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## The Narrow Social Traditions Do Not Let Two Young Hearts Meet In Manju Kapur's Novel 'Home'. [A Note On Nisha - Suresh Love Story]

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**Abstract:** *Indo-Anglian fiction has been greatly enriched since the appearance of women novelists as they have touched almost all the aspects of Indian Society specially related to the Indian women related to the Indian women. Women novelists like Kamala Markanday, Anita Desai Shashi Deshpande and Bharti Mukharjee have given ample space to the social and economic conditions of the contemporary Indian society. These women writes highlight how the women have to spend life in the conditions created by male - oriented society. Before these women writes, male novelists were abo writing about the social and economic conditions of Indian society, but they had little to say about Indian women, about their social and economic conditions. While in Indian middle class society women were forced to act according to these rules made by male-oriented society. Women were treated secondary to men and were supposed to work within the four walls oof the house. Their duty was to breed children, to look after them and to serve their husbands how cruel and immoral they might be.*

**Key Words:** Indo-Anglian, women novelists, Indian Society, economic conditions, contemporary.

The male dominance did not permit women to breathe in an open air. They were not free to take decision how to lead their life. They were not given liberty to shoulder any social responsibility their life was completed moulded and guided by their male - partner. Meaning there by they were not supposed to do any thing out side their domestic duties towards the family as modern wife. Even the Hindu mythologer Manu has laid down the rule that a women in childhood should depend on parents, in young age on her husband and in old age should depend on her children.

But the women novelists broke this myth and they boldly picturised this miserable plight of Indian women specially in middle class society. They strongly and boldly created awareness among women to fight for their rights and liberty. They should struggle hard to make there identity and recognition in the family as well as in the society. Only then they can contribute in the making of the Indian. The protagonists of these writes are bold women, strong enough to fight against the evils of society and to bring and end to the male - dominance which had enslaved women for centuries together the result is obvious in the present society when women are marching ahead shoulder to shoulder with men.

Manju Kapur makes a striking entry on the horizen of Indo-Anglian fiction by contributing hen five popular novels which not only touch every aspect of life of women in Indian society specially that of middle class, but also other social, religious and political issues, But her main focus remains on the problems and issues of women of women in Indian middle class families. She does not call her self a feminist though her bent of mind in always towards the welfare and well-being of women.

She, being a women does not ignore any aspect of human life related to women. Her novel 'Home' depicts the story of a joint middle class family with its merits and demerits, pleasure and pain, rituals and conventions, the position of women in joint family. Besides this she has taken up a very important aspect of human life i.e. love. This novel depicts the love episode of Nisha and Suresh. She has minutely observed how love develops in the family of Lala Banwari Lal, a business man having a big shop of clothes Suresh a young student doing. Engineering course. Nisha travels in a bus while going to college from the house of Mausi (Rupa), as Nisha's parents were not in a mood to continue her study and wanted to marry her. But her aunt (Mausi) and her husband were of a progressive mind, therefore they took Nisha and admitted her in a college for graduation. Nisha used to see a boy in the bus every day. Manju Kapur finds an attraction developing in the heart of Nisha for that young boy, a very natural description-



"She first noticed his dark glasses and long Hair. He was tall and thin, with a sallow Complexion and his face was decorated with a blush Black stubble. He took off his glasses to make Sure she knew he was looking at her. She looked Away, annoyed by his familiarity".

The boy took initiative and asked her " where do you study ?" In the beginning she did not reply but on his asking again she felt "what harm there could there be in a short civil reply?" she replied 'DBC' thus it was an introductory dialogue between Nisha and that boy. The boy also told that he was studying in KCE [Khalsa College of Engineering]. This introductory dialogue began to convert in further dialogues as they used to travel in the same bus every day. The boy began to try to come closer and closer to her every day and one day he offers her to accompany him to coffee house.

Nisha thinks -

"Here could be nothing wrong in having a cold drink with some one she had seen so after. She left herself be guided towards the coffee house."

