

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Valorization of Eastern Culture in Geeta Mehata's *A River Sutra*

A Thesis submitted to the Central department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirement for the degree of masters of Arts in English

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March 2015

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Letter of Recommendation

Binod Paudel has completed his thesis entitled Valorisation of Eastern culture in Geeta Mehata's *A River Sutra* under my supervision. He carried out his research work from May to December 2015. I hereby commend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

This thesis titled “Valorisation of Eastern Culture in Geeta Meheta’s *A River Sutra*’ submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Binod Paudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Acknowledgements

Words fail me to convey my feelings of gratitude to my respected teacher Khemraj Khanal who as my supervisor provided invaluable inspiration and constructive comments to give the final shape of this thesis. Without his invaluable suggestions, continuous encouragement, kind co-operation and scholarly guidelines, this research work would never have witnessed the form it enjoys at present. So I am much indebted to him.

I am proudly grateful to Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, Head of the central department of English, for the approval of this research work in the present form. Also, I would like extend my profound gratitude to Ramchandra Poudel sir, Harihar Gnawali sir, Badri Acharya sir, Subharaj Ranabhat sir, Maheshwar Poudel sir for their valuable guidelines.

I would sheer injustice if I do not express my sincere thanks to my friends Gaurav Sapkota, for his academic support. In course of completing this thesis, I received help and suggestion from various persons, institutions, departments and well wishers. I am indebted to them individually.

I owe a great debt to my parents Guru Prasad Upadhyaya and Sharmila Sharma who provided me the light of education despite facing various challenges and difficulties. Also I am grateful to my uncles Nirmal Raj Kafle and Krishna Prasad Poudel and my sisters Binita Poudel Sapkota and Bidya Poudel for their continuous impute to complete this thesis.

Date: - March 2015

Binod Paudel

Abstract

Geeta Mehata's *A River Sutra* valorises the eastern culture and belief with the help of the different stories used in the novel. The narrator, retired bureaucrats who is spending his retired life in Narmada valley hears the stories from the pilgrimages who had visited the river with different motives. As being the main character, he retells the stories which are based on the religious beliefs and mythological characters. Although different characters have their own motifs of visiting the Narmada valley but they hold the crux of religious importance, which is the valorisation of the culture. This research analyzes the eastern culture and its importance in the novel. Basically this research had taken the theoretical insights of cultural studies developed in the field to look on the Novel. The smoothly woven stories based on the myth of Narmada River and the characters and their strong beliefs on the myth itself valorizes the Eastern Culture in Geeta Mehata's *A River Sutra*.

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I. Exploration of Eastern Culture in *A River Sutra*

This research focuses on critical reading of cultural representation of the Geeta Mehta's *A River Sutra*. In particular, it explores the cultural issue of spirituality, religiosity and the eastern values. In the superficial reading the novel seems to be the depiction of the simple lifestyle of the narrator. However, in the deeper analysis narrator's lifestyle and attachment to eastern culture shows that this novel can be analyzed from the cultural perspective. The novel is clearly filled with cultural issue and eastern ethical values in relation with the narrator's life, which is about the uncommon pain and joy that the narrator has collected during his tenure as the manager of a government rest house on the bank of the Narmada River. The narrator is a retired civil servant who had spent the whole of his life in government jobs, but after his retirement, he starts to live on the bank of the Narmada River as a "Vanaprasthi". In the course of time he realizes the tradition and customs which is the accurate representation of eastern culture through its portrayal of music, religion and major landmark. Reversal of the position of the bureaucratic towards the nature helps in understanding the way in which is also the pivotal theme of the novel. Presentation of the stories within the main story of the novel itself also signifies story telling tradition which is privileged in the eastern culture. The novel consists of series of different stories which the narrator hears from different people who came to the river on pilgrims.

Mehta presents tradition in her novel through the narrative of women who arrives and asks the narrator to join him as she sings before the river. Her songs pay tribute to rivers beauty and its close association with the different aspect of sensuality and beauty inherent in women. Professor Shankar returns and starts to addresses the

woman as Uma which means "peace in Nights" in eastern culture. It turns out that he was Naga Baba the ascetic who has returned to the material world. He tells the Narrator how the soul has to travel through eighty four thousand births in order to become a man.

Similarly, the monk's story tells us about how a man in eastern culture is devoted to the ascetic life and they will not hesitate to renunciation by leaving their wealth and property. The 'Tariq Mia's' Story and the frequent visits of the narrator to the mosque shows the religious tolerance between different religions in eastern culture.

The devotion of a music teacher to his pupil teaching the religious hymn shows the affection of religion in individual's life. The superstition which is strongly followed in the culture is portrayed in another story of the executive, who had regularly seduced by the half serpent and half women in his bed. The executive come to the Narmada River to be purified from the venom of the serpent, believing that Narmada River has the potentiality to purify or neutralize the venom of serpents. The story of the girl who had been kidnapped by a Bandit called Rahul Singh believing she was his wife in previous life, also suggests the eastern culture following the Superstation and believing in life after death.

The novel brings many references from the 'Upanishad', 'Vedas', and many Hindu sculptures and myths like 'Kama Sutra', Goddesses 'Parvati', Saraswati and most frequently lord 'Shiva'. It also advocates for the need of educating the person who is deprived of the education itself. Narrator's passionate attachment with the nature shows his devotion to the selfless life and culture. All the life events and belief of the narrator reflects his sense of valorization of own cultural norms and

religious faith. Drawing upon the ideas of cultural studies, this research will explore cultural issues in the life of the narrator.

Gita Mehta was born in an Oriya family in New Delhi in 1943. When she was born her father was in jail. He was blamed for helping the nationalist movement of Gandhi. During the time India was fighting for freedom from British colony. At the age of three, Mehta was left to be raised in a convent in Kashmir so that her mother could better aid her jailed husband. After India got independence Mehta's father went into politics. She is the daughter of Biju patnik, an Indian Independence activist and a chief minister in post- Independence Orisa. She completed her education in India and at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. She has produced and/or directed 14 television documentaries for U.K, Europe and U.S networks. During the year 1970-1971 she was a television war correspondent for the US television network. Her film compilation of the Bangladesh revolution *Dateline Bangladesh* was shown in cinemas, theaters both in India and abroad.

Similarly the novel raises the issue of cultural valorization and inclination to eastern religious faith in the life of an individual. A bureaucrats start to live in the riverside in a guest house after his retirement as a 'Vanaprasthashram', what is the significance of vanaprastharm in eastern culture and how a man should remain in this stage of life? The narrators hear many stories from the pilgrims about the Narmada River and eastern tradition, what is the significance of those stories in the novel? And how these stories were linked to the eastern culture?

When the narrator had started to live in the house, his perception of life has one meaning and when he spent his days in the house and encounters with many people and heard many stories why his perception about his own life changes? What makes him able to change the perception about life? What is unique about narrator

attachment with nature, why he keeps on involving in religious activities, how his life circumstances passes through a number of changes towards ethical values. To what extent his life is guided in accordance to eastern culture. These are the some major questions that my study aims to explore.

Further, this research contends that the narrator devotion to eastern religious faith and cultural values are caused by his sense of valorization of eastern culture. It assumes that narrator's life circumstances tends to adopt eastern religious norms and ethics.

Similarly the primary objectives of this project is to explore Mehata's characterization of a narrator as a representative figure to valorize the eastern norms and values. It also incorporates how cultural critics concept of giving importance to own culture is applicable in the context of the narrative

Although this research project makes use of significance concept developed in the field of cultural criticism, it doesn't offer a comprehensive analysis of cultural criticism in general rather Chris Barker's concept of cultural studies which is concerned with culture is constituted by signs, meanings, and representation that is generated by signifying mechanism in the context of human practices. As narrator's life story reflects the human practices it is appropriate to analyze this novel as novel concerned with cultural studies since the major objective of the study is to demonstrate the cultural issues prevalent in the life of narrating, the study borrows the ideas from other realms of criticism that are appropriate to the title of my thesis.

This research provides a significant contribution mainly in two areas of concern; firstly it brings the life circumstances of the narrator within the purview of

critical analysis. Secondly, this research makes a significant connection of cultural valorization by an individual and his life resembling eastern ethical concepts.

