

INTERPRETATION AND CHANGING THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP IN MANJU KAPUR'S *HOME*

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Abstract: The present paper significantly observe the story of conventional Indian family and history of four generations of the patriarchal family of Banwari Lal who believes in old Indian customs and traditions, and try to investigate how Kapur characterize women who battle against patriarchal conventions and ideas that are not discouraging, delicate and needy. Although personal ambitions and lawful limitations, there is an expansion of the old house and cloth shop because the novel asserts definitely that the interests of family business come before individual concerns. Home is a masterful novel and acts of compassion negotiate and secrecy that lies at the mind of each family.

Keywords: Manju Kapur, Home, Conventional, Patriarchal family

Manju Kapur's *Home* is a unique tale of a family which is considered as the first place and source of happiness and learning. Family teaches us to understand human relationship which is the essence of the continuity of human existence. Family is the source of developing strong relations, sense of devotion, mutual understanding and respect to each other. The relationship between father-son, mother-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, man-woman and lover-beloved can easily be noticed everywhere and all these relationships are originated in family or home. Without family or home, there is no real scope of happiness in human life.

Manju Kapur's *Home* is a story of every home in India. Here, she covers the story of daily life of almost four generations in detail. She presents everything - hopes and aspirations, failures and frustrations, conflict between two generations, etc. She seems to be wonderful in the presentation of various types of human relationships in this novel. It is not only the tale of Banwari Lal's family; rather it is the tale of every home in India. Manju Kapur's novel 'Home' may have been an old-fashioned. But her unique sense of presentation makes it more and more concerning to the contemporary times. The point is that the importance and essence of human relationship and home cannot be denied in any age. A family living under the same roof faces so many problems, but the members do not forget the essentials of home. They share conflicts and confrontation with delight and

overcome all those problems easily. . Home teaches us the lessons of sacrifice and compromise with each-other for the sake of respective happiness.

Home is the story of almost four generations - Banwari Lal, his sons, his grandsons, and his grand grandsons - all living under the roof built by Banwari Lal who came to shift in Karol Bagh, New Delhi after partition. Home deals with the hopes and aspirations and failures and frustrations of Banwari Lal, his wife, his two sons - Yashpal and Pyarelal, two daughters-in-laws-Sona and Sushila, one daughter Sunita, one son-in-law Murli, four grandsons - Ajay, Vijay, Raju, Vicky and one granddaughter Nisha and great grandson Virat. The people belonging to four generations - quite different in attitudes and approaches, share the same roof for many reasons altogether.

Banwari Lal was the victim of partition. Before coming to India, he was a rich businessman in Anarkali, the famous commercial district of Lahore. His shop was destroyed in communal violence, and he was forced to leave Pakistan:

With her seven years old son, two years old daughter, pregnant wife, and wife's jewellery, they crossed the border into their new, wizened nation. First, they were sent to a camp in Amritsar, then Delhi, to finally arrive in Karol Bagh. The jewellery was sold, a house bought, and a shop rented within walking distance on Ajman Khan Road. (4)

Banwari Lal was a religious fellow. In Karol Bagh, he became a devotee of a holy baba. Under his blessings, his life and business flowered and prospered in right direction. He had firm faith in God:

Once settled in Karol Bagh, Lala Banwari Lal became a devotee of a holy man, a Baba, who lived near the house. His faith needed an anchor, and the holy man combined astrology, palmistry, spiritual guidance, and reassuring predictions about the future. Pray to the Devi, everything will be all right, feed the cows, feed the Brahmins, everything will be all right. (5)

In the beginning, he faced hardships and came across so many hindrances. With his patience and power to cope with these inevitable hardships, he overstepped and established business with reputation. He got his daughter married without any force and show as suggested by Baba. But he felt regret during the marriage of his only daughter Sunita. He could not do much because that was the beginning of his new career in India. He consoled himself.

Banwari Lal's thoughts did not materialize because fate has some different notions. Murli, the husband of Sunita developed the habit of drinking. He was not compromising and it was almost impossible for Sunita to adjust. But she had to adjust:

“That these facts proved inadequate to ensure Sunita’s happiness, that the boy drank and became abusive was something the daughter did her best to hide from her parents. This shame was now her own.” (5)

After Sunita’s marriage, Lala Banwari Lal was ready for the marriage of his eldest son Yashpal. Yashpal equally handled the business along with his father. He was obedient. But he was fallen in love with Sona who at times visited his shop for some purchasing. In the eyes of Lala Banwari Lal, love marriage was not acceptable at any rate. In the beginning, he showed his opposition like his wife who was ready to take poison if it happened:

