

**QUEENLY ASSERTION OF HERITAGE AND PRIDE: A FEMINIST
READING OF THE SELECT HISTORICAL NOVELS**

THESIS

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CHAPTER V

SUMMATION

In the historical context, the dual emphasis on the importance of women taking charge of their physical destinies and reclaiming their individual identity is fundamental to the authors' feminist perspective. The thesis based on the analysis of the psychological and sociological investigations of royal women and their status follows a conventional pattern of using the secondary sources for gaining insights into social reality. Hence the study attempts to reflect on the 'Queenly Assertion of Heritage and Pride' on the chosen Indian English Historical Novels: Gita Mehta's *Raj* (1989); Kamala Markandaya's *The Golden Honeycomb* (1977); Shahana Dasgupta's *Razia: The People's Queen* (2001); and Mahasweta Devi's *The Queen of Jhansi* (2000).

The second chapter "Queenly Assertion Nexus Solidarity: The Supreme Empowerment" teems with the key aspects of positive feminine and masculine sensibility, reconstruction of women's part in history and a set of critical tools by which women can be seen to challenge the patriarchal order. Gita Mehta's novel *Raj* represents Jaya's constant struggle to live with dignity. Princess Jaya of Balmer inculcates the native science of monarchy and governance in terms of 'Rajniti' to dedicate herself to her native dharma.

Jaya is born in the Kingdom of Balmer where its enlightened monarchs, schooled properly in "Rajniti", exclusively the native philosophy of monarchy have ensured that the kingdom remained prosperous even when famine stalked the rest of Rajputana. Jaya's destiny lights up from her birth by her father, the Maharajah Jai Singh. The Maharajah has prohibited the purdah system and he decreed that his daughter is not to be raised in purdah.

Maharajah Jai Singh instructs Jaya to learn the texts of 'Rajniti', the classical art of government. 'The Raj Guru of Balmer becomes Jaya's instructor, who whispers the four arms of kingship: *Saam, Daan, Dand, Bhed* and also the duties of a king which enhance the positive masculine sensibility. At the age of twelve, Jaya is taught 'sola shringar', the sixteen arts of being a woman which enhance the positive feminine sensibility. She also taught that a woman's duty to please her man.

Prince Pratap of Sirpur has married Jaya only for political convenience. He has no intention of treating her as his wife unless the necessity for children arises. Jaya learns the intricacies of western society to please her husband Prince Pratap when the Prince of Wales visits India. At the actual meeting with the Prince of Wales, Jaya greets him with her bare hands folded in front of her face and the Prince of Wales returns her traditional gesture of welcome by asserting Indian traditions which will please him more than his own. Jaya played polo, partnering Prince Pratap and against Major James Osborne and Dickey Mountbatten, the

cousin of the Prince of Wales with the English visitors which asserted her heritage and pride with dignity.

After the death of Maharajah Victor of Sirpur, Prince Pratap takes his place as Maharajah and Jaya becomes Maharani that symbolizes Jaya's identity as a ruler. Even as the Maharani of Sirpur, Jaya's status is no more important than a concubine for Pratap.

According to the British policy, Pratap necessitates of an heir, which forces Jaya to perform that duty to give a heir to Pratap. When Jaya delivers a male child, Pratap prohibits Jaya to breast-feed the baby by employing a wet nurse instead. This further humiliation of maternal rights enrages Jaya, but she keeps calm. Maharajah Pratap has already robbed her of the dignity of being a wife, and now he is stealing the rights of her maternity. She becomes lonely from within but her only hope is her new born child.

Pratap's relationship with the dancer becomes scandal. Arising political and social consciousness in a fertile milieu has brought Jaya out into the open in protest. So she offers her price as being named Regent Maharani of Sirpur in the event of anything happening to Maharajah Pratap. This is the only hope for Jaya to assert her individual identity that leads her to the public interest to serve her native dharma. Angrily Pratap agrees and gives it in writing. Pratap's agreement authentically asserts her identity of royal woman as the Regent Maharani of Sirpur. After the death of Maharajah Pratap, Jaya's four-year-old son is officially declared as the Maharajah of Sirpur and she is the guardian of his throne for fourteen dangerous years. At the age of eighteen, Arjun joins the war and died like a true warrior. With a tragic loss Jaya becomes lonely. She takes a full year to get back to normal life.

Jaya learns that the rulers are being asked to sign an Instrument of Accession and James Osborne advises her to sign it before her subjects start fighting each other and the butchery begins in Sirpur. Jaya decides to return to Balmer to consult Raj Guru on what to do. Raj Guru guides Jaya with the first lesson of 'Rajniti' and he also reminds that her 'dharma' is protection that she cannot escape her destiny. Jaya follows the advice of Raj Guru and assumes leadership of Sirpur. She begins to compare a letter acceding the kingdom of Sirpur to the Union of India. At the end, Jaya has applied to be a candidate in the election.

Thus, Jaya a timid female child grows to the status of a Queen with the positive feminine and masculine sensibility. She comes out from her shackles of physical repression. An individual consciousness of Jaya's destiny to assert her individuality as a queen encourages the political and social consciousness to protest and marching against the colonial and patriarchal discrimination. Hence, the protest of her individual identity also leads her to the crisis of her people to assert the native identity as a common goal. So far Jaya has suffered and protested silently but finally she proves herself as a true 'Sati Mata'. Even she has grounded in traditional values and pities and partly because of it, Jaya responds to change in

her personal and political life with surprising openness and resilience and manages to hold the heritage and pride on her own. Thus the four arms of kingship and the Arthasastras empower Jaya to fulfil her true principle of native dharma. At the end, the lessons of Rajniti affirm and assert her individuality in concrete ways to serve her dharma.

