CHAPTER 5

INDIAN DIASPORA: A SUITABLE BOY

Published in 1993, Vikram Seth's novel, *A Suitable Boy*, made history as a publishing phenomenon and impressed critics and reviewers all over the world. This book of Seth heralded the change for Om an economist poet to a fulltime writer making millionos in pounds. The book, a commentator says, is in 'more than eight lakh words kneaded, in 478 section of 19 parts in its 1347pages weighing about fifteen hundred grams.'

It is the longest novel published in England since Richardsons Clarissa and longer that Tolstoy's War and Peace. More relevant are the artistic comparisons made to Jane Auston George Eliot Tolstoy and Dickens. The pre-release publicity and the "superbly orchestrated public relations campaign." That accompanied A Suitable Boy had never ever remotely happened to an Indian author. This novel truly reminds of Tolettoy and Victorian novels to the readers. Vikram Seth has once said that the book has given him immense pleasure written in a highly readable prose style well sketched characters a very neat and natty (central) plot it may look deceptively simple in its structure and contents on the contrary Vikram Seth write a monumental work, which although clearly set in a definite socio-historical context, makes direct reference to various elements and creates a new hybrid world. Seth was immensely disappointed when Booker judges ignored the book and did not give priority to its. But his joys knew no bounds when this novel of Seth won the common wealth Prize for him. Out of joy said he, "This wwas the kind of book that reminded him of why he came to publishing."
In 1986 after the publication of *The Golden Gate* he made up this mind to return home to Indian. His decision to return home to his parent’s house in Delhi was governed by a feeling that he had been away for too long; he was missing the company of his family to whom he had always been very close. He also aimed to write a novel set in post-Independence India based on theme of a mothers search for a suitable boy, for her daughter. Seth thought it might be a short novel of around. Two hundred to three hundred pages and that he would finish it is a year or two. However the original theme was to expand exponentially:

“It was 1987, Vikram Seth was 35 years old and the novel was published in 1993. He was to say later that *A Suitable Boy*, a massive novel carved huge chunk from his 30’s”

When Seth begin writing *A Suitable Boy* he “had a few notes about what I wanted to include in it but I did not have a story, any characters who gripped me, or even a scene to start things off with.” but when he came up with it finally it was a voluminon book covering 1347 pages extended in nineteen parts.

He explains that since he felt that *A Suitable Boy* was a distinctly Indian novel he wanted the novel to the published initially in Indian and to be typset here:

“I was in Calcutta, and I knew I wanted the novel to be typesetonce only I couldn’t bear to proof read a book of this length for three different english language publishers. I would have hated it by the end. I decided to it in India to show that we could.” it is alos said that Seth used to rite as many as 12000 words a day in longh and during the writing of the book. But in one of his inter views, he refused to accept this statement and informed that:
"May be it was true for a day or but there were weeks when I didn’t write a word. The first time have written any of these novels I’ve just had a straight first draft with out looking back or publishing. Nor mally I don’t show to any one while I am writng the first draft then i send it out to friends to gauge their opinion on what works and what doewsn’t which characters make sense, and so on. Then I mull over what they have said and read the book anyself. and then I leave it for a few months because I don’t want to revise by committee so I leave it until, I think I’m ready"5 the just part of the novel open with a grand wedding and once he had finished writing it, Seth realized that he now had many characters in whom he was interested and who belonged to such varied professions that he needed to know those worlds and understand all the complexities of law, polyticvs, administration medicine farming, music, religion and soon. Hee took off for a year and traveelled across northern India by train to do research. The research inspired him with new ideas and substantiated his characters and their varied backgrounds with vividness and colour Several years went into the writing of this messive nvel which in the traditionof the European realistic novel of the 19th century tells the interconnected stories of four families fulung across north India. A Suitable Boy was to prove enormously popular and it generated a publishing history that is scarcely revalled:

"It has darkened the qualitative work of a bock beneath a breath takin façade of quantification –rores o reupees, misslions of worlds hundreds o pages ergo (and thi "truth" is determined into us with temple cacophony) the boo is bound to be as those statistics."6
A Suitable Boy\textsuperscript{20} won the connect Award in 1993 and launched Seth into a slow of interviews, talk shows and book signings on his book tour. This novel, set wholly in India gives fully well the impression of Indian Diaspora.

Like that of The Golden Gate (1986) its main plot is concerned with the question of finding suitable partner exactly on the pattern of the fictional techniques of fane Auston, an imminent Victorian novelist. A Quast-historical novel. A Suitable Boy chronicles a saga of a four intergenerational and interconnected families: the mehras the chatterjis, the Kapoors and the Khans. Will the heroine, Lata submit to her mother Mrs. Rupa Mehra's arrangement or will she follow her own spirit even if that means defying not only her mothers, but also barriers of cost and religion. Thus candidates present themselves: Amit Chatterji, Bengal; Poet and novelist sophisticated, rich and a Farahuma, Haresh an emergetic and bright youngman determined to make a career for himself in the shoe manufacturing industry and Kabir, a chicketer dashing and handsome but a Muslim. But the decision of Lala afteralt is as follows:

"Lata finally settles for Hares not implausible because unromantic and index of Seths own programmatism an of the direction in which India is, probably heading" but the main strength of the novel lies not in the business of match-making but in the depiction of the social panorama of the decade after Independence. Structured into nineteen sections and set against the backdrop of post. Independence India, leading its way towards the first general elections, the novel opens with a wedding that gives Seth a chance to introduce all these families and several major characters. It is the wedding of Savita, the elder daughter of the widowed Mrs. Rupa Mehra, to Pran a university lecturer who is son of Mahesh Kapoor, the Revenue Minister of the State. Present at the wedding
are the khan family of the Naawab of Baitar, the close friend of Mahesh Kapoor and the anglicized Chatterji Class. The other three families are connected with the ties of Marriage, Barring the Khans Lata the heroine of the novel is the younger daughter of Mrs. Mehra who is in search of a suitable boy for the marriage of her daughtyer. This is the only idea which drives the logic of the plot and forms the main interconnecting thread of the novel Mann, the younger son of Mahesh Kapoor is another character who has his erotic connection with a Muslim girl, Saeeda Bai, Linking himself with diverse geographical and cultural sites of the novel Maan’s relation with a Muslim is paralleled in the Lata’s falling in love with a handsome young Muslim student Kabir Durrani: Mrs. Rupa Mehra is horribly shocked when she comes to know of her daughter’s connecion with a Muslim boy, and sends her at once to Calcutta, to the home of her eldest son Arun Mehra married to Meenakshi, the daughter of Mr. Chatterji a Bengali judge of great repute. A little letter Meenakshi’s brother, Amit Chatterji a well known poet falls in love with Lata by chance, since marriage is considered as a pious and sincere duty of parents to find out a suitable match for their children males or females so the other members of the family give full support to Mrs. Mehra in searching out A Suitable Boy for her daughter Lata who in love with a Muslim boy against Hindu religion. As a result Mrs. Mehara succeeds in her discovery and decides to marry her daughter with Haresh a boy from Khatri caste working in a leather manufacturing industry which of these three suitors will Lata marry and who in fact is the most suitable boy are the question that the novel portrays in details.

