



## **THE ANALYSIS OF “RAJ”**

**Dr. D. PARAMESHWARI**

Assistant Professor

Dept. of English

Osmania University College For Women  
Veeranari Chakali Ilamma Women's University,  
Koti, Hyderabad

### **ABSTRACT**

*The historical novel Raj covers the period from 1897 to 1950 giving a picture of the British rule, the affairs of some princely states and finally Indian independence followed by the merger of princely states. The novel has six divisions: prologue, Balmer, Sirpur, Maharani, Regent and Afterword.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The four chapters Balmer, Sirpur, Maharani and Regent trace the life and achievements of Jaya devi, a princess born and brought up in Balmer, a small kingdom in Rajasthan. The main story in Balmer thus deals with Jaya's upbringing, which is different from the upbringing of traditional princess. Her father Maharaja Jai Singh brings her up as a prince much to the consternation of her mother. When Jaya was just five years old, Jai Singh took her in to jungle overruling the maharani's objections. There she was made to face a chained panther, who was constantly lunging forward. After a long time, her terror subsided. Then the maharajah took her hand and putting the other hand on her brother tikka's shoulder told them “Rulers are men and men are always frightened. A man cannot govern unless he confronts his own fear”.

“The Maharaja had a decree that his daughter was not raised in purdah. Maharani insisted that Jaya be educated in the traditional manner of the princess of Balmer” another cause for maharani's worry was that Jaya had inherited the maharani's green

**Dr. D. PARAMESHWARI**

1Page



eyes but her father's dark skin. She wondered if Jaya 'a dark skin would create problems at the time of marriage.

Jaya is given lessons on 'Rajniti' by the Raj guru, and English is taught to her by Mrs Rao. She is also exposed to hunting, polo as well as feminine arts and traditional rituals. Everyday she is reminded of the 'sati' queens of Balmer and wonders "why there were so many sati's and so many vows". Jaya studies the Artha sastra's tenets on civil and criminal jurisprudence. She realizes that the revenue system of British India was modelled on the revenue system of Chanakya.

Alarmed by the changes in Jaya's education, the maharani complained to Kuki- bai and the purdah ladies, "who will marry such a overeducated girl? Her in laws will resent her. Her husband will be insulted when she flaunts her learning in front of him. She is twelve years old. She should become a woman; her father is trying to make her into a son:

Maharaja Jai Singh is an able ruler with the welfare of people at heart. He makes his wife up purdah and join him in the running and maintenance of relief camps. His modernity is revealed in the way he brings up his children. His personal care in giving them lessons in courage and in getting them trained to be good administrators are brought out very well in the novel.

The maharani, who is old fashioned and who observes purdah strictly and follows all the customs and traditions of the Balmer kingdom, stands by her husband in all the matters. The only time she feels constrained to disobey her husband is when she is asked to come out of the purdah and assist in organising kitchens for the people during famine. Ultimately, she is overruled and has to remove her veil.

In the early years of drought, maharani did not know that one day would cling her veil as a dying soldier clings to his standard, afraid to dishonour the memories of the Balmer Maharani's who had preceded her, she is superstitious and fears any kind of natural or human calamity. She even visits the Sati Mata to find out about the future of the kingdom, and also of the prospects of Jaya. Sati Mata's cryptic and the tragic news of tikka's glorious and valorous death while charging the enemy troops at Aleppo throws the whose kingdom into a pall of gloom. The father is so grief stricken that after a short illness, breathes his last. Before his death, he tell Jaya: " I have informed the council that you are to become ruler of Balmer, Baisa". He handed her the anklet. 'Raja Mansingh must rule as regent until, you come of age.... Guard the honour of the people, Bai-Sa. Complete the reforms I have begun'.



Jaya's upbringing helps her to rule as a queen as well as to face with equanimity the sorrows and hardship that she encounters in her life. She encounters upheavals not only in her personal life but in the kingdoms and country's as well. Any other person in the place of Jaya would have gone Berkey.

In 1919, Jaya is married to the sword of prince Pratap of Sirpur. Her uncle raja Mansingh has hastened Jaya's marriage to remove the only threat that remained behind in the path of their son ascending the throne. Jaya's brother tikka, the real contender to the throne, had expired earlier, leaving Jaya in the line of succession.

Jaya's marriage to Pratap is almost a failure from the beginning. First, she is married to his sword and then has to wait for years to see and meet him in person. Then Pratap, not impressed by her traditional upbringing, dressing and style appoints Lady Modi, socialite, to give her training and change her style. Jaya, is an intelligent, receptive and eager to please her husband, undergoes the ordeal and with in a short period is an accomplished modern lady. Still Pratap doesn't find time for her.

Thus, the depiction of the boar hunt and other such shikars, and the elaborate references to zenana and concubines and eunuchs make the princely India come alive on the pages of the novel. It is rightly said that:" despite the usual themes and events raj is the saga of triumph—the triumph of "the people", of democratic principles and of a woman who accepts the inevitable changes gracefully"

## REFERENCES

Bande, Usha. "Raj: A thematic study" Indian women novelists, Set1, Vol V. Ed. RK Dhawan. Delhi: Prestige Book's, 1991.

Raj. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Ltd., 1993. All references belong to the penguin edition.

Pathak, R.S "Tribal People, Locale and Values in A River Sutra". Modem Indian Novel in English, Ed R.S Pathak. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999.