Kamala Markandaya's novel *The Golden Honeycomb* recounts the struggle for Mohini's determination to educate Rabi to fight for self-discovery and freedom. In Devapur State, the ruler, Maharajah Bawajiraj I is deposed for his actions that are intended to encourage people to oppose the British.

The young Bawajiraj is installed on the *gaddi* of Devapur State as Maharajah Bawajiraj II who is unaware and lets the British Agent and the native minister to manage the state. Maharani Manjula gives birth to a male child, the next heir to the throne. Manjula experiences the pangs of deprivation when she told that she is not to nurse her child because the Palace does not approve of it. While the Maharani weeps from frustration and flies into a rage, the Maharajah arrives as a placatory remark and pacifies her. The Maharajah also feels himself ill-equipped to oppose them. From then onwards Maharani Manjula becomes aware of every fetter riveted onto their lives under the vague label of sacrifice for the sake of the Ruling House (The British).

The young Bawajiraj is tutored in a particular way, which is favourable to the continuance of the British Empire. Maharani Manjula objects and she wants her son to learn about his country first. In the Agent's opinion her attitude reinforces the view that Indian women are backward, so that her objection is overruled. Maharani Manjula feels that her son is being moved away from her maternal love and nurturance that encompasses her country and her people, which are also his country and his people.

Then the young Bawajiraj carefully moulded by the Agent and ascends the throne of Devapur State as Maharajah Bawajiraj III. He is in love with Mohini, a distant relation of Manjula's sent as retainer and companion to the widowed Maharani. She shares Manjula's spirit and will not let it be swamped by the ratified royal atmosphere. So she spiritedly challenges Maharajah Bawajiraj with the fact that she is pregnant.

He does not love his tepid wife Shanta Devi, really loves Mohini, though she taunts him to an end. Bawajiraj begs her to marry him. She makes it very clear that she has no wish to be his official wife or junior Maharani because she prizes her freedom more than the status of a queen. She explains that if she officially marries him, her child will be tied up hand and foot by the British as the father is.

Mohini has begun to consider the future of her unborn child as her pregnancy as seven month advanced. The impending birth of Mohini's child offers the Dowager Maharani the weapon she has been awaiting to fight the alien British with who remains a power behind the throne. She has heard of intrigues to deny recognition to the child until the union of the parents

is regularised and rumblings about the naming of the infant. In fact the British have advised Bawajiraj that the name of the child should not reflect any connection with dynasties that ruled or are ruling Devapur. When Mohini herself confronts him with the problem and he wavers, she calls him a *nam-ke-vaste* king, who is not master in his own house.

Mohini as suggested by the Dowager Maharani chooses to name her son Rabindranath, after a great man who is also a poet. Bawajiraj promptly agrees, unaware of what the name Rabindranath represents. The Dowager Maharani feeds the little Rabindranath's imagination with stirring tales of his ancestors' feats of arms against the British, particularly with the decisive sortie out with a band of hidden elephants. She teaches him that the British defeated the Indians only because of better training and discipline and because the Indian rulers allowed the British to divide them. When Bawajiraj protests to Manjula against her telling such legends to Rabindranath, she asserts that legends are the blood history of a country and that Bawajiraj's tutors taught him only slanted facts.

When Bawajiraj approaches the subject of discipline and schooling for Rabi, Mohini declares her decision to teach Rabi about the world of reality outside the Palace gates. She proposed a tour which makes Rabi to learn the real world as a commoner. The conversation between Dowager Maharani and Mohini about Indian who sold their souls and birthright to the British strikes Rabi. He notices the effects of the draught and hears the grumbles of the people.

When the mill workers are in strike in Bombay, Rabi protected the Maharajah from the people by being as a common soul of them. Rabi is interested in water and proposed to construct a dam for his people. During the summer of the next year water flows better in controlled cascades that support the people from the scarcity of water. While the people suffering with the excessive taxation because of the British, Mohini points out that the people are now Rabi's people and that the Maharajah is a monster to his people.

Rabi always assures that the protests will always be peaceful. Rabi is worried about the striking people. But Usha is confident that it will be sustained, because the people have progressed far beyond what they were like in the days of the strike by the empty-belly race of Bombay. Moreover, these people have not come for justice, instead to claim their natural rights and also have a supreme confidence in their ability to succeed in their claim – the human spirit. In the end, Maharajah Bawajiraj has been pleased for his people only because of Mohini and her son Rabindranath who has fulfilled Dowager Maharani Manjula's wish and tried to do their best to inherit their heritage and pride for the people of Devapur State.

Mohini's independence and Dowager Maharani Manjula's assertion of the blood history of a country paves the way to protest against the patriarchal order and the colonial power. By rejecting her status as being a queen, Mohini asserts her individuality outside the palace of both the British and Indian royal society for her son Rabi to nurture him as a selfless ruler of the kingdom.

Shahana Dasgupta's *Razia: The People's Queen*, is about the story of Iltutmish's daughter Sultan Razia, the only queen to rule from Delhi. Razia is intelligent, capable and energetic, but she is a woman. Iltutmish has taken keen interest in her education and involves her whenever possible in the affairs of the empire and takes his decision and convinced to place the future of his empire and his people in the hands of his daughter.