Seth manager to inverweave in a credible way all the larger themes of political social and religions conflicts with the day to day ordinary human emotions of his true to
life characters who have a strong resemblance to Dickensian characters, over whom
countlines readers have laughed and cried. A multitudinous of characters and events throng
the novel the setting moves back and forth between the cities of Brahmpur which is
fictional and Calcutta (a world by itself) with exertions to New Delhi, Kanpur and
Lucknow an to a remote village in the north where Maan Kapoor opens a month in
exiles Brahmpur represents a geographical area whose worth Indian identity is stretched
out to make it a representative of India as a whole. The sweep of the novel gives Seth a
chance to portray in the fictitious northern state of “Purva Pradesh” in its various aspects:

“This little fire was indeed the center of the universe. For here it burned in the
middle of this fragrant garden itself the heart of Pasand Bagh, the pleasantest locality of
Brahmpur which was the capital of the state of Purva Pradesh which lay in the center of
the Gangetic Plain which was itself the heartland of India... .... And so on through the
galaxies to the outer limits of perception and knowledge”8 the element of Indian
Diaspora lies in the fact that Vikram Seth offers a huge, thick and multi layered slice of
Indian life that in the revisit, serves to counter the wide spread false views of India and
improves the world understanding of own country. The historical scale of Seth’s novel
invites comparison with war and peace, like Tolstoy, Seth writes to history of the recent
past form the point of view of individuals whose lives are affected by the great historical
events of the time and also crosses the boundary between the invented and the historical
Nehru is his equivalent of Napoleon

It is quietly clear from the title of the novel that it contains an Indian sensibility overall.
This term suitable boy’ is very time used in the systems of arranged marriages in India.
The search is always on for suitable boys and girls. According to Meenakshi Mukharjee,
the subject of finding a suitable matter for a girl or boy in Indian fiction is not new. In support to her view she gives the example of Buddhadeb Boses Tithidor which is a massive novel written in Bengali with an interesting theme of search for a suitable husband by a girl having very limited choices. She further adds that the columniations trilogy written by Ashapuna Devi and Bimla Mitra is also directly connected with the theme of search for a suitable boy on which Seth’s present novel is based.

“Reading the M.S., before publication,
I remember having wondered if anybody except a reader like one who shares the same regional back ground would get so completely involved in the nounces of the story of those in terlocked upper middle-cast families in U.P. Bihar and Bengal. We know that the author is familiar with Austen Dickens and Eliot but his novel might just as well have been written in Bengali where a tradition exists of long three Decker realistic stories about families”

Vikram Seth the writer of the book considers of Suitable Boy’ as a plea for religious tolerance.

The Examples: “It is an insult to Hinduism that these people have hijacked what it means to be Hindu.... It is tolerance understanding-not just trying to bosh your neighbor over the bead because he is Muslim. these things need to be said.” the element of Indian Diaspora is clearly seen in the statement of Vikram Seth when he talks to Amit Roy about the genesis of a Suitable boy.

I wanted to write about Indian planned to write a series of five short novels instead I wrote one rather long novel which deals with a period I did not at first think was very interesting the early 1950’s according to Malcolm Bradbury, A Suitable Boy. “Is a vast
chronicle novel of post-Independence Indian life and one of the more startling work’s of the early Nineties.”12. I connection with Indian Diaspora the following statement are apt to be quoted: “He (Seth) thought that after dealing swiftly with this period, the would ‘go forward to the Sinne’ Indian was the Emergency and all that kind of stuff. In stead, I got stuck in that period.......’ Zamblau’ aboulition countesand losing their sources of income the British having left and the new king of politicians coming in. The old politicians who had been self sacrificing now becoming more self-serving.” 13

The search for Lata’s husband expands into a richly detailed and exotically vivid narrative that cries crosses the fabric of India denoting very clearly the idea of Indian diaspora. As Thomas Blom Hansen says.

“The secular state in India in other words not merely produce3d public spheres full of reason and science as is sometimes suggested. on the cuntry the public sphere in secular India remained full of religious signs and practices packaged and represented as culture realm represented as a political, pure and sublime. Now a friday prayer a mosque or a Hindu procession and temple wre no longer manifestations of community and sectarian strength, but picturesque and awesome manifestations of Indian culture and

The Indian nation.”14 but impolite of the fact that the book was first published from England and America, Seth has made no effort separately for the foreign readers to understand it. Hindi and Bengali words remain un translated and Indian references are not explained. Vikram Seth himself explains the reason in this connection:

“When I wrote The Golden Gate I did not make any effort to make Californian life receassible to the Indian reader. So why should I do so for foreign reeders? I can only
dope that the characters and the story interest them sufficiently to make them want to read the book.”

The plot of the novel is by all means true picture of Indian life and its system prevailing all over the country. If Mehrotra’s and Kapoor’s represent the Hindu middle classes of North India the Nawab if Baitar stands of feudal Muslim aristocracy. The aristocracy fast fading in its relevance which is symbolized by the Baitar library falling to pieces in neglect. The Nawab’s two sons Firoz and Intiaz are lawyer and doctor respectively and their careers look forward to the end of that feudal structure look forward to the end of that feudal structure ever as Zamindary Abolition Bill is being eliscussed legislature and court. Their friendship with maan like their father’s friendship is a part of the synergetic traditions of India. Haresh who considers his work as his relation, and disregards caste restrictions on working in the polluting leather industry seems to ba sign of the modern ideas of economic progress and social egalitarianism. The anglicized Chattergi’s give Seth a chance to self reflectively portray a novel in the making in the character of Amit and show a colonia metropolis like Calcutta coming to grips with political independence from the British.

Through revast canvase of the novel and the leisurely handling of the plot in linear time, the novelist attempts to represent more than just the characters and their individudal stories. It is the vast and varied life of the young nation that he attempts to represent through the fictional turn of Brahmpur, the capital of Purva Pradesh. A Suitable Boy, as a novel of Indian Diaspora is termed Quasi-historical because Seth takes several historical developments of the nation and makes them a part of his fictional character’s lives: such as the political and legal developments of the 50’s: Many political
personalities like Nehru, Kidwai and so on are dramatized as real historical figures in comes representations. However the novel may also be turned quasi-biographical dt. Is interesting to note the many biographical points of comparison between some of the characters and situations portrayed in the novel and their real basis in the individual history memory of the Seth family. All this in toto is going to make the novel a great Indian Diaspora.

