



SEARCH FOR AUTHENTIC SELFHOOD IN MANJU KAPUR'S HOME

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Abstract

The paper compromises the theme of quest for identity and faced many cultural dilemmas' of the Indian women's struggle under a closed society's patriarchal system in society. Manju Kapur's *Home* (2006), focuses on the view to revise tradition versus modernity in novels. This novels is based on the identity quench in the value system of the modern society. Manju Kapur is much fascinated to portray problems related to women in a larger perspective. In her novels, the women's questions have emerged effectively in the context of the identity of the new educated middle class. Manju Kapur in her works depict how women manage to negotiate both the spaces in their lives, through sacrifices they have to make the home fires burning and also through their personal lives they find some kind of fulfillment outside the home. She inspires women to cross the threshold of family life. Always manju kapur focuses on delving into the experiences of the protagonists and their search for self insights cultural identity and identity formation.

Key words: Quest For Self , Cultural Identity, Patriarchal Society.

The women writers, first and foremost, must be exceptionally careful and delicate in pointing out the issues in Indian culture. Yet, with the progression of time, they are getting to be noticeably bold in communicating

their outrage articulately against the wretched social circumstance they live in. In Manju Kapur's novels, one can see the glorified woman trying to throw off the burden that she has been carrying for ages. The image of a woman is changing with the passage of time. The protagonist, portrayed by the novelist is away from the traditional portrayals of the self-sacrificing, enduring, meek and quiet woman. They are the modern portrayals of self-assured, assertive, educated, protesting and ambitious ones making society aware of their needs and proving their identities.

Manju Kapur's *Home* is the first decade of the twenty-first century, several many transformations were noticed, particularly in the field of the quest for self identity related to the consolidation of woman's position in the fast-growing and fast changing society. In *Home*, Manju Kapur is in search of new alternative in her enactment of the character named Nisha. She vividly picturaizes the struggle of the protagonists between tradition and modernity and their need for an identity in the society forms the theme of the novel. The novel *Home* portrays Nisha, the protagonist as bold, educated and balanced. Manju Kapur's novel, *Home* takes us through a brisk and strangely captivating account of three generations i.e., the first generation of Lala Banwarilal, the second of his two sons, and the third of his grand children. The first and foremost generation of Lala Banwari Lal, was head of the family, executed a saree business in Karol Bagh, Delhi, so there he was attracted and he settles after partition of India. Banwari Lal has two sons named Yeshpal and Pyarelal and a daughter named Sunita, who already married and has a son Vicky. Yeshpal his first son marries Sona and second son Pyarelal marries Sushila. Sona's sister Rupa is the wife of an educated man but badly paid government servant, Premnath. Banwari Lal is a believer in the traditional and rituals. He always insisted to all that the Men work out of the home, women within. Men carry forward the family line, women enable their mission. His two sons Yashpal and Pyare Lal unquestingly follow their father in business and in life but their wives do not. Neither does his granddaughter Nisha who makes her choices considered unavailable to the women of the family. Both the sisters are hard workers, good at heart and live with their in-laws in the same area. All the members belongs to the next generation to Banwari Lal. There is a sudden change fed up the accidental death of Sunita her only son Vicky in Karol Bagh while travelling to Delhi from Bareilly. As Sona does have child for a long time, her mother-in-law assigns to her the responsibility of Vicky. In the intervening time Sushila gives birth to Ajay.

Sona feels her life has been misery and she is always taunted by Maji for not bearing a child. She keeps fasting for a long time for the desire of a child but there is no improvement in her life. Hence Yashpal plans to visit a shrine at Chitai neaby Almora. It is believed that the Goddess of the mountain was very powerful and the divinity will solve the problems of the believers. Rupa and Premnath also accompany them.

After two months Sona comes to know that she has pregnant. Soon she gives birth to a girl named 'Nisha'. When her horoscope is matched, she is declared as Mangli. After Nisha again Sona gives birth to a son Raju. In the meantime Sushila gives birth to her second son named Vijay. So including Vicky, Ajay, Vijay and Raju were declared as the representatives of the third generation. In the early part of the novel Nisha, in her early years falls as a victim to the carnal desires of Vicky, a fifteen year boy and her kin. Vicky tries to seduce her. It affects her sensitively and psychologically. So she was sent to Rupa's home for a change. In Rupa's house Nisha has no problem at all she spent time happily Premnath and Rupa understand that all the problems was done by Vicky and he was behind in the Nisha's depressed circumstance.