Razia is not a typical princess and not to veil herself. Iltutmish has been discovered her many talents and realizes that she is having all the qualities needed to be a king. She learns not just to read and write, but to argue and express her own. As a result of her wide education, that later on as queen she describes as being 'wise' and 'just'. Thus her father trains Razia to become a queen and a warrior.

Shahana Dasgupta picturizes Razia - who did not wear flowers in her hair - in a different way that symbolizes her masculine qualities such as courage, physical strength, assertiveness, protectiveness and self-confidence etc. In her part, Razia wants to assert her heritage with pride and dignity to serve her native dharma on behalf of her father.

After the death of Sultan Iltutmish, Razia becomes aware of an opposition to her becoming queen and she realizes that the time is not yet ripe for her to ascend the throne and Shah Turkan proposes that her son Ruknuddin has been declared as Sultan. He is enjoying himself and has little time to rule. Within a short period, Ruknuddin's weaknesses and odd behaviour worried people and their future are totally insecure. As a result of Shah Turkan and Ruknuddin's unfair treatment against Razia paved the way to found them guilty and killed. Then, Razia wins the people and ascends the throne with dignity.

Sultan Iltutmish organised a way of supplying food and other products to the towns and cities from the villages. As following the footage of her father, in a long afternoon, Razia is accompanied by her court officials and is visiting villages many miles away from Delhi. As the people's queen, she feels that this is the best way to understand her people by herself directly with compassion and selflessness. She also has given up wearing the veil so as to be able to talk face to face with her people.

The Sultan has spent most of her time in a village and has promised to repair the roads and set up a post system. She feels that she must know what is happening in the faraway corners of her territory. Her orders have to be passed on immediately to the people as well as her governors and soldiers in different parts of the kingdom. This can happen if her army and messengers could use good roads. The proper system of roads also is needed for the merchants, farmers and the craftsmen. Razia also has to make the travelling for ordinary people as safe as possible from the thieves and dacoits. Therefore Razia begins to link towns and villages by road with a carefully thought-out plan and built small forts at certain points to guard the roads. Razia has introduced a postal system as well.

As an energetic and efficient manager, Razia's projects for the welfare of the people began to change the atmosphere in the sultanate. As a political woman she makes her boldest decision of removing the tax on non-Muslims and she thought that this is the best way to treat the Hindus and Muslims as equal.

Razia has been on the throne for three years from 1240. In the early months of her reign, Altunia, the governor of Bhatinda is the power of strength to Razia. After Altunia's departure for Bhatinda, She turns to the people for advice, to Jamal-ud-din-Yakut in particular. As an Ethiopian slave, he has attracted her attention by his calmness and dependable nature.

Yakut not only looks after Razia's horses or acts as a royal stable, but also advises on the other matters of state, when riding alongside her or while fighting by her side. Gradually, Yakut becomes Razia's irreplaceable adviser. He is always with her, helping her on to her horse and assisting her in court. Razia's such close terms with an Ethiopian slave makes a way to the Renegade Amirs like Balban and Aetigin, to play on Altunia's love for Razia and his jealous nature. They inform Altunia of the growing friendship between Yakut and Razia. They also tempt him with an offer to share power with him after Razia is toppled. Acting with jealousy and fury, Altunia is planning to revolt against Razia. Then he declares that Bhatinda is independent from Delhi of the Sultanate, which is only a part of larger conspiracy. Razia regrets about Altunia's rebellion and decides to march to Bhatinda.

At the battle field, Yakut has been isolated and killed by Altunia. Razia loses the battle and is taken as a prisoner and has incarcerated in Bhatinda fortress. In Delhi, the Amirs are enjoyed by knowing the loser of Razia. They appoint Razia's brother Muiz-ud-din Bahram Shah as their ruler in her place with Aetigin as the Sultan's deputy. Altunia is just forgotten for the offer to share the power. Only then he realises that he has been used and fooled by the Renegade Amirs. He and Razia then consult with each other on their common goal of taking revenge against those who are betrayed them. Altunia and Razia get married and they march together on Delhi. The Sultan's forces meet them outside Delhi in a place called Kaithal in October 1240. Altunia is killed in the battle. Razia is killed on 13th October 1240.

From an early stage, Sultan Iltutmish perceives Razia's rare qualities –some feminine and masculine sensibilities in a positive way - and trains her in the art of the governance and diplomacy. At the end of her father's guidance and counsel, Razia becomes a queen and a warrior who succeeds the throne of Delhi. Razia's intelligence and capable as well as energetic participation in politics strengthen her to meet the challenges and protect the interests of the people. Although a rebellion by powerful Amirs, as an efficient ruler, Razia projects for the welfare of the people.

Hence, Razia's independent nature and her penchant for progressive measures gradually assert her supreme power as a Queen on the throne of Delhi. Razia's father Sultan

Iltutmish's personal instructions in the art of ruling a country helps her to assert her heritage by serving the requirements of her people with the support of the Amirs like Altunia and Yakut. Being the people's queen, Razia succeeds herself to inherit the heritage for the people of Delhi.