David Myers, one of the noted critics, is of opinion that the novel A Suitable Boy would be comparative failure without some scenes of tragic suffering. He lays emphasis especially on the harrowing evocation of Mrs. Kapoor’s cremation and the sense of loss and tragic guilt that Mahesh Kapoor and his son Maan Kapoor suffer from. In this way, the novel deals with Indian culture and its various aspects on so many occasions that have taken place in its contents. Actually the ceremonies the honours attention morning and prayers for the dead Mrs. Mehra are not for the dead women but addressed to her, that the funnel service was usually an offer or an attention to do her service. The collection of ash and bon and carrying them back first to the dead persons house and then to holy river, like the gangs at Brahmpur is another deep rooted belief among Hindus that is bodily death is giving up of the ghost he or she must be provided with a fresh tenement or at least with some temporary accommodation Aefred C. Lyall gives another example of Hurdeo Lala who has been poisoned in Central India by his brother out of jealousy also makes the picture of Indian culture more clear. He says:

“This was a sensational murder, not unlike that of Hamlets father and whereas in England he might have been commemorated by a tragic drama, a mournful ballad, or bya
figure in wax-work exhibition, in India temples were erected to him "16 in this
connections more comment of myers is quite appropriate and worth mentioning:
“The husband (Mahesh Kapoor) has to perceive that his wife’s life, which she devoted
modestly to her ‘puja to her magnificent garden and to her family and friends has been
spectrully superior to his life which he has committed to politics ambition, secularity
and mocking contempt for his wife’s piety.”17
Myers calls it a tragic aspect of life, but it is not so. There are so many different cases in
Indian history and Indian culture that go dead against this type of understanding. The
difference of approach to this world by Mr. Kapoor and Mrs. Kapoor is as transparent-
the difference of approach of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mahesh Kapoors, political mentor
and Kamla Nehru.
“Indeed, for all the Minister of Revenues impatience with her, she was his regret. And it
was right that the should continue to be so, for he should have treated her better while she
lived the poor, ignorant, grieving foot.”18 Nehru says of Kamla: “we were attracted to
each other…… but our backgrounds were different and there as a want of adjustment.
these maladjustments could sometimes lead to friction”19
The following lines of the text show very clearly the transformation in Mahesh Kapoor
after the teeth of his wife:
“He wanted to give up and let the world take care of itself. But he could not let main go
and politics had been his life”20 the same thing happens with Nehru also and he
expresses about the death of wife, Kamala Nehru.
"I was with my wife when she died in Lausanne on February 28, 1936. A little while before news had reached me that I had been elected the president of the Indian National Congress for the second time. I returned to India." 21

Thus, both Mr. Nehru and Mr. Mahesh Kapoor were sad on the occasions of the deaths of their wives but did not feel guilty conscience at all and took it without any remove.

It is a long part history of India that death is not considered any tragic phenomenon in Indian culture. Here we have a concept of stable civilization. Mahesh Kapoor, Maan Kapoor and even Pt. Nehru are the products of this stable civilization. Hence, the death of even some ones near and dear can't check him or her from continuing his or her callings. All this comes under the prominent trait of Indian Diaspora.

The most fully realized and emotionally engaging character in A suitable Boy is Mrs. Rupa Mehra, who has only one mission left in life-to arrange a proper marriage for her youngest daughter, Lata. Mother and daughter are generation apart in their ideas but not surprisingly they eventually do reach an agreement of sorts, as a result of which they find that they are closer than they had ever imagined. Mrs. Rupa Mehra is very possessive of her family and takes care of it at any cost.

"Mrs. Rupa Mehra, torn between solicitude for from concern for Savita who was due to deliver any day now and desperate anxiety on behalf of Lata would have liked nothing better that to have an emotional break-down. But the press of events would not allow it at present and she, therefore, abstained". 22

Mrs. Mehra, besides being a typical Indian mother is a remarkable character of the novel. She is always eager to see her children well settled in life. Despite the whole mother and daughter drama there in the novel are the glimpses of resentment at the limitations of an
economic and social world in which women had no future and they had to depend either
to the resources if their husband or to those of their fathers in otherwise cases. One my
find almost no change between the female treatment of Jane Austens novels written in
19th Century in England and those of Seth who wrote this novel in post-Independence
India the 1950’s. The first statement of the novel itself.

"You too will marry a boy I choose"(3) becomes the harbinger of all the events that Lata
Seth’s female protagonist, is made to experience throughout. The second refers to Savita
and Pran who are newly married couple> In this connection, Mrs. Rupa Mehra says
authoritatively that:

“they will be happy.”(4)

And this statement of hard in due comes of thme, becomes true because this couple
throughout the novel is presented as an ideal couple by Seth. Their mutual understanding
and trust towards each other enable them to overcome the hurdles and barriers in life.
Lata is always advised in the novel to follow the edeals of Savita and Pran in so far as her
matrimonial problems are concerned:

“a gradual, stable attraction such as Savita’s for Pran was this not the best thing for her,
and for the family, and for any children that she might have.”23 so impressed is Mrs.
Rupa by the character of Pran Kapoor that she once says: “we cann’t both many from”
“What is good enough for your fiction is good enough for you”(1)

The novel does not deal only with the things about the life of Lata but it also presents
before as the scenes of political, social and individual turmoil of post. Independence
India of today in a comparatively larger perspective. The following lives of the novel are
the best representation of Indian diaspora and make some one fully acquainted with the characters:

"Now that the exchange of garlands was over the crowd pard no great attention to the actual wedding rites. These would go on for the better part of an shhour while the guests milled and chattered round the lawns of Prem nivas. They laughed they shoote hands or folded them to their foreheads. they coalesced into little knots the man here the whomen there. The warmed themselves at the charcoal filled clay stores placed strategically around the garden while their foosted, gossip laden breath rose into the air, they admired the multicoloured lights they smiled for the photographer as the murmured ready please" in English they breathed deeply the scent of flowers and perfume and cooked spices; they exchanged births and ceathes and politics and scandal under the brightly coloured cloth canopy at the back of the garden beneath which long tables of food had been laid out; they sat down exhaustedly on chair with their plates full and tucked in inexhaustibility servants, some in white livery some in khaki, brought around fruit juice tea and coffee and snacks to those who were standing in the garden, samosas, kachauries ladues, gulab jamuns, burfis and gajak and icecream were consumed and replenished alongwith puris and six kinds of vegetables. Friends who had not met each other for months fell upon each other with loud cries, relatives who met only at weddings and funerals embraced tearfully and exchanged the latest news of thrid cousins thrice removed Lata's aunt from Kanpur horrified by the complexion of the groom was talking to an aunt from Lucknow about 'Rupa's black grand children' as if they already existed."24

Because of a long line of characters in the novel, actually it becomes very difficult for some to known as to who is who and what she or he has to do and where. This is a kind
of typical Indian as India is a very populous country which is a melting pot of various colours castes, cultures and creeds. This is the reason that the novel is not about a single individual or a single family or a single event but of India itself as whole.

