

Issues of Gender and Caste in Manjukapur 's Home

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 12

Special Issue: 1

Month: December

Year: 2023

P-ISSN: 2320-2645

E-ISSN: 2582-3531

Received: 17.10.2023

Accepted: 05.12.2023

Published: 14.12.2023

Citation:

Muthulakshmi, K., and S. Ganesan. "Issues of Gender and Caste in Manjukapur 's Home." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 12, no. S1, 2023, pp. 427–29.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/rtdh.v12iS1-Dec.135>

K. Muthulakshmi

Research Scholar

Assistant Professor of English, JJ College of Arts and Science (A), Pudukkottai

Dr. S. Ganesan

Research Supervisor

Associate Professor & Controller of Examination

PG & Research Department of English

H.H. The Rajah 's College (A), Pudukkottai

Abstract

Manju Kapur is a contemporary Indian English Novelist. Much concerned about the problems faced by sensitive Indian women in fulfilling their identity. She records the search for identity among women of different strata of society. Establishment of identity is an assertion of the self against de-limiting factors like race, colour, language, caste and gender among the caste is a legally Indian phenomenon. That leads to individual crisis and socio political tension. It plays a eminent role in Indian society and Indian literature reflects the tragedy of the heinous practice of untouchability. Ms. Kapur touches on this issue most significantly in the plight of Nisha the third generation female protagonist in Home. She is an upper caste. As a child she is a victim of abuse by a cousin, whom she states fearing although her life. Luckily she has a loving aunty Roopa masi who nurtures her and sends her back to her parents. She is a very beautiful maiden, the cynosure of all eyes at college. Naturally she falls in love with a youth of another community. Consider inferior to theirs. So she is prevented from meeting the young man and their romance ends. Unluckily she develops some skin-ailment and it is difficult to find her a groom. Her horoscope has a stigma of 'Mangli dosha' and that adds to the difficulty. Finally she is married to a middle-aged widower. In his household after giving birth to a her twins, she finds a home. This after passing through many vicissitudes Nisha finds a home and contentment she did not get at her parents home.

Keywords: Caste, Gender, Ostracism, Re-marriage Caste, Prejudice

Introduction

Manju Kapur's third Novel *Home* 2006 is set in contemporary India it depicts the complex life of a joint family in North India Manju Kapur has proved herself to be one of the sensitive historians of the ideal middle-class of India. She explores the sufferings of female characters and the manner in which Indian upper middle class girls are molded to suit the needs of a patriarchal society. In this Novel '*Home*' Male chauvinistic atrocities in society are clearly depicted through the characters the women are portrayed as silent victims of the joint family culture and its stereotype of conduct according to values.

"It is way to expect virtue from women till they are in some degree independent of men" (*Vindication of the Rights of Women* p. 92).

The Banwari Lal family is traditional and the patriarchal. They have always believed that men must leave the house to work and women work within the four walls footfalls of their home. Banwari Lal's two sons follow the father's way and rules without questions Banwari Lal's principles are challenged by his elder son Yashpal, who falls in love with the customer Sona a beautiful women. The girl was in her first year of college but marriage enough reason to discontinue her education (*Home*). After many struggle Yashpal marries Sona. But Sona does not conceive a child for ten long years her child is situation makes her vulnerable her mother- in- law scolds her for any reason. "Sometimes she cried and told her husband she wanted to go home.... at this Sona allowed he tears to flow copiously". (*Home* p11). Sona is always compared with Sushila her co- sister and wife of Pyarelal Sushila delivers Ajay here and Vijay in the next few years. Great was the jubilation at this first grand-child (Sunita son Viki born six years earlier, did not count the male line was augmented courtesy of Sushila and Pyarelal"). (*Home* p14)

Sona's sister Rupa who is also child essays to Sona "Even God needs to be helped sometimes". (*Home* p23). Sona tries to calm herself by praying and closing her eyes to concentrate on her favourite image of God and says, "I am going old, bless us with a child, girl or boy I don't care but I cannot bear the emptiness in my heart" (*Home* p19). Sona is scolded nobody finds false with Yashpal. They find fault with only the wife Sona.

After the death of sister-in -law Sunitha, Banwari Lal brings Vicky, a ten year old boy and pushes him, towards the childless Sona. But she doesn't want to be the mother of ten years old boy, a borrowed child from another womb. After ten years Sona delivers the precious girl baby. The elders of the family particularly males address her as a child of Mangli. According to astrology believed to be unfavorable for marriage, causing discomfort and tension in the relationship."The baby's horoscope was cast;the configuration of the planets at her birth made her a Mangli". (*Home* p39).

Nisha's birth meant a certain neglect of Vicky ". (*Home* p41). Vicky could not get proper space in grand parents home. The lack of affection and the feeling of being forsaken made harsh , very arrogant and the birth of Nisha was intolerable to him. So from the beginning he hated his cousin Nisha and trespasses his limits in his treatment of her."Vicky was always on the look out for opportunities to get Nisha alone" (*Home* p59).

Nisha not to reveal this ask they would not allow her to go to school after that. 'Home stands for Homelessness'. Nisha, a small child could not express the injustice done by her cousin Viki to her. After the birth of Raju the brother of Nisha realises her mother's lack of attention to her. As she could not concentrate on the studies, she was pushed to stay with Rupa , her mother's co- sister.

She immigrates from her father's home to Rupa masi's home where she breaths the air of freedom and psychological solace because here she never finds any noise of her cousin and the disturbance of Vicky too. Rupa and her husband treat Nisha as their daughters. After eleven years of stay in her aunts house, she is compelled by her father to return to her home to take care of her grandmother being a girl child the responsibility of looking after the old woman falls in to Nisha's hands. In the male dominated society boys are considered as productive persons and their society puts more value on them, while girls are given secondary preference and considered as a burden. Sona feels that her sad days of this disgrace and resentment are gone after the birth of little son Raju, they gave preference to the male child Raju.

Nisha enters Durgabai college for doing English Honors. As a result of her family careless attitude towards education , like all the other girls in her community Nisha too becomes in different towards her studies. Nisha practices the household activities and cooking because they think that the girl must do things like cooking household work to earn her husband's love. Nisha meets a boy Suresh an Engineering student. They fall in love but she is not allowed to marry him. Love does not

see any social barriers she remains unsuccessful in in her studies and her love. Her choice of your boy from the lower caste is a sin to her family and it is sign of the rejection of the traditional ways. She wishes to get a good match, she always remains in the fetters of tradition throughout her life.

Nisha have been forced to observe her first Karva Chauth fast for her future husband even as a ten year old child. But she fails in her expectation in her love this is a good example of the misuse of religion. Sona's narration of the Karva Chauth 'Savitri Katha' to Nisha and other women in the families also a similar exercise. She feels that all men are hungry beast who will not miss any opportunity to misuse women. They makes her lose all tender feelings towards Suresh the lover. Because of mangali dosa the beautiful women charming Nisha marries Arjun a widower .She tries to prove her identity by her bouquet business but at last enters into the normal bondage of life.

Conclusion

There are many women inside the family who remain silent suffers . They are enslaved by the traditional and familial values which are outdated and requires close re-examination in the light of new new realities. In the socio political milieu. We find Nisha reconciling to her life "Ten months after Nisha's marriage twins were born one girl one boy. Her duty was over -God had been kind, however hard it was to believe"(Home p335).

References

1. Kapur, Manju, *Home*, Random House India, 2006.
2. Wolstonecraft Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* on Political and Moral Subjects.