Mahasweta Devi describes Rani Lakshmibai, upon folklore, who challenges her native opponents and the British power to claim her rights to serve her native dharma for her people. At her eighth birthday Manu marries, Gangadhar Rao, the King of Jhansi and becomes the Maharani as Rani Lakshmibai. In a tender age of eight, being as a queen, Lakshmibai obliged to learn the many different customs and rules of the king's Maharastrian Brahmin family. She is also taught various other skills in the women's private quarters, alongside her studies.

Even as a tender age of eight, queen has to assume a variety of responsibilities. Gangadhar is keen on teaching his bride and gives her ample opportunities to learn to become truly worthy of the royal family. After the emergency situation of wedding is ended, the British has been agreed to transfer the power to Gangadhar Rao. In 1843, he is acknowledged as the independent king of Jhansi with a condition of keeping a British battalion.

In his deathbed Gangadhar Rao adopted a boy named Ananda and then the child has called as Damodar Gangadhar Rao. Moreover, Gangadhar Rao sent a letter by requesting the British government for help and gaining their approval for two things that to acknowledge the adopted boy as his successor and to put his wife as in charge of ruling the state.

At his fortieth age, the king passed away. But the British government was not ready to take over the King's final wish. For her part, Rani Lakshmibai sends letter twice to the Governor General for the approval of the adoption and the right to the throne. But the adoption has never been approved by the British and the Queen has no right to govern the kingdom. Finally the English officials decided to annex Jhansi with the British Empire because of the Doctrine of Lapse. Dalhousie has never been granted any monetary support or promise to the queen other than a monthly stipend of 5000 rupees. Then onwards negative attitudes of the British have taken apart which made the people to see the British Empire as their enemies.

The Jhansi massacre takes place. As an absolute innocence, the Queen has not participated in the massacre. The Queen makes the ultimate decision about the rebellion is only because of the British, who have rejected the loyalty of the Queen. By realizing the fact about the British, the Queen takes charge of Jhansi, her actions have proved her own worth. Thereby she asserts herself as a most capable ruler. With the promise of the Rajput chief's loyalty, the Queen begins the preparations for war. The Queen has started shaping her army against the British. She also organised a women's troop. As a result, the uprising of 1857 against the British is transformed under the Queen's leadership into a genuine struggle for Independence.

Under her leadership, the Queen has mobilized all her troops on all sides of the Jhansi fort against the British army. She disguises as a skilful young male warrior and fights on unstoppably, and her troops are fired up with her enthusiasm.

The heroic Queen who lost her life fighting the British in 1858 against Hugh Rose was the very same Queen who exchanged letters with the English officer, Major Erskine in early 1857. The Queen was on the side of the English, but she chose to fight them only because her loyalty was rejected by the English. During the massacre, Jhansi is cruelly blacklisted by the British. Such an uncertain condition, the Queen takes in charge of Jhansi on behalf of the British government. Thereby she asserts her individuality as a queen and her actions towards the native people have proved her own dignified worth of assertiveness, self-confidence and selflessness as a capable ruler.

The feminist argument in the period of the Independence struggle is able to emphasise the positive feminine and masculine sensibility which in terms of compassion, nurturance, maternal love, selflessness etc and courage, physical strength, assertiveness, protectiveness and self-confidence etc respectively. In the historical context, the dual emphasis on the importance of royal women taking charge of their physical destinies and reclaiming their supreme identity is fundamental to the authors' feminist perspective. However, the protagonists Jaya, Mohini, Razia and Lakshmibai are precisely significant because they used their right to define their assertion as a queen – the power that gives their personal leverage in a masculine world – to challenge the constraints of the patriarchal power and the British Empire.

To sum up, the protagonists of the selected novels are being nurtured in the native tradition. With sufficient opportunity they asserted their supreme power with positive feminine and masculine sensibilities. By rejecting the practice of sati and the purdah system the protagonists challenge the native opponents and the British by inherit their pride and dignity and empower themselves in the native science of monarchy and the art of kingship (governance) that fulfilled their true principle of native dharma.

The third chapter entitled “Challenges to Pride: The Emergence of Feminism and Nationalism” attempts to discuss the selected historical novels which concentrates and evaluates the key issues on the feminist theory of nationalism in postcolonial context which includes:

- a. A woman's active of historical visibility into cultural, political participation in national formations.
- b. Women's position within the nationalist movement.
- c. Paying attention to the structures of racial, ethnic and class power to the forms offeminism.
- d. The space in patriarchy from which women must speak and struggle to redefinethemselves.

Gita Mehta's novel *Raj* covers a turbulent period in Indian history, which is both of Imperial

British India and the Royal India under the Princes. It is saturated in nationalism and also presents the pathetic predicament of princes who are moulded into brown Englishmen by British imperialists.

As a true nationalist, Maharajah Jai Singh of Balmer only thinks the welfare of his people. Her active political participation in national formations, during the years of draught, the Maharani of Balmer witnessed the drought: supervised the relief camps for women inside the inner fort; held an assembly, a durbar for the refugee women.

Maharajah Jai Singh injected nationalist fervour to his daughter Jaya Devi by appointing Mrs. Roy who taught English language for Jaya. She has strong views on the British Raj and also her lessons are full of blood-curdling accounts of the injustices of the British Empire. At Jaya's lessons Mrs. Roy throws her nationalist journals angrily in front of Jaya which delineates her part to nationalism. For his part, Raj Guru instructed Jaya the four arms of kingship and also the duties of a king.