Many critics and writers have been written about different aspect of the novel. Stella Algoo Baksh is one of the critics written in the novel. In this regard, he asserts:

Mehta had focused on the interaction between India and the western world. In *A River Sutra*, Mehta changes focus and explores the diversity of cultures within India. To accomplish this, Mehta presents seemingly unconnected stories in her novel, stories about Hindu and Jain ascetics, courtesan and ministerial, Diamond merchants and tea executives, Muslim clerics and music teachers, tribal folk beliefs and the anthropologist who study them. (56)

Mehta explores the cultural diversities of India and presents the collisions of faith, of different people, which has been affected by traditional beliefs and practices. Washington post's Reviews on this Novel, "the stories leave the reader with the sense that things are richer and more meaningful than they seem, that life is both clear and mysteries that the beauty and the horror of this world is both irreducible and inexplicable"(post review). In the same way Boyd Tonkin praises, "The novel as didactic and refreshing prose, part of an Indo-British wave of writers who confirms that the "cultural passages between South Asia and the west can still yield fresh perspectives (23). South Asian myth and ritual represents as tradition and western values and reason represent as modern. There is tussle of both in the novel. On the same line, Indira focuses:

Certain elements in the novel *A River Sutra* by Gita Mehta constitute motifs or themes which run through the novel as threads holding together the different stories told and adding meaning to the whole.

Two such themes would be the river and sorrow. The river as an object is ever-present, with the various characters and their stories occurring along the river, because of the river, or in proximity to the river, while a sense of underlying sorrows helps define the society and characterize the consequences of many of the tales told. (24)

Thematic issue of the novel is highly debatable, in her article review on *A River Sutra* by Geeta Mehata, Marlene fisher analyzes the novel as depicting oriental, mystic spirituality, poverty by designing to transport its readers from the particular of the history to transcend humanity.

We live in the world what the west knows or thinks it knows about the rest, matters varies much to the fate of countries like India. By their myth we shall know them and by those myths we act upon them too. The myth that *A River Sutra* gives us about India are familiar ones. This is the well known world of the oriental mystique, compounded equally to poverty, mystery and spirituality that, by designing to transport its readers from the particular of history to a realm of supposedly transcendence "humanity". Allows us to choose a romantic, exotic, fantasy, over another view that may be less familiar, and perhaps less pleasing. (214)

Similarly, this novel is reviewed glorifying the Narmada river as sources for all the human action as an embodiment of mythological, archeological and anthropological significance. The stories narrated within the framework of story of novel shows love and desire of an ex-bureaucratic and his human heart.

*A River Sutr*as is a lovely book. Its stories of the monk, the teacher, the executive, the courtesan, the musician and the minstrel revolve around

the character of the Narmada River itself. It is a river whose sources is all the human activity and longings embodied in mythology, archeology and anthropology. More than anything else, the Narmada River that unbroken record of the human race harbor's love and desire in all their forms. The stories, to which the ex-bureaucratic privacy are 'only' stories of the human heart. (20)

Likewise, the concept of cultural studies will also be reasonable perspective to uncover the cultural reality of the narrator's life story. However no research has been done yet, from the perspective of cultural studies. This research will focus on the cultural issues and their implication in the narrator's life.

As this study emphasis on the cultural reading of Geeta Mehata's *A River Sutra*, it borrows the ideas and principles developed in the field of cultural studies. Mainly this study brings ideas from Chris Barker's analysis of cultural studies as an Intra disciplinary or post disciplinary field of inquiry that explores the production and inculcation of maps of meaning. A discursive formation, or regulated way of speaking is concerned with issues of power in signifying practices of human formations constituted by signs, meanings and representation that are generated by signifying mechanism in the context of human practice.(4)

Cultural studies do not speak with one voice it cannot be spoken with one voice and do not have one voice with which to represent it. Cultural studies have not referred to which we can point. Rather, cultural studies are constituted by a language game of cultural studies, Grossberg in Chris Barker's book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* argued:

though cultural studies has stressed conjunctural analysis, which is embodied descriptive and historically and contextually specific, there are some concepts in cultural studies across the globe which form a history of real achievements that is now a part of cultural studies tradition and to do without which would be willingly accept real incapacitation.(9)

A cultural study has always been a multi-or post-disciplinary field of inquiry which blurs the boundaries between it and the other 'subjects'. The study of culture has no origins and to locate one is to exclude the other possible starting point. Cultural studies is a discursive formation, that is, a cluster of ideas, images and practices, which provides ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society. A cultural study is constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects and coheres around the key concepts, ideas and concerns. Further cultural studies had a moment at which it named itself, even though that naming marks only a cut or snapshot of an ever-evolving intellectual project.

Stuart Hall, West Indian born British thinker associated with the 'New Left' of the late 1960s, Director of the Birmingham Centre for contemporary cultural studies had a significant role to let emerge an identifiable and particular field called cultural studies. Most significant figures in the development of British cultural studies, Halls's work makes considerable use of Gramsci and the concept of ideology and hegemony. Stuart Hall also argues in Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* that one way of thinking about culture in our own world, 'is in terms of shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the codes which govern the relationships of translation between them' (Hall, 21). If we accept that people who have a common

cultural background share ideas and concepts, then we understand the need to look at cultural practices in our world in ways quite different from the ones that we are so far used to. This understanding of 'culture' also helps us figure out the complex relationship between representations of culture during the colonial period and the struggle of the colonized to come up with their own notions of what their culture is and what it ought to be.

Bennett offers his element of definition of cultural studies as "a Cultural study is an interdisciplinary field in which perspectives from different disciplines can be selectively drawn on to examine the relations of culture and power" In *Cultural Studies Theory and Practice* by Chris Barker. As Chris Barker cites Bennet in his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practicse* as: "cultural study is concerned with all those practices, institutions and system of classification through which there are inculcated in a habitual form of conduct" (6).

The forms of Power that cultural studies explore are diverse and include gender, race, class, colonization etc. A cultural study seeks to explore the connection between these forms of power that can be utilized by agent in the pursuit of change. The prime institutional sites for cultural studies are those of higher education and as such, cultural studies are like other academic discipline. Nevertheless, it tries to forge connection outside of the academy with social and political movements, workers in cultural institutions and cultural management.

Straut Hall puts Culture as "actual grounded terrain of practices, representation, language and customs of any specific society" (7) in Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies Theory and Practicse*. Contradictory forms of common sense which have taken root in and helped to shape popular life. Culture is concerned with question of shared social meaning that is the various ways we make sense of the

world. However, meaning are not simply floating out there rather they are generated through signs, mostly notably those of language. Chris Barker gives emphasis to cultural studies as:

Cultural studies has argued that language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meaning and knowledge about an independent object world' existing' outside of language. Rather. It is constructive of those very meanings and knowledge" (7).

That is language gives meaning to material objects and social practices that are brought into view by language and made intelligible to us in terms that language delimits. These processes of meaning production are signifying practices. In order to understand culture, we need to explore how meaning is produced symbolically in language as a signifying system

Similarly, a good deal of cultural studies is centered on questions of representation. That is on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us in meaningful ways. Indeed the cultural strand of cultural studies can be understood as

The study of culture as the signifying practices of representation. This requires as exploring the textual generation of meaning. It also demands investigation of the modes by which meaning is produced in a variety of contexts. Further, cultural representation and meaning have a certain materiality, that is, they are embedded in sounds, inscriptions, objects, images, books, magazines, and television programs. They are produced, enacted, used, and understood in specific social contexts. (8)

Further, cultural studies have developed a form of cultural materialism that is concerned to explore how and why meanings are inscribed at the moment of

production. That is as well as being centered on signifying practices, cultural studies tries to connect them with political economy. This is a discipline concerned with power and distribution of economic and social resources. Consequently cultural studies have been concerned with, who owns and control cultural production? The distribution mechanisms for cultural productions and the consequences of patterns of ownership and control for contours of cultural landscapes. One of the central tenants of cultural studies is its non reductionism. Culture is seen as having its own specific meanings, rules and practices which are non reducible to, or explainable solely in terms of, another category or level of a social formation. In particular cultural studies have waged a battle against economic reductionism. That is the attempt to explain what a cultural text means by references to its place in the production processes, For the cultural studies the processes of political economy do not determines the meaning of text or their appropriation of audiences. Rather political economy, social relationship and culture must be understood in terms of their own specific logics and modes of development. Each of these domains is articulated or related together in context- specific ways. The non- reductionism of cultural studies insist that questions of class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nation and age have their own particularities which cannot be reduced either to political economy or to each other.

Likewise, cultural studies have deployed the concept of articulation in order to theorize the relationship between components of social formation. This idea refers to the formation of a temporary unity between elements that do not have to go together. The concept of articulation is also deployed to discuss the relationship between culture and political economy. Thus culture is said to be articulated with movements of production but not determined in any necessary way by that movement and vice versa.

