



**SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR**

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**

# **Indian English Literature**

(Optional English)

**B. A. Part-II**

**(Semester-III Paper-IV : Novel)**

**(Semester-IV Paper-VI : Indian Poetry)**

(Academic Year 2014-15 onwards)

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## Introduction

Dear Students,

This Self Instructional Material (SIM) for Optional English at B. A. Part-II is prepared for you as distance learners. It is designed specially for you taking into consideration that there is no teacher to explain any of your difficulties. It helps you to understand the lesson. It provides answers to the Check Your Progress exercises in the end to enable you to correct your own responses to the exercises.

There are eight units in this book, which are divided into two parts, one for each semester. First part contains four units of Novel. Second part contains four units of poetry. The poems are by Indian Poets. In the third semester, you have a novel by Rama Mehta, *Inside the Haveli*. In the fourth Semester, you have an Indian Poetry. The unit on the novel is divided into four parts (Unit No. 1, 2, 3, 4) and the unit on Indian Poetry is divided into four parts (Unit 1, 2, 3, 4).

This book is, thus, carefully designed to enable you to appreciate novel as well as Indian poetry in English.

We wish you great success in your career and hope that you will take full advantage of this book in English.

**- Editorial Board**

## CONTENTS

### Indian English Literature

#### Semester–III Paper-IV

##### NOVEL

##### *Inside the Haveli* by Rama Mehta

Unit-1	Indian Women Novelists	1
Unit-2	Outline Story & Plot of <i>Inside the Haveli</i>	12
Unit-3	Theme of <i>Inside the Haveli</i>	25
Unit-4	Characters in <i>Inside the Haveli</i>	31

#### Semester–IV Paper-VI

##### INDIAN POETRY

Unit 1	i) Breaded Fish by A. K. Ramanujan	41
	ii) To an Unborn Child by Shiv K. Kumar	48
	iii) Life Signs by Jayanta Mahapatra	55
Unit 2	i) Woman by Arun Kolhatkar	61
	ii) Words to a Boy by Dom Moraes	70
Unit 3	i) The Previous Occupant by Agha Shahid Ali	80
	ii) The Accountant's House by Vikram Seth	89
	iii) Journey to Golgotha by K. Raghavendra Rao	98
Unit 4	i) Foreshadows by Manohar Shetty	109
	ii) The Female of the Species Gouri Deshpande	114

Each Unit begins with the Objectives of the Section -

Objectives are directive and indicative of :

1. what has been presented in the Unit and
2. what is expected from you
3. what you are expected to know pertaining to the specific Unit once you have completed working on the Unit.

The self check exercises with possible answers will help you to understand the Unit in the right perspective. Go through the possible answer only after you write your own answers. These exercises are not to be submitted to us for evaluation. They have been provided to you as Study Tools to help and keep you on the right track as you study the Unit.

## Unit-1

# Indian Women Novelists

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### Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Subject Matter
  - 1.2.1 Part I
    - Check your progress-1
  - 1.2.2 Part II
    - Check your progress-2
  - 1.2.3 Part III
    - Check your progress-3
- 1.3 Rama Mehta
  - Check your progress-4
- 1.4 Glossary
- 1.5 Summary
- 1.6 Key to check your progress
- 1.7 Exercises
- 1.8 Further reading

### 1.0 Objectives

After completing the study of this unit, you will:

- Acquaint yourself with development and growth of Indian women novelists.
- Understand the contribution of major Indian women novelists and features of their novels.
- Know the contribution of Rama Mehta.



## 1.1 Introduction

The Indian English Literature is gaining significance day by day. Indian fiction is the result of more than six decades. The contribution of Indian women novelists plays a vital role in it. The quantity and quality of the novels written by the Indian women novelists prove their literary potential.

Gender and biological distinctions have affected women's consciousness in every walk of their lives. Patriarchal social systems kept women to the margins and the inferior status. They were not given any opportunity to express their views or show their talent. However, novelist like Toru Dutt wrote a novel in English in 1877 and paved a way for other women novelists.

The Indian women novelists depict various subjects in their novels. They portray psychological, social, cultural, familial, spiritual, and other pictures of society. Most of the novelists put forth the Indian reality with Indian setting and characters. The study of some major Indian women novelists will bring out significance of their literary contribution to Indian writing in English.

## 1.2 Subject Matter

### 1.2.1 Part I

The secondary status given to women did not allow them to express their creative skills in writing. However, Toru Dutt whose exposure to the outer world was limited started to write novels in French and English. Her world was small and hence her two novels *Bianca* or *The Young Spanish Maiden* written in English and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* written in French became autobiographical. The story of Bianca and her sister, Inez and the story of Marguerite and Sister Veronique depict sisterly love. Though Bianca is Spanish and Marguerite French both remain Indian in spirit. The unfinished *Bianca* appeared posthumously in the *Bengal Magazine* in 1878 and *Le Journal* was also published posthumously in France and its English translation by Prithwindra Mukherjee was published serially in *Illustrated Weekly* in 1963.

There were some other women novelists who also exhibited their artistic power and wrote novels. Raj Lakshmi Debi's *The Hindu Wife* (1876), Mrs. Krupabai



## 1.2.2 Part II

After the Second World War women novelists started to write powerfully about the subjugation of women. The period from 1950 to 1980 can be defined as the phase of social representation and awakening. The most outstanding novelists of this period are Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Attia Hosain, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, and Shashi Deshpande.

Markandaya in her novels like *Nectar in the Sieve* (1954), *Some Inner Fury* (1957), *Silence of Desire* (1961), *Possession* (1963), *A Handful of Rice* (1966) and *Two Virgins* (1973), presents her women characters in relation to the historical, cultural, political and sociological environment of changing India with the focus on the issue that the political freedom is meaningless without the freedom to women. Her heroines like Rukmini from *Nectar in the Sieve*, Mira from *Some Inner Fury* show how Indian women in spite of the burden of patriarchy retain the internal reservoir of their strength to make significant contribution to socio-economic reorientation of the accepted challenges of human life. Markandaya tries to establish how emancipation of women has been obstructed by the imbalances in economic and social order.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala, in spite of her preoccupation with the complexities of East West encounter, through her well known novels *To Whom She Will* (1955, published in the United States as *Amrita*), *Nature of Passion* (1956), *Esmond in India* (1958), *The Householder* (1960), *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), *The Householder* (1960), *Get Ready for Battle* (1962), and *A Backward Place* (1965) expresses sympathy for the secondary position of woman in the situation of inter-racial marriages. She focuses women from the weaker sections like beggar women, widows, prostitutes, and the women suffering under the burden of cross cultural marriages. She brings out the difficulties of women to establish their dignity against the traditional society. She highlights the social reality and demonstrates the difficulties of women's adjustments with social commitments and personal desires. She defends the value of tradition, spirituality and social ideas.

Nayantara Sahgal advocates woman's freedom against the burden of marital bondages. Her *This Time of Morning* (1965) has the political background. She also attacks the injustice inflicted on women. In *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) the plot revolves around the problems created by partition. It also highlights the need of

emotional life in marital relationships. In *The Day in Shadow* (1971) Sahgal handles the issue of marital disharmony. In *A Situation in Delhi* (1977) and *Rich Like Us* (1985) Sahgal handles the problems of women's freedom.

Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) explores the story of Leila under the shadows of partition and violence.

Nargis Dalal is one of the greatest women novelists in India. She has excelled her contemporaries like Jhabwala and Desai. She has made her works vivid by her artistic dignity. Her novels *Minari* (1967), *The Sister* (1973), *A British Day Party* (1976) explore human existence and her vision of life. *Minari* deals with the people of aristocratic background. She depicts a variety of people of different races, religions and classes. Even the characters differ from each other in their tastes and temperament.

