

GENDER AND CULTURE IN RAMA MEHTA'S 'INSIDE THE HAVELI'

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ABSTRACT

The image of the new women and her quest and struggle for identity of her own is emerging theme in the Indian English Novel. The male domination in a woman's life is a natural phenomenon in a patriarchal society and the consequent suppression of the woman to a secondary position seem to have prompted Indian women writers to take up the cause of women.

This paper concentrates on Gender and Culture in Rama Mehta's 'Inside the Haveli'. The major incidents in the novel are taken into account to support the study. The concept of purdha is central to the theme of the Novel. Patriarchal family system is presented in the novel. The society itself, in those days when Rama Mehta has written the novel 'Inside the Haveli', was passing through the birth pangs of transition from tradition to modernity. In such a transactional period woman can play an important role as an agent of change. This is depicted in Rama Mehta's Novel 'Inside the Haveli', where the Haveli becomes a symbol of tradition, "Which was like a fortress protecting them from the outside world, giving them security and a sense of superiority".

Rama Mehta born in Nainital in 1923 was a well-known sociologist. She made several studies of educated Indian women who are caught between tradition and modernity. She also worked as a lecturer and plunged into writing with her novel "Inside the Haveli". She also wrote non-fiction research works such as divorced woman and from purdah to modernity. Her other two novels are Ramu: A story of India (1966) and the life of Keshav: A Family story from India (1969).

KEYWORDS: Gender, Culture, Tradition, Modernity