Further, In *Cultural Studies Theory and Practice*, Chris Barker argues that for most Cultural studies writers “power is regarded as pervading every level of social relationship. Power is also understood in terms of processes that generates and enable any form of social action, relationship or order.”(10) Cultural studies has shown the specific concern with subordinated group, at first with class and later with races, genders, nations, age group etc.

In one hand Cultural studies have commonly understood popular culture to be the ground on which subordination is won or lost. As Chris Barker defines the concept of hegemony as,

The process of making, maintaining and reproducing ascendant meanings and practices has been called hegemony. Hegemony implies a situation where a historic bloc of powerful group exercises social authority and leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent. (10)

In another hand Identity became a central area of concerns in cultural studies during the 1990s. As Chris Barker describes in his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* In other words cultural studies explore how we come to the kinds of people we are? How we are produced as subjects? How we identify with description of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old etc

Cultural studies has focused qualitative method with their focus on cultural meaning, ethnography, textual approaches and reception studies are commonly used approaches in cultural studies. Ethnography is an empirical and theoretical approach inherited from anthropology which seeks detailed holistic description and analysis of cultural based on intensive fieldwork. Ethnographic concentrates on the details of local life while connecting them to wider social processes. Ethnographic cultural

studies have been centered on the qualitative exploration of values and meanings in the context of a whole way of life. That is ethnography has been deployed in order to explore question about culture, life world and identities. In the context of media oriented cultural studies, ethnography has become accede-word for a range of qualitative methods, including participating, observation, in-depth interview and focused group discussion.

Textual approaches as a tool seeks the meaning by considering the text as a signs, narratives and deconstruction of the text. Chris Barker argues, Semiotics explores how the meaning generated by text has been achieved through a particular arrangement of signs and cultural codes. Such analysis draws attention to the ideologies or myth of text. (35) Narratives are structured form in which stories advances explanation for the ways of the world. Narratives offer us frameworks of understanding and rules of references about the way of social order are constructed. Narrative minimally concerns the disruption of equilibrium and tracing of the consequences of said disruption until a new equilibrium is achieved. Torrodo (1997). Bringing Derrida and his notion of Deconstruction in his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* Chris Barker discusses

Deconstruction is associated with Derrida's undoing of the binaries of western philosophies and the extension of this procedure into the field of literature. The purpose of deconstruction is not simply to reverse the order of binaries but to show that they are implicated in each other.

Deconstruction seeks to expose the blind spots of texts, the unacknowledged assumption upon which they operate. This includes the places where a text's rhetorical strategies work against the logic of a text's arguments. That is the deconstruction seeks to expose the

tension between what a text means to say and what it is constrained to mean. (36)

Cultural studies seek to play a de-mystifying role, that is, to point to the constructed character of cultural texts and to the myths and ideologies that are embedded in them. As Barker argues in his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* It has done this in the hope of producing subject positions, and real subjects, who are enabled to oppose subordination? As a political theory, cultural study has hoped to organize disparate opposition group in to an alliance of cultural politics. However Bennett (1992, 1998) has argued that the textual politics which much cultural studies produces is not connected to many living persons and ignores the institutional dimensions of cultural power. Consequently, he urges cultural studies to adopt a more pragmatic approach and to work with cultural procedures in the construction and implementation of cultural policy.

The research is classified into three chapters. The first chapter contains the exploration of the eastern culture. The second chapter deals with the Valorization of eastern culture and ethics in narrator's life and circumstances within the novel and the third chapter provides the conclusions.

II. Valorization of Eastern Culture

When we analyze the novel, *A River Sutra*, we can observe various issues associated with cultural studies from the very first paragraph of the novel itself. Here the concept of cultural construction shown through the Hindu cultural beliefs of the division of human life to form an individual's identities and obligation in life: "The government still pays my wages, but I no longer think of myself as a bureaucrat. Bureaucrats belong too much to the world, and I have fulfilled my worldly obligations. I am now a vanaprasthi, someone who has retired from the forest to reflect" (1).

As the above lines indicate, in Hindu culture, every person is believed to bear with certain worldly obligations which is termed as 'karma'. Here, the narrator mentions one of the cultural norms 'vanaprastha' which is one of the stages of human life, where the very persons leaves the society and goes penance in isolated with natural surroundings.

Similarly, in the next paragraph the narrator expresses his urgency for getting emancipated from these worldly desires and expectations. He States:

Of course, I was forced to modify tradition, having spent my childhood in Bombay and my career as a civil servant working only in cities. Although my desire to withdraw from the world grew more urgent as I agreed, I knew I was simply not equipped to wander into the jungle and became the forest hermit, surviving on fruit and roots. (1)

As above lines indicate we can observe the narrator's deep concern to the Hindu religious sense of getting freedom from the worldly desires and circumstances.

However, we can also find his worried about the possibility of being survived in the forest. Here, as Chris Barker discuss in his book *Cultural studies Theory and*

Practice by taking the ideas of Raymond Williams as: the purpose of cultural analysis is to explore and analyze the recorded culture of a given time and place or shared values and outlook of a culture as cultural studies reveal, human beings are bound within their cultural norms and values his sense of worry also shows concern about the forthcoming difficulties while living in a jungle as a hermit.

Likewise in the next contemplation, the speaker also seems to express his desire of visiting the 'Narmada' river, which possesses great significance in the Hindu religion as the daughter of lord 'Shiva' in order to get salvation from his all worldly sins. His thought goes like this:

But the bungalow's proximity to the Narmada River was its particular attraction The River is among our holiest pilgrimage sites, worshipped as the daughter of the god Shiva. During a tour of the area I had been further intrigued to discover the criminal offense of attempted suicide is often ignored if the offender is trying to kill himself in the waters of Narmada. (2)

As the cultural study argue all the texts are constructed by language within a particular social context. Here, this novel is written within a framework of Hindu religion and culture. These lines also show the writer's concern of social-cultural circumstance of the then society. Hindu religious belief of worshipping Narmada River as one of the sacred place to get salvation by mentioning the Narmada River as daughter of lord 'Shiva', the author also indirectly tries to represent power of Shiva in Hindu religion. Here even the daughter of lord Shiva is worshipped to get favor of lord, besides in Hindu religion suicide is also consider as sin and a person who commits suicide in Narmada river gets freedom from criminal offense in religious sense.

Furthermore while mentioning the rule of Aryan in the snake kingdom by defeating the tribal people the author indirectly tries to show the supremacy of Aryan over the tribal. These lines go like this:

Our bungalow guards are hired from Vano village and enjoy a reputation for fierceness as decedents of the tribal races that held the Aryan invasion of India at the bay for centuries in these hills. Indeed, the Vano village deity is stone image of half-women with the full breast of fertility symbol but the torso of a coiled snake, because the tribal believe they once ruled a great snake kingdom until they were defeated by the gods of the Aryan. Saved from annihilation only by a divine personification of the Narmada River, the grateful tribal conferred on the river the gift of annulling the effects of snakebite, and I have often heard pilgrims who have never met a tribal reciting the invocation. (6)

As Chris Barker cites Bennet, in his book *Cultural Studies and discourse analysis: a Dialogue on language and identity*: "Cultural studies is concerned with all those practices, institutions and system of classification through which there are incultalited in the habitual form of conduct" (6). Cultural studies incorporate the symbolic representation of religion. Here a stone image of half women with full breast represents the religious symbol of fertility. However, the coiled snake indirectly suggests the devil power in Vano village. Although tribal people were the ruler in the beginning phase Aryan's god defeat them ultimately and ruled over them. Victory of Aryan suggests Hindu religious beliefs of the supremacy of Aryan people as the representative of god themselves within an eastern cultural framework. Worshipping

stone as the representative of deities themselves is one of the major religious norms of eastern culture.

Besides, the writer's intention and idea about the power of Aryan people seems to be bounded within the framework of eastern culture.

Similarly, the people believe that Narmada River is one of the healing powers for the deeds like madness and emancipating them from the grip of the serpent. The narrator mentions:

Salutation in the morning and at night to

Thee, O Narmada!

Defend me from the serpent's poison.

The Vano villagers also believe their goddesses cures madness, liberating those who are possessed. (6)

Barker cites Hall in *Cultural Studies Theory and Practice as:*

To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feeling about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. This culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and making sense of the world in broadly similar ways."(42)

Cultural studies believe that in every society power mechanism is presented at every level. Here we can observe people's belief in the healing power of the god, even the diseases like mad. It reflects the traditional religious devotion to the god and belief in the power of the god. Eastern people surrender themselves to the god as only power for giving their survival and liberating themselves from various diseases. These

rhythmic lines reflect the beliefs of people in the Narmada River as a powerful authority in regards world happenings.