The picture of India that Vikram Seth has portrayed in *A Suitable Boy* is not only an India of sex and passion, high fashion, fast car and slick life; it is an India of people, loving their customs and traditions; an India of tolerance and understanding, an India of self made people with rationality and sanctity and over and above all an Indian of not love marriages but of arranged marriages in which only parents' opinions are respected and followed. Hence, the novel can be treated as a diasporic creation in the realm of literature.

It is not unbelievable to say that *A Suitable Boy* is a 'magnum opus' a social comedy of all assismenting and all captivating. It is exactly in the good tradition of Jane Auston, Charles Dickens and R. K. Narayan. This novel of Vikram Seth also gives us the touch of political realism imphatically pleaded by not only Graham Grence but also by Nayamtare Sahgal a noted novelist of India. Apart from this the novel like *Raag Darbari* of Srilal Shukla, truly presents a curious blend of social comedy and political realism found in the academic world of professor and Dr. Pran Kapoor. Establishing a compison between the cases of Mrs. Bennet of Austen in Pride and Prejudice and Mrs Rupa Mehra of Vikram Seth in A Suitable Boy no opinion of Nred C. Choudhari is quite relivant in this connection:

"A for stringer force, in actual fact the only positive force, is the Hindus insatiable greed for money .... It is this love of money which is the true motive behind the industrialization in England and India, the insatiable greed for mony led to the birth of
middle class. Mrs Bennet and Mrs. Rupa Mehra members of this class find it increasingly difficult to search suitable boys for their daughters. In today's India, this social problem has assumed a monstrously form where thousands of daughters are burnt for inadequate dowry. Very few writers have cared to probe the miseries and angelicas of mothers of many daughters, which scant resources and who are caught in the vicious tentacles caste, religion and conservative traditions. Vikram Seth basically and English brown Shib, sitting away from the growing and unfilled aspirations and consequent frustrations of this middle class, writes marvelously on this theme."25.

Through the character of Amit Chatterji, Vikram Seth compares A Suitable Boy his own creation and composition to bangam tree, which represents an Indian Diasporic image in a true sense of the term. About a banyan tree Amit, who is speaking for Seth, gives his opinion:

"... It sprits, and grows and spreads and drops from branches that become trunks or intertrine with other branches sometimes branches die sometimes the main truck dies, and the structure is held up by the supporting trunks...... it has die own life .... But so do the snakes and birds and bees and lizard and termites that live in it and on it and off it,"26

With a luminous profession of similar he switches tracks in the same dialogue quoted above and changes the comparison to the ganges "in its upper suitable and lower courses including the deltas." The most typical Indian Diaspora image is created when Amit compares the performance of a raag to a novel and tells all this to his aunt Dr. Ila Chattopadhyay as under:

"I’ve always felt that the performance of a raag resembles a novel –or at least the kind of novel I’m attempting to write..... first you take one note and explore it for a while, then
another to discover its possibilities, then perhaps you set to the dominant and pause for a bit and its only gradually that the phrases begin to form and the table joins in with the beat. And then the move brilliant improvisations and diversions begin, with the main theme fouturning from time to time, and finally it all speeds up, and the excitement increases to climax."27

The three similes quoted above and used to describe the novel-benyan tree, the Ganges and a raag... imply largeness volume and natural organic structure. All these three similes altogether give readers and impression of a strong Indian disporic image.

The democratic and generosity as desired condition for India's secular politics, described and truly depicted in the novel also reflect upon the same issue i.e. Indian Diaspora. For example the land Reforms Bill the evccts of this legislation will be diversely felt and therefore, Seth allows several differing views on it, the Nawab of Baitar, the Raja of Maan Mahesh Kapoor the landed farmers in the village the musicians who were patronized by the Zamnolars, Rasheed the socialist and many more including the lawyers and judges in the courts. Almost every significant character of even seen from several angles, is a true representative a disporic image. Haresh is the obvious example. A less visible example is Saeeda Bai and her Urdu gazals, the heterogeneous audients at Holi in the Kapoor household is deeply claimed like the adoring Maan, but Ilia Cahttopadhyay describes her Brahmpur experience and Saeeda Bais singing with writing scorn. Scene and characters me positioned in such manner as to force the reader to form the same notion is the disporicone. Though the novel gives the impression of comfortable and leisurely sample through the confused demr, the noise and multiplicity of several Indian lanes, neighborhoods and homes, it is properly and systematically arranged. The
following lines present before us a realistic picture of India and also are worth quoting in this connection. These lines describe the old part of Brahmpur, a town portrayed in the novel:

"There was just enough room for the tonga to get through among the buttockcarts, rickshaws, cycles and pedestrians who thronged both the road and the pavement which they shared with barbers plying their trade out of doors fortune tellers, Flimsy tea stall, vegetable, stands, money trainers, ear cleaners, pickpockets, storay cattle, the odd sleepy policeman, sauntering along in faded Khaki, sheet soaked men carrying impossible loads of copper, steel rods, glass or scrap paper on their backs as the called, 'Look out! Look out!' in voices that somehow pierced through the din, shops of brass-ware and cloth

(the owners attempting with shouts and gestures to entice uncertain shoppers in), the small carved stone entrance of the Tinny Tots (English Medium) School which opened out onto the courtyard of the recommended haveli of a bankrupt aristerat and beggars .... Who would quietly invade Nabiganj as evening fell, attempting to avoid the police as they worked the queues in front of the cinema halls." 28

A number of related issues such as history and the nation and their realistic representation in A Suitable Boy the land reform legislation, religion and caste in the context of secularism and modernity in the public sphere has also been plored. For all that Vickram Seth mocks himself in the guise of Amit Chatterji in the novel, "for sitting around all day staring out of the window," he worked hard on A Suitable Boy.