While Maharajah engaged with the nationalist venture, Jaya's marriage proposal is finalised with Prince Pratap of Sirpur. Jaya left her birth place in a tragic condition of her father and her brother's death. Prince Pratap has married Jaya only for political convenience to the British. He has no intention of treating her as his wife unless the necessity for children arises. He wants Jaya to learn the intricacies of Western society which would please her husband in front of the British Empire. To this end, he engages Lady Modi an Indian woman. When Jaya feels pathetically about her marriage life, Mrs. Roy says that it takes courage to fight for her rights.

Mrs. Roy, her childhood tutor wants Jaya to meet the nationalist leaders who are trying to help women like the princes who wrote to "The Bombay Chronicle" about their status in India particularly to meet India's greatest poet, Rabindranath Tagore. Jaya accepts Mrs. Roy's invitation and goes to her garden house for a musical evening. Mrs. Roy points out Tagore and Motilal Nehru to Jaya. Tagore leads Jaya to Sarojini Naidu and introduces her to the Nightingale of India, who is fearless. At every possible moment into the political participation in national formations Jaya has been formed herself in a particular way.

After resolving Pratap's issue with Esme Moore at London, Jaya returns to Sirpur with a document that recognizes her as Regent Maharani of Sirpur, which is given by the Maharajah Pratap. Thereby Jaya asserts her space in patriarchy from which she must speak and struggle to redefine herself. Meanwhile, Maharajah Pratap's plane crashed and he caught a tragic death. Then Jaya becomes the Regent Maharani of Sirpur. Reaching Delhi, Jaya learns that the Indian National Congress has refused to attend the Round Table Conference. They no longer want Dominion Status but full independence so that India can become a republic.

Tiny Dungra suggests that Jaya should familiarize herself with administrative matters. Because he explains that the next years will be hard for rulers, who caught between the

Empire and the Reformists. And each time the rulers increase taxes for the British, the people will be more disposed to join the ranks of the Reformists. Thereby Jaya plans for developing Sirpur on the lines of Dungra, holding long discussions with Dungra's experts and studying records.

Jaya's mother who became Sati Mata goes to Dandi on the eve of the Salt Satyagraha to pray all night with the Mahatma. Jaya and Lady Modi drive to the Dandi seashore. At the edge of the water Gandhi hands over his staff to Mrs. Naidu who accompanies with him and wades into the sea. When Gandhi is jailed by the British, Mrs. Naidu takes over the march on the salt depot. The Maharani goes with Mrs. Naidu to nurse the causalities. Jaya wants to join her mother to march on the Dharsana salt depot. Tiny stops her by pointing out that if she is seen at the salt depot, she will be stripped of her Regency and her son Arjun too may lose the Sirpur throne.

To counter the threat to her Regency from the Raj Guru of Sirpur, Jaya ushers in a speedy development programme, constructing a dam, air-fields in tribal areas, schools and roads. An earthquake devastates Sirpur and Jaya employs all the seven aircrafts of Sir Akbar to drop supplies to the tribals marooned in jungle islands. The Hindu-Muslim antagonism ruined the Third Round Table Conference. The religious harmony of the city is disturbed and each quarters become a religious fortress.

Jaya convenes a meeting with the leaders of different communities to defuse the new religious intolerance. At last, the British Parliament alarmed by the scale of religious rioting, agrees to an All-India Federation in which Indians will share power with the Viceroy. Jaya learns that other conditions set by Parliament have tendered the Federation impossible. And now the Reformists are demanding democratic elections in the kingdoms too. Many conservative rulers following the advice of selfish Residents unleash repressive measures. This only enhances the cry for democratic elections in the kingdoms too.

Hindu-Muslim antagonism reaches new heights in India. All over India the Reformists clamour for democratic elections in the kingdoms. While Jinnah has announced a separate country for the Muslims, the Indian National Congress launches a Civil Disobedience movement demanding full ruling powers and otherwise threatening to stop war production. In 1942, the Indian National Congress launches the Quit India Movement, urging all Indians to cease cooperating with the British in the war effort. Violence and sabotage erupts everywhere. The National Congress refuses to share equal power with the Muslim League and a frustrated Viceroy swears in an interim government without Jinnah. The nationalist movement taken part and on the other side the Second World War getting momentum. During the war Jaya lost her only heir to the throne, Arjun.

Finally India and Pakistan have separated as independent nations. Then the

Instrument of Accession took place to unite all states throughout India. Osborne advises Jaya to sign it before civil war erupts in Sirpur. Jaya goes to the Balmer Fort and meets the Raj Guru and asks for guidance as to what she should do. The Raj Guru tells her that her ‘dharma’ is protection and that she cannot escape her destiny. Returning to Sirpur, Osborne helps Jaya to recognize the royal estates. Then Jaya tours the country, explaining to the people that Sirpur is merged with the Indian Union to prevent violence.

After returning to the capital, Jaya recalls the final words of the Raj Guru to her about her ‘dharma’ and also the first principle of the government, ‘the people’. She requests Osborne to accompany her to the office where election petitions are being signed. At the Law Courts, she signs her election petition as an Independent candidate which can redefine herself as a whole.

Kamala Markandaya’s *The Golden Honeycomb* opens with a typical confrontation between British imperialism and Indian Nationalism. Bawajiraj II is installed on the *gaddi* for Devapur state by the British Political Agent. By appointing the English tutor, the British motivated the puppetry elements on young Bawajiraj, the son and next heir to the throne.

