



Cover Page



MANJU KAPUR'S HOME: A SAGA OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Dr Manjula Goel

Associate Professor

RKSD College Kaithal, affiliated to K.U.K

Haryana, India

Abstract

Home is Manju Kapur's third novel. The protagonist Nisha feels herself controlled by the society and culture. She is confident and progressive in her temperament but many times feels controlled by the prevailed patriarchal set-up. Kapur brings out the realities of Indian joint family culture where Nisha feels suffocated and doesn't feel safe. Like other female novelists, Manju Kapur proclaims woman's independence within the prevailed social set-up. Home is a saga of Nisha's struggle for emancipation. How she resists oppression meted out to her by society and in that process, she develops mental ailment. Prior to 1970s, gender was a concept that has no social meaning in English. In 1970s feminist theorists began to use the concept to ground their arguments that biology is not destiny. Instead, they asserted, meanings attributed to sex differences are defined in historically specific ways through culture and politics. These man-made interpretations of sex differences secure male dominance over women.

Keywords: Feminism, Gender, Culture, Society, Education.

Introduction

Indian women novelists are gaining grounds worldwide and winning critical review and international recognition. Among the prolific women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Jhumpa Lahiri, Manju Kapur is also a distinguished figure in the world of novels. Society, morality, values are like bondage to them, so all of them are leading forward in an ambiguous manner in the midst of relentless urbanization and the far-reaching western influences. Manju Kapur's Home (2006) is her third novel. The novel deals with patriarchal family of Banwari Lal who believes in old Indian customs and traditions. Manju Kapur gave her magnificent magnanimous in the field of Indian English fiction writing. She depicted emancipation of new pretense of Indian woman in her novel. It is believed that Feminism is the movement which sustain woman to dissent against male- inclination world. It was the movement for equal rights and privileges in the field such as social, political, and economical despotism of society. Home is the story of orthodox Indian family and saga of three generations' women. Kapur represents new women who fight against patriarchal conventions and notions that are not hopeless, feeble and reliant. She accomplished woman who struggle for self-identity and self-dependent. Manju Kapur's Home presents women in new gender roles who strives between tradition and modernity to ascertain her own identity by being economically independent without relies on male support. Manju Kapur is the Indian woman novelist who characterizes the suffering and divergence of the modern educated women that fight between tradition and patriarchy on the one hand and individuality and independence on the other hand. Women characters in her novels are conscious about the predicament and prefer to struggle and revolt against the traditional and culturally accepted norms and existence. They also countenance the duties and try to reshape themselves in the socio-cultural manners of the changed society. Manju Kapur in her novels describes the portrait of rebellious women who search for self-discovery, self-esteem; self-sufficiency and self-govern as they are caught between feudal principles and the hasty impending new life. At the same time, the women characters in Manju Kapur's Home are trying to sustain the stability between family and society. With penetrating and keen insight, the novelist webbed the story of her novel and hatched it with full size and shape and with much hammering on the anvil attuned to the family voices of Lala Banwari Lal, a patriarch of cloth business at Karol Bagh in New Delhi. Home published in the year 2006, the central figure is a woman Nisha who is third generation woman in Banwarilal's family. The novel explores the portrayal of an Indian joint family of the Banwari Lal who runs their cloth shop in Delhi. The two sons of Banwari Lal, Yashpal and Pyare Lal - are well settled in business and are married the former to Sona and the latter to Sushila. Banwari Lal's daughter Sunita married to Murlu, an unemployed man having irritable nature believing in dowry and liable for the burning of Sunita at the age of 32, and leaving after her only son, Vicky, a slant and slender boy of timid temperament who under taken care by maternal uncles and their parents. Speaking about the Banwari Lal's family Kapur writes: "The Banwari Lal family belonged to a class whose skills had been honed over generations to ensure prosperity in the market-place. Their marriages augmented; their habits conserved "(Home). Nisha refuses to reconcile with the patriarchal and male governed society and tries to establish her own individual identity. Since the establishment of the society, woman is stamped as the weaker sex, denied full justice, social security, economic liberation, and political awareness. In this context, Beauvoir comments, "humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being" (Second Sex 44). Home is the saga of three generation women which explores different views of each generation women. The first half part deals with Banwari Lal's family saga and Nisha's childhood to her college life. The latter part is exposures of Nisha's struggle for maintaining her relationship with Suresh, her broken relationship with Suresh, mangli issues which build hurled in her marriage, her patchy skin marks and her long success journey after so many difficulties and circumstances which resulted in her successful business of suit stitching. In this novel Kapur has described protagonist Nisha who caught in patriarchal threshold in her home. Nisha is the protagonist of the novel, who struggles against the traditions of the society to establish her identity. Nisha fights for her rights at some point of time she was disappointed but Kapur holds upon her protagonist. In Nisha's life journey her aunt Rupa always stands up with her to



Cover Page



encourage her. Nisha emerges out lucratively all hurdles and circumstances of her life. With each difficulty of her life, she grows more and stands affirm in life and her ability makes her thriving woman from ordinary girl to a successful business woman. The novels end happily with Nisha's marriage with Arvind and her two twins a baby girl and a baby boy. Kapur mentions in the novel: "Her duty was over. God had been kind; however hard it was to believe" (335). Manju Kapur portrayed image of woman who caught in orthodox Indian family, but her female protagonist Nisha does not remain silent and mimic, she revolts and elevates her enunciation against patriarchal Indian society and established her own identity as a successful business woman and as a successful wife, daughter-in-law and as a mother.