Moreover Rupa was childless. Premnath and Rupa looked after Nisha very carefully: "Nisha now finds herself in an atmosphere very different from the one she had lived in. As the only child she was the centre of interest, concern and attention" (24) After a long illness Banwari Lal dies and the whole burdens comes to Yashpal, being the elder one. Nisha also returns home to take care of her grandmother. Almost immediately Ajay's marriage takes place and then Vijay's. Nisha was a mangli. A mangli intended to marry regrettably, destined for misery, unless a similar mangli could be found, with a similar fate and horoscope. She should wait unless a mangli could find.

Ultimately Nisha was interested in her college education because she belived that good education will change her life in a good manner. Her parents thought that it would take time and during that time educating her would be a good thing. Nisha decided to do go for English Honours from Durga Bai College. While studying she met Suresh, a student of Khalsa College of Engineering. Suddenly she fall in love with him. But her parents were unwilling to get her married to him. Again she was caught into a lot of mental agony to her resulting in skin disease eckzeema to her. Her parents could not take care of her health and doesn't make any arrangements for her marriage on time. Her younger brother's marriage took place before her marriage.

Nisha's condition was very pathetic. She lived like a prisoner at her home. Her brother's wife Pooja brought much complexity to Nisha they were not in good terms. Each arrogant breath Pooja took all each possessive

gesticulate she made towards her husband added to the sore in Nisha's heart. "Pooja was a snake in the house a legitimate snake From the site of marital bliss she crept to sit next to Nisha...Sitting idle was a great problem for Nisha" (263).

After that Nisha got the teacher job in Kid Play Way School. Her father was very concerned about his daughter thinking that the women of this house had never worked and he was sending his beloved daughter out into the world because she did not have her own 'Home' to engage herself for accomadation. Nisha opened her heart to her aunt Rupa "There is no place for me in this house. If it is only marriage that will get me out, then marry off to anybody, I don't care" (281). When her aunt reacted at this proclamation of Nisha she retorted "I am fed up, I will go to ashram and devote myself to homeless widows Should I kill myself and make everybody happy. (282).. Later Nisha starts a business, 'Nisha's creation'. Her father trusted her as he trusted his son. His father realized that she was very intellectual, methodical and independent than Raju. It was her father's duty to get her married. Then Her parents searched a good match for her, a 'manglik' widower named Aravind and got her married to him.

After marriage, she tried her best to continue a balance between married life and her professional life. The author shuts the curtain of the novel happily with these words: Ten months after Nisha's marriage, twins were born. One girl and one boy baby. Her duty was over-God has been kind, however hard it was to believe. Forty days later, during the naming ceremony,

Nisha sat in front of the paradise, and through the smoke gazed at her tiny babies. Their color was the way hers had been before blemishes had come upon her. The mother in-law sitting next to her held the fragile boy in her lap. Just like her grandfather, she murmured as she caressed his cheek, a statement she made every day, to the approval of all the things.

Thus the paper analyses Nisha's quest for self in Manju Kapur's Home .It explores the complex terrain of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family Nisha reveals her inner quest for self-determining survival. As a working woman, Nisha worked for last years and achieved in her life but in home it was ruined. It brings to her sense of achievement in life helping her to create her own identity, her own voice, and her own place in the society and in home. She belongs to middle class family. Her quest for self-identity, struggle for economic independent existence, and her equality with man depend upon Indian social ethos. From her birth she

suffers a lot to achieve her identity. Nisha's childhood is scarred by incestuous abuse, the victimized girl is sent to stay at Aunt Rupa's home in order to preserve the honour of the family.

After eleven years of stay there she was back to her house to accompany her grandmother. Everyone think of her future though she was born as mangli she was destined to marry the similar horoscope. According to Indian tradition, a woman must defer to her husband in every possible respect. She must make the marital home pleasant for him. She must cook the meals, wash the dishes and take care of the children. She must never enquire about money and she must acquiesce to her husband's every demand. But Nisha break the rules with the changing social equations. Quest for self in Nisha's childhood to motherhood. Her journey was not easy and smooth. Her study, her life in Rupa's house, her association with Vicky and Suresh, her skin disease which ruined her fate and finally she succeed her own identity.

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