The novel by Anita Desai started a new phase in the writing by Indian women novelists. Her work shows her efforts to explore the tactics of oppression working within the social structure. Desai started to write women-centric novels and probed the inner recesses of feminine psyche. Her *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) is Maya's entire story of her married life. *Voices in the City* (1965) also gives the inner account Monisha's married life but it lacks the power of *Cry, the Peacock*. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sita's psychic growth gets severely curtailed by parental negligence and it results into the injury to her psyche.

Shashi Deshpande focuses on the subjugation of middle class working women. She highlights familial relationships, motherhood, negation of woman's identity, and other issues of woman's life. In her well known novels like *Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *That Long Silence* (1989), *The Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000), *Binding Vine* (2002), *Moving on* (2004), Deshpande deflects self realization and self actualization of the protagonists. She recommends that educated woman wants admiration, social recognition, and the freedom of self expression. She also pleads that women's writing must be evaluated as a part of the mainstream writing. In *Dark Holds No Terrors* she depicts the picture of the life of Sarita who escapes to her father's house being tortured by the sexual extremes of her husband but is disappointed by her parents. *The Matter of Time* answers some basic questions about life, death and relationships. The husband in the novel leaves home for his disenchantment with the material world.

In this stage of the novels the women novelists have depicted their protagonists as sensible individuals speculating the conditions of life in the context of patriotism and commitment.

### Check your progress-2

- **Choose the correct alternative to fill in the blanks**

1. *Nectar in the Sieve* is written by  
a) Kamals Markandaya                      b) Toru Dutt  
c) Attia Hosain                                d) Anita Desai
2. Ruth Praver Jhabvala's novel is \_\_\_\_\_  
a) *The Day in Shadow*                      b) *To Whom She Will*  
c) *A Situation in Delhi*                      d) *Rich Like Us*
3. Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* has a background of \_\_\_\_\_  
a) shops                      b) Partition                      c) sports                      d) games
4. *This Time of Morning* is written by \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Nayantara Sahgal                      b) Attia Hosain  
c) Kamala Markandaya                      d) Ruth praver Jhabvala
5. *Cry, the Peacock* is a novel by \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Anita Desai                                b) Shanti Deshpande  
c) Bharati Mukharjee                      d) Arundhati Roy

### 1.2.3 Part III

With the advent of Bharati Mukharjee and Arundhati Roy, new frontiers of women's writing were explored. They made efforts to express the issues that are not gender specific but they do reflect the vision of the world. They represent postmodern social scenario. They go beyond the domestic lives of women and handle issues like multiculturalism, terrorism, inner-racial marriages, technology, transnationalism etc.

Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) shows her conscious understanding of the marginalized communities. Her linguistic innovations have changed the history of writing by women novelists.

Mukherjee exposes the situation of migration and hybrid culture in *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989), *The Holder of the World* (1993), *Desirable Daughter* (2003) and *Tree Bride* (2007). She explores new dynamics of man and woman relationship. Her heroines are the combination of sensitive women and self aware individuals.

The other women novelists are Gita Hariharan, Gita Mehta, Namita Gokhale, and Shobha De. Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of the Night* (1982) won the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book. *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994) and *When Drums Travel* (1999) show her delightful writing. Her controlled sentences and brevity of words reflect her writing skill.

Mehta's *Raj* (1989) and *A River Sutra* (1993) focus Indian culture and history.

Namita Gokhale's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1999) pioneered her own path. It is an autobiographical novel. The novel has sexual and psychological implications. In this novel Priya Sharma desires an illicit relationship with man called B.R.

De's novels depict the picture of Indian society. The women in her novels symbolize the overpowering materialism and the lack of spirituality that characterizes modern age. In *Socialite Evenings* (1989) she shows the struggle of woman against the male dominated society.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni experiments with the technique of magic realism in *The Mistress of Spices* (1997). Anita Rau Badami broke the barriers of sentimental feminism and expressed nationalism, hybrid culture, dislocation etc. In *Hero's Walk* she expresses her concern for the predicament of the children of immigrant. She explores the trauma existing in life of Sikh minority in *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*

Kiran Desai handles issues of globalization, nationality, immigrants, multiculturalism etc. in her Booker Prize Winner *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). She presents multicultural global society and the predicament of man.

In the contemporary scenario Manju Kapur's novels *Difficult Daughters* (1998) and *Immigrant* (2009) mark a change in the writings by women novelists. In *Difficult Daughters* she raises her voice against taboos that obstruct woman's growth in India. In *A Married Woman* (2003), she speaks of marriage and woman's search for freedom. In *Home* (2006), she handles the issues of gender ideology. In *The Immigrant* (2008) she deals with the physical relationships between men and women from woman's point of view.

At present, there are many Indian women writers in India and abroad writing and contributing to Indian English writing actively.

### Check your progress-3

1. In *God of Small Things* Arundhati Roy shows \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Community
  - b) marginalized community
  - c) prince
  - d) princes
2. Bharati Mukherjee presents the themes of \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) religion
  - b) gods
  - c) migration
  - d) movies
3. *The Mistress of Spices* is a novel with \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) magic
  - b) realism
  - c) magic realism
  - d) false
4. *The Inheritance of Loss* is novel by \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Manju Kapur
  - b) Kiran Desai
  - c) Shashi Deshpande
  - d) Anita Badami
5. *Difficult Daughters* is written by \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Manju Kapur
  - b) Anita Badami
  - c) Chitra Divakumari
  - d) Bharati Mukherjee

### 1.3 Rama Mehta (1923 – 1978)

Rama Mehta was born in Nainital. She was one of the first women to be appointed to India's foreign service. However, Mehta was forced to resign her position after her marriage. She became a top sociologist, lecturer and novelist. She

married into an aristocratic family of the Oswal community in the erstwhile Mewar state. The Oswal community strictly maintained the *pardah* system. There is a significant resemblance between the life of the protagonist of the novel *Inside the Haveli* and Mehta's own.

Catherine Galbraith (1913-2008), an American author, co-authored a book *India : Now and Through Time* with Mehta in 1972. This book was intended to introduce children from the age of 10 to 14 to the culture and life of India. The book includes personal anecdotes and photographs. Joseph Lelyveld of *The New York Times* described the book as a graceful and accurate book that makes the reader wish for more stories.

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University has established 'The Rama Mehta Lecture'. The purpose of this lectureship is to invite to Radcliffe and Harvard a distinguished woman in public affairs, the sciences, or the arts who has a deep understanding of the problems of women in developing countries.

Mehta's first novel *Inside the Haveli* (1977) can be taken as a model of Indian sensibility. By using the common metaphor of *Haveli* the heroine of the novel, Geeta brings about a change. The novel won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979. The other non-fiction works of Mehta are: *The Western Educated Hindu Woman* (1970), *The Life of Keshav: A Family Story from India*(1971), *Divorced Hindu Woman* (1975). Her article in *Indian Women: From Purdah to Modernity* edited by Bal Ram Nanda is a her significant contribution to the writing about the problems of Indian women.