Maharani Manjula protests that her son should learn about his own country first, but Manjula feels that her son is being gradually moved away from her, her country and her people.

After a sudden death of the Maharajah Bawajiraj, the young Bawajiraj carefully moulded by the British Political Agent and ascends the throne of Devapur State as Maharajah Bawajiraj III, at the age of twenty three. Maharajah is very fond of the pregnant concubine Mohini who is the Dowager Maharani Manjula’s ward, and wants to marry her. But she refusing to do so and there she finds her space in patriarchy from which she must speak and asks him if he wants their child to become a British puppet like him.

All the while the Dowager Maharani Manjula remains a power behind the throne, and also has a great weapon of Mohini’s unborn child to fight against the British with her active of historical visibility into cultural and political participation in national formations. The child is born and the Dowager Maharani is paying particular attention to mould Rabi with nationalist fervour. She begins her part with telling tales of his ancestors’ feats of arms against the British. She teaches him that, in spite of all that, the British defeated the Indians because of better training and discipline and because the Indian rulers allowed the British to divide them.

As a concubine, Mohini does officially not exist. This is an apt space for Mohini to declare that the world of reality for her son, Rabi. The two women – his mother and grandmother – are sculpting the boy’s life into the formation of nationalism. As

Mohini's suggestion, Rabi is engaged with an excellent local Pandit, who teaches the real world. Then Mohini planned for a commoner's tour of the kingdom for the native edification of Rabi, While travelling into the countryside, the Pandit shows Rabi the poor peasants of Devapur State which shown the reality of the common people and their lives.

The Delhi Durbar marks a turning point and the development of nationalism in *The Golden Honeycomb*: in Delhi Durbar, specially honoured native soldiers by the British who saved their white officers or their family members are not loyal and also against the people of uprising. While Rabi is staying at Simla with his father, the Viceroy has recognized Rabi as the heir-apparent to the throne of Devapur. At Bombay, the mill workers are on strike against the Maharajah and surrounded his car and rock it. Being as a commoner Rabi himself safeguards the Maharajah from the mill-workers in their own language.

When the First World War starts, Maharajah Bawajiraj has organised an Expeditionary Force; with himself as Commander-in-Chief. Rabi refuses to join the Expeditionary Force as his deputy and also Dowager Maharani Manjula and Mohini protests that they have given enough to the British and now their son Rabi is an Indian and he doesn't want to become cannon fodder to the British.

Rabi proposes to construct a dam to harness water in times of plenty and release it when the heavens are unkind. The Dewan's youngest daughter Usha also makes her position within the nationalist movement in the line of the Dowager Maharani Manjula and Mohini. One day Usha staged a play and it is divided between the Rulers, who are bad and the Ruled, who are good. The King and his guards, who are all bad, wear evil masks. The downtrodden subjects, who are all good, wear dust. In the second scene, the good, armed only with righteousness, dust themselves off and challenge the bad king. In scene three, the finale, the bad rulers are won over and promise to do better in future.

Bawajiraj protests to Mohini about the way the play presented rulers as monster. The Resident accuses the Dewan to his face of using children as proxies to fight his battles. The Resident invokes the Dramatic Performance Act, in 1876 to ban all the further performances of the play. While the nationalist movement spreading with Gandhi's ideas to the princely states, Usha is immersed in developing the Gandhian campaign in Devapur.

The people of Devapur named the Maharajkumar with water and the Maharajah with salt. Because as Mohini protested to Maharajah Bawajiraj, the people are suffering of excessive taxation and asked him to relieve the suffering a little. She also pointed out the thing that the people are now Rabi's and not for the Maharajah, a monster to the natives.

While Gandhian thoughts are spreading to the princely states, the Jallianwallahbagh massacre galvanizes the Indian populace. Strikes, withdrawal of services, withholding of taxes, and non-cooperation become widespread. In further the struggle of independence begins. The leaders of the nationalist movement are building their inner strength. The people have intended to struggle endlessly. For their part, Vatsala and Usha have participated in the nationalist movement. At the end, as Mohini and Manjula's wish to serve their people made Rabi to become a common soul.

Shahana Dasgupta's novel *Razia: The People's Queen* narrates the story of Sultan Razia the only woman ruler of Delhi. Sultan Iltutmish decided to groom his daughter Razia for the throne as a queen and as a warrior. Thereby he encouraged her to participate in politics and left her in charge of the throne when he is away from Gwalior. Sultan Iltutmish is having a keen interest for Razia to be trained to lead his army one day as a warrior queen: he trained her to fight on horseback and on foot; to manage her shield and heavy armour and at the same time, to be quick in her movements, so that she can quickly get away when necessary.

She is trained to direct the soldiers from the top of an elephant during a battlefield. She is also trained in the use of several weapons as such the sword, the spear and the bow and arrows. Through studying the enemy's weaknesses and the terrain of battle Iltutmish teaches Razia the need and importance of well-planning for a campaign to succeed. As being a master in diplomacy, he also teaches her that one should resort to diplomacy and avoid war in some situations. As a result of such training and her father's guidance and counsel, by the time Razia comes to ascend the throne, she is prepared well to command the army on her own.