"Friends of the family recall Seth's parents tiptoeing around him and providing for all his needs, but they also remember him working as one possessed." 29
In this connection the following statement of Leila Seth Seth’s mother is quite apt to be mentioned because this also is more or lesson indicative of Indian Diaspora which Seth has reflected upon:

“He worked very hard on the book…… he used to walk to the Nehru Memorial museum Library regularly and read the newspapers and gazettes pertaining to the period. He also watched movies from the late forties and early fifties; he must have seen Deeda helfa” dozen times. He learnt Urdu from a teacher in order to understand the nuances of Muslim Culture better. He med and interviewed our extended family our friends, our acquaintances and many others whom he felt could give him an insight into understanding particular aspects of life or work or The psyche of the times. This included boxwallaps, bureaucrats, doctors, judges, lawyers, musicians, naturalists politicians policeman, professors, teachers, sants and gurus. Eh read all the land reform cases in the law reports went-as Shanturn had done earlier-to live with a Jatav shoemaker’s family in Agra, stayed for a month as the heights of summer in a largely Muslim village in eastern U.P. tried to figure out how one visited a courtesan and bathed in the Kumbh Mela at Allahabad.”30

A very common Indian family trend is noticed in A Suitable Boy when Latas family rejects Kabir for the simple reason that he is a Muslim. His good looks, his intelligence, his sincerity are all pushed aside as non entities, and the only way he gets identified with, is by his religion. Similarly, towards the end of the book when it is said that:

“The Banaras people had decided that Mann was no longer a suitable boy.”31

It does n’t look surprising. Every body knows that in spite of Mann being acquitted by the court, he is blacklisted for the rest of his life and any connecton with him is a positive disgrace and strictly forbidden within the so-called social decorum. Only a family, which
considers its daughter to be nothing but more burdens or liabilities will accept Mann as a prospective son in law. At another level Kalpana Gaur inspite of being so highly compatible with Varun is not considered to be a suitable girl by Mrs. Rupa Mehra. An short the title of the novel itself is a subtle irony on the whole gamut of Indian marriages where the term suitability lack depth and any definite direction. The meaning of the term varies from individual to individual as how well the manage their affairs, their friendships their marriages and their life.

The structure of the novel does not stand only on the base of the main theme of the search for a suitable boy for Lata, but running parallel to it, it has also a wide range of diverse themes denoting Indian diaspora. The themes include politics religion, customs, philosophy, art, culture and academics. And the common connecting strand that runs through the centre of all the subplots as well as the main plot is an increasing revulsion against anything passionate or obsessive, which reaches its Zenith with Mann stabbing Firoz in a moment of frenzied jealousy. But it is not only the sexual passion, also the passions for religion, politics, power, career etc. which are given treatment in the book.

In a big and ethnically diverse country like India religion his always played a very important role in Indian life. Here in India, religious factors and religious rituals and rites are sometimes more vital and significant than even economic factors. And for majority of Indian’s no other factor is move powerful and influential than their religious faiths and beliefs. Indians follow their religious as dogs follow their masters. They may sacrifice anything even life for the sake of religion. Mrs. Mahesh Kapoor is in appropriate example of the same belief and faith in A Suitable Boy. Such type of uotlok very often results into communal riots operated by some political manipulations and evil minded
persons, and consequently, the common man suffers and the country has to fall victim to a great financial loss. In the following passage, the speaker, while praising Pandit Nehru for his efforts for establishing communal harmony, peace and cordiality, advises the readers to following the principle of brotherhood and fraternity.

“And thus his meetings ended, and or he went to the next one always late always late always impatient, a man whose greatness of heart won the hearts of others and whose meandering pleas for mutual tolerance kept a volatile, country, not merely in those early and most dangerous years but throughout his own life time safe at least from the systematic clutch of religious fanaticism.”32

According to Vikram Seth religious passion is a kind of bigotry, a kind of fanaticism which is very fatal and devastative not only for the people in general but also for the entire nation:

“ My sister! My sister! Saeeda Bai laughed in Mann’s face as if he had made some insane joke, it is not my sister he is in love with. She tried to push Mann violently away. They fell onto the floor and saeeda Bai screamed as Mann’s hands went round her throat. The water in the bown spilled over. The fruit bowl overturned. mann noticed none of this. His mind was red with rage. The woman he hoved had betrayed him with is friend, and now she was taking delight in mocking his love and his misery.”33

Though Seth wrote this novel before the Ramjanambhumi-Babri Masjid dispute which occurred on 6th December 1996, yet there is much similarity between the two because equally horrifying episodes in the book are also described. Such episodes and occurrences can be connected with Indian diasporic images.
The most brilliant Indian diasporic image is reflected through the Raja of Marh when he decides to with passive support from some Hindu officials and political leaders to build a temple of Lord Shiva on a piece of land situated quite adjacent to a mosque. It is said that the mosque is a renewed shape of a long forgotten ruins of an old temple and can’t be destroyed. Therefore, the Raja decides to erect the temple on the land just nearby the mosque. Consequently the Muslims of that locality objecting this act of the Raja of Marh take the help of their Maulvi who gives a fiery and communal sermon as under:

"Their religion was in danger. The barbarians were at the gates.... The land that the Kafirs sought to build on was disputed land-disputed in God’s eyes, but not in the eyes of the animals who spent their time blowing conches and worshipping parts of the body whose very names it was shameful to mention and now the infidels who held power in the land wanted muslims, when they turned their faces westward in prayer to the Kabba to face these idols and these same obscene objects with their heads bowed."

Hindus do not kneel down, and the communal riots take place in the evening which the government forces fail to control. And after killing fighting, firing and bloodshed, as usually happens a temporary abatement of weapons on both sides takes place in the last. But bitterness and hostility still remain, though liedorman, yet await a favourable opportunity to flare up again. It is during the periods of Dussehera and Moharram that the opportune moment for both the communities (Hindu & Muslim) commences to raise the communal riots. Blood flows freely and fire blazes all burning to ashes:

"Firoj closed his eyes as if to shout out the terrible vision of The city in flame."