#### **Check your progress-4**

##### **Choose the correct alternatives to fill in the blanks:**

1. Rama Mehta was born in .....  
a) Nainital                      b) Dehradun                      c) Ambala                      d) Bharuch
2. The Oswal community strictly maintained the ..... system.  
a) loan                              b) golden                              c) sad                              d) *pardah*
3. *Inside the Haveli* won the ..... Award in 1979.  
a) Sahitya Akademi    b) Sahitya Sadhana  
c) Sahitya Sandhi    d) Sahitya



## 1.4 Glossary:

**Patriarchal:** Ruled by man/men.

**Margin:** Lower limit/Barely adequate.

**Exposure:** The revelation of an identity.

**Domesticate:** Accustom to home life and management

**Emancipation:** Liberation/ Setting free.

**Mainstream:** The prevailing trend in opinion, fashion, etc.

**Speculate:** Consider

**Scenario:** Outline with details of situations.

**Innovation:** New methods/ideas

**Immigrate:** Come as a permanent resident to a country other than one's native land.

## 1.5 Summary:

Indian women novelists started to write novels when the status of women in society was low and they did not get opportunities to express their views. In spite of the patriarchal burden the writers like Toru Dutt, Raj Laxmi Debi, Swarnkumari Devi revealed their creative capacities through their novels. Jhabvala, Markandaya, Hosain, Sahgal, Dalal, Deshpande steadily used their talent to put forth the predicament of men and women in Indian society.

The novelists like Mukharjee, Roy, Desai, Divakaruni reflect their capacity to handle the global subjects and various writing techniques.

The contemporary scenario of Indian women novelists is giving a new dimension to the field of Indian writing in English. Indian women novelists are getting name and fame world over.

## 1.6 Keys to check your progress

### Check your progress-1

1-a

2-b

3-a

4-b

**Check your progress-2**

1-a          2-b          3-b          4-b          5-a

**Check your progress-3**

1-b          2-c          3-c          4-b          5-a

**Check your progress-4**

1-a          2-d          3-a

**1.7 Exercises:**

1. Write a note on the contribution of the Indian women novelists who started to write novels at the very beginning stage.
2. Bring out the contribution of major women novelists to Indian English novel.
3. Write a note on Rama Mehta's contribution to Indian English novels.
- 4.

**1.8 Further Reading**

1. Iyengar, K. R. S. Indian Writing in English, Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1973 Print.
2. Naik, M. K. A History of Indian Writing in English, New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1982 Print.



## Unit-2

### Outline Story & Plot of *Inside the Haveli*

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#### Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Outline story
  - Check your progress-I
- 2.3 Plot of *Inside the Haveli*
  - Check your progress-II
- 2.4 Glossary
- 2.5 Key to check your progress
- 2.6 Exercises

#### 2.0 Objectives

After completing the study of this unit, you will

1. know briefly about Rama Mehta's novel, *Inside the Haveli*.
2. know about the outline story of the novel.
3. learn about the plot of the novel.
4. be able to answer questions on outline story and plot of the novel.

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this unit we are going to discuss the outline story of Rama Mehta's novel, *Inside the Haveli*. It brought her lot of popularity. It could help Rama Mehta to bag the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979. This novel is the depiction of the struggle of the protagonist, Geeta for her identity. Her personality is split into modern impression of Bombay and traditional life at haveli, Udaipur. It is a remarkable novel from the viewpoint of the communication in its socio-cultural context. As a

sociologist, Mehta had direct experience of the purdah system as well as other traditions in Oswal families in Rajasthan. The novelist presents her sociological study in the form of a novel, *Inside the Haveli*.

## 2.2 Outline story

### Part I

The novel opens with the entry of Geeta, the protagonist of the novel in a new situation. Geeta, the protagonist is a girl born and brought up in Bombay. She had studied in co-educational college and had an exposure to metropolitan life. She comes to Udaipur as the nineteen-year-old bride of Ajay Singh, a professor of science. The novel begins with a negative stance. At the end of the novel, Geeta accepts the life of the haveli as a willing prisoner as she finds that the haveli stood for its typical features – grandeur, pride, dignity and honour.

Ajay's ancestors were the ministers of the Ranas of Udaipur and their haveli, Jeevan Niwas, was one of the biggest and the most prestigious havelis of Udaipur. It is an immense cultural shock for a spontaneous, vivacious and educated girl like Geeta to adjust and adapt to the stringent and traditional ways of the haveli, wherein women kept purdah. The novel presents the story of the protagonist's identity-crisis in the cross-cultural content. Brought up in Bombay, Geeta the independent young woman struggles to maintain her modern identity in a traditional world of the haveli of Udaipur, where she is married. Therefore, the novel projects a journey to find woman space in the society and to search one's own authentic identity. Geeta tried to speak in a distinctively personal voice, among the collective voice, asserting the autonomy of women.

Geeta, being outsider knows nothing about the traditions and values of the haveli. Her frank, talkative and spontaneous nature would be the main obstacle in adjusting with the old traditional world of haveli. Her husband Ajay was also an educated man working as a professor of science in Udaipur University. Geeta felt suffocated in the haveli besides all comforts and wealth around her. There was only hope to her that her husband may get job in Dehli where they could settle and get rid of the haveli life.

The novel is set in Udaipur, once the capital of the state of Mewar. It is famous for its grand history and noble heritage. The city is surrounded with beautiful natural

scenes. The gateways palaces and havelis are city's typical features. The novel provides the readers entry into the haveli of Sangram Singhji. Sangram Singhji was one of the trusted ministers of the king of Mewar.

The typical structure of haveli, having different sections creates the suitable atmosphere for the novel. The historical courtyard with three rooms is at the entry of the haveli. Further, there are many more rooms. There were separate rooms for women keeping the aim of purdah system. Women were confined to their rooms only and no woman was entering in the male section. Males of the family and very close relatives were allowed to enter into women section or rooms. While entering, male also have to give announcement of their entry. The servants male as well as female were comparatively enjoying the freedom. The maid servants can have conversation with their husbands as there was no intersecting wall among them.

Geeta felt very awkward in the haveli as was taken as outsider in the haveli. No one was positive about her. Everyone used to say that she needed a training to learn the system of the haveli and the member in the family. Her husband was the only help for her but it was also only in night time. The traditional system of the haveli was not permitting this new couple to live together. Ajay, being educated also do not agree with this structure but he was helpless before the elders and the tradition. Geeta's maid, Dhapu played very important role as she was her friend and guide. She taught Geeta the manners and etiquettes required in the haveli. She used to give advice regarding how to shake hand others. She was told to speak a little and maximum answers can be given with nodding only. Geeta was curious to listen what happens outside her room.

Geeta's father-in-law, Bhagwat Singhji and mother-in-law, Kanwarni Sa were very strict. Her mother-in-law used give orders to all the family. She enjoyed the dignity in the family. Her self-confidence was so much that she spoke very strongly and even moved in the house with special power. She gave regular instructions with high pitch to Geeta regarding family matters. Though she was strict, she was full of concern and affection. The incident of fastening the bracelet on Geeta's wrist is sentimental one. She plainly announced her as the next to her; meant Geeta had to take charge after her. Geeta learnt the ways of living in the haveli day by day. She was introduced with Ajay's relatives – uncles and aunts in the course of time. They used to visit the haveli frequently.

Geeta learnt the ways of haveli within two years perfectly. She had forgotten her past and adopted the tradition of the haveli. Here, Geeta compromised with new situation and tradition. She changed herself totally any how she could live very amicably with the haveli life. The manner of respecting the elders was rather artificial one but it helped to maintain the unity and harmony in the haveli. Unpleasant words and loud voice was strictly restricted in the haveli so everyone used to speak in a low voice. Geeta also learnt to control her feelings and words. Very soon, Geeta was liked by all. She also respected all her family members. She showed great respect for her mother-in-law who gave her blessings for happy life.

## **Part II**

Many of women were frequently invited by Geeta's mother-in-law to have chatting and refreshment. Many times singing and dancing programs were arranged during the evening time. All her family members (only males) attended those functions with enthusiasm. They exhibit their aristocratic style in taste of dresses. Ajay's grandfather was old enough who used to recall the memories of celebrations in the past. Ajay's birth was celebrated with a grand party. Geeta's mother-in-law respected her mother-in-law, Bhabha Sa despite her scolding words many times. Geeta's father-in-law, Bhagwat Singhji was kind and noble man. He managed the matters of haveli though the revenues were cut down regularly. He arranged the celebration of Vijay's (Geeta and Ajay's daughter) birth with a grand funfair.