“His wife was not so tolerant of the fires of youth. The boy had to see sense. She would rather eat poison than negotiate for a girl like that. With their status and position why should they have to ask anybody for anything?” (7)

But Banwari Lal showed his true spirit and was ready to compromise himself. He did not want to see his son in unhappiness. He respected the emotions of his son and ready to do whatever Yashpal loved. He became ready for Yashpal’s love marriage. He says to his reluctant wife, but Yashpal’s mother wanted to get big dowry for her son which bride’s family would not offer at all. They were comparatively weak in prosperity:

“We have nothing but our daughter - we are small people.”(9)

Yashpal’s marriage with Sona was performed despite his mother’s desire. The result was inevitable. She did not appreciate her daughter-in-law Sona. Sona made complaints to her husband many times. She did not become pregnant even after two years of her marriage. Sometimes, the behaviour of her mother-in-law became intolerable: “Sometimes she cried and told her husband she wanted to go home, nobody had asked him to marry her, her self-respect did not allow her to be subject to such treatment.” (12)

Banwari Lal performed the marriage of his younger son Pyare Lal in time. He married with Sushila, a local girl from Chandani Chowk. She brought good future for the family. All the household goods were given by her father. Banwari Lal was highly pleased and satisfied. But the greater satisfaction came in his life when he became the grandfather of two grandsons - Ajay and Vijay of Pyare Lal. On the other hand, Sona was still barren. The birth of Ajay and Vijay made her jealous also. She became the victim of depression. She began to show her anger even on a little matter. She began to disbelieve everything.

Lala Banwari Lal family heard the news of Sunita’s demise. The entire family was shocked. The male members became ready for Bareilly. The mother of Sunita wept and wept and nothing could console her. Here also, Sona could not console her mother-in-law as the latter claimed. Her mother-in-law questioned about her feeling as a mother. She told her that she could not understand the feelings of the mother because she had not child:

“You think sleep is possible? What can you know of a mother’s feelings? All you do is enjoy life, no children, no sorrow, only a husband to dance around you.” (19)

The words of her mother-in-law were too depressing for her. But she had to tolerate these things because she is still childless. Her womanhood and motherhood had been questioned. The woman can accept everything but taunt on her barrenness is intolerable. The fate of woman is destined towards that and she is bound to accept silently. Similar was the case with Sona. She had everything but her barrenness was curse for her.

The arrival of Vicky in the home of Banwari Lal created more complications. Vicky was the son of Sunita. After Sunita’s death, Vicky came along with Yashpal and Banwari Lal. They persuaded Sona to look after him. Since Sona was childless, it was easier for them to tell her so. But Sona directly opposed the suggestion before her husband.

The dream of Sona was realized. She became pregnant after ten long waiting years. She was extremely pleased and all the family members felt the same. Everyone in the home cared her a lot and a rare kind of satisfaction came to her. The birth of Nisha brought certain limitation in Vicky’s life. It was Sona who looked after him although she did not want to do so. But now she was engaged in her own daughter Nisha. Sona did not want to bear additional responsibility of Vicky anymore.

Gradually, Vicky developed himself into a spoiled child. He became careless and all the time he wandered here and there. He did not want to go to school. He hated education:

“Vicky hated school, hated studying. The pattern had been set for failure, and he saw no point in struggling against it.” (45)

Every member of Banwari Lal’s family was aware of Vicky’s stay at the same home. Vicky was the son of his own daughter. His mother was died. It was the social and moral responsibility of Banwari Lal to look after him, they did also. But they are suspicious about the nature of help they might offer to Vicky. Sona particularly was aware of the outcome. She took it easily till she had not child. But she now not needed Vicky simply because she was no more barren. Kapur lays emphasis on basic human nature in which there is more scope of narrowness. The character of Sona reveals the same. Kapur appropriately writes at this juncture.

After the birth of Raju, Sona’s family was complete. Sona did not feel the need of Vicky at all. His stay in the same home was now burden to Sona. Vicky was also aware of the some fact. He was revolting every time. He did not decide where to go, what to do, how to live. Everyone in the home was busy in his or her own work. Vicky’s condition could easily be understood:

“As the children grew, Vicky hovered uneasily between shop and home, between upstairs and downstairs, between his grandparents and his aunts. By the time he was fifteen he was moody and gangly. He looked as though he had worms.” (50)

Banwari Lal's family did not support Vicky emotionally. They showed kindness which cannot be called love and affection at all. He did not get motherly affection at all from Sona. He unburdens his heart to Nisha:

"I know they only keep me because I am useful. It is my fate that no one wants me. How many times has your mother said, even your own father does not want you - so what can I expect from other people?" (56)

