

A THEMATIC STUDY OF THE NOVEL JIHADI JANE BY TABISH KHAIR

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Abstract:- Alienation is the fundamental and straightforward system which forms the subject of several psychological ,sociological ,literary and philosophical studies .It is a most essential theme of individual restriction in the contemporary epoch .Alienation is the result of loss of identity. Alienation and the role of Western media are two essential themes in Tabish Khair's novel Jihadi Jane.The theme of alienation in the novel has trapped mind of the readers .The two female protagonists uncover themselves stranger in Yorkshire society .The second chronic theme of the novel which trapped the consideration of the reader is the role of Western media. The women in the novel are fed up with media Western media always represent Islam in a poor light .Consequently the women learn towards their religion. They talk about the issues concerning their religion. They usually watch over the news inter-connected to Islamic states. The paper will explain the themes of alienation and Western media in the form of different angles .Moreover the concept of alienation will be discussed thoroughly.

KEY WORDS:- Alienation , Western media ,Hijab ,Jihad ,Nunja ,Orthodox ,Ambush ,Religion ,Brainwash ,Protagonist

INTRODUCTION:-

Tabish Khair is a reputed author whose recent novels have been shortlisted for many great awards and translated into many languages .His novel, Jihadi Jane has been nominated for the KIRKUS PRIZE ,in USA , Atta Galatta Banglore Festival Book Prize and Tata Book of the year Award in India. As far as the thematic study of the novel is concerned, there are two important themes, the theme of alienation and the role of Western media. The novel is written with first person narrative. Tabish Khair is a writer who reiterates on the depressed contemporary life. Two bold lives one is courageous young girl experimenting with all the spoils of youth and the other is quite simple girl connecting to her traditional medium and the security of the Hijab. It is a luminous act that he workout to portray the debilitating world and distortion through the eyes of female protagonist. In the initiation of the novel ,the two girls are entirely contrasting in their approaches and the way of living .Jamilla is an orthodox Muslim girl came from a Pakistani migrant family and Ameena is westernized ,comes from India and have divorced parents. Jamilla is a religious girl but Ameena is a reformist type of girl .Jamilla always remain in Hijab but Ameena is influenced by the Western culture and wears tight jeans. Jamilla is an associate of a local mosque of rural area in Yorkshire where as Ameena smokes cigarette in the playground of school. These given lines beautifully express:

Ameena was still a smoker . But the months we had spent together had made her more careful in the way dressed .She was no longer wearing tight jeans and the T- shirts bearing moronic slogans that she had previously preferred. Now she was wearing baggies and shirts. No scarf yet though. And of course not full Hijab that I donned outside school ;she sting teasingly called me a 'nunja'. (Khair 9)

The theme of alienation in the novel has entangled mind of the readers. The two girls asset themselves alien in Yorkshire society .One of them, Ameena in the beginning aims to bring the acknowledgement of the Western society by ensuing the patterns and moral cryptograph of the later which includes sexual encounters and smoking .She exceptionally admires and loves Alex .He is similar to young Devid Beckckham . He combs his hair and plays soccer like Beckham . Ameena loves him from the core of heart . In his own class ,two classes above and two classes below half of the girls were in great love with Alex .But Alex used to date many girls simultaneously . When Ameena has a break up with Alex ,she faced irritation and dissatisfaction with Western living . As she was residing in England but living there make her feel alien . Besides this , her parents are disconnected since her childhood and she did not obtain the passion and devotion of her parents . Her mother always remain busy with her work as she is a working woman . She was unable to give much time to her and all this results in her alienation .These are the dissatisfactions and frustrations which brings her towards religion .

Jamilla is the second character who associates to an orthodox Muslim family. She has been alienated within her own family and not allowed to ask questions. She has a solid faith in her religion and never crosses her boundary . Her important aim thus to live like a good Muslim . She is not very convenient to her family .Unfortunately her father passed away due to a heart attack . On completion of her basic education, she desired to proceed for higher studies but her family not cooperated her in this step . Mohammad ,her brother marries a girl from his friend circle . As a new woman came in the family and she feels uncomfortable to adjust herself . Even she is not so much close to her mother .Her family arranged for her marriage but she refused and feels herself ambushed . Actually she want to study and she thought that it will not be possible after her marriage . She openly indicates her irritability when in the class she has been called by the name Jamey. All these obstacles and sufferings make her to think that she is unable to adopt Western culture. The girls Ameena and Jamilla became friends and attempts to find relief in religion and mythology. They planned to adopt Islamic religion and they feels that England is not a suitable place for them .That is why they decided to proceed to Islamic state and to join Jihad .

Role of Western media is the second repetitive theme of the novel which capture the thought of readers .There are many references to Internet and social media such as YouTube , Facebook , Twitter which played a significant role in the novel . In the novel the women are greatly influenced by media . As far as Western media is concerned , it represents Islam in an unacceptable light .Accordingly Ameena and Jamilla inclined towards their religion . Ameena initiated reading Holy - Quran and started to perform Salah (prayer). Jamilla do some part time work and became Ameena's room- mate .They feels living together is not too distinct from home except that they have freedom and time .In the free

time they begin to watch TV and chat with friends on Internet. Jamilla's family invites them every Friday for dinner. All of them sit down together and watch news related Islamic states. They observe that Muslims are being killed in many Islamic countries such as Palestine, Saudi Arabia etc. The only medium which makes them aware to understand more pertaining to their religion is the Western media. It is clearly mentioned in the following lines:

When Ameena returned, we usually spent time working, watching TV or, increasingly, chatting with our friends on the Internet. As our friends in real life had diminished after school, our friends on the Internet had grown in number. There was little we shared with our former school friends any more. They were obsessed with fashions and boys and films, Ameena and I were more interested in matters of faith and life, as we saw it. They dressed in ways that embarrassed us, except for a couple of the Muslim girls, while we obviously dressed in a manner that made many of them feel uncomfortable. I had not noticed it as much before Ameena started putting on the niqab. (Khair 55)

CONCLUSION:-

The novel revolves around the two major themes of alienation and role of Western media. The characters are alienated largely because of their some defects in themselves or several evils in society. Alienation is a heart touching and painful story of the two female protagonists. It serves as a basic theme in this novel. Western media plays a vital role to make them familiar with religion and mythology. They discussed all the issues related to their religion. The novel assists to explain mechanism how one gets brainwashed and the extremism through social media used by activists to ambush vulnerable people.

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