The death of Bhabha Sa was the sad incident in the haveli. Her death was mourned for near about 13 days by all family. The haveli was experiencing the dignified silence. No one, including children was happy and in a merrymaking mood. The relatives and neighbouring families joined the mourning and consoled them. Karwarni Sa felt very sad over the death of her mother-in-law. She expressed the words of gratitude for her guidance and care taken for last fifty years. The family was extending warm welcome to all visitors and relatives in the past. Bhabha Sa was managing all the internal affairs. Now this responsibility falls on Kanwarni Sa who has to manage the duties, rituals and customs of the family.

Meantime, one minor episode was introduced in which the author provide a space for servants in the family. The driver, Heeralal tried to develop illicit relationship with the maid servant, Lakshmi. He used to provide her many gifts – saries, edibles etc. to attract her. But she did not respond him positively. Her

husband, Gangaram was very simple man. Once, he found the halwa packet and suspected the nature of Lakshmi. He accused her in harsh words. So, she left the house permanently leaving her daughter, Sita in the haveli. All searched her with no success. Once Khyali, another maid servant saw her and requested to return the haveli but she did not listen her too.

### **Part III**

Geeta got accustomed with haveli life. She had learnt the ways of haveli. Her mother-in-law got tired and felt weakness. So, Geeta started shouldering the responsibility of haveli besides the duties of her two children, Vijay Sa and Vikram. Her involvement in the haveli's routine life experienced the weight of the walls that restrict her the outer world. She was caring Sita, Lakshmi's daughter as like her own children. She decided to send her to school. Everybody, Vijay Sa, Pari objected her plan of sending seta to have education. Considering the suggestion of Dhapu, to seek permission from Bhagwat Singhji, she requested him for her education. Her request was sanctioned when she placed it via Pari. Bhagwat permitted sita's education uttering – it is better to be in school than play in the street. Sita was admitted to a school with great objections from many of the relatives of Bhagwat Singhji. Nandu Buo Sa, Manji Buo Sa, Kanta objected to sita's education. But somehow, Geeta succeed in changing the static life of the haveli. Sita got some friends to play with her.

By teaching reading and writing to maid servants, Geeta wanted to free them from ignorance and superstition. Sita enjoyed the school very much. Other children admired her saying – “Little Mistress”. Geeta also started classes for the children from neighbourhood families and became very happy to stay and enjoy the haveli life. Ajay's promotion and cancellation of going to Dehli, did not make her nervous to Geeta. Geeta showed sympathy for the situation of poor people who spend more money on functions such as – marriage, engagement, superstitious activities and so on to enjoy the life. The maids of the haveli joined the school; though they made fun of Geeta and her proposal of school in the beginning. After some days, women recorded the complaints about girls and their education as it made them more and more disobedient. Nandu and Manji complained that Geeta's school had generated many problems. All thought that the school was responsible to lose the dignity of the haveli. Geeta became very strong and declared that she would not endure any action that might dishonor haveli and her aging-in-laws. She firmly announced that she

would not leave Udaipur and accept the life of haveli as willing prisoner. She expresses her gratitude towards her family members who showered the love, kindness and care. Geeta's mother-in-law accepted Geeta and her proposal of classes and extended strong support for its continuity.

#### **Part IV**

In the course of time, all members became old. The haveli also looked old one. No celebrations were organized as before. The honour of haveli was diminishing. Geeta and her mother-in-law cared haveli to preserve its tradition of yearlong respect. The new generation knew nothing about the glorious past history of the haveli. Ajay's promotion and his cancellation of shifting to Dehli were welcomed by Geeta with enthusiasm. Though liked or not, Geeta accepted all the ways of living of the haveli except the purdah system. She tried to preserve the dignity of the haveli. Her classes of learning and sewing encouraged the poor to search for their identity. This social work was making the poor people aware about their rights and freedom. It was her good luck that her in-laws supported all her proposals.

Meanwhile, Sita was proposed by an educated boy, Shivaram. Every one admired Geeta's contribution in allowing education to Sita anyhow she could get such a match. Geeta knew that the marriage was the only security for women and so every woman must prove themselves to have a suitable life partner. Geeta's daughter, Vijay Bai Sa also was proposed by Vir Singh, the son of Daulat Singhji. There was long past enmity in those families. Geeta's mother-in-law accepted that proposal only with an object to develop good relations among those two families. Geeta objected the proposal because her daughter was only of thirteen years old. She objected for child marriage which was not new in Rajasthan. Everyone except Geeta accepted that proposal. Geeta strongly protested against early marriage. She tried to convince her husband that marrying a girl at an early age is the criminal act. She also blamed that all her family members were also running after money, prestige. Here, her husband, Ajay defended his parents saying they were never after money. All of them give more importance to the integrity and honesty of the family.

The marriage of came in the way of her learning. She left the school. Geeta also accepted her leaving the school as there was no other way to convince them. Geeta and her mother-in-law's visit to daulat Singhji's haveli took Geeta into her past life. She saw Vir Singhji, the proposed husband of Vijay Bai Sa and remembered her



marriage with Ajay. As like Ajay, Vir Singhji was also handsome looking boy. After observing Vir Singhji, Geeta had to change her opinion. His dignified way and nobleness were his plus points that impressed Geeta very much. She also had not seen her own prospective husband, Ajay who was selected by her mother. As like Ajay, Vir Singhji also belonged to good family which is the important factor in fixing the marriage of a daughter.

### **Part V**

The marriage ceremony of Sita was a grand ritual function as it was supported by the whole haveli. Lot of functions were performed before the actual marriage. Sarju, mid-wife bathed Sita applying various aromatic herbs and pastes any she could look more and more attractive. Sita's father, Gangaram was very happy to see the marriage ceremony of his daughter. He also remembered his wife, Lakshmi who suffered a lot without her own mistake. Sita came across one old woman who gave her a box containing a red saree, a skirt, two silver rings, a pair of silver anklets and a box of kumkum powder. Sita cried very much when she was told about that old woman who was no one else but her own mother. On the actual day of marriage, Sita looked rather changed and mature. It indicated the way of Indian life. The bridegroom arrived on a bridal horse wearing very attractive dress. His face was covered with strings of silver threads and flowers tied to his turban. All relatives were given a warm welcome for that function. Everyone was in happy mood. The priest chanted vedic hymns and Sita and Shivram were asked to exchange the garlands. Dhapu and her husband played the temporary roles of Sita's parents. Sita's leaving with Shivram made everyone sad. There were no bounds for their sad expressions. Geeta became very sad. Gangaram was happy as he was relieved from his important responsibility. The whole haveli missed Sita. After a few days, Sita returned to haveli. She was looking like a happy bird. Everyone asked her about her in-laws. She was happy to share her in-laws experiences with whole haveli.

It is the typical Indian tradition to see the matching of horoscope of a girl and boy for finalizing their marriage. Though there were many proposals for Vir Singhji, according to matching the horoscope, Vijay was suitable one. Their horoscope matched perfectly and so the whole haveli's joy had no bounds. Geeta also agreed that he was the suitable husband for her daughter. But her mind was not ready to marry her so early. Geeta's father-in-law convinced her that Vijay's education would be continued even after her marriage. He also convinced Geeta that the girl had to

marry and leave her father's house one day. Bhagwat Singhji talked with Daulat Singhji about Vijay's education after her marriage for which he also gave the consent. Geeta was still unable to decide as her mind was not approving for the child marriage. But finally, she agreed for their marriage.