Likewise, the speaker also mentions about the religious harmony within diversity, reflects the multiplicity of the society. These lines go like this:

Beyond the village on the next range of hills is a Muslims village with a small mosque adjoining the tomb of Amir Rumi, a Sufi saint of the sixteenth Century? My friend Tariq Mia is mullah of the village mosque, and most morning I walk all the way to the village in order to chat with Tariq Mia, for the old man is the wisest of my entire friend. (7)

Cultural Studies also incorporate multiplicities within a certain social context. Here we can find the notion of religious harmony which is highly valued in the eastern culture. Tariq Mia is the best friend of the narrator. They both are from different religious background. However, there is deep intimacy and mutual correspondence between these two people who represent diverse religion and culture. In the narrator's sense of respect to another religion is one of the appreciable aspects of eastern culture.

In this way, there is also mentioned about the four stages of life termed as "Vanaprasthami" in Hindu cultural beliefs. The narrator mentions it as:

A day seldom passes when I do not see white robed pilgrims walking on the riverbank far below me. Many are like me, quite elderly person who have completed the first stages of life prescribed by our Hindu scriptures-the infant, the student, the householder-and who have now entered the stage of vanaprasthi, to seek personal enlightenment. (7)

As in cultural studies there are various issues associated with certain culture and religion. Above lines show Hindu people's religious devotion to various pilgrimages as the means of salvation. Here, the narrator also mentions four 'vanaashram' of Hindu religious sculptures-the infant, the student, the householder, and the vanaprasthami. Vanaprasthami is especially concerned about liberating oneself from family and materialistic life seeking ways of enlightenment. At this stage every person within the Hindu religious framework is believed to abandon his materialistic worldly life and entering into the isolated natural place for penance and enlightenment. This concept of enlightenment is really important in eastern culture. Enlightening oneself is essential for every person to fulfill religious duty, according to the religious sculpture. This concept of enlightenment valorizes the eastern culture.

Similarly, in the next contemplation of the speaker, he argues about the importance of endurance in order to get salvation from the worldly sins. These lines go like:

Then I remained myself that the purpose of the pilgrimage is endurance. Through their endurance the pilgrims hope to generate the heat, the tapas, that link the man to the energy of the universe, as the Narmada River is thought to link mankind to the energy of Shiva. (8)

Chris Barker in his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* emphasis Raymond Williams idea of culture centers as everyday meanings: values, norms and material or symbolic goods where he argues: Meaning is generated not by individuals alone but by collectives. Thus the idea of culture refers to shared meanings. (42) Cultural Studies, argues that in every culture there is some sort of mutual interrelationship between the belief of the people and cultural ideas. Here we can observe the

interrelationship between cultural ideals and human beliefs. In eastern culture's endurance signifies one of the basic necessities to live a happy life. Besides, eastern culture's valorizes endurance as the means of salvation. Here, the speaker also talks about the importance of 'Narmada River' as a linking power between the worldly life and the godly mercy of lord Shiva.

Similarly, in the next paragraph the narrator also show his deep belief and valorizes the almighty position of lord Shiva, not only as a creator but also as an agent of destruction. These lines go like this:

It is said that Shiva, Creator, and destroyer of Worlds, was in an ascetic trance so strenuous that rivulets of perspiration began flowing from his body down the hill. The stream took on the form of women –the most dangerous of her kind: beautiful virgin innocently tempting even ascetics to pursue her, inflaming their lust by appearing at one moment as a lightly dancing girl, at another as a romantic dreamer, at another as a romantic dreamer, at yet another as a seductress loose-limbed with the lassitude of desire. (8)

Cultural study also incorporates various aspects of socio-cultural institution and their functioning mechanism. Raymond Williams *The Analysis of Culture: Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* argues that “we explore culture in terms of institutions of artistic and cultural production”. Here lord Shiva is presented as a prime agent for the creation of human being and their ultimate destruction. So, all the religious institutions with in the Hindu religious framework functions with the belief that, lord Shiva is the sole authority of creation and destruction.

Likewise the narrator Mentions the religious beliefs of Jain people and the similarities between the Hindu and the Jain religious concept which believes that worldly desires are the main hindrance in the path of salvation.

No. These masks prevent us from killing some blameless insects by sudden inhalation." He removed his masks in order to eat, revealing the strong lines of a handsome face only slightly marred by a jutting chin. "A Jain monk seeks to free himself of the fetters of worldly desire through the vows of poverty, celibacy, and nonviolence. (11)

The multiplicities within the certain socio-cultural context are incorporates by the cultural studies, these lines signify the very foundation of salvation as abandonment of worldly desires. Jain religion also valorizes the necessities of emancipating oneself from the grip of worldly desires and expectations. There is a deep respect for the vows of poverty, celibacy and nonviolence. If we go back to the religious concept of 'vanaprastha' it reflects the similarity between two religions, Hindu and Jain.

Moreover, we can find the mention of importance of 'Upanishad' as a Hindu religious sculpture as source of enlightenment.

Do not put such value on my actions," the monk interrupted me sternly. Giving up the world was no sacrifice for me." But what a sacrifice for your father! Sixty-two million rupees! I patted the boulder, inviting him to sit by me. "We Hindus revere the spiritual teaching contained in our Upanishad. Do you know what the word Upanishad means? It means to sit beside and listen. Here I am, sitting eager to listen. As a monk, can you deny me Enlightenment? (13)

There is a great influence of language and its various functioning in the process of constructing certain socio-cultural beliefs. Here the speaker mentions not only the significance of spiritual teaching of Upanishad but also the equal importance of listening the same teaching. We know that linguistic functions not only learning through reading but also by listening the same spiritual teaching. Here Eastern belief in enlightenment is suggested by referring to the language function like reading and listening. Besides, in chapter two entitled as the Monk's Story shows the cultural process of becoming a Monk and importance of abandoning worldly greed and possessions in order to enter the divine path, which is especially assigned for the monks. As cultural studies is associated with socio-cultural beliefs and norms. Here we can observe the valorization of eastern culture by reflecting upon the importance of rejecting the worldly possessions. Previously there was the mention of Hindu religious philosophy of four stages of life; here we can see the detailed process to enter to the spiritual life of monk. So, there is a great relevance and significant similarity between Hindu concept of 'Vanaprasthan' and Jain belief of abandoning worldly circumstances to get the peaceful life of monks.

Similarly, in chapter five there is detailed reference of 'Kama', Hindu god of love and his power of creating and regulating the sense of love.

Kama must be sharpening his arrows of blossoms and stringing his bow with bees, sisters. Take care the sahib does not lure us to a seduction."I could not help smiling at the women's reference to Kama, God of Love, with his sugarcane how strung with honeybees and his five flowered arrows of desire. There was indeed a mood of longing in the jungle. Small flowers foamed over the leaves of the

mango trees; the wind carried the scent of lemon blossoms and
sandalwood to my nostrils. (93)

As the cultural studies believes above mentioned lines reflect upon the power of 'Kama', the god of Love .Kama by sharpening his arrows can create the sensual sense of seduction. He not only encourages male partners but equally uplift the seductive desires in female too. He can make the women's smiling by attacking through his arrows of desire. Here we can find indirect mention of functioning mechanism of Hindu religion where the god Kama is assigned with the power of love and seduction. Besides these lines indirectly reflect upon the importance of seductive desires for the continuity of human beings.

Furthermore, we can observe the importance of emancipating oneself from the seductive desire of Kama to achieve aesthetic stage of life. Here is the little mention of the role of the desire for the continuation of worldly phenomenon. These lines go like this:

But still the Aesthetic had sneered as he was pierced by the five
flowers-tipped arrows unleashed by Kama from his sugarcane bow-the
Enchanter, the Inflamers, the Parches, the Paroxysm of Desire,
the Carrier of Death. Then Maya, the Illusion of the worlds, had
appeared-the only women capable of arousing the lust of the
Destroyer of Worlds. Enraged at the destruction of his meditation, the
Ascetic had opened his third eye, the Lotus of command, and reduced
Kama to ashes, even as he himself was being consumed by Desire. (97)

The texts are constructed within social context; moreover it is also associated with production, control and distribution of various cultural elements. Here the author seems to be bounded within the framework of eastern culture because of his repetition

about the various reference of Hindu religion. Here the narrator mentions the negative power of female as an agent of arousing illusive worldly desire and lust which ultimately results in the destruction of world. However, by deeper contemplations and meditation, the lotus of command was able to reduce destructive worldly illusions of Kama to ashes. Here we can find the valorization of the eastern culture which gives the great significance to meditation as a powerful means of controlling destructive worldly desires. In comparison to western culture, eastern culture is more concerned about the significance of mediation as the very means for salvation.