Diwedi rightly observes: "As the title indicates, the novel centres around the concerns of womankind more than those of males, and some of the dominant concerns of womankind as discussed in it are: dowry (and marriage depending on it), barrenness, and education and financial independence" (Diwedi 45).

However, Nisha's build up can be deduced in a further approach if seizes the emblematic analysis of 'Home' which is the title of the novel too. From her childhood, Nisha could not have an occurrence of a sweet home that gives protection and contentment to a person. Her own home was unable of given that her protection and she had to be shifted to Rupa masi's her aunt's home. Though she flourishes at Rupa's home and all her insecurities and intuitive chaos are place to reprieve but she persists to trundle betwixt Rupa's home and her own home. The stable sensitivity that this was not her real home and her own home couldn't hold her dispossesses her of a sense of rootedness. Finally, this search for home concludes when she gets happily married, having two twins' children and finds a home which she can describes her own in the true sagacity of the sense. Feminism can be construed as a discussion of supremacy politics. But at one more stage, it is described by an escalating consciousness of the standard of 'difference' and a persistent rescheduling of connotations. It gives to assortments, plurality of female acquaintance. All the women characters in Home interpret the notion of selfhood in their own distinctive comportment. They espouse diverse approaches of self affirmation too. Sona espoused disregard; Rupa absorbed her concentration to economic accomplishment. Pooja revolves to disobedience and revolt, while Nisha slithers towards optimistic and positive ways of self contention. The agitated women in Kapur's Home can be taken as one in a pattern. The story of three generations of Banwari Lal family portrayed on great images provides a historical outline to the novel which is typical of post-modernism.

Indian women writers have started questioning the prominent old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle. A major development in modern Indian fiction is the growth of a feminist or women centered approach, that seeks to project and interpret experience, from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. Indian women writers portray this complex, dual and ambivalent identity of women engendered by a clash of tradition and modernity in their women characters. Their works no longer represent woman as a mute sufferer and upholder of traditional values but an individual who fights hard to free herself from the cages of conservative society.

Home quite fascinatingly, if not very expressively, shows the choking closeness and destructive limitations of Indian family values. It is a closet dark world where any hint of individual expression is swiftly trampled to death, to be substituted with deadened conformity. This novel is about the family of Banwari Lal. The shop owner Banwari Lal, his sons Yashpal and Pyarelal and their wives and children and it explores the world of joint families. This world of joint families is not the large happy make-believe families of films. It is a world trying to grapple with complexities of adjusting your aspirations and individualities with those of the others inside closed walls of the house, facing challenges of generational changes, trying to accommodate growing children in narrow personal spaces and even narrower working spaces. Kapur's treatment of such a multiplicity of subjects revealed the enthusiasm of her mind and the extensive assortment of her comprehensions. Manju Kapur records her apprehension for Indian women in this novel. She dwells on assortments feministic issues in this novel like-female education and their empowerment, economic autonomy, annihilation of mangli nuances and marriage, etc. She recites significant issues of class and nationhood and appended them to the rising sagacity of women identity in post-colonial India.

References

- Beauvoir, Simone De. *The SecondSex*. Trans. H.M. Parshley. Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1979.Print.
- Dwivedi, A.N. "Manju Kapur's Home: A Feminis t Reading". In *Novels of Manju Kapur: A Feministic Study*. Ed. Ashok Kumar. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2010. 38-45. Print.
- Kapur, Manju. *Home*. Noida: Random House India, 2006. Print.
- Kumar, Satendra. "Romance and Claustrophobia Amid the Chorus of Family Voices: A Study of Manju Kapur's Home". *Remapping the Female map: Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur*. Jaipur: Yking Books. 2012. 111-126. Print.
- Milhotra, Ruby. "Existential images of Women in Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters." Prasad, Amar Nath. *New Light on Indian Women Novelists in English*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2005. Print.



Cover Page



-
- Modern Language Association of America. MLA Handbook for writers of Research Papers. Seventh Ed., New Delhi: East West Press Ltd. 2009.Print.
 - Rajpal, Sujata. "Home by Manju Kapur." Rev of Coffee Break. 3rd Sept. 2011.Web 8 August 2014.
 - Rajput, Kalpna. "The Self-Syndrome in the novels of Manju Kapur". Remapping the Female Map: Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur. Jaipur: Yking books. 2012. 151-166. Print
 - Singh, Jai Arjun."An Interview with Manju Kapur". Remapping the Female Map: Jhumpa Lahiri and Manju Kapur. Jaipur: Yking books. 2012. 178- 182. Print.
 - Spivak, Gayatri C. "Can Subaltern Speak"? The Postcolonial Studies Readers. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth and Helen Tiffin. Routledge: Oxford, 2006. Print.
 - Uniyal, Ranu. "Craving for Intensity Beyond Intelligent Survival': Women in the Novels of Ruchira Mukerjee and Manju Kapur". In Novels of Manju Kapur: A Feministic Study. Ed. Ashok Kumar. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2010, 85-92. Print.