### **Part VI**

Meantime, Bhagwat Singhji felt ill as he got a heart attack. That incident made all haveli nervous again. Geeta and her husband Ajay lost the joy of their daughter's proposal. When Geeta observed that her father-in-law's health was deteriorating day by day, she felt worried. She understood that the whole responsibility of haveli would come to her husband, Ajay after Bhagwat Singhji's end. She also worried as Ajay had no experience of managing the haveli matters. If he failed to shoulder the responsibility of the haveli and preserving its past dignity, glory, pride etc. the whole village would blame him. Geeta did not want to happen so as was ready to struggle for preserving haveli's dignity at all cost.

Bhagwat Singhji was getting weak and weak every day. The hope of his recovery was lost. In his final days, Geeta understood his greatness of mind. His instructions to his accountant to pay the debt of Gangaram incurred for Sita's marriage. He played the role of a huge tree under which every one of haveli got the shelter. Geeta observed the falling of that tree making all helpless. His son, Ajay was going to be replaced him. All were in doubt whether Ajay could manage all the haveli matters in the absence of Bhagwat Singhji. Geeta understood the true importance of Bhagwat Singhji and so became restless when he was counting his last moments. Geeta, her mother-in-law and husband were beside the bed continuously at last stage of her father-in-law. She only knew that the absence of her father-in-law was the great loss which may make total haveli weak one. All wept continuously over his death. Geeta observed the complete change in her mother-in-law after her father-in-law's death. The tradition of the haveli provided her black saree, no bangles, and no ornaments either in her wrist, neck or ankles. This changed picture of her mother-in-law made her to cling and cry.

Geeta's mother-in-law tried to console her saying – Don't cry, my child. My husband lived honourably leaving you behind as the mistress of the haveli. The proof of your love to him would be your keeping the haveli as trust for your children. Geeta's final decision is the turning point in the haveli. She was very aggressive and

protested the customs and traditions of the haveli. But after the death of her father-in-law made her to change that attitude and struggle for haveli's traditional sanctity. She decided to accept all the rules and conventions of the haveli that provided dignity, security and kinship. So became happy to be the 'willing prisoner' of the haveli.

It's the story of the protagonist Geeta's identity crisis in the cross-cultural context. Brought up in Bombay, Geeta the independent young woman struggles to maintain her modern identity in a traditional world of the haveli of Udaipur, where she is married off. The aristocratic culture of the haveli and the setting of Udaipur in Rajasthan evolve the socio-cultural context in the novel. As an amalgamation of tradition and modernity, Geeta is definitely a role model for thousands of women who are caught in the complexity of dilemma of traditions and modernity even today.

### **Check your progress-I**

#### **Fill in the blanks:**

- a) ..... was the name of Geeta's husband.
- b) At the age of ....., Geeta got married.
- c) Geeta objected ..... traditional system in the haveli.
- d) ..... was the name of the haveli.
- e) ..... was the name of Sita's mother.

### **2.3 Plot of Inside the Haveli**

Plot is the action or sequence of events in a literary work. It is a series of related events that build upon one another.

Plots may be simple or complex, loosely constructed or close-knit.

There are five basic elements to the plot:

- 1) Exposition
- 2) Rising action
- 3) Climax
- 4) Falling action
- 5) Resolution

An award winning novel, *Inside the Haveli* is a fine piece of work of Rama Mehta. Mehta depicts the struggle of a young girl, Geeta to maintain her identity in ancient and traditional ways of life in Rajasthan. The novel opens with Geeta's entry into haveli. The protagonist, Geeta was born, brought up and educated at Bombay. She, the modern Bombay girl, marries into a conservative family and suddenly finds herself trapped into repressive forces of traditions. Everyone calls her outsider who knows nothing about the traditions and values of the haveli. The women of the haveli utter, 'she will never adjust; she is not one of us'. No one was sure that she may adjust herself in this old traditional world. Her nature was frank, talkative and spontaneous that seems to be odd in the haveli. The Hindu purdah system in Jeevan Niwas has both theoretical and experimental background. It has a significant socio-cultural value. The purdah system would look like an insult of women's freedom and identity, but it also entailed sanctity, honour and decorum of women's identity. Geeta has only one hope that her husband, Ajay may get a job either at Delhi or Bombay where they may settle to get rid of from the suffocating situation of the haveli.

Some minor plots are well connected to the major plot to exhibit the other qualities of the protagonist. Her kind and generous nature comes out when we observe her mixing and caring the servants of the family. Dhapu, her maid, was her only guide and friend. She provides Geeta all the tips that may help her rendering with in-laws. She cares even Sita, Lakshmi's daughter very much. She convinced all her in-laws and prepared for consent for her decision to send Sita for school. She took permission from her Father-in-law for sending sita to school. Geeta also decided to teach the maid servants to read and write. She wanted to remove their ignorance and superstitions. She started classes for the children from the neighbourhood also. News of her class spread and young maids from the havelis came and joined the class. Very soon, they began to recongnise letters.

The haveli was turned into a school. Soon, there were some complaints against the classes. They pleaded that education made young girls defiant and disobedient. They spent time in listening stories than working. But Geeta continued her classes to make them more popular. Nandu and Manji disliked her progress. They said that it would harm the dignity of the haveli. Geeta could not tolerate that comment. So, she decided not leave the haveli stating, "I don't want to leave Udaipur now. The haveli has made me a willing prisoner within its walls". Sita got education and so that she could get good proposals of marriage. Everybody accepted that, because of Geeta,

Sita could get Shivram's good match. She played a vital role in Sita's marriage ceremony giving everyone comforts.

The story of Lakshmi and Heeralal is one more minor story connected here to the main story. Lakshmi, Sita's mother was a maid servant in the haveli. Heeralal, the driver tried to tempt her with gifts. Lakshmi's husband, Gangaram was a simple man. Once, Heeralal brought her a packet of halwa. Gangaram came to know about the halwa and suspected his wife's character. He accused her but of her no mistake. Lakshmi could not tolerate the false accusation so she left the haveli and her family to return never. Sita lost her motherly love and Gangaram also lost his wife suspecting falsely. Heeralal became the cause of shattering the whole family.

Geeta protested early marriages of boys and girls. She said that it was a criminal act to marry at an early age. In the beginning, she did not like the proposal of Vir Singh for her daughter, Vijay Bai Sa. But later on, she remembered her own marriage. It was also not a love marriage but an arranged one. Her mother was eager to see prospective husbands for her daughters. Here, Geeta also was eager to see her son-in-law. For the sake of haveli's joy, she accepted the proposal of Vir Singh for her daughter, Vijay. As like other members of the family, Geeta felt that Vir Singh was a suitable husband for her daughter.

Bhagwat Singhji's illness is another episode in this novel. No doctor gave the surety of his life. Ajay's face lost its youthful, carefree look. Geeta was lost in thoughts. She felt sorry for Ajay thinking how would he handle the haveli? He had no experience and cared for management of the haveli. She also felt that people would criticize him if he failed in preserving dignity and pride of the haveli. So, Geeta decided not to let this happen. After the death of her father-in-law, her mother-in-law changed into black. She was completely lost into the thoughts. Geeta cried a lot clinging to her. The words uttered by her mother-in-law, 'Don't cry my child. Your father-in-law lived honourably. He has gone leaving you the mistress of the haveli; if you lived him, you will keep this haveli as a trust you're your children' proved the success of Geeta. So, she decided to preserve the tradition of the haveli at all cost. She felt that she had to sacrifice certain things to preserve the sanctity of the traditions. She accepted the life of the haveli that epitomized dignity, security and kinship. It did not allow freedom but it had its beauty, the beauty of the bond of traditions. Her individuality was smothered under her grateful acceptance of the

life of the haveli. The only question remains – was stability and security worth bargain for individuality and freedom?