Seth portrays this event very appropriately in *A Suitable Boy* in the horrifying scene of Firoz and Mann when they are attacked by a murderous Hindu mob:
“Mann and Firoj were sauntering along the dark lane of Katra mast towards Misri Mandi when Mann stopped suddenly. The sounds he heard approaching them were not those he had expected. They were the sounds neither of the Tazia procession- and surely it was too late for a Tazia processional- nor the joyful sounds of Bharat Milap. The sound of drums had stopped on either side and neither ‘Hay! Hussain! Hay! Hussain! nor ‘Jai Siyaram’ could be heard. Instead he made out the ominous, inchoate sounds of a mob, broken by screams of pain or passion-or shouts of ‘Harhar Mahadeo’. This aggressive invocation shiva would not have sounded out of place yesterday-but today it chilled his blood. He let go of Firoj’s hand and turned him around by the shoulders, ‘Run’ he said his mouth dry with fear “Run”. His heart was pounding Firoz stared at him but did not move. The crowd was rushing down the lane now. The sounds gain closer. Mann looked around him in desperation. The shope were all closed, their shutters down. There were no side lanes with in immediate reach “Get back Firoz,” said Mann trembling “Get back run! There’s nowhere to hide here.” What’s the, matter is n’t it the processions of “Firoz’s mouth opened as he registered the terror in Mann’s eyes.” Just listen to me”, Mann gasped- “Do as I say Run back! run back towards the Imambara: i’ll delay them for a minute or two. That’ll be enough. They’ll stop me first.” “I ‘m not leaving you” said firoz. “Firoz you fool this is a Hindu mob.” “I’m not in danger. But I won’t be all right if I come with your god knows what will be happening there by now. If there’s rioting going on, they’ll be killing Hindu there. “No” oh, God.” By now the crowd had almost reached them and it was too late to flee.” 36

The scenes depicted in the novel look as if straight out of the then released Hindi film Bombay which is broadly based on the devastating riots which took place in Bombay in
the after math of Babri Masjid demolition, so routine-like, as if such scenes are not confined to any particular period or space, and they occur again and again from time to time, as an inevitable part of the total Indian “adjustment,” and hence such strange similarity. The counter balance to this maniacal mob is the deep, induring inter-religions friendship between Mann and Firoz on the one hand, and between their father Mahesh Kapoor and the Nawab Sahib on the other.

Another aspect of Indian Diaspora is clearly visible in Seth’s condemnation of such type of fanaticism produced either by religious passin or by sexual acts operated on opposite caste. Seth condemens it in the following manner:

“Down the rollers the great linga part the next step and the nex and the next, gathering speed as it rolled. the tree-trunks cracked under the impact of its weight is veered to left and right, but it kept rolling on down, swifter and swifter towards the Ganga, crushing the pujari who now stood in its downward path with his arms upraised, smashing into the burning pyres of the cremation Ghats and sinking into the water of the Ganga at last, down its submerged stone steps, and into its muddy did. The Shiva linga rested on the bed of the Ganga once more the turbid waters passing over it, its blood staign, slowly washed away”

As a fol to the mad frenzy of the Hindu-Muslim violence Seth pictures some areas of cultural syneretism achieved by years of mutual. Mahesh Kapoor, the person who represents values of secularism in the novel, invites Saeeda Bai, the Muslim courtesan at his home, Prem Nivas, during Holi. The Minister one must remember refuses his wife permission to have to have the Ramcharitmanas recited in the house during Dusshera. Saeeda Bai, who entrances the mixed audience comprising a large number of Hindus and
a few Muslims with her talent and voice also sings a number of traditional Holi songs which are devotional Hindu poems about Krishna. Ustad Majeed Khan, the renowned classical singer criticizes the Raja of Marh and his Shiva temple while teaching a new raag to Veena his student. The omniscient narrator takes the reader closer to the Ustad’s thoughts on the temple. The Ustad finds its repugnant that the morning call to prayer from the mosque with its injunction “prayer is better than sleep” would be challenged by the sound of the conch from the temple. Yet later, as he begins to meditatively hum the words of the composition ‘Jago Mohan Pyare’ which he has been teaching the Minister’s daughter he forgets everything except the music and the narrator remark’s:

“It was veery far from his mind that the words were addressed to the dark God, Krishna, asking him to wake up with the arrival of morning, or that “Bhairava”- the name of the raag he was singing was an epithet of the great got Shiva himself.”38

A noted critic, wood ward says that Seth has called his novel ‘as a plea for tolerance’. A Suitable Boy was published at a time when Indian politics was beset by communal conflict caused by the ‘Ram Janam Bhoomi’ campaign. The last vestiges of Nehruvian secularism seemed to be ripping away from the body politics of the nation. A Suitable Boy that engages with religion in the public sphere, seriously and affectively offers the spirit and framework of Nehru’s secular vision of India on the only sane alternative to religious nationalism and the politics of hate.

The novel also depicts the issues of caste atrocities and caste politics let by ‘Mandir’ and ‘Mandal’ commission. Caste factors dominate as much in contemporary electoral politics as they did then. How every Seth reserves his deepest feelings for the Hindu-Muslim question. The question of caste in rural India is dealt with rather thinly.
Moreover, in the context of land reforms, it acquires dimensions of calls: The landed against the landless. Kacheheru is poor powerless, passive and isolated as against the rich and powerful landed located in Rasheed’s family. In contrast in the urban region of Brahmpur, the Jatavs are presented as a community with agency. Their plight is as miserable as that of Kachcherus. In fact the urban squalor and filth of untouchable colomoes whose cleaning and processing of leather is carried out are vividly portrayed. Yet the poverty stricker Jatav shoe-makers threaten and inforce a strike, which pushes the upper-caste traders into a financial squeeze. A group of untouchables in the tanning pits exhibit aggression towards the visiting Haresh and Kedarnath and Jagat Ram’s small business is a sign of his economic dignity even as he battles to sustain it. Kachecheru and Jagar Ram, as a contrasting pair in the novel, make a telling statement about caste in the public spheres of rural an urban India. All this makes the novel a disporic piece concerning Indian set-up of life and people. For Seth, traditional identity of religion and caste have no space in the public world of the nation; they can only lead to conflict and violence. However, in the private sphere of the institution of marriage and the family, Seth’s point of view is traditional and even conservative.

Against a background of the Hindu-Muslim communal violence, very courageously Seth presents before the readers three sets Hindu-Muslim erotic relationships. The most important among them is lata and Kabir’s relationship which constitutes the main plot of the book. Though their relationship is put under suspense by the author whether it with be of any result or not yet it is there, Mam’s infatuated love for Saeeda the courtesan is also there but it is eventually doomed and finished by the lack of acceptable familial anchoring. On the other hand, Maan’s semi-erotic friendship with Firoz stands the test of
time and even a drunken attempt at murder. Their ties, of friendship are reflected in those of their fathers. Male friendships/associations across religions such those mentioned above, or across caste and clise such as that of Haresh and Jagat Ram that pose no threat to the continuing structure are allowed growth.

In a true spirit of Indian tradition, Seth places before Lata a choice of three suitors out of which she has to select one who is of her best choice by all means. And Lata selects Haresh as her life partner. These alternative before Lata are taken as symbolic of choices before India.