In the same way, narrator also mentions the eastern belief in ghost and witchery and their effect in the people as:

If a man believes strongly enough that he is possessed, then I suppose you could say he is possessed. Bose wants to visit a shrine that he thinks can cure him. The local villagers worship there. Will it be all right if he goes with them? Certainly in fact, I advise it. The young man has imagined his sickness. Let him imagine his cure.

(108)

Cultural Studies depicts all the socio-cultural beliefs within the contextual framework. While bringing Raymond Williams ideas of “culture which is constituted by the meaning generated by ordinary men and women or the lived experienced of its participants” in Chris Barker’s *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices*. Here eastern belief in ghost and their methodology to emancipate themselves from the evil influence is presented. Narmada River is a purifying source from the evil power is the meaning generated by ordinary men and women. They have lived experienced of healing power of Narmada, so it becomes the culture in the Society.

Similarly, in chapter seven there is a reference to the 'puranas' and talks about the demons, sages, gods, loves, cosmologies.

To my surprise I had become fascinated by the endless. Legends contained in the puranas. After a day spent walking through tea gardens laid out with mathematical precision or studying columns of figures at my office desk while the long blades of the wooden fan stirred the air, I found it a delight to sit on the veranda in the evenings reading the labyrinthine tales of demons, sages, gods, lovers, cosmologies. I even discovered mythological tales dealing with the vary area in which my tea states was situated, legends of a vast underground civilization stretching from these hills all the way to the Arabian sea, people by a mysterious race half human half serpent. (119)

Cultural Studies, also incorporates various tales and beliefs of different religions. Here, there is a reference to endless legends of the Hindu religious sculpture and 'purans'. There are numerous tales of demon, sages, gods, lovers and even cosmology. Eastern people have deep faith on myth. And the narrator gives a reference of a person who is influenced by mythological tales of Hindu religion. Here we can find the symbol of devil power in the form of half woman and half serpent. We can indirectly grasp writer's intention to valorize the eastern mythological concepts. We can also see the great influence of eastern myths and beliefs in the person who is formerly came from the so called civilized world. He can't escape from the grip of evil power. Besides, there is the indirect presentation of eastern culture as more influence in comparisons with other culture because the very person who began

to read the eastern tales is now become one of the believer of eastern mythological tales.

Likewise, the speaker also narrates the power of holy serpent in eastern religious philosophy. "A world devoted to pleasure and learning, its serenity guarded by hooded serpent with great gems flashing from their hoods". (120) Cultural Studies argue about texts are considered within particular socio-cultural context. Here, the author being one of the members of eastern society writes about the power of holy serpent in Hindu mythology. Unlike western culture where only human rationality is emphasized, eastern culture gives equal importance to even the so called inferior creature like serpent are flashing with beautiful gems in their head. Similarly, in the next explanation about the interaction with an old friend, the speaker questions, is it possible to stay with a woman without marriage? "Which women will live with me without marriage?" (121) Cultural studies also incorporate the status of male and female and their interrelationship within that historical context. Unlike western culture, eastern culture doesn't permit living together of man and women before marriage. Here the author indirectly valorizes eastern culture which is comparatively more descent than the western culture. Sexual vulgarity is less common in eastern culture in comparison to western culture.

Likewise the narrator narrates his own experience of dreaming about the sexual intercourse because of the evil impact of worldly desires.

I did not know whether I had fashioned her from the night and my own hunger, even though her small teeth pierced my skin again and again like the sudden striking of a snake, and I heard the hissing of her pleasure against my throat. But when she left my bed I was already asleep, dreaming I still held a creature half serpent in my

arms, my sated senses pulling me into the underground world of my grandfather's legends. If in the morning the mirror had not reflected the vermillion marks of her painted feet on my chest or the streaks of her black collyrium on my skin I would not have believed she existed. Seeing them, I was sick with love as if I had been pierced by all five arrow of desire. (125,126)

Here, we can find the eastern belief in the evil impact of worldly desires. The narrator dreams a sensual dream where he is being kissed and embraced by the women who is in half women and half serpent form. It shows that in eastern culture human beings are real victim of the worldly desires. They can't emancipate themselves from such lusty life even in their dreams. His is being fascinated by the half women half serpent creature. The creature also expresses her sense of pleasure by making hissing sound. The narrator feels himself pulling to the underground world, which indirectly suggests hell i.e. 'Narak' in eastern culture.

As above, the narrator also mentions his dream where he is enchanted by the girl named 'Rima'.

What can I tell you of the months that followed? I was intoxicated by a pleasure that left me both satisfied and delicately unsatisfied. I never saw her by daylight, and if I had I would not have recognized her. At some point in our lovemaking she had revealed her name was Rima, yet I did not search for her among the tribal women bending over the tea bushes, fearful that the brilliant sun might rob me of my enchantment. (126)

Here, we can find the eastern belief in enchantment and influence of devil girl in the narrators dream. He fills intoxicated mixed with satisfaction and dissatisfaction in his

dream vision. However such lovemaking scenario disappears in his daily world. The narrator's conscious unwillingness to search the women 'Rima' in real world also signifies his preference of living dreamy life. The author shows the deep belief of eastern people in such dreamy experience.

Similarly, the narrator also narrates his dream experience of hearing fairy tales from the women. The women tell the tales of a great serpent kingdom beneath the soil, she also speaks in charming voice during the eclipses of the moon.

She told me tales of a great serpent kingdom lying inches beneath the soil. She spoke to me of the charms that gave men the strength of elephant in rut and the magic performed during the eclipse of the moon when a man's sole could be captured inside the two halves of a coconut. She swore she had seen an old woman raise flames from the palms of her hand, and a tribal priest cover a mango seedling with his shawl, then pull it away to reveal a dwarf tree bending under the weight of ripe mangoes. Swarming like clusters of black bees in the whiteness of her eyes, her pupils mesmerized me as her low voice gave substance to the world I had dreamed of when reading my grandfather's books. (127)

Here we can find a deep rooted tradition of telling fairy tales. The evil girl enchanted the narrator in his dream during the full moon eclipse. In eastern culture the eclipse of the moon signifies bad omen when evil power can become more powerful than other situations. Although this story told by the women is unbelievable for western people but eastern people believe in such stories. Storytelling tendency is one of the significant aspects of eastern culture. The author valorizes the trend of storytelling by giving the examples of dreamy visions of narrators himself.

Moreover, the speaker narrates the continuous visiting of Rima in his bed every night in the dream.

For a year Rima came to me every night, sliding into my ebony bed to coil her limbs around me, like a magician she drew me into a subterranean world of dream, her body teaching mine the passing of the seasons, the secret rhythm of nature, nature until I understood why my grandfather's books called these hills Kamapura, the kingdom of the God of Love. (129)

Cultural studies also speak about how cultural ideas are distributed and go over long period of time. Rima visits narrator every night in the dream which he defines as Kamapura, the kingdom of the god of Love. He says that even his grandfather used to read books where there was the detailed mentioned of lovely kingdom. Here we can find the continuation of cultural beliefs from a grandfather to the grandson.

As above the narrator mentioned the evil impact of the eclipse of the moon as he walks outside and becomes fatally ill.

The guard ran to my room and woke me up. Together we managed to carry you from the woods to your bed, we could see you were not physically ill and we are frightened. We realized you had gone outside during the eclipses. Perhaps you did not know that man can become fatally ill or mad if he walks outside during the eclipse of the moon. We sent for the priest of the tribal village to ask his advice before we informed Mr. Sen. (135)

The common stress of Hoggart Thompson and Williams on 'ordinariness' of culture, as discusses by Chris Barker In his book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* which includes the active creative, capacity of common people to construct shared

meaningful practices. Such ordinariness of culture can be traced out as above lines shows, eastern people had deep belief that if anybody walks outside during the eclipse of the moon he or she will suffer from the fatal madness. These lines show that eastern people believe in priest. It shows a sense of respect for the priest and their traditional belief of evil impact during the eclipse of the moon.

Likewise the next paragraph talks about the healing process of an individual's illness or physical disability with the help of religious enchantment or 'Mantras' and its results.