To sum up, the plot of the novel is skillfully woven leaving no any gap in the flow of the thought. It is very simple having no intricacies. Rama Mehta succeeds in projecting Geeta’s character through different minor actions linking properly. She has shown her masterly skill in the construction of the plot.

### Check your progress-II

- a) In a literary work, Plot is the .....of events.
- b) Geeta was born, brought up and educated at.....
- c) The ..... system would look like an insult of women’s freedom and identity.
- d) ..... became the cause of shattering the family of Gangaram.
- e) Geeta felt that ..... was a suitable husband for her daughter.

## 2.4 Glossary

**Purdah:** Purdah is a Persian word means ‘curtain’. A cultural practice in Hindu society.

**Conservative:** old traditional beliefs follower

**Repressive forces:** Pressurizing, burdening elements

**Stifling:** hard, rigid

**Segregated:** separated, divided.

## 2.5 Key to check your progress

### Check your progress-I

- a) Ajay                      b) At the age of nineteen      c) Purdah
- d) Jeevan Niwas        e) Lakshmi

### **Check your progress-II**

- a) action or sequence                      b) Bombay                      c) purdah  
d) Heeralal                                      e) Vir Singh

## **2.6 Exercises**

### **Essay type questions**

1. Explain the outline story of the novel, Inside the Haveli.
2. Comment on the plot construction of the novel, Inside the Haveli.

### **Write short notes**

1. Traditions in the haveli
2. Family system in the haveli
3. Opening of the novel
4. The ending of the novel.
5. Elements of the plot

## Unit-3

### Theme of *Inside the Haveli*

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#### Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Theme of *Inside the Haveli*
- 3.3 Check your progress-I
- 3.4 Glossary
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key to check your progress
- 3.7 Exercises
- 3.8 Further Reading

#### 3.0 Objectives

After completing the study of this unit, you will

1. comprehend the theme of *Inside the Haveli*.
2. Understand the central conflict in the story.
3. Understand the events of the story.

#### 3.1 Introduction

Theme means an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature. It is the central idea explored by the literary work. A work of literature may have more than one theme. Simple ways to understand, find, and analyse literary theme is:

1. Understand the concrete events of the story
2. Understand the central conflict in the story
3. Look at the events of the story in the light of the universal human experience



4. State the answers to the questions that you have pursued. These statements will be literary themes.

There may be major theme/s and minor theme/s in the story. The details of the events surrounding the central conflict contain the major theme/s of the story. The details of the events surrounding the other minor conflicts contain the minor theme/s of the story. Themes of any given story grow out of its plot and conflict.

### **3.2 Themes of *Inside the Haveli***

*Inside the Haveli* depicts the life of a woman trapped in traditions and a desire to free herself from them. Hence, the major themes of the novel are surrender and compromise.

The haveli represents the silence of the women who strictly follow *Purdah* and other rules of Rajput families. Geeta, the heroine of the novel is an educated girl born and brought in modern Bombay. She marries Ajay, a lecturer at University of Rajasthan. Ajay belongs to a traditional Rajput family of the state living in ancient haveli with three hundred years of its past glory.

Geeta is not happy with the life inside the haveli. She finds herself trapped in the traditional value system. The women in the haveli are passive sufferers. They live life as per the traditional rules and taboos of the haveli. Geeta, who is brought up at Bombay in an atmosphere where men and women can mingle freely, cannot bear the orthodox system and values of the haveli. She feels that the purdah system is a kind of cruelty against women.

Geeta tells Ajay that he should leave the haveli and get job in Delhi. When Ajay is appointed as the head of the department at Udaipur University, he tells Geeta that he cannot leave Udaipur and he has to take care of his parents also. Geeta knows it well that it is impossible for Ajay to leave the haveli and its life. Slowly, Geeta accepts Ajay's decision and also the life inside the haveli willingly. She knows the strong bond of Ajay with the haveli. By the time she finds that women are not humiliated but respected. They call each other with due respect. Politeness, courtesy and decorum are the part of the life in haveli. Geeta sacrifices her freedom for the domestic life but she believes that people should move with the time.

Geeta desires to bring changes in the haveli. Her first step towards it is sending Sita, the servant's daughter, to school. The second step is starting classes for maid servants and the servants of the neighbouring havelies. There is protest and criticism but she succeeds as the maid servants and other women come to her classes for learning. No one in the haveli had thought of educating servants' children. Servants and relatives oppose Geeta's decision but her father-in-law supports her. He supports Geeta saying that people of the haveli must change with time. Geeta feels happy in the haveli. Sita's education helps her in getting an educated young man, Sjhivram, as her husband. Instead of becoming a servant, Sita goes to a farmer family with good income.

Geeta comes to know that family honour should be preserved. She finds that her father-in-law was concerned about her. He often inquires about her health. He advises the maid servants to provide her comforts and space required. Her mother-in-law wants to mould Geeta as per the haveli's rules. But she is very kind towards Geeta. She protects Geeta when Geeta is criticised for starting classes for servants. Geeta notices the kind behaviour of her in-laws and she becomes interested in haveli's culture and reputation. She wishes to protect haveli's dignity.

Geeta does not accept Vijay Bai Sa's engagement with Vir Singh. She believes it wrong to marry her daughter at an early age. She protests very boldly saying that she would not give permission for a child marriage. Geeta's father-in-law convinces Geeta of the proposal of Vir Singh. He tells her to think of the girl's marriage at the proper time. He tells her that Vijay can continue her studies after her engagement to Vir Singh. Geeta understands that Vir Sing is quite handsome and educated. He comes from a rich family and is going to London for further studies. At the end of the novel Geeta accepts the proposal. However, it is to be noted that she is not forced to accept the proposal. Geeta begins to understand the importance of haveli's culture.

Geeta has to accept the traditions of the haveli. When her father-in-law dies, her mother-in-law says to Geeta "Don't cry, Binniji. You are now the mistress of this haveli. You can't forget your traditions in its sorrow." Geeta knows that her father-in-law was truly a great man. He believed in traditions but he was equally tolerant. It was a tradition for him to be kind and generous. Geeta promises her mother-in-law that she would live in the haveli and preserve the traditions and values of the haveli.

At the end of the novel, Geeta says that she is a willing prisoner in the haveli. She realizes that haveli has given her love. She says that her children must grow in the haveli and learn to respect the haveli and its traditions and dignity. She comes to know that the traditions of the haveli have cultural values.

Geeta accepts her role with dignity assuring that she would do her best to maintain the dignity of the haveli. She surrenders to the rules and regulations of the haveli. She is ready to adjust and she is successful in adjusting with the traditions of the haveli. Of course, Geeta's step to educate the servants is a step of bringing modernity and change in the haveli. It suggests that the new ideas will prevail in the haveli without harming the honour and reputation of the haveli. Geeta succeeds in breaking the silence of the haveli by transforming the orthodox customs of the haveli. She surrenders herself to the love of the in-laws and her husband. She compromises to bring constructive and sophisticated changes in the haveli.

