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Gita Mehta, a widely acknowledged Indian name in the world literary scene, is known for her writings about India, and its contemporary social life. In her creative output she has projected the Indian charm and heritage in the style of her own. Her journalistic approach to the subject and scrupulous way of narration has offered wide readership across the globe with great acclaim.

In order to explore the hippies’ pilgrimage to India during 1960s and 1970s, I picked up Gita Mehta’s *Karma Cola* and read it. After reading, the sufferings of Western pilgrims kept on haunting me and forced me to read it again. The next careful reading helped me to resolve upon the purpose of the author’s writing which is intended to convey the real strength of Hinduism. This inspired me to explore Gita Mehta’s other works too. So finally I decided to do my research work on Gita Mehta only.

Before emerging as a writer, Gita Mehta had been a journalist. She made her debut with the creation of *Karma Cola*. In this work she has made reportage on crooked gurus and the Westerners’ urgency of liberation. Her journalistic tone has made *Karma Cola* very convincing and alive. With the publication of this non-fiction, she tasted the flavour of success as a writer. Other than the Western perception of India she has picked up the subjects from Indian history, politics, culture and religion in
her other writings. In an interview to Wendy Smith she told that she wanted to make modern India accessible to the Westerners. Being a popular writer the demands of her books facilitated translations into 21 different languages and been on the bestsellers’ list in Europe, U.S. and India.

The purpose of this research is to study and assess how Gita Mehta has represented the contemporary social life through her works (fiction and non-fiction). For the sake of convenience and clarity this study is divided into six chapters as summarized below.

Chapter I is divided into two parts. Part I attempts a brief survey of the Indian English novel with special reference to the women writers. It deals with the arrival of the most acclaimed genre, the Novel, on the scene of Indian English Literature, its earlier structure, the pioneer novelists, variations of themes in the pre and post-independent India and the role of women novelists, who have contributed to elevate the Indian English novel to an esteemed position among the world literature.

Part II focuses on Gita Mehta’s life, her evolution as a writer and all her creativities that go on evolving her as a significant writer and also a fascinating personality.

Chapter II deals with the Western mis-conceptions of the East in Gita Mehta’s non-fiction *Karma Cola*. It not only represents hippies’ pilgrimage to the mystic East for spiritual quest and their exploitation but
also establishes Hinduism. It provides us with an opportunity to improve our vision of India, cleansing the awkward diaphragm which the Western people commonly use to portray.

In chapter III, Gita Mehta’s first novel Raj has been studied to explore the Indian history of 53 years in the Imperial British India and Royal India. Within the historical framework the story of Princess Jaya Devi has been enmeshed to generate the saga of triumph. In Raj the protagonist transforms herself according to the political and social needs and evolves herself as a modern individual of high moral values in the most popular fledgling democracy of the world.

Indian cultural values, art forms and ethos have been discussed in Chapter IV with reference to A River Sutra and Eternal Ganesha. Both the works provide us with an opportunity to probe into the world of Indian Metaphysics and spiritual beliefs through excellent use of Indian myths, rituals, taboos and superstitions. From A River Sutra diversity of Indian culture has been explored by means of six different stories tucked altogether through the river Narmada. In Eternal Ganesha mythological stories associated with Lord Ganesha’s origin, his physique and relevance in the present age of evil; kalyug have been expressed in an engrossing manner. Both the works support the author’s regard for the holy river Narmada and the ubiquitous deity; Lord Ganesha and also establishes the faith in the fundamental law of Hinduism “The Unity in Diversity”.

In Chapter V various subjects concerning the progress of fifty years of Indian independence have been evaluated in terms of *Snakes and Ladders*. Taking into consideration of India’s progress the author has made an unflinching assessment of modern India which revolves around the contemporary politics, politicians and their policies. Through the garland of thirty six essays Gita Mehta intends to convey that the nation’s progress depends upon success and failure of the policies, implemented by the ruling government.

Chapter VI draws a conclusion about contemporaneity along with a brief discussion on the language, style, narrative technique and themes employed in her writings. The discussion is concluded with the author’s Indianness and her regards for her glorious motherland – India and ardent admiration for Hinduism. Her works seem to focus on various aspects of Hinduism. There would be no exaggeration to compare Gita Mehta’s writings with the facets of diamond reflecting the traits of Hinduism, if the diamond is multifaceted Indian Hindu culture.

The present study lays no claims to be all inclusive or thorough but we have tried our best to make a critical study of Gita Mehta’s works from our perspectives which hopefully contributes to the criticism of Gita Mehta. With due apology I must say that if her flying colours sometimes did droop, I am contented with like a page-boy in joining the crusade.