

PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE IN THE PRACTICE OF CULTURE AND TRADITION IN MANJU KAPUR'S THE IMMIGRANT

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Abstract: The objective of the present paper is to show how the women suffer in the new countries, as depicted in Manju Kapur's novel, *The Immigrant*. Kapur's women protagonists are the picture of new women. They fight for their limitation of traditional ethics and family duties. It's their distinct struggle with family associated society through that they leaped into an avid effort to shape an identity for themselves as experienced women with impeccable backgrounds. The author mainly focused on the plight of the woman as she stands at the crossroads of life to adopt the new culture.

Keywords: Customs, Culture, Tradition, Ideology.

Introduction: Tradition is generally defined as ancient beliefs, practices or customs that have been followed from one generation to the next generation. Customs and traditions have practiced by every culture, every race or group of people. The Indian culture is knitted in the fabric of customs and tradition. In India the novels that are being written in English show the effects of new trends, mechanization and the effects of a western culture on Indian society.

ManjuKapur's deputed novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) earned her substantial success, both commercially and critically, in India as well as abroad. *A Married Woman* (2003) and *Home* (2006) both were shortlisted for the Hutch Crossword Prize for fiction, and in 2011. She received DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, shortlist, *The Immigrant* (2008). Her views are out from the others of her age. Nowadays the modern women writers are voicing themselves generously and courageously and on a various themes without agreeing feminist positions in the society. Her novels attain a momentous new sense when read in the point of view of traverse beliefs of traditional critical thinking.

Kapur points out that for every man's success there is a woman. If man is an exclamation mark, woman is a full stop. In the novels of ManjuKapur, the author searched the social, economic and cultural traits for the development of new women. The perception of new women in Indian humanity differs from the one in the West and therefore ManjuKapur has tried to develop her own stream of emerging of new women grounded in realism. She has her own concerns significances as well as her own ways of dealing with

the difficulty of her women protagonists. Her novels mark a noteworthy involvement in this path.

ManjuKapur exposes the conflict between tradition and modernity. Her women protagonists are the picture of new women. They fight for their limitation of traditional ethics and family duties. Her feminine protagonists are generally educated, aspirant distinct confined within the range of a traditional society. Their education leads them to freelance thinking that their family and society become impatient of them. They struggle between tradition and modernism. It's their distinct struggle with family associated society through that they leaped into an avid effort to shape an identity for themselves as experienced women with impeccable backgrounds. The writer has represented her protagonists as a woman trapped within the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a craving to be a vicinity of the political and knowledgeable movements of the day. Dr Shaleem Kumar Singh writes, "ManjuKapur has successfully portrayed the conflict of tradition and modernity in her characters. The specialty is that her female characters are only involved in clash against male dominated traditional world but they have also suffered this conflict in the form of generation gap" (37).

On Kapur fictional works, she mainly focuses both the courage and the wishes of the Indian women. She portrays Nina - what are the role assigned to her by the society attempt to find out through her independence and finding. Searching to the varying times and circumstances, she riots against the old tradition and culture and she searches for their freedom. According to Indian tradition the girl's marriage is arranged by her family. Nina's mother is a

believer of the old ways, she always reminds Nina about marriage to be her final goal. The mother believes in the superiority of man but she never supports her. When AnandaAlka has expressed an interest in meeting her daughter 'She soaked dals and imli, she ground the walnuts for her special barfi, she fried namakpara' (I 52). Simone de Beauvoir also describes the institution of marriage:

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to woman by society. It is still true that most women are married, or have been, or plan to be, or suffer from not being. The celibate woman is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage whether she is frustrated, rebellious, or even indifferent in regard to that institution. (SS p.445)

Immigration focuses compromise and sometimes it is the clear about the cultural changes in food and clothing. She explores the special challenges facing by immigrant wives: the way a young woman's life already so well-maintained as a professional become an even more difficult balancing act to a foreign culture.

In Immigrant Nina's fury and her fight against all traditional belief into a considerable ending. Nina goes to Canada with lots of sari but she could not wear them due to the new mentality. Nina starts to wear jeans and t-shirts in order to mingle and familiar with the people in her surroundings. Even though, she is not willing to follow in her western costume but she does not leave off the new fashion and trend. She is in the situation to make friends and entity she lose her identity and her valuable culture.

Indians are well known to the value of belief and morals but they find difficult to sustain and they can change their attitude for the new survival. Nina faces a lot of difficulties in the new atmosphere. After changing her appearance she is not able to satisfy people and get respect. In India before marriage she was identified as a good lecturer but things are difficult in new place. The mind always wanders in the new place Nina has to adapt herself to the new culture, tradition and environment which is not easy. Nina expresses her first pathetic condition in Canada...

"For the first time in her life she felt out of place. Wrong clothes, shoes, handbag, bag. May be in their eyes she was like the women sweeping." (I, 106)

Kapur, in her description of Nina, pointed out her clash to adjust the new environment. Regarding to Nina about the Western culture is the women should

be fair, hygienic, lean, speaking in lower tone and gorgeous in appearance and for men; they should be smart, austere and not emotional.

"I am the wrong colour; I came from the wrong place...of all the passengers the only one not allowed to sail through immigration, made to feel like an illegal alien." (I, 108)

Kapur narrates about the struggle of Nina with her decorative SalwarKameezes, learning western culture, struggling with vegetarian food and wish after the bonds of widespread family and friends.

'In all the time of wearing salwarkameez no one had accosted her. Now in jeans, she is accessible to the whole city. She looks down at her clothes with some friendliness' (I 154).

However, being persistent in her determination to maintain her Indian habit, she eagerly cooks Canadian cuisine and meat for Ananda, while maintaining on eating her separately cooked vegetarian foods. "Turmeric, yellow turning into brown as it bubbled in hot oil, red chillies that crackled as the roasted, onions and garlic that turned pink then brown, releasing sweet sharp smells, tomatoes that become soupy as they were swished around, cumin and coriander that gave out pungent flavor, these smells and imagined sights travelled across the world from north India to eastern Canada to kick her sharply in the stomach" (I141).

In Canada, Nina is longed for Kumbhmela festival and she is never missed to attend the festival. "The words reverberated through Nina, though she was as much a stranger to the KumbhMela as anyone in Canada. Educated, secular and westernized, she had anything to do with ritual Hinduism." (I 175)

According to Shankar and Northcott (2009), patriarchy is in essence the economic, social, and/or political oppression of women by men. In multi-generational households, which predominantly still exist in immigrant families in the west, it usually means that the oldest living male family member is the patriarch and has control over the rest of the family. It is often seen as an issue faced by women in developing cultures and among immigrant women in the west. Shankar and Northcott also imply the ability to escape patriarchal cultural norms is possible through migration. Women are often depicted as deeply confined and restrained by patriarchal traditions and culture. The migration process is seen as providing immigrant women with the economic independence, new social and cultural opportunities

due to the different gender norms of the receiving country, and new expressions of gender and identity. At the end of the novel, she becomes a new woman totally different from what she was before her marriage in India. Many cultural factors are responsible for changes in any real personality and she changes her personality because she faces the pressure of ideology: without changing herself, she can't live in the developed country. She

unconsciously follows the norms and cultures and start forgetting her own cultures. She suffers from social invisibility and feels inferiority complex. To end it, she starts dressing up like the westerners. She lost her ideology and accept new ideology as her own and living with two identity and perception, and there is a necessity for serious discourse on the issue of new situation.

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