonstrate that they are psychologically and psychically powerful. Their mothers-in-law, spouses, and even society have publicly humiliated them. They never, however, jeopardize their familial relationship by engaging in unlawful activities. Women's attitudes are influenced by their cultural psychology, and their patience is inherited from their elders. As a result, women understand what it means to be a subservient character in society and at home. The majority of women do not attempt to free themselves from their oppressions and sufferings, instead meekly accepting the patriarchal system. For years, this silent group had accepted oppression, and as a result, they had adopted patriarchal culture. The psychology of women is shaped by old tradition, and the result is the mind of 1950s women who meekly followed the habit. As a result, psychology shapes one's culture in accordance with socio-cultural factors.

Sharma describes the character of Indian women as the ideal of tolerance, cooperation, forgiveness, love, and compassion in the article "Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Culture in the Novels of Vikram Seth." The majority of Vikram Seth's female characters have the trait that Sharma remarked on.

In India, the more young generation has raised a strong voice against gender inequality. The Indian government has taken several progressive steps and implemented drastic adjustments to eliminate societal concerns such as child marriage and widow remarriage. Since then, society has undergone incredible changes, which are clearly reflected in the novel *A Suitable Boy*.

*When Abdur Rasheed, an Urdu tutor, told Maan that Muslim women of the lower castes had to labor in the fields and can't keep purdah, Seth remarked on the pitiful state of Muslim women in India. We Shaikhs and Sayyeds, on the other hand, make an effort. It's simply a question of honor, of becoming the village's big shot.*

The speech of Abdur Rasheed clearly demonstrates that society may adapt in response to its own needs. Muslim women from the upper middle class or higher class should adhere to the regulations completely, although women from the

lower middle class or lower class may be excused from the requirements if they labor in the fields. Lower-class Muslim women were spared from wearing purdah since the society expected them to work. Purdah would be a barrier in the field, thus the Muslim society allowed women to labor without it.

Difficult Daughters, directed by Manju Kapur, also features Malati Trivedi and Begum Abida Khan. Swarnalatha and Shakunthala, two minor characters, acknowledged their societal consciousness and applied Gandhian principles throughout the story. Swarnalata, a minor character, speaks up during the Satyagraha, which inspired women to participate in the independence struggle:

*The Congress Party's leaders are being tried on a daily basis under the Defense of India Act, a law that highlights the many different meanings of the term "country." They are thrown into the constraints of cramped jail cells since the outcome is decided. Hundreds more kids are in the same boat as them, and hundreds more will undoubtedly join them before their time is out... It is our responsibility as women, no, not obligation, since that term has awful overtones. It is a privilege for us to be able to contribute to our country's togetherness.*

Swarnalata constantly challenges Virmathi, the heroine, to consider her place in society. Lata, the heroine of Vikram Seth's tale, lacks the whole confidence to sever the unwelcome conventional link, just as Virmathi. It is wonderful to swim in the seas of tradition, but sinking in them is suicide,' said Gandhiji. As a result, women should be aware of where they must adhere to tradition and where they must defy it.

The Indian society, which restricts the activities of family women, encourages courtesans to go anywhere, meet anybody, live with a large number of people, and do anything she wants. Courtesans were appreciated and exploited by landowners. This demonstrates the patriarchal society's brutality. The males used the voiceless female's life in public in order to protect their own women behind the four walls. It is a frequent practice in India to be entertained by the Courtesan's singing. The respected individual enjoys displaying his money by entertaining courtesans at his residence. In the novel A Suitable Boy, Mahesh Kapoor invited Saeeda Bai Firozabadi, a famous singer and courtesan, to entertain his friends and relatives during Holi. Because of her status as a courtesan, all the guys praised her whenever she sang. Women despised her because they thought she was seducing their husbands, brothers, and sons. The ladies spoke about Saeeda Bai's beautiful outfit and

jewelry as they stared down through the gaps in a stick-screen. "She always wears Banarasi silk," they said. Tonight's color is red. It was green last year... Take a look at the zari embroidery on the sari. Very showy, very flashy, very flashy, very flashy, very flashy, very flashy, very flashy, very dazzling Take a look at her baubles. The thick gold necklace with the enameled design...

Despite her aptitude in numerous arts, such as singing and dancing, a courtesan was never given a place of honor in society. In contemporary India, brothels had replaced cultured homes, and courtesans were now seen as money-making machines. They were treated with cruelty and humiliation by both men and women in society. To a wealthy man, having a mistress was a source of pride, and he could easily disclose his affair to others. Women who had relationships with males were shunned by patriarchal society, which considered them as great. Vikram Seth's portrayal of exploitation and bigotry through the character Saeeda Bai is excellent.

## CONCLUSION

The paper defines culture and examines the history of Indian English writers, as well as Vikram Seth's distinctiveness and literary accomplishments. The researcher has mentioned the research's goal and goals towards the conclusion of the Introduction., Multi-Plural Society in India, examines India's many socio-cultural notions. demonstrates how an individual's intrapersonal psychology helps them to embrace societal culture. This chapter looks at how Hindus and Muslims feel about socio-cultural theory. The third chapter delves into California's Yuppie Culture.

The narrative is dominated by isolation and alienation, with the researcher tracing the source of the isolation. Queer Theory is a method of determining a gay person's psychological attitude.

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