After the death of Sultan Iltutmish, Razia's stepmother cleverly seized the throne for her son Ruknuddin as Sultan. By realizing the fact, Razia was waiting for the time to ascend the throne of Delhi as her father wished to succeed his throne by her. In 1236, when Razia became the Sultan, immediately began many projects for the lives of ordinary people to make them comfortable and she began to reward the Amirs (Altunia and Yakut in specific) who have helped her, by appointing them to ministers or governors of provinces.

When Altunia declared his independence from Delhi, Razia decided to face his rebellion and challenged to meet him in the battle. But she lost the battle and imprisoned by Altunia. Finally the Queen and Altunia combined together for their common goal. But both of them died on the battlefield of Kaithal.

Mahasweta Devi's *The Queen of Jhansi* emphasizes the importance of conflict between imperial design of the British Empire and Rani Lakshmi Bai's loyalty and admiration to safeguard her kingdom against the English. It represents the political

participation of the Queen in national formations from 1853 to 1857.

In 1842, the Maharajah Gangadhar Rao married Manu who then became the Rani Lakshmibai. The King then started giving the opportunities to teach his bride to become worthy of the royal family. As a true protector of his people, Gangadhar Rao concentrated on the internal governing of the kingdom. In 1851 the Queen gave birth to a male child but the child no more after three months. Due to his son's death, the King was bed-ridden. Then he adopted a child from his descendant Vasudev on his deathbed. In the adoption ceremony, the child is named by the King as Damodar Gangadhar Rao. On 21 November 1853, the King passed away.

The king's final wish was to accept his adoption by the British government and approve the queen and ruler of Jhansi kingdom as long as the boy is still under age. The Queen also requested the English officials for her husband's final wish. But the British rejected all the letters written by the late king and Lakshmibai and they were not ready to accept the adoption and the Queen instead they have annexed the Jhansi under the British. This made the Queen to prepare herself for the rebellion.

Thus the 1857 struggle begins for independence which shakes the foundations of the British Empire for two years. The nationalist movement is going on a full swing. With the real motive of nationalism, the Queen started forming the army. When she took charge of Jhansi, her actions proved her own worth as a capable ruler. While the Queen had building up Jhansi as a strong power in every aspect, her domestic enemies were also taking heed.

Disregarding caste and religion, the Queen called upon and organised a women's troop by means of nationalist movement.

The Queen herself took over the leadership and trained the Jhansi women with nationalist fervour. The Queen's enthusiasm influenced the citizens and everyone prepared themselves for the Jhansi massacre. On 31 March the British decided to attack Jhansi. The Queen bravely fought in the battle as a young male warrior and lost her life, an early freedom fighter who began the struggle for India's independence.

To conclude, the chapter sums up the key issues of the feminist theory of nationalism.

The selected novels in this chapter show the protagonists various strengths such as willpower, courage, independent action, and strong enough to face their real restrictions. They have evolved for themselves to the public affairs. Independently emerged with all official sanctions, they are more free than their male counterpart. All the women (Jaya, Mohini, Razia and Lakshmibai) are nationalists and in touch with the nationalist movement (political events), they raised their voice against men and the English. At the end, by protesting against the British and to safeguard the natives the

protagonists redefined themselves.

The fourth chapter “Historical Narrative: An Analysis” highlights the writers’ narrative devices reconstruct the past from two distinct historical perspectives that of Indian nationalism and Indian feminism. As such the title “Historical Narrative: An Analysis” concentrating on the elements in historical narrative like, authors’ narrative technique, the characterization of the author, the use of language, the use of image and symbols in historical narrative, important periods, incidents and historical events in the colonial context and so on.

Gita Mehta portrays the novel, *Raj* between the Imperial British India and the Royal India under the Princes. The story has started with typical Indian scene in 1897 and ends with an independent India as a Republic. The novel dramatizes its narrative according to the important events such as the famine of 1898, the impact of freedom movement in royal India, the two world wars, the role of the royal armies in supporting the British, awakening of the democratic spirit among the masses and at the end Independence. Within this framework, the novelist weaves the story into four books named as Balmer, Sirpur, Maharani, and Regent which centralizes the protagonist Jaya Devi.

As a whole, the novel presents an account of the royal history between 1857 and 1950 with a balanced perspective. Thus Gita Mehta’s *Raj* is not only a fictional history but also a constant struggle for the protagonist’s supreme identity in the British Raj.

Kamala Markandaya’s novel *The Golden Honeycomb* is an historical romance which is favoured by the first generation on Indian Writing in English. The novel begins with a

Prologue and ends with an Epilogue, a Note and Acknowledgements. In the Prologue Kamala Markandaya pinpoints the importance of India as a dominion in British possession.

The novel divided into three parts sums up the trials and tribulation of India under the British governance through a succession of moving events, pitiable strikes and round-the-clock agitations and lockouts. Markandaya records the story of three generations of Rajahs of an erstwhile princely state of Devapur. As a historical novel *The Golden Honeycomb* follows a certain chronology in recording the specific dates and events such as Rabi was born in 1895, the Delhi Durbar and its long preparations spanned 1902-03, and also the cavalcade of small episodes and events that link known landmarks such as Curzon’s visit and the Salt tax.

The novel is one of the best of Kamala Markandaya by presenting a historical theme with the woven tapestries of words and sentences. In *The Golden Honeycomb*, Markandaya shows her deep insight by handling the situations and characters.

Stylistically, the characters are created by the author with the specific purpose of underlining the message. These characters fall into three groups, those who come into contact with Rabi and each intended to influence him in some way.