### 3.3 Check your progress

#### Choose the correct alternatives to fill in the blanks

1. The details of the events surrounding the central conflict contain the ..... of the story.  
a) minor            b) major            c) insignificant    d) irrelevant
2. Geeta, the heroine of the novel is an educated girl born and brought in modern .....  
a) Bombay        b) Delhi            c) Pune            d) Jaipur
3. No one in the haveli had thought of ..... servants' children.  
a) Raipur        b) Jaisalmer      c) Manipur        d) Delhi
4. No one in the haveli had thought of ..... servants' children.  
a) educating     b) convincing     c) considering    d) caring
5. Geeta's father-in-law convinces Geeta of the proposal of .....  
a) Vir Singh     b) Sher Singh    c) Pur Singh      d) Shur Singh

### 3.4 Glossary

**Transnationalism** : Extending beyond national boundaries.

**Taboo** : Prohibition/restriction imposed on certain behaviour by social custom.

**Ideology** : The manner of thinking characteristics of a class or individual.

**Anecdote** : Story/Tale

**Implication** : Suggestion

**Metaphor** : Symbol/Image/Simile

### 3.5 Summary

*Inside the Haveli* depicts the story of Geeta caught in a conflict between tradition and modernity. At the beginning of the novel Geeta is not willing to accept the culture of the haveli. In the due course of the time she gets attached with her family members but she cannot accept the purdah system. Her mind changes and she thinks about the proposal of Vir Singh. Though she cannot change the purdah system she gets success in bringing reformation in the haveli by educating Sita and maid servants in the haveli. Thus the novel focuses on the themes of Geeta's surrender and compromise.

### 3.6 Key to check your progress

I 1-b 2-a 3-d 4-a 5-a

### 3.7 Exercises

1. Write in brief the theme of surrender in *Inside the Haveli*.
2. Write a note on the theme of compromise.
3. Write a note on the clash between tradition & modernity.

### 3.8 Further Reading

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## Unit-4

### Characters in *Inside the Haveli*

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#### Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Subject Matter
  - 4.2.1 Rama Mehta's Art of characterization
- 4.3 Major/ Minor Characters
- 4.4 Check Your Progress
- 4.5 Glossary & Notes
- 4.6 Key to Check Your Progress
- 4.7 Exercises
- 4.8 Further Reading

#### 4.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the remarkable features of Rama Mehta as the contemporary Indian woman novelist in English.
- Know about Rama Mehta's art of characterization.
- Know about the technique in the novel.
- Explore the protagonist, Geeta's inner self and her individuality.
- Study the struggle of a young woman to maintain her identity.
- Understand Rama Mehta's feminist perspective.

#### 4.1 Introduction

This unit acquaints the students with one of the most celebrated, prolific contemporary Indian women novelists in English known as Rama Mehta and her novel *Inside the Haveli* (1977). In the detailed study of this novel, they will learn

about Rama Mehta's art of characterization, technique and the protagonist's own way of emancipation and her individuality.

## **4.2 Subject Matter:**

### **4.2.1 Rama Mehta's Art of Characterization:**

*In Inside the Haveli*, Rama Mehta depicts the dilemma of a woman trapped in traditions that binds her and a desire to free herself from these domineering forces. It portrays the ancient and traditional ways of life in Rajasthan. Rama Mehta focuses more on sociological side of the characters rather than psychological. Her characters behave keeping in mind the rules of the society and status. She succeeds amply in giving us the faithful pictures of the erstwhile Rajput and Oswal families of Rajasthan.

There are major and minor characters in the novel. Geeta, is the protagonist of the novel. The major character in the novel is Geeta. The remaining other characters such as Ajay Singh, Sangram Singhji, Bhabha Sa, Bhagwat Singhji, Kanwarni Sa, Dhapu, Lakshmi, Manji Bua Sa, Sita, Gangaram, Hiralal etc. are minor character. But they play a major and significant role in the development of the novel.

## **4.3 Major / Minor Characters:**

### **Geeta: Female protagonist of the novel**

Geeta is a female protagonist of the novel. She was born and brought up in Bombay. She had studied in co-educational college. She had seen and experienced lively urban life of Bombay. She married into a very conservative family of Udaipur. She comes to Udaipur as the nineteen-year-old bride of Ajay Singh. Her husband Ajay Singh works as a Professor of Physics in Udaipur University. She loves her husband who is quite intelligent and kind. He too loves her deeply. The novel focuses on the conflict between tradition and modernity. In the novel the haveli represents the Indian tradition and the girl, Geeta represents modernity. The moment she lands in Udaipur, she is chastised for being bare faced and made to realize that she is an outsider even by the maids of the haveli. Geeta finds herself suddenly enclosed and encaged in a huge haveli where she is all the time surrounded by women. There were separate apartments for women. Men could not enter the area of women. She had no communication with her father-in-law. Even she had a very little time to talk to her husband. She remembered that even her mother had advised her to

keep her head covered and never to argue with elders. After her arrival at the haveli, her brother-in-law and Pari, an elderly maid servant trains her in the ways of the life of the haveli.

Even after two years of her marriage, Geeta has seen neither her father-in-law nor her grandfather- in-law. She feels restrained and lonely in the haveli. She told Ajay about her suffocation and he sympathized with her. He told her that he would try to find a job in Delhi and then they would leave Udaipur. This comforted Geeta and she started adjusting herself to the life of the haveli. She gave birth to Vijay Bai Sa, a daughter.

By and by, Geeta was enchanted by the harmony, dignity and security of the haveli life. After her grandmother-in-law's death, her mother-in-law told her that she had learnt a lot from her mother-in-law and this is the way the traditions of the family are upheld. The death of Bhabha Sa was mourned with all seriousness. No one talked loudly. After thirteen days of mourning, the haveli restored itself to its normal life.

Now Geeta had learnt many things. She had become more calm and subdued. Once while her mother-in-law had gone out, she managed the haveli quite deftly. When Vijay went to school, Geeta decided that Sita, the daughter of Lakshimi, the maid servant should also go school. All other people except her father-in-law opposed this proposal. Education for servant girl is a very bad decision by Geeta. Despite all the disorientation and criticism, Geeta succeeds in sending Sita to school and the attitude of maids and the haveli women mellows down. She does not stop here and starts classes for the haveli maids and their children as well as of other havelis. She teaches them reading, writing, tells them stories and also takes knitting and sewing classes for them. Though the classes become very popular and get immediate success since their commencement, the mistresses of other neighbouring havelis criticize Geeta's attempt and complain to Bhagwat Singh's wife: "Kanwarni Sa, my niece's husband is already fed up. Before going to work he has to eat cold roties lift from him because his wife comes here to listen to stories is that what a woman should do?" (p.162). Ajay and her father-in-law praise her for her efforts: "You did the right thing; I am proud of you. It is time for new ideas to enter the haveli", Said Ajay Singh with conviction (p.137). But for Geeta's mother-in-law, it was again a whim on her part.



Geeta continues with her efforts to bring education to the servants, though she thinks of revising her decision off and on. The change that the protagonist is trying to bring about is neither welcome nor acceptable to these women who find social security in the old patriarchal culture and rigid traditions of the haveli. Geeta's efforts bear fruit and she is appreciated by one and all when Sita is married to an educated boy who has a 'pucca' house, land and bullocks in addition to a promising future. Gradually Geeta learns to respect the continuity, validity and strong emotional ties of the haveli people.

Time comes when Geeta begins to accept the life of the haveli and begins to feel that it was not a prison. Even, if it was a prison, it offered security and love. Ajay had promised Geeta that he would seek better prospects outside Udaipur but once he announces that it was impossible for him to leave Udaipur. He had duties towards the family and the haveli. A few words of Ajay had put an end to her restlessness. She accepts the path of adjustment and accommodation. She feels that she is able to breathe new life in the haveli.