"Kabir, a transcendence of religious factionalism, Amit, a sophisticated internationalism, or Haresh, home spun and plodding pursuit of economic stability."39

While this reading may sound ovastly symbolic, there is no dnying the fact that Lata's choice does manage a tricky balance, between her individual self and the expectations of society. It is also quite clear by the end of novel that is is a choice, that Lata is exercising; given Mrs. Mehra's uncertainty about Haresh's suitability she is not passively acquiescing in her mother's wishes even if the match was initially arranged by her. Lata who is in love with Kabir, a Muslim Boy is initially sovept along by the storm of objections. Like many of her generation her mother is horrified at the thought of a Muslim suitor. As a daughter Lata has no choice in the matter but to tag along with her mother when she breaks the news to Kabir and personality interacts him to run away with her he refuses Lata is positioned against a relentless society and the reading lopes that Lata will somehow wiin her Kabir, Gradually however, Lata's perspective changes as she is exposed to other families and marriages. She is introduced to the other two suitors whom the author takes care to present as likeable and even desirable choices. Her short
stay with the sinister Sahgal family makes her view her own mother differently. Pran’s illness and the birth of his and Savita’s baby the two incidents occurring side by side in the same hospital make her see the significance of the family as a bulwark against trouble and pain and her mother as its guardian:

“Her mother appeared to her now as the guardian of the family and with life and death so near each other here in the hospital it seemed to Lata that all that provided continuity in the world or protection from it was the family. … Lata looked back on her wish to elope with Kabir with a kind of amazement, even as she could not shake off her feeling for him. But where would these feelings lead? A gradual stable attraction such as Savita’s for Pran was this not the best thing for her and for the family, and for any children that she might have.”

Aran and Savita are powerful advisors by precept; the affectionate and supportive relationship that they enjoy communicates to Lata their assumption that “marriage and children were a great good.” Lata who has now begin to thing of herself as a possible wife and mother can see the strength of her mother love for her in Savita’s love for the baby. In the case of Haresh, now she is not confused and supporting his case and respecting her mother’s choice tells about Haresh to Malathi in the following words:

“Haresh is practical he’s forceful, he isn’t cynical. He gets things done and he helps people without making a fuss about it. He’s helped Kedarnath and Veena a great deal.”

Replying to Maths question if he would let her teach, she says “I’m sure of it. He hates to see anyone’s talent wasted. He encourages them. And he is really concerned about people.”

So far as A Suitable Boy is concerned it belongs to the genre of realistic novel which indicates that in addition to realistic representation of society the individual
consciousness of characters will be realistically etched with same degree of complexity. Seth's attention is on verisimilitude, on social and historical accuracy of his characters. Written in Indian context, the novel is a true representative of diasporic spirit. Apart from all this the impact of Elizabethan drama also seems to be a dominating factor in A Suitable Boy like that of India, the deep secular component, regulating Elizabethan drama, is clearly found in this novel of Indian Diaspora. If an ardent Neoplatonist principle molded many Shakespearean heroes, one may easily trace restages of such an outlook in Vikram Seth too. The choice of the Indian author to place his mental work on the stage of the early fifties, the period of that immediately followed the horrors caused by riots between Hindus and Muslims overtly reveals that intent. Consequently all characters who are religious fanatics are deemed defeat before the end of the novel. On the other hand, one is confronted with many cases of characters who cross the imaginary barriers of religious extremism, significantly they are always positive examples. The instance of the friendship between Maan and Firoz, with the almost idyllic epilogue is to be read in this perspective. The surprising finale is designed in order to be welcomed as a right – although there has been patent violation of justice-measure b the reader. Moreover, that can be a compensation for Mahesh Kapoor's political failure. To his credit, the narrating voice reports:

"Mahesh Kapoor, though a Hindu, was well known for his tolerance for other religions-his wife would have said that the only religion he was intolerant toward was his own-and was liked and respected among knowledgeable Muslims."42

In a similar vein, through Mahesh Kapoor losses creditability on the family front on the political front his is an ideal figure. Excessive involvement with political matters results
in him behaving rudely and unreasonably with his wife and son. On the political front however, he is a man of principle and like his hero Pandit Nehru, champions the cause of unity equality and tolerance:

“A number of other people some individually some in pairs, some in groups and some in what could only be called throungs spoke to Mahesh Kapoor during the morning and early afternoon’ cups of tea came from the kitchen and went back empty. Lunch time came and went and the Minister sahib remained energetic through unfed Mrs. Mahes Kapoor sent word to him through servant he waved him impatiently away. She would never have dreamed of eating before her husband did, but her main concern was not that she was hungry but that he needed food and did not know it”

In Indian way of life a wife does not take food if her husband has not taken it. And this is what happens only in India. So Indian diaspora is seen every episode that the novel depicts. Even this element is found in Indian politics of today also example the portrait of Mahesh Kapoor is in total contrast to the anti Muslim, Hindu right wing ideas of Congress President Tandon at the central level and the Hindu baiting attitude of the “legislative vixen” Begum Abida Khan at the state level. The contrast becomes more prominent when Mahesh Kapoors nationality is equated with his political rival, R.N. Agrawals author tarranism and over confidence. L.N. Agarwal as the Home Minster of the state is in charge of the humanitarian side of the state but in his arrogance he overlooks the genuine problems of the people. Instead he only manages to aggravate the already volatile situation with his complete inability to perceive the scenario. Seth presents three different occasions to show how the man’s insensitivity and high
handedness result in mass disaster and at least on one occasion, his meanness and vengeful behavior cause general embarrassment to the government.

The first occasion is his removing adequate police protection from the controversial construction site of the Shiva temple and relocating the force at the entrance of the Goving Shoe Mart as a possible precaution against picketing by the Jatav community. He also orders in discriminate to firing if the necessity arose. Ultimately it results in Killing and blood shed. The second occasion is his under estimation of religious fanaticism and mass panic at the Pul Mulsfestival on the banks of Holy Ganga. The third of the university students and than a gradual vicious Lathi Charge which results in the death of a student. And his meanness as a politician becomes clear when on his orders, the police come to evacuate the Baitaar House, when not a single male member of the family is present to face them. But the final nail in the coffin is that, to occasion is he remorseful of his behavior on all these occasions Agarwal is contrasted with the calmness sensitivety and tolerant attitude of Mahesh Kapoor. His vociferous support for the Zamidari Abdition. Bill and the Hindu code bill are perfect examples of this idealism.