Manju Kapur understands the excitement and curiosity growing in the hearts of young boys and girls, so she finds Nisha being excited while enjoying the company of a young boy though yet not knowing very much about him. They were confined to formal talks about their study, college, parents and family. Nisha tells some details of her acquaintance to her friend Pratibha. Nisha does not try to know about the caste of the boy (Suresh). But her friend insists an asking the caste and the boy on this she replies :

"How should I know ? Am I going to marry him that I should start doing question - answer?"

Their meetings continued, and they both "felt a mile-stone, enough for him briefly to touch her arm"(146) Suresh often flattered Nisha by admiring her physical beauty and Nisha too felt flattered. She also began to maintain her beauty to impress more and more her boy friend. Thus they both began to grow less formal to each other and Nisha knew many details about her family and business, about his future plan and future career. Thus they came closer and closer.

Thus, Nisha began to feel a deeper soft corner for Suresh and began to dress up herself as Suresh liked. Her changed hair style was not liked in her family but she had to please Suresh. Suresh also began to help Nisha in her study by bringing extra notes in English literature. She obtained good marks in English. In this way Nisha's closeness with Suresh increased and some times she missed her class for the company of Suresh. After her examination she had to stay with her parents but she remained in contact with Suresh telephonically. Suresh also loved Nisha from the core of her heart and he one day proposed Nisha for marriage. But at the same time he felt an inferiority complex due to his family status as his family stands no comparison with that of Nisha. He admits-

"Your family won't like me ..... I am not rich" Their love affair became deeper and deeper. Nisha was over confident of her high percentage in the examination as she did in the first year. Therefore she began to miss most of the classes for enjoying herself in the company of Suresh. She Started seeing movies during school time and gradually they began to enjoy the warmth of each others body in the darkness of cinema hall when the film is running.

But at the same time Nisha was afraid lest she should fail as she has not been serious these days about her classes and study. She is in the third year of her course, therefore she wants that the parents of Suresh should talk to her parents about their marriage, as Nisha has made up her mind to marry him Suresh tells that his parents are not rich as her family is the consideration of Social discrimination was there in the mind of Suresh, but Nisha does not take it seriously and tells Suresh that her parents only want to marry her and tells that her parents are not narrow minded. She does not understand the harsh reality of the social system. Suresh expresses his deep love to her-

"Even if they do not agree to our marriage I will never stop loving you never you are the princess of my dreams".

Suresh arranges meetings with Nisha at same place and wants come closer and closer physically but Nisha



like a practically wise girl tells Suresh "We should wait till we are married" (189) Some times Suresh tries to meet her by his emotional feelings of love-

"Life after like we have been together. No one can separate us ..... I could die for you yaar, you are my princess, my queen, for the rest of my life there as only you"

But Nisha does not lose her chastity at the hands of Suresh. She does not stay at the place which Suresh had arranged for meeting, the room of a friend. She asks Suresh why he does not suggest his parents to talk to her parents regarding their marriage. Her frequent meeting with Suresh resulted into shortage of attendance . She has no proper and satisfying explanation to it. The only solution was that Suresh should talk to her parents for marriage. Rupa, her Mausi gausses that Nisha was in love with same boy by her activities and life style. One day Nisha asks her Mausi "What do you think of love-marriage?" (195). Hearing it "Rupa too leapt to the same conclusion. The new hair style, the glowing looks, the todays in the jeans and T-Shirts..... The poor performance in second year ..... of course there was a boy in the picture.

Rupa's guess was correct and she asked Nisha about the family of the boy. Nisha badly utters- "How does it matter. It is him I want to marry not his family"(196). Suresh comes to meet Yashpal, Nisha' father the whole matter comes into light and Nisha's mother objects to it and bursts into anger but Nisha shuts up her by saying" You also did the something Ma's(197), the whole family is against this marriage as Suresh belongs to a family of low standard, while the family of Banwari Lal has a great reputation and is known for its status in the society. Suresh on the other hand could convince her parents about his sincere love and devotion to Nisha -

"Suresh on the other hand tried to convey to his beloved's family that he would do any thing to prove that his intentions were pure. He only wanted Nisha, no dowry, no fancy wedding, he did not care if she was a Magali."