In *The Golden Honeycomb* her women characters celebrate the Shakti-power.

Manjula, Mohini, and Usha are shaped from the same kind. They are strong, independent, self-educated and intelligent. Together they form three generations of the women's movement and face the issues in each generation. In addition, Rabi is anointed with three different kinds of Shakti power: from his grandmother, Manjula – the value of the past with all its stories of individual and national identity; from his mother, Mohini – the importance of resisting authority and fighting for one's rights; and from Dewan's daughter, Usha – the personal fulfilment of walking hand in hand with someone whose intellectual acumen and political idealism would help him be a good ruler and a good man. Thus Kamala Markandaya succeeds well in *The Golden Honeycomb* and thus became a consummate historian out of necessity; but be it said to her credit, she made a virtue of this necessity.

Razia: The People's Queen is a short and poorly executed novel by Shahana Dasgupta. It tells the story in brief about the rule of Sultan Razia, who was the only queen ever to rule from Delhi, and who, already in the thirteenth century instituted many progressive and modern measures of good governance. Through the novel Dasgupta historically portrays the core concept that Sultan Iltutmish perceiving the instability of his sons to succeed him on the throne of Delhi and observing the rare qualities of his daughter Razia, he then decides to make her his heir. So from an early age, Razia is brought up as a prince rather than a princess. Iltutmish personally instructs her in the art of ruling a country.

The novel has been divided into thirteen chapters with the subtitles which describes the story as a whole. Finally the novel sums up with the description of searching for Razia at present. Stylistically the author has created the characters with specific purpose which underlining the message. These characters fall into two groups those who come into contact with Razia and each intended to influence her in some way at her court.

Through the character-shaping of Razia, the author influences the social responsibility. Sultan Iltutmish has appointed her daughter as his heir who is the first female successor for the throne of Delhi Sultanate. As a capable ruler Razia has devoted herself to her Empire and her subjects. Dasgupta sketches Razia's equality amongst her subjects of Hindu and Muslims by establishing schools, academics and research centers and also public libraries those are the shared places of Muslim traditional manuscripts and Hindu works.

Shahana Dasgupta is evidently narrates the history of Sultan Razia with combined facts of Delhi Sultanate and the Empire and with the imagination of villages that are belonged to the Sultanate and the people. Dasgupta names Sultan Razia rather than Sultana because the title officially underlines her rightful credibility as such a powerful sovereign leader of Delhi. Finally the author ends with the novel thus after the end of Razia, the people of Delhi are still allied to Razia and merely her presence is enough to harden their love and respect for her.

Even it is poorly executed by Dasgupta the novel has given a succinct outline of history that of Sultan Razia and her life and time.

Mahasweta Devi was an eminent writer of tribal literature in Bengal. Her historical writing of *The Queen of Jhansi* proposes a new paradigm of sources and also the factual events of the 1857 uprising. The novel forms both conceptions that of the debate for royalty of Jhansi and the brief political career of an extraordinary woman, Queen Lakshmibai. Thus the story dispels the mythical and legendary notions of Lakshmibai who led her troops to the battlefield and died while fighting.

Within the historical and politically debatable framework, Queen's life and political participation are framed in the growing colonialism. This organization of the central character is both episodic and chronological. Mahasweta Devi is always tried to explore people's version of history. She collects all the sources of information from archival records, personal memoirs, and family legends through people who were close to the Queen and oral legends which are popular on parity with each other. As a historical narrative, Mahasweta Devi brings the reality of the life of Gangadhar Rao and Lakshmibai and the British officials who exchanged their claims and views on letters.

As a result of the analysis, all the four selected historical writers, Gita Mehta, Kamala Markandaya, Shahana Dasgupta and Mahasweta Devi attempting to address social and political issues of contemporary relevance. The writers emphasize different aspects of social and political conflicts of both India and the British. Dialogue and debate have taken part in the novels in order to interrogate social, political and cultural values. The nationalist movement is analyzed primarily through the impact on individual consciousness and destiny. Thus the selected historical writings broaden our vision and challenge us to review the Indian historical facts in terms of feminism and nationalism during the colonization.

In Indian history, the queens were having their own power as equal to their male counterparts (Kings). Because of the colonization the kings were becoming puppets to the British Empire. They were only holding their name without any power or any right to serve their native *dharma*. Hence the queens, the nobles and their people were also in the same realm. Becoming aware of the situation, the queens wanted to free themselves from

that hangover. They started struggling against the patriarchy. At one point, they found their space and asserted their supremacy as queen. Because the queens believed that their individuality was a peculiar tool that would enhance them to attain their common destiny – heritage and national pride – to serve their native dharma.

The queens' positive feminine and masculine sensibility paved the way to inherit their heritage and to destroy the old institutions which were the obstructive to their social progress of nationalist movement. Nation's Freedom from colonial rule was a birthright of its people. Its conferment would allow the nation to occupy a status of equality with other members of the family of nation. Thus, the queens' empowerment, their national formations and their involvement into the nationalist movements encouraged the people to defend their nation's right to survive as an independent country.

In future, the scholars who are willing to pursue their research on Indian English Historical Fiction may concentrate on the recommendations of the further research: A comparative study of the representations of women in historical fiction by men and women writers; by employing the theoretical perspectives, the scholars can further 'Re-read' psychoanalysis to explore the issues of female and male identity in the historiography.