Chapter – V

Conclusion

Through the analysis of all the novels, it is apparent that they are deeply embedded into Indian social life and culture. Each of the three novels successfully captures and renders various social realities of contemporary India. The first novel, *The God of Small Things*, presents a number of burning issues of local as well as universal relevance. It depicts a big panorama of social life, exploitation of poor and weaker section in the society, and social apathy towards marginalized ones. It carefully displays the social evils that have been having deep roots in the Indian society for millenniums. The second novel, *A River Sutra*, raises a number of indigenous social issues. But, side by side, it also presents the vibrancy of Indian culture. The novel seems to synthesize tradition and modernity. In symbolical manner it presents that Indian tradition is immortal. Though, it is endangered by human greed, because of which the contemporary India is suffering under the perils of harsh social realities; but, ultimately it will be able to overcome them. The third novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, exclusively deals with women question in Indian social life. It shows that an all pervasive chauvinism has been controlling
Indian social life from time immemorial. It re-tells Indian myths from feminist point of view and draws an analogy between contemporary and mythical figures. By presenting the plight of three subsequent generations of women, the novel presents that despite all high claims of modernity and women empowerment, women are still leading miserable life. The novel shows that all women, whether they are queens, princesses, middle class woman, or a home caretaker, have similar fate. They are victim of patriarchy.

In *The Theory of Novel* (1920), Georg Lukacs, considering this genre as the ‘bourgeois epic’, holds that, unlike its classical counterpart, it reveals the homelessness and alienation of man in modern society. According to him the novel, as a genre, arises when that harmonious integration of man and his world is shattered; the hero of fiction sets out in search of totality. For Lukacs of *Studies in European Realism* and *The Historical Novel*, the greatest artists are those who can recapture and recreate a harmonious totality of human life. In a society where the general and the particular, the conceptual and the sensuous, the social and the individual are increasingly torn apart by the “alienations” of capitalism, the great writer draws these dialectically together into a complex totality. His fiction thus mirrors, in microcosmic form, the
complex totality of society itself. In doing this great art combats the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society, projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness. Lukacs names such art “Realism” and the task of the realist writer, according to him, is to flesh out these “typical” trends and forces in sensuously realized individuals and actions; in doing so he links the individual to the social whole, and informs each concrete particular of social life with the power of the “world-historical” – the significant movements of history itself (qtd. in Eagleton 25-27).

If Lukacs’ “capitalism”, in the aforementioned argument, would, in Indian context, be replaced by “patriarchy”, “castism” and like terms that are used to denote the forces that negate “liberty”, and “equality”, for all, one may easily find that the three novels taken for the study qualify the criteria of being a “bourgeois epic”. All the three novelists are very much concerned with ordinary people and their psychology. Though they have different-different approach towards the social realities subjected by them, but the thing that is common is that, as Veena Singh observes, all the three show their deep insight into human nature. All of them, being women, often present new perspectives of the existing social realities (166-67). They portray the complexity and
different colours of life in Indian society. They unfold the secrets which have not been discussed or if discussed, not discussed with required seriousness, and tend to “fight against the existing social order of the day” (Sree 137). They deal with politics, gender issues, and history. They present the people with their plausible experience in probable situations.

According to Georg Lukacs, a hall-mark of all great realists is that they are ruthless towards their own cherished prejudices and conviction. They describe what they really see, not what their reader would prefer to see. He further holds that realist writers are driven to an intense participation in the life of the community by the social condition of time and take the most important, burning problems of the community which are most acute at the time for their starting point. It is these sufferings that determine the objects and direction of their love and hate and these emotions also determine what they see in their poetic visions and how they see it. They may come out with different-different solutions for the basic problem. But they all have a common quality that they penetrate deeply into the great universal problems of their time and inexorably depict the reality as they see (Lukacs 11-13).
The novels, taken for study, fulfil these criteria also. They deal with sordid social realities, discriminations based on caste, creed, and gender. Moreover, the attitude of the writers, in presenting them, seems quite ruthless. While the third novel reserves entire space exclusively for women issues, other two novels subject a number of other injustices also that are prevalent in contemporary Indian society. They deal with castism, police brutality, child abuse, political hypocrisy, human greed, as well as impact of urban lifestyle on youngsters. In the contemporary India these are burning issues. As Lukacs holds that the defining achievement of classic realism is an organic perception of the human being as the location of multiple, often contradictory social forces; the protagonists in the novels are portrayed entangled in more than one, and often contradictory, obligations. They represent a class of people who suffer like them. In addition, Steven Earnshaw holds that the proper subject matter for a Realist novel is everyday reality, that too with characteristically omniscient point of view. He suggests that a faithful copy of the world and contemporariness are two principles of Realist novel (14-30). The novels also seem to fulfil these criteria. The details given in the novels are credible and likely to be located in our surroundings, and their subject matters are the contemporary and recent past. Even if they make cursory references to Indian
tradition and culture, they use these myths, according to Meenakshi Mukharjee, as a technique to present or illustrate contemporary realities (126-57).

Moreover, in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (1958), Georg Lukacs argues that modern writers should do more than merely reflect the despair and ennui of late bourgeois society; they should try to take up a critical perspective on this futility, revealing positive possibilities beyond it (qtd. in Eagleton 48). If we judge the concerned novels on this criterion, apparently they hardly seem to fulfil it. *The God of Small Thing* does not put forward any such possibility. Instead, its characters seem helpless in front of social obstacles. Their energies get crippled and self-consuming. *A River Sutra* seems only feebly optimistic in its vision that a synthesis of traditional and modern values would help overcoming the contemporary problems. Likewise, with almost gloomy atmosphere in the entire novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* ends with a weak optimistic note i.e. the protagonist’s decision to put the things right. But in other sense they all fulfil this criterion also. Since they focus the sordid realities of contemporary society, their ruthless presentation itself is a sort of resistance with a latent hope that by getting conscious of these brutalities at some day people will endeavour to get rid of them. As Terry
Eagleton holds that realism itself is intrinsically neither revolutionary nor reactionary. Instead, it is a “philosophy of life” (40). It can be considered a “philosophy of life” that acquaints people with the injustices that exist in the society unnoticed, and by bringing them on surface Realism pays the way to cure them and establish an egalitarian society – “[a result that] can be achieved only by a truly great, profound and all-embracing Realism (Lukacs 18).

Thus, the above mentioned characteristics of the concerned novels confirm their position in the main-stream of Realist fiction, and their writers’ to be true inheritor of tradition of Realist fiction writing. After investigating the novels it is perceptible that the novels have been written with great care, deep knowledge and understanding of Indian scenario and beliefs. The novelists have proved their commitment to Realist novel. The issues taken in the novels are very close to social reality. It may be possible that in order to emphasize any theme, the novelists would have accentuated some particular scenes or conditions, but they largely stick to the promise of true representation. Since, owing to the last few decades of feminist movement, women have become more assertive and vocal regarding their feelings and experiences, and have
acquired wider vision; they, instead of dealing with romantic subject, are
tackling an array of serious themes and are presenting them with conviction.
Works Cited