The priest tried to talk to you, asking why you had been walking in the jungle on such an inauspicious night. Who had you gone to meet? But you just sang and called this Rima's name, your eyes so strange, like a madman's. The priest told us to let no one see you and he went away. He returned an hour later with a covered basket. He asked me to heat some milk while he went to your bedside. I brought the warm milk thinking he had some medicine for you. When I reached your bed I screamed with fear and dropped it. The priest was holding a snake only inches from your face and reciting some spell. I could see the snake's tongue flicking out of touch the skin of your face. But you did not wink, or even blink. (135,136)

Here, we can see how eastern culture believes in healing power of a witch doctor or priest. As Raymond Williams gives emphasis on the meaning which are generated by the collective not by alone and the ideas of culture refers to shared meaning. In barker's book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices*. The believing on the Priest is not the meaning generated by any single individual it is the collective ideas of culture generated from the shared meaning. The priest asked the detailed happening in the

auspicious night of eclipse of the moon. He brings a covered basket and tries to heal the narrator by making the snake licking his face. By doing so, he can remove the evil impact of the devil girl Rima. By reciting some spell he tries to bring the narrator back to the normal life. He suggests the narrator to go and worship Narmada River which is the symbol power to cure him from such evil influence.

Furthermore, we can find the speaker narration of the story where tribal people's belief in the importance of the power of desire.

They say he has been touched by the power of the goddess so he is not an outsider any more. Anyway, don't perturb you self, sir. I know everything what is going to happen. There shrine is only a big Banyan tree. Nothing harmful. There the villagers will have an assembly with Mr. Bose .Now hurry sir. You must take refreshment. The cook is waiting in the dining room with your meal." Mr.Chagla left my room and I washed hastily. As I was dressing I shouted to him through the closed door, "What happened in the assembly? Did the guards tell you?" "The tribal will beg the goddess to forgive Mr. Bose for denying the power of desire." (141)

Cultural Studies is an inclusive theoretical framework which incorporates multiplicities of the society. Here we can find the contrast between Hindu religious beliefs and the beliefs of the tribal people. Hindus beliefs that, worldly desire is harmful in the way of getting salvation, Where tribal people believes that power of desire represent goddesses of desire . Everything that happens to the narrator is because of his denial of the power of the goddesses of desire. Tribal people believe that there is no life without desire. Without desire human life is completely empty and we can achieve nothing at all.

Moreover in the following conversation one of the representatives of the tribal people argues about the necessity of desire for inspiring love and life. These ideas go like this:

How can such thing happen? Then what is all this goddesses business?
 "Sir Really, sir." Mr. Chagla sighed in frustration. "The goddesses are just the principal of life. She is every illusion that is why she is greater than all the gods combined. Call her what you will, but she is what a mother is feeling for child. A man for a woman'. A starving man for food. Human beings for God. And Mr. Bose did not show her respect so he is being punished."(142)

Here, the representation of the tribal people valorizes their tribal belief of goddesses as the very principal of life and sources of inspiring love. She is the greatest goddesses and the combination of the god according to their religious belief. In *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices*, Chris Barker trace out the idea of Raymond Williams as "identification and forms of culture, including the specificity of cultural production their aesthetic purpose and the particular forms that generated and express meaning". However, previously we find that Hindu religious norms degrade the worldly desires as the very foundation of evil happenings in life. On the one hand, Hindu people argue for the renovations of the desire on the other hand tribal people glorify the value of desire as the very source of life.

Similarly, the narrator also mentions the reference to the history and civilization of 'Naga' people.

My dear fellow. This is where the war for the possession of India was fought-pitting Aryan reason against the primal beliefs of the tribal. Though they weren't tribal at all, really. As Nitin Bose noted in his

diary, they had a civilization long before Aryans arrived, with great cities and so forth. Called them Nagas and worshipped the Nagas, the snake. In my opinion the Sanskrit word for city, nagara, comes from them. (150)

Raymond Williams idea as “the reproduction, in time and space, of selective tradition of meaning and practices involving both social order and social change”. Which Barker has discussed in the book *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* Historicity of the particular society is dealt by the cultural studies. In the above lines we can find the historical war between the Aryan and tribal people in order to rule the place. People of the then society are named as nagas because they have a culture of worshipping the Naga, the holy snake. Besides, in the process of naming the place as ‘nagara’ the very term ‘nagara’ is derived from the Sanskrit word for city. As cultural studies are also concerned about the language of particular society we can find the impact of Sanskrit language in that city. There was a conflict between civilization of Aryan people and that of tribal people. So, here is valorization of Sanskrit language as well as culture of worshipping snake as an epitome of God.

Furthermore the narrator narrates about the holiness of the Narmada River and also suggests that there are many scared spots on her banks. These lines go like this:

I hope you are not contracting the fatal Indian diseases of making everything holy, my friend. The Narmada is already holy by half. Do you know how many scared spots there are supposed to be on her banks? Four hundred billions, According to the puranic scriptures.
(151)

We can find the depiction of the eastern culture of establishing scared spots in the banks of river, one of the bank of Narmada River, there are four hundreds billions

scared spots according to the Puranic sculpture. Eastern people try to make everything holy by giving them religious importance, eastern people believe in holiness of various rivers like Narmada.

Moreover, the narrator also mention about the Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy wrote about the holiness and religious suicide on the Narmada's bank.

As if reading my thoughts Dr. Mitra said, "You know, the great Alexandrine geographer Ptolemy wrote about the Narmada. I suppose even the Greek and the Alexandrian had heard about the Narmada's holiness and the religious suicides at Amarkantak- people fasting to death or immolating themselves on the Narmada's bank, or drowning in her waters-in order to gain release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. (152)

Cultural Studies also talks about various beliefs and stories of different places. Here the narrators mention the historical writing about holiness of Narmada River by the great Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy. It shows not only the eastern people but also the westerners are aware of the importance of the importance of the Narmada River and mention about it in their historical writing westerners are also aware of religious significance of Narmada River as a holy place to gain relief from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Here the author valorizes Narmada River as a well known place even in the ancient period of Alexandrian.

Likewise there is a detailed story of the significance of the Narmada River. Various aspect of its importance like religious piousness, Place for learning and power for dispelling malevolent effect of Saturn. The description goes like this:

On top of all that mythology, there's the river's astrology. Her holiness is believed to dispel the malevolent effects of Saturn so all

manners of epileptics, depressive, and other unfortunates rush to her bank. And yet, the Narmada is also the magnet to scholar. Towns on the banks of the river are renowned for the learning of their Brahmins. It is as if reason and instinct are constantly warring on the banks of the Narmada. I mean, even the war between the Aryans and the Pre-Aryans is still unresolved here. (153)

The author valorizes eastern culture by depicting significance of the River Narmada. The writer presents the detailed description and the history of the River Narmada. By giving great significance to the eastern river the author shows his intention of valorizing eastern culture of worshipping the river.

Furthermore, the narrator also narrates a story about the immortal that lives in the temple of 'Supanshwara' on the north bank of Narmada.

"My dear Chap what about the temple of Supanshwara on the North bank of Narmada?"

I reluctantly admitted that I had never heard of it.

"But you must have heard of the Immortal who sleeps in the forest near the temple."

"What is an Immortal?" I asked, faintly irritated by Dr. Mitra's heavy-handed display of Mystery.

"An Aryan warrior."

"Are you telling me that a four-thousand –year-old Aryan warrior is asleep on the north bank of the Narmada?"(153)

Here we can observe a sort of supernatural-like story about a person who is immortal and all the people tries to visit him for the salvation. It is believed that this Aryan warrior asleep on the north bank of Narmada River for four thousand years. This

reference to the story of immortal person shows the belief eastern people in the immortality, by the mercy of god. Author's intention here seems to valorize the eastern culture and its belief in the possibility of immortality from the mercy of god. Beside it also indirectly suggest divine power of Narmada River as the Immortal named Avatihuma is living on the bank of Narmada River.

The speaker mentions the harmonious lifestyle of the Pre-Aryans with the philosophy of profound respect of nature and interdependence for all life.

A round head appeared through the office window, happily nodding assent when I asked for the guard Dr.Mitra tapped my arm, "Now remember, the Pre-Aryan had live here peacefully for centuries, perhaps even millennia, before the Aryans arrived. Their philosophy was based on a profound respect for nature and the interdependence of all life. (154)

Multiplicities of lifestyle and marginalized voices are the areas of study in cultural studies. Here the Narrator's story about the peaceful living situation of pre-Aryan is attempt to include multiplicities of the then society. The philosophy of pre-Aryan was founded on the respect for nature and the interdependence of all social life. This idea about their social life shows the appreciable aspect of eastern culture. So, we can find the valorization of eastern culture in this reference to the harmonious lifestyle of tribal people.