Finally she emerges as the new lady of the haveli. She opposed the tradition of early marriage for girls very strongly. She is against Vijay's engagement with Vir Singh as Vijay is still a child. She speaks to her mother-in-law for the first time in a raised voice, " Bhabhi, whatever happens, Vijay can't get engaged at this stage" (p.205). All the family members try to convince her but Geeta remains defiant, even though it leads to the severe heart-attack of her father-in-law. Bhagwat Singh makes an emotional appeal to Geeta. However, she agreed to it later as Vir Singh was to go to England for further studies and marry after some years. It was also decided that Vijay should continue her studies till she got married. When her father-in-law dies, she sobs uncontrollably. Her mother-in-law tells her that now she was mistress of the haveli and it is in her hands to uphold the prestige and tradition of the haveli. Geeta decided to so calling herself a willing prisoner of the haveli. The novel ends with the death of bhagwat Singh and Geeta's taking over the responsibility of presenting the customs of the haveli. In the end we feel pity over the death of Bhagwat Singh and the widow's attire of Kanwarni Sa, but at the same time we feel proud of Geeta who sacrifices her modernity for keeping the traditions of haveli and turns out to be a true Indian woman. Love and concern do not bind anyone but makes one free. She finds her own way of emancipation and individuality

- **Minor characters**

**Ajay Singh:**

Ajay Singh is Geeta's husband. He is a Professor of science at Udaipur University. He is always busy with his work and spent very little time with Geeta. He tells Geeta that he knows that the life in the haveli would be difficult for her. He assures her that he would always support her in whatever decision she would take. He admits that men were really pampered and women in traditional society suffered but he loved her deeply and wanted to see her happy all the time.

Ajay's character is bit dull as he is over shadowed by his father. He lacks drive and initiative required in as owner of the haveli. He is quite unlike the member of a royal family. He is torn between traditions and modernity but even then, he lacks active participation either in traditional ways of life or modern reforms. He is a good Professor but he does not possess the qualities of an administrator or a ruler. In fact, it is Geeta who finally decide to uphold the values and traditions of the haveli.

**Kanwarni Sa:**

Ajay Singh's mother and Geeta's mother-in-law is quite a remarkable character. She is called Kanwarni Sa by the servants. She is a tiny lady with small bones. Her body is quite frail and fragile. Her complexion is smooth and her mouth is firm. There is rigidity in her thin life. She exuded self-confidence and dignity. When Geeta came to the haveli as a bride, she told her to follow the traditions of the haveli. She told her to cover her face and speak as little as possible. She controlled everyone with craft and tenacity. She never raised her voice. Her gentle persuasion made Geeta fall into the routine life of the haveli smoothly. She always gave her plenty of love and care. Kanwarni Sa represents the strong-willed powerful woman.

**Sangram Singhji:**

He is the grandfather of Ajay Singh, Geeta's husband. He was an old man when Geeta came to the haveli as a bride. The haveil was then called Sangram Singhji's haveli. He was a highly reputed man in Udaipur. The king of Mewar made him one of his trusted ministers. After his death, his son Bhagwat Singhji became the head of the family. He was generous and kind towards common folk.

**Bhabha Sa:**

She is the wife of Sangram Singhji. She was quite strict as a mother-in-law. She was the mistress of the haveli till her husband lived. She often taunted her daughter-in-law Kanwarni Sa.

**Bhagwat Singhji:**

He is the son of Sangram Singhji who was truly a nobleman. He was quite liberal and modern in his views. He was a democrat in true sense. He was willing to accept new ideas. He did not impose his decision on Geeta. He had also made a reform in the family tradition. He calls Geeta 'Binniji'. He treated his servants like the members of the family.

**Dhapu:**

Dhapu is another servant who is also a married woman. She helped Geeta in many ways. She is very talkative. She is also hard-working like other maid servants Sarju and Ganga.

**Lakshmi:**

She is a young maid servant who was married to Gangaram, a male-servant in the house. She had also come to the haveli at the age of ten. She gave birth to a girl on the same day, Geeta gave birth to a daughter. Gangaram accused her of being a woman of low morals. She left the haveli leaving her daughter behind.

**Gangaram:**

He is gentle, soft spoken and kind servant. He never scolds other servants even when they laughed at his wobbling legs. He called Lakshmi 'worse than a street woman'.

**Hiralal:**

He is another faithful servant of the haveli. His effort to seduce Lakshmi shows his lustful motives. He tried to give her a parcel containing Saree and blouse.

**Vijay Bai Sa:**

She is a daughter of Geeta and Ajay Singh. She is quite intelligent and independent. She is engaged to Vir Singh to be married.

### **Sita**

She is Laxmi's daughter and married happily to Shivaram who had studied upto metric. Her education helped her in getting a good husband.

### **Vir Singh**

He is Vijay's bridegroom. He was an educated handsome young man. He was to go to England for further studies.

### **Pari**

Pari is one of the oldest servants in the haveli. She had worked in the haveli for more than forty-five years. Her father had brought her to haveli when she was eight years old. She was given away to the haveli forever. She was respected by all. She was addressed as 'Pariji'.

There are some minor characters like Daulat Singh, Nandu Bua Sa, Kanta Bai Sa (Manji) etc., khyali, the cook etc.

## **4.4 Check your progress**

### **Q.1 Answer in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- 1) Who is the protagonist of the novel?
- 2) Who is Sita?
- 3) What is the profession of Ajay Singh?
- 4) Where did Geeta study?
- 5) Who trained Geeta in the ways of the life of the haveli?

### **Q.2 Choose the correct alternative:**

- 1) Sita is married happily to -----who had studied upto metric.  
a) Hiralal      b) Shivaram      c) Vir Singh      d) Dhapu
- 2) -----is a minor character in the novel  
a) Gangaram      b) Geeta      c) none of these
- 3) Bhagwat Singhji calls Geeta -----  
a) Kanwarni sa      b) Ganga      c) Binniji      d) Kanta Bai sa

- 4) Geeta comes to Udaipur as the ----- bride of Ajay Singh.  
 a) Sixteen-year-old                      b) fifteen-year-old  
 c) eighteen-year-old                      d) nineteen-year-old
- 5) ----- made Sangram Singhji as one of his trusted ministers  
 a) The king of Mewar                      b) The king of Rajasthan  
 c) The king of Karnataka                      d) The king of Punjab
- 6) In the novel-----represents the Indian tradition.  
 a) The house      b) the haveli      c) the villa      d) the bungalow
- 7) Geeta comes to -----with her husband.  
 a) Mewar      b) Udaipur      c) Rajasthan      d) Bombay
- 8) Pari had worked in the haveli for more than -----years.  
 a) Forty-seven      b) forty      c) forty-five      d) forty-six

#### 4.5 Glossary & notes:

- **gentle(adj.):** moderate, mild
- **protagonist(adj.):** chief person in a story and a factual event
- **impose(v.):** a thrust, obligation
- **tradition(n.):** opinion or belief or custom handed down
- **modernity:** modern view, expression
- **emancipation(n.):** setting free
- **restore (v.):** to bring something back to its normal or proper state.
- **deftly (adv.):** adroitly, skillfully
- **disorientation:** to cause someone to lose his bearings
- **patriarch:** the male head of a family
- **seduce(v.):** to persuade to engage in sexual intercourse

#### **4.6 Key to Check Your Progress:**

##### **Q.1**

- 1) Geeta
- 2) The daughter of Lakshmi, the maid servant
- 3) Professor of Physics/Science
- 4) In co-educational college, Bombay
- 5) Her brothers-in-law & Pari, an elderly maid servant

##### **Q.2**

- 1) b Shivaram
- 2) a Gangaram
- 3) c Binniji
- 4) d nineteen-year-old
- 5) a the king of Mewar
- 6) b the haveli
- 7) b Udaipur
- 8) c forty-five

#### **4.7 Exercises:**

- 1) Bring out the principal traits of the character of Geeta in 'Inside the Haveli'.
- 2) **Write short notes**
  - a) The character of Ajay Singh
  - b) The character of Bhagwat Singhji
  - c) The relationship between Geeta and Ajay Singh
  - d) The character of Kanwarani Sa

**Further reading:**

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