Vicky showed unwanted and accepted kind of behaviour towards Nisha. He felt good in the company of Nisha. He poured undue love and affection which Nisha did not desire at all. Nisha warned him that she would tell all these things to her mother: "I'll tell everybody how dirty you are." (57)

Vicky's reply was quick: "We are not going to tell anybody about this. This is our secret. See, you have done su-su. Ajay, Vijay and I are always doing su-su in front of each other." (57)

Vicky's affection for Nisha can be called a mere act of sexual infatuation in the young age. He displayed his horrifying behaviour many times. He did his best to blackmail her. He was always in search of opportunity to come near to Nisha and fulfilled his inclination:

"Meanwhile Vicky's preoccupation with Nisha increased, his eyes fixed on the small white hand that had caressed him, the hand that had made him come all over the durrie. Just thinking of the excitement and the release made him long for it again." (60)

Nisha could not easily forget these bad things done by Vicky to her. She became self-possessive. Her health was deteriorating day by day. Nobody understood the real cause. Rupa, the sister of Sona took Nisha to her own home. Here, she felt comfortable and more concerning. Rupa was also childless. Premnath and Rupa looked after Nisha very carefully:

"Nisha now found 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." (68)

Banwari Lal's family did their best to accommodate Vicky in their home. They tried to educate him, taught the lessons of business and now they wanted Vicky to be married and it would be their final responsibility. On the other hand, Vicky did not want to leave Karol Bagh. His father Murli was also assertive in this direction. He did not want his son to come back in the small and dirty town once more:

"Murli found an opportunity to inform his son that his future lay with his mother's family. He should guard against letting them get rid of him cheap, they had short-changed his mother and now they were trying to do the same to him." (79)

Nisha was growing in the lap of Rupa and Premnath. Premnath, in particular, was more interested in the education of Nisha. He gave his evening time to her in order to solve her problems. On the other hand, Sona was also conscious about Nisha's traditional growth. She wished that her daughter must have learnt the traditions of the family also:

"From time to time Nisha's mother insisted her daughter come home to be groomed in the traditions of the Banwari Lal's household." (92)

Vicky was married to Asha at the age of nineteen only. Thus Banwari Lal's family fulfilled their last responsibility. Asha and Vicky lived in the same house but with not equal status. Asha realized the position of her husband in the home. Asha was intelligent enough to exploit the situation. She wanted to attach with family deeply and emotionally. Especially to Sona, she showed great appreciation. All the time, she told Sona that she did not want to leave her. She became pregnant and delivered a son Virat. Thus, the family of Vicky was also complete. Now, Vicky wanted to develop his separate business. He told his grandfather about this. Banwari Lal was in dilemma. He was more conscious about the fate of Vicky but at the same time, he did not want to displease his sons, grandsons and daughters-in-law by showing more affection to Vicky. He wanted to do something to Vicky as his moral responsibility and he did.

Banwari Lal did not survive for a longer period. He realized the inevitable result. His grandsons - Ajay, Vijay, Raju and Vicky were the products of modern generation. He was a traditional businessman so he doesn't want any changes in the shop. His two sons - Yashpal and Pyare Lal followed his footprints with full reverence. They did not object their father. But in the fast growing Indian society, the younger generation has to show his presence everywhere. The sons of Pyare Lal - Ajay and Vijay showed their idea of transformation in the shop. They wanted to establish new business and transform the old shop into a traditional one.

The second generation became agree with the third generation. Especially, Yashpal welcome the view of cousins. He declared his thoughts. Banwari Lal could not see any change in the shop because he died. The entire family was in sorrow. Lala Banwari Lal was the source of inspiration for them. He did not trouble them at all. He did not suffer for a longer period and that was quite satisfactory to them:

"The family couldn't believe he had gone so soon. He had not troubled them enough, in itself an indication that he was free from the cycle of death and rebirth, all his bad karma expiated during six months of suffering." (119)

After the death of Lala Banwari Lal, home took time to become in normal situation. Everyone took his occupation and routine life was followed.

Conclusion

In this novel Home, Manju Kapur mainly wrote on male and female relationship, modern marriages, education and conventional woman of India sacrifice for tradition. She wrote about sons, daughter, mother, father, sister, daughter-in-law and wife who plays role in our society. And woman changes their human images in our usual restrictions. Manju Kapur explored the complex environment of the Indian family and reveals many subjects that are embedded within the family the revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage and lastly the women's struggle for her continued existence. Manju Kapur's protagonist in the present novel lives within the subject of faith and fruitfully finds her Home.

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