In the same way, the speaker narrates the conflict between pre-Aryan and the Aryans as:

Then Along came the Aryans. Restless nomads. Obsessed with conquest. Revealing in war. Placing the truths learned by the mind above all other truths, including the truths of nature. In other words,

the war between the pre-Aryans and the Aryans was a classic conflict between instinct and reason. Rather like the conflict that drove Nitin Bose mad. In any case, the pre-Aryans slaughtered a number of Aryans. But the Aryans warrior had been granted immortality by their gods. And immortals cannot die. Ah, here's the guard. (154)

Cultural Study also talks about the contextual history of the then society. As Raymond Williams put forward in Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies Theory and Practices* "the reproduction, in time and space, of a selective tradition of meaning and practices involving both social order and social change." Here, the narrator reveals the war between the pre-Aryans and the Aryans as a conflict between instinct and reason. However, Aryans warrior has been guaranteed immortality by their gods which makes them victories over the pre-Aryans. In this way, as a cultural studies suggests contemporary society was full of conflict and various ways of their resolution. This narration of the ancient history and the belief in almighty power of the god as the sources to immortalize the people with their will suggest eastern belief in immortality godly mercy.

Likewise, the narrator narrates the story of the Muslim named Nabab who believes in the holiness of the Narmada River and its power to purify the sinners.

Once a year, as schoolchildren, we joined our ruler in showering blossom on its waters. The Nawab was a Muslim but he honored the river's holiness. I can still hear his voice echoing through the microphones: "Bathing in the waters of Jamuna purifies a man in seven days, in the water of the Sworswoti in three, in the waters of the

Ganges in one, but the Narmada purifies with a single sight of her waters. Salutations to thee, O Narmada." (163)

Eastern Culture is full of harmony and mutual intimacy, here lifestyle of Nabab reflects not only the Hindu people but also the Muslims have equal respect for the purifying power of 'Jamuna', 'Ganges', 'Sworswoti' and 'Narmada'. Nabab also believes in the power of Narmada as greatest among all the rivers. He salutes Narmada as source of purifying worldly sins. Both Hindu and Muslims flung their garlands into the water with the sense of worship and deep respect for this river. Here, we can find the valorization of eastern culture as the culture with harmony and mutual intimacy and respect.

In the Same way, the narrator narrates a situation of a daughter who have been abducted by the bandit and kept her for two years in the jungle, the narrator explains the situation as:

The women covered her face with her hands and her shoulders shook as she began weeping again. "I fear my daughter will have much need of kindness. How could this terrible thing have happened? I did everything to protect my child. With her beauty and her unblemished reputation, she could have married a respectable man. Who will believe in my child's virtue now? Who will accept her as a wife, a girl captured and kept by criminals for two long years?" (173)

In the above lines we can find a mother highly worried about the exploitation of the virtue of her daughter, by the Bandits. In eastern culture a girl who is unmarried is expected to remain pious until her marriage. However, because of the abduction of the bandits the mothers fears about the certainty of her child virtue. Her beauty and reputation is probably exploited by the kidnapper. This reference to the worried

mother shows the eastern culture of expecting piousness in any girl before her marriage.

Furthermore, the narrator narrates the bandit's beliefs in lifecycle and rebirth. He claims the girl to be his wife in the previous life, but was unable to get her because of his bad fortune.

Don't you know you are mine? You have been mine in many lifetimes but each time I lost you. This time I have unsheathed my dragger before Fate. I will not let you go.' "He stretched out his arms to me. Suddenly I knew he was speaking the truth, and that night I entered my captor's embrace. Guided by his torch, I learned I had known his body in hundred lifetimes before he took me again a virgin on the thin cotton quilt which was all that shielded our bodies from the ground. (184)

Here, we can find the reference to the eastern beliefs in lifecycle and rebirth. The Bandits claims his relation with the abducted girl was from the many lifetimes ago. He claims his attachment was not being success because of his ill fate. We can see the belief of eastern people to the rebirth and continuity of relationship of the previous life. The girl also feels some sort of familiarity with his body. The bandit's intention to marry with the girl is really appreciable aspect of eastern beliefs which believes in our relationship for eternity.

In the Same way, the narrator mentions a situation where a girl shows her feminine shyness. In eastern culture it is expected that female should be shy and less vulgar in the issue of love and sex.

She seemed not to notice the vulgarity of painting. "Can't you see? It's a picture of Shiva's consort, the goddesses Parvati, who

performed all these great penance until Shiva returned her love.
 Don't you think it is only proper that such great love should give
 birth to music?"I must have looked perplexed because she said shyly.
 (195,196)

In the above lines we can find an example of shyness in women even to see the painting of lord Shiva and goddesses Parvati who are making love. His reluctance to observe such vulgar painting indirectly suggests eastern culture of keeping females within the boundary of shyness and virtuous in the matter of sex. The narrator narrates the great love between the god and goddesses as the source for the origin of music. The women seem to be perplexed to see such vulgar image and she observes it shyly only after maintaining the importance of this love making painting.

Moreover the narrator also narrates the importance of the religious word 'Om'

"Om is the three worlds.

Om is the three fires.

Om is the three gods.

Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva.'"

"The first sound of Om is the manifest world, the sound of waking consciousness," The second sound of Om is the unmanifest world, the sound of dreaming consciousness, The third sound of Om is the non manifest world .The sound of dreamless sleep, the sound of potential experience." "The half-Syllable of Om is silence, the sound of the un manifest world. It is the ultimate goal. The incomparable target,"

(197,198)

In eastern religious philosophy especially in the Hindu religion recitation of the term Om have great religious significance Om represents the three worlds, three fires, and

three major divine power: Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar. These three deities possess almost all power to create, control and destruct all the creature of this world. Here the author indirectly seems to valorize eastern language especially Sanskrit which have the single word for prayer with numerous aspects of meaning. Recitation, of the word 'Om' sounds like melodious one note but actually three and half sounds. This shows multiplicities of single term not only in the tone but also in its meaning. Besides it combines three separates actions of our body: opening of our lips, releasing of breath, close of our lips. It shows three significant human bodily actions at the same time. The first sound of Om is the manifestation of the world, walking consciousness and as gross experience. Similarly, the second sound of the Om signifies unmenifest world, dreaming consciousness, and subtle experience. In the same way the third sound denotes to the nonmenifest world, dreamless sleep and potential experience. Simultaneously, final half syllabus of Om suggests silence, unmenifest, world, ultimate goal, incomparable target, respectively.

In the same way the narrator narrates about the art of dancing, for the creation of music by the lord Shiva. These lines go like:

There was no art until Shiva danced the creation." He said, explaining how melody was born. "Music lay asleep inside a motion less rhythm-deep as water, black as darkness, weightless as air. Then Shiva shook his drum. Everything started to tremble with the longing to exist. The universe erupted into being as Shiva danced. The six mighty ragas, were born from the expression of Shiva's face, and through their vibrations the universe was brought into existence. "The melodies of these six ragas sustain the harmonies

of living things. When they fuse together they become the beast of Shiva's drum that brings the universe to destruction. (206)

In the above lines lord Shiva is presented as the creator of music by shaking his drum. While lord Shiva shakes his drum everything started to trembled with the longing for existence. The whole universe was erupted as the lord Shiva was dancing. The six mighty ragas, the pillars of all music were born from the expression of Shiva's face and the vibration of the universe. Here we can observe the creating power of lord Shiva, who creates melodious music by making vibration in this universe. Melodies of these six ragas are helpful in sustaining the harmonies of the living things. Beat of the Shiva's drum brings the destruction of the universe. The revelent fuse between six ragas ultimately leads to the creation of music and destruction of whole universe. Eastern culture believes in Shiva not only as the power of destruction but also as the agent of creation.

Also the narrator further narrates about the importance of overcoming human limitations in order to be a Naga

He had not known his teacher would make him cross India on a journey so; long as the Naga baba would forget what snow would look like by the time they reached the sand dunes and blowing tumbleweeds of the desert. You cannot be a Naga without overcoming human limitations," his teacher had said, leaving him again. "Learn to survive without water. If I find you here when I returned, I will take you to our academy." (239)

The various ways of teaching and learning as well the beliefs in culture are the area of cultural studies. Naga people believes that to live the life as 'Naga' one should overcome all the human limitations and take part in their academic education. Here,

we can find a sort of relevance between Hinduism and 'Nagas' concept of hard penance for the saint life stage.

Similarly, the narrator talks about the scientific relevance of eastern culture of using ash all over the human body.