On the cultural front, the traditional Indian classical music gets priority in Seth’s book. India, Lucknow has always been considered to be the centre of all arts and cultures, and a base from where musicians imbibe the essence of their music. Seth’s Purva Pradesh cultural tradition is a reflection of this Lucknow tradition. But the portrayal is an ironice one since the advent of modernization also implies at one level the deterioration of ancient heritage. This is best exemplified in the steady decaying of Nawab sahib’s country Palace and his historic library and a gradual alienation of people from classical musical and an increasing attraction towards light music and film songs best exemplified
by Varun, with his penchant of Hindi film songs Seth has ever given an ironic comment on the courtly style of living of the people of the state, which, is made to look ridiculous and hilarious in the eyes of the modernized people of Calcutta:

“All that courtly cutline with its yes Hazoor and No Hazoor nd nothing robust about it all “How are you?” “Oh, well I’m alive” .... Yes I’ll have two florets of rice and one drop of dal...” see that subtlety and etiquette and bowing and scraping and Ghazals and Kathak. Kathak! When I saw those fat women twinkling around like tops I wanted to say to then, “Run! Run! don’t dance Run.”44

It would be interesting to compare Seth discussions on political debasement, social immorality, corruption and individual hypocrisy, dishonesty etc; to what we see around us now-a-days in India related to corruption, scams and political individual hypocrisy etc; almost in a daily routine basis, as if the whole country has gone cancerous without any hope of remedy or salvation. To that effect A Suitable Boy is not only a comprehensive but also an extremely senstitive and intelligent creative document having the element of Indian Diaspora. It, not only exposes, but also castigates, and also at the same time, shows how best the human animal that has fallen to the lowest pitch of existence willy nilly due to himself can also rise beyond, higher, to central place of same benign understanding and rationality Seth’s criticism, social, political, cultural and ever familial, has a sharp edge which cuts, but also cuts to form.

Regarding the form of the novel, the opinion of Seth is highly convincing and appropriate. He explains that he had initially intended to write a short book of about two hundred and fifty pages concentrating mainly on Lata or Lata’s mothers search for a suitable match for her. But he clarifies:
“having begun it with a wedding and having lots of characters come to that wedding I realized that I was quite interested I was writing a different kind of book.”45

The apparently uneventful narrative of social manners and life styles of the Indian middle class (Seth includes every minutiac including a visit to the Zoo and animals seen therein) is offset with detailed accounts of social and political crises:

“The nuts and bolts of political demographic run through the novel set against the background of the partition.”46

Mrs. Mehra’s search for a suitable son-in-law helps Seth’s historical book drop move intimate for its First General Election under the Prime Minister ship of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru but there is a growing disillusionment with his leadership. This has led to a rift in the ruling Congress Party between the supporters of Nehru and Nehru’s political rival, Purushottam Das Tandon. There are also parliamentary quarrel on the implementation of land reforms that require the appropriation of landed estates from Zamidars who had enjoyed large proprietary rights from the British Government, Memories of pain and feelings of insecurity, are still fresh in the minds of those who had been uprooted from their homes during the partition of the Indian subcontinent and violent communal clashes are not uncommon. Here in this novel, Vikram Seth uses three, sets of political characters. Appearing in their real names came Jawahar Lal Nehru Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Rajarshi Purushottam Das Tondon under the first category. Seth portrays their characters very minutely keeping in view their important roles in Indian politics. The second category of characters include those with their changed names and also known personalities playing important roles in Indian politics. One of them is Mr. S.S. Sharma the chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Then there are two state ministers, the secular
Mahesh Kapoor, the dramatized version of Damodar Swaroop Seth, and L.N. Agarwal whose personality is like Chandra Bhan Gupta. Two other important figures, representing the emergent forces in Indian politics, are the ‘successful subaltern’ Wasi Khan and “domed idealist”, Abdur Rasheed. Seth points out that he too had initially held the impression that the 1950’s was the period (portrayed already in the novel) of idealism of the freedom movement but extensive reading of newspapers of the era proved otherwise that this was neither “and innocent time” nor “a period of great public probity”. Referring to the interviews that he conducted with the people who had been young students at that time Seth explains:

“You’ll realize what bitterness and cynicism had crept in already at that time. student riots and protests were taking place in place like Lucknow to support’ this observation".47

It took over eight years for Seth to complete the manner. It took over eight years for Seth to complete the manuscript of this novel. During the work he had to arrange meetings sometimes with ex. Freedom fighters and sometimes with those, visited the courtesans at that time and also with those extremely affected by the abduction of Zamindari. During the writing period he had to stay in different places such as Banaras, Allahabad in the country side and in Agra where, he had spend sometime with a shoe making family. It was necessary for him.

“because how can you claim to write about something unless you know it if not from the heart of it then somewhere from the inside of it.”48

In addiction to all this Seth also presents in the novel the transcribed parliamentary debates on the Zamindari Abloition Bill and arguments in the High court in the legislative
language and style. Not only this, but the text also includes popular films of the time with relevant social and cultural themes. Overall, the novel as a whole is a true Indian Diaspora dealing with the burning issues of Indian life and its people. It is very clearly noticed that the bulk of novel is used to portray a realistic picture of India vivid descriptions of the Pul the ordinary life of Rasheed’s village the horror of the communal riots, a cricket match, the whole election procedure of campaigning polling and counting, all these land the novel a very wide socio political frame work. Though the paper seal Vikram Seth uses at the end of the polling should have been at the commencement of the poll, the enduring impression is one of thoroughness. Several jokes and assdetes from popular Indian folktales find their way into the novel. The whole gamut of the socio-cultural forces helps to give a historical orientation do the characters’ lives oscillating between the individual attitudes and cultural forces and often obviating the difference between the two individual live are shown as the unconscious working out of the historical forces. It The Golden Gate escapes being defined as Indian fiction, owing largely to its firm American locale,Seth’s next novel, a 1400 page tale of social realism A Suitable Boy establishes Seth not as an Indian expatriate but an artist interested in the affairs of Inda. Highly, praised and compared to Tolstoy’s and dickens’ fiction A Suitable Boy has none of the sweep philosophical grasp or permanent truths of human nature that underline these epic narratives in the history of the novel. Seth uses the setting of post colonial India but the humour and the layers of irony implicit in the novel dony a sence of the imaginative quest and creative tussle with which the Indian expatriate exile is so characterized. The concerns of language style presentation and technique are absent as the novel acnosisously emultates the great tradition of the mainstream English
novel from Fielding to Hardy. In fact, as noted academic and critic C.D. Narasimhaian comments Seth has achieved little in this novel except to display his:

“Infinite patience to observe trivig in upper class Indian society and record it meticulously, to what end only he can tell.”

In the whole the novel is a true Indian Diaspora dealing with the burning issues of the Indian life and its people.
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