Thus, the narrow traditional thinking of Nisha's family raises the question of equal status of both the families which Suresh does not have Manju Kapur has touched this important issue in considering the marriage of sons and daughters. Nobody cares about the sincerity and passions of love in the hearts of the young lovers. Suresh, in-spite of his commitment of sincere love and devotion for Nisha fails to win the hearts of Nisha's family, because family status stands in the way of two lovers. This is what the novelist tries to put forth how the prevailing social discrimination works as a villain in the meeting of two hearts. Suresh feels inferior to Nisha's family or someone might have threatened from Nisha's side which makes Suresh so timid that he fails to speak boldly about his decision in the meeting arranged by her uncle in a restaurant for further discussion and final decision. This meeting is attended by Nisha's uncle and her brother Raju along with Suresh and Nisha. Nisha is astonished and anguished at heart on heaving what Suresh speaks-

"We can not get married, if your family does not approve. I will be standing in the way of your happiness."

Nisha expected that Suresh would speak boldly about his firm decision and would stand against the narrow traditional considerations of caste, standard and social status in the way of marriage. But Suresh behaves cowardly and does not deny any argument of her uncle during this meeting. It disappoints Nisha and breaks her heart-

"She wanted to run out from the restaurant never see Suresh again, never see that lean face, ..... never touch the hair soft and curly against the neck...."

Suresh yields to desire of her uncle and brother and it seems Suresh comes under its impression of the rich status and high standard of Nisha's family. It also seems possible that somebody from Nisha's family might have threatened Suresh to face the consequences if he does not yield to their desire Nisha is also confused and stunned at the strange behaviour of Suresh she does guesses something unusual has happened in between -

"What force, money and - threats had they used to make him behave the way he was not behaving? She would never know?"

Nisha is perfectly broken at heart and is so disappoint that she thinks of committing suicide. She also



threatens - "They can't force me to marry someone I don't want to"(206). At the same time Rupa concludes that Suresh was weak and it was only Nisha who was mad after him. Nisha tells Suresh "I will die before I marry anyone else, don't listen to any thing you hear."(213). Nisha forces Suresh to agree for marriage but Suresh replies "my family is not agreeing"(213) Nisha tries to derive out his fear by saying "Have they said anything previously" . But Suresh leaves Nisha desperately under the refuge of watchful aunt and uncle, Suresh never tries to contact Nisha while she tries but in vain and now Suresh had vanished from her life and there was nothing she could do."(215)

Thus, the love story of Nisha and Suresh ends in smoke. Suresh can not be held responsible for breaking the heart of Nisha as the boy who loved Nisha so passionately and deeply can not be so indifferent from Nisha while he takes initiative and goes to talk to the father of Nisha. There is something deep and serious which makes Suresh to behave so strongly all of a sudden. Nisha's idea that someone has threatened him from her family seems true.

Thus, the end of Suresh - Nisha love story speaks the traditional and narrow social system that still considers the difference of social status and caste while settling the marriage of girls and boys. Perhaps it was the rich status and high caste of Lala Banwari Lal's family that stands between Nisha and Suresh and finally prevents their marriage. Suresh being from a poor family and lower caste can not dare go against the desire of Nisha's family. His inferiority complex makes him withdraw himself from the life of Nisha and is lost in the crowd of the world.

Manju Kapur has been successful in presenting the traditional social norms of Indian contemporary middle class society in which there still prevails the difference of haves and have not and the consideration of the low and high caste which does not let the young hearts meet. The novelist, besides her focus on female world, highlights a clear picture of Indian contemporary social system. The love episode of Nisha and Suresh also shows the art of plot-construction of Manju Kapur who makes this episode an essential part of the plot of the novel. It also raises the question of women liberty as Nisha has to abide by the desire of her parents. She could not cross the limit of social system. Nisha's desperate condition due to her break up of love wins sympathy for her in readers hearts and leaves in the minds of the people how to remove such narrow traditions from our society.

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