On the way the child looked for water snakes, learning where they swam the water was pure enough to drink. and was surprised at how good they tasted and how they filled her stomach. He taught her to drink fresh milk directly from the teats of wandering goats, and how to look for cattle markings. Together they collected pats of cow dung to be left in the sun to dry. The Naga Baba made a small fire and burned the dung so it would crumble between his fingers into ash that he smeared all over his body, an antiseptic and insulation against heat and cold. When he rubbed the mixture on her arms she found mosquitoes never bite her. (248,249)

In these above lines, we can find use of ashes as an antiseptic and insulation against heat and cold. It shows the relevance of Hindu culture with scientific approach of saving our body from the mosquitoes and even heat and cold. Here we can find that even the religious belief and traditions are applicable with the notion of medical science. This valorizes the eastern culture by showing its relevance even in the modern medical science.

As above, the speaker also narrates about the natural place which serves as the source for the creating of great religious scripture as well as great literature of eastern society.

Thousands of years ago the sage Vyasa dictated the Mahabharata on this riverbank. Then in our own century this region provided the setting

for Kipling's Jungle book. In between countless other men have left their mark on the river." An assistant grimaced at her fellow scholars. "For instance, Kalidas. His poem *The cloud Messenger* and his great play *Shakuntala* both describes the hills behind this rest house and then twelve hundred years ago Shankaracharya composed a poem to the river." "What about all the poems Rupamati and Baz Bahadur wrote when the Narmada appeared to them as a spring from them under a tamarind tree not so far from here?" asked one of the men. (264,265)

As above lines shows, Vasyas write Mahabharata, Kipling write Jungle book, Kalidas write the cloud messenger and Shakuntala and Shakanacharya composed a poem on the bank of this river. Like western culture, eastern culture gives great importance to the nature and believes nature as the prime source of creativity. Bank of the Narmada River is the very setting for this masterpiece. Even though Kipling is the western writer he found the bank of Narmada as the pious place in eastern beliefs as the suitable centre or place for his creativity.

Moreover, the author presents the beautiful poems about the praise of Narmada River as:

When Shiva as a golden peacock
 Roamed the oceans of the Void.
 "You reminded the destroys
 Creation awaited His command.
 Fanning than his terrible feathers,
 Shiva brought forth this world and the mountain
 Where he sits in meditation
 Until the destruction.

"You were present at the creation
 By Shiva's command you alone will remain
 At the destruction." (277)

In this poem, the author presents the writer history of religious scripture and she also mentions about the role of lord Shiva in the creation and destruction of this world. Shiva as the golden peacock roamed all over the ocean he reminds us of the creation by his command. He brought this world and the mountain by sitting in meditation. Here the author says that Narmada was present during the creation and will remain until the time of destruction. Narmada alone will be the only river which remains until the destruction by the command of lord Shiva. In this poem we can find the valorization of eastern belief of creative power of lord Shiva and his sole authority to destroy this world.

In this way, the narrator also relates the eastern concept of travelling through eighty four thousand births in order to get the human life again.

"Is this your enlightenment? Is this why you endured all those penances?" He gave me an ironic smile. Don't you know the soul must travel through eighty four thousand births in order to become a man?" He turned and I almost didn't hear him add,
 "Only then can it re-enter the world." (281)

Here, we can find eastern concept of endurance and enlightenment to get the salvation. It also talks about the travel of human soul through the Eighty four thousand births in order to become a man. Easterner's Beliefs that one should pass through eighty four thousand births and ultimately get the human life. In this world the soul takes birth in different form and finally gets the human form. The author valorizes eastern culture by depicting eastern belief of life and death cycle and final

achievement of being born as man by passing many hardships and life form. The author with the help of various stories told by different people in course of narrator's stay at the bungalow had shown the various aspect of eastern culture. The abandonment of worldly life and entering in the phase of vanaprasthami the certain age is the cultural and religious values of eastern culture. The Narmada River, around which the whole story is being set have the significant values in eastern culture, more emphasizing in the Hindu religion. Narmada River with various Hindu gods and goddesses is another significant aspect that the author had portrays to valorize the eastern culture.

Further, the bank of Narmada River, not only the holy and religious place but also the appropriate land for the creation also adds the bricks in the valorization of eastern places and traditions. Not only the vayas, but the Kipling had also chosen the bank of Narmada for his creation, which became the milestone in the western literary tradition too. So, the author indirectly portrays the norms values and beliefs of eastern culture which can be concluded as the author deliberately valorization of eastern culture in her novel *A River Sutra*.

III. Politics of Valorization of Eastern culture

A River Sutra, astonishing collection of stories of a retired bureaucracy's as a narrator represents the whole periphery of Narmada River. Narmada River as the setting of the novel reveals the many mythological related stories of eastern culture. The narrator, retired civil servants: spent whole life in a governmental job based on western tradition became the manager of the Narmada guesthouse. The novel is made up of the series of different stories which the narrator hears from the different people who comes to the Narmada on pilgrimages. The author with the help of the narrator praises the setting of the different stories in the novel. Her detailed description evoking the beauty of landscape and the creature inhabiting it, demonstrate an intimate knowledge of those surroundings. In this way a river Sutra praises the eastern setting or the river bed of Narmada River.

Culture is about shared meaning where language is central to meaning and culture. "Representation through language is therefore central to the process by which meaning is produced. Culture is one of the most difficult concepts in the human and social sciences and there are many different ways of defining it". Culture is said to embody the best that has been thought and said in a society. "It is the sum of great ideas as represented in the classic world literature, painting, music and philosophy". In recent years, in a more social science context, the world culture is used to refer to "whatever is distinctive about the way of life of people, community, nation or social group where culture depends upon its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them and make sense of the world in broadly similar way."

In the novel, Geeta Mehata, valorizes the notion of eastern culture, from the perspective of retired bureaucrats, The story is being told , who interacts with many travelers and residents of the area. All stories are relayed to the reader through the

series of brief stories. Major themes like the themes of love, the Narmada River, Desire and religion are explored.

The monk's story tells about a man who renounces the world and the elaborated ceremony that was evolved in this. In teacher's story, narrator tells about the character called Master Mohan and his devotion to the music where at last commits suicides. Similarly, in another story called the Executive's story speaks about a young executive called Nitin Bose who works in a tea company in Calcutta, where he falls in love with a girl named Rima. He is put under a spell but his women and is possessed. Nitin Bose is told that he must go to the river Narmada to regain his sanity. The narrator meets many people who tell him about the origin of the river and how it means whore and yet ironically it has the reputation for being one of the holiest rivers in India. The courtesies' story speaks about the Nawab who is the ruler of a small Indian state called Shabag. A very ugly woman tells the musicians story, who tells him that music is the mathematics by which the universe can be comprehend. Meanwhile in the Minstrel's story we heard about Naga Baba, who rescues a child called Uma from the brothel. The concluding story is called the song of the Narmada. It deals with the arrival of a man called the professor Shankar, a key archeological authority on the Narmada in the country and conducting an archeological dig and speaks about his interest in river's Immortality.

The novel mainly deals about the customs and traditions of various pilgrims of different religious beliefs who undertake the difficult and tiring pilgrimage to visit the Narmada. There are a lot of superstitious practice and rituals associated with the pilgrimage. The power of love to heal and also to cause tragedy from the main theme in every story told to the narrator in the novel. The narrator describes how the people he met have been like water flowing his life to teach him something. The river

Narmada becomes the symbol of the immortality of love and its huge capacity to give life. Many of the stories deal with the ordinary people who become intoxicated with riches or overcome by lust and who try to regain their peace and solace through making the pilgrimage to the Narmada. In many instances this people find forgiveness and absolution from their sins because they possess sincere beliefs in the power of this river to heal and cure. We are given many insights into different types of people who undergo physical and mental suffering in order to become spiritually purified. The monk's story makes a striking statement about suffering that a man who can't suffer is not alive and the final words of Professor Shankar that a man must go many rebirths in order to truly become a man.

Moreover, the author depicts unique superior value of eastern culture by exposing religious, cultural, mythological and moral belief of the society. Similarly, the writer also achieves a sort of spiritual fulfillment by expressing her spiritual perspective of her own culture and society.

In this way the Novel a River Sutra is an excellent woven novel which valorizes the eastern culture. The reference of the different religion of the eastern culture like the Muslims, Hindus etc. the mythological aspect of the river Narmada, the setting of the largely in the Narmada valley with most of the story and the reference from the eastern norms, values, myths, religion valorizes the eastern culture.