



Features of Feminism and Individual Liberation in Manju Kapur's Home

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Abstract:

Indian English writers have emerged from their cocoons and begun to speak up for the voiceless in their society. Manju Kapur is one of them who has written against women's obliteration and subjugation. Because of the male dominance, women are always treated as 'other' and 'secondary'. This article sheds light on how the protagonist established patriarchy and facets of feminism, as well as her identity, self-reliance, and created a new world for her. Kapur has vividly depicted the problems that a typical Indian woman would face challenges in her personal life, as well as how society plays an important role in shaping her impediment.

Key words: Feminism, Patriarchy, Self-reliance, Individual independence, Conventionalism and Subjugation etc.

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a broad sociopolitical movement that promotes women's well-being and goodness in society. Many female writers, thinkers, and critics have founded a new school of thought based on this idea that seeks to liberate and identify women in literature. Women's writers have moved away from the traditional portrayal of long-suffering women in conflict, and female protagonists searching for identity: they are no longer portrayed and defined purely in terms of their victim status. Women novelists have developed their unique style that reflects female sensibility. They convey a strong sense of social change awareness.

Simon de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Virginia Woolf are well-known feminists. In today's world, they are associated with feminist intellectuals such as Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar. The erasure of women, their dilemmas, their search for identity, their discovery of their own space, and the celebration of the female body are the central themes of this trend. Indian English writers have emerged from their cocoons and begun to speak up for the voiceless in their society. Manju Kapur is one of the writers who has written

against women's tyranny and subjugation. Women are always seen as 'different' and 'secondary' due to male supremacy. This article explains how the protagonist formed her identity, self-reliant position, and constructed a novel universe for herself, as well as the panoramic perspectives of patriarchy and facets of feminism. In Kapur's writing, the strains of feminism are obvious. The tussle of her female characters, their vulnerability, and quest for identification, freeing attitude, the feminine mind, and the female biological world, all demonstrate this. "Home exposes a distressing home fact," says Anupama Chowdhury, "that joint families can both ruin and retain our maturity, individuality, and mental advancement" (Chowdhury33).

Manju Kapur's third novel, *Home*, takes us on a tense yet surprisingly attractive journey through three generations. The novel *Home* is about Banwari Lal's house, a paterfamilias who believes in living in a shared family. He is the family patriarch and owns and operates a sari shop in Karol Bagh. He has two children, Yashpal and Pyarelal, as well as a married daughter, Sunita. Sona, Banwari Lal's daughter-in-law, Rupa, Sona's sister, and Nisha, the heroine, are the three female characters included in the story

The story begins with two sisters, Sona and Rupa, one of them is gorgeous and the other plain. Either of them is convinced that the other is more providential and tranquil than they are. Both underestimate the fact that they have more intricacies in their lives than the other. Sona has a lot of problems in her life as a woman. Her family members mock her and humiliate her for two reasons: a lack of dowry and barrenness over a ten-year span, both of which taunt her like nothing else. Her gentle, submissive, and adaptable personality carries her through everything. Sunita is the daughter of Banwari Lal, who favours an unqualified man to marry his daughter. She burns herself and dies, leaving her ten-year-old son Vicky as a result of her terrible married life and patriarchy. Vicky is pushed to Sona without any prior interaction because she is considered as a subpar object in the perspective of everyone around her.

Sona lives a sad life with no one to whom she can share her difficulties. Her complaints are suppressed, and she is ignored in every way. During Sunita's burial rites, Sona tries to comfort her mother-in-law by saying, "Sleep now, Maji, sleep, you'll make yourself sick if you cry like this, and it won't bring her back" (*Home* 15). "You believe it's possible?" the old woman spits out willfully. What can you possibly know about a mother's emotions? You don't have any children or sorrows; all you have is a husband who dances about you." (*Home* 15) Sona, who is childless, makes daily efforts to maintain her status in the family. However, she is mocked and disparaged by everyone because of her infertility. She has deteriorated significantly over the last ten years and eventually gives birth to a girl kid, Nisha, who is the key character of this tale.

As a child, Nisha was sexually assaulted by her teenaged cousin Vicky. She is taken to her aunt Rupa Masi after the incident, where she excels as a student. In Banwari Lal's traditional family, a girl's education is considered secondary, but Nisha's education begins properly at her aunt's house. She was head over heels in love with Suresh and determined to marry him, but traditional standards resurfaced, and racial prejudice put an end to the wedding festivities. Purneet Kaur articulated and argued this prejudice as follows: Women in *Home* are the rebels of inhibition, societal oppressive expectations, joint family regulations and patriarchal limitations in the society. He also extends: Kapur has divulged societal evils like superstitious beliefs, prohibited female education, child marriage etc.

The institution of marriage is an intimate oppressor to marginalize women within the society (Purneet 21) Nisha suffers throughout the narrative as a result of society values that are opposed to her. She has never been concerned about cultural constraints; instead, she aspires to be an independent woman who is self-sufficient. All of India's economic disparities, as well as the taboos against love marriage, convert her free will into a source of shame, shattering her hopes. Kapur has eloquently depicted the challenges that a normal Indian woman has in her personal life, as well as how society contributes to her predicament. She used two types of female characters: the archetypes of traditional society, such as Nisha's mother in law and her mother, who have a history of subjugating women under the guise of tradition. The second type of character refers to their daughters who have grown up from their naive stage and are now independent women. She portrays the mother as the pinnacle of stereotyped values, which the daughter defies. Nisha, a post-colonial woman, defies society's rigid conventions in order to achieve self-sufficiency, but her husband does not support her.

Sunita's husband, Banwari Lal, is a symbol of patriarchy and a male-dominated culture. Sunita was burned as a result of them. Thus, the novel *Home* depicts the responsibilities of women in traditional society, such as getting married, having children, and abiding by all the in laws. Kapur wants to persuade her readers that while a family system is beneficial, it should not obstruct the advancement of the feminine world. These female characters cause us to identify with their feelings in a way that makes us feel like we are not them.

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