



MANJU KAPUR'S *BROTHERS* AS A POLITICAL NOVEL

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Abstract

Manju Kapur is one of the major Indian English woman novelists. She is one of the prominent Indian English woman novelists of the contemporary times. She has published six novels so far- Difficult Daughters,(1998) A Married Woman,(1999) Home,(2006) Immigrant, (2008) Custody,(2006) and Brothers (2016).Her recent Brothers is a political novel that deals with the Indian politics and the tragic aspect of it and how men make their lives miserable by their whims and ambitions for money and power. As the novel deals with the political scenario, it is a political novel along with other novels like In Custody, A Train to Pakistan etc.

Keywords: woman novelist, Indian politics, money and power and suffering.

Manju Kapur published six novels so far- *Difficult Daughters,(1998) A Married Woman,(1999) Home,(2006) Immigrant, (2008) Custody,(2006) and Brothers (2016)* . The contribution of Manju Kapur to Indian English woman fiction is significant. In her most of the novels, she explores how the women struggle in patriarchal setup. She use different theme and such as patriarchal setup, search for identity, quest for the self, infertility and infidelity and the women's struggle for existence.

Brothers got published in 2016. The title of the novel is 'Brothers' as the novel sis about the Giana brothers, their birth, growing up, education, marriages, divorce, declining years, their rivalry and, mutual jealousy concerning property. It is mainly a political novel because it deals with the politics and how money is closely linked with the politics. A political novel is a "book which directly describes, interprets, analyses poliicalphenomena"² and in which 'a political milieu is the dominant setting."³

The narrative covers pre-Independence and post Independence periods. It has a passing reference to the movement of Gandhiji's Quit India Movement of 1942, leading to the freedom of the country on 15thj August, 1947. Viral becomes a patriot and *chota* a freedom-fighter-cum-politician works with other political leaders Mrudula and Mansi are the daughters of Mrs Tapti Giana who is at the centre of the novel. It is novel about the suffering as the wife of rich man but suffers from humiliation of being called the wife of a murderer. It is suggested that she is reason behind the murder. How aggressive men try to come up from the position of common party worker to the post of the Chief Minister of the state. Himmat Singh Giana, a law-graduate, being a party worker, struggles to become the Chief Minister of the state. Of course, he is at the end of the novel shot dead by his brother in the programme Jan Sunawai at his residence. His life of long political struggle and success ends with the tragedy.

The main sociological focus is on the community of the *Jats* in Rajasthan. On one level it appears to be a political novel and other hand, it is about the rivelary between the brothers for

accumulation of wealth and power and the women suffering in the society of Rajasthan, especially in the joint family set up. It is thrilling because there is murder at the end of the novel.

The novel is divided into four sections- entitled by the characters- Tapti, Virpal/ Himmat, Mangal, etc. The sections have some parts. The novel covers a long period of eighty years from 1930 to 2010. The narrative moves backwards and forwards and flashbacks into the remote past. So the narrator has made an attempt to narrate the long story of the Giana family of Lalbanga village, to the east of Ajmer, in Rajasthan. It is of the three generations- grandfather, son and grand children. So it is more complex novel of the epic narrative of the family known for its richness and social and economic power and traces how it rose to power. The only weakness is that it does not sustain the elements of suspense and curiosity. So the later part of the novel reads dull and uninteresting.

It begins with Lalsingh and his brother Kishen Singh and their children - Dhanpal and Virup. Dhanpal joins the army as the situation demands and fights against the Britishers' enemies in the second world war and returns after being injured -the loss of a leg. His wife is Gulabi and Virup's wife, is Mithari. Himmat Giana is the elder son and Mangal is the younger. It is actually Dhanpal who enables his younger brother to grow, educate him but he is inclined towards Business as he comes in contact with Gaur Sahib, a Brahmin. He runs away from the home when he was a boy leaving his child wife, Mithari. He is away from the home for a long time of twenty -five and odd years. People in the village do not consider her to be widow as her husband might be alive and not dead. At last, one day it is revealed that he is alive . Unexpectedly he returns to his village, joins his wife and takes away.

From their boyhood, there has been always a feeling of envy and jealous between the brothers- Himmat Singh and Mangal. Mangal's wife, Tapti is worried about her husband's heinous act and her daughters are also worry about the unusual situation at home and they are ready to face their friends in the college. The news of CM's murder came into the newspapers, and broadcasted in the TV channels regularly for a week. Tapti is sorrowful on the events and her mother is mother sorrowful but the women at home sympathise each other. Mangal put in the most famous prison of Delhi i.e., Tihar jail where the most dangerous of our country are put in cellular rooms. It is overcrowded jail and several untoward incidents happen there inside.

The political changes and death of men in politics is closely linked with the sorrow and suffering of the women, especially Tapti Giana, the wife of Mangal the murderer who is jailed first in Jaipur Central jail and next he is shifted to the biggest Tihar Jail, in New Delhi. She suffers with the ignominy of being a wife of murderer. Mrudula, and Mansi. Born in course of time, her daughters- Mrudula and Mansi, feel the same sense of guilt and sorrow for being the siblings of a murder.

The families of Himmat and Mangal become marked divided due to this murder which takes place at the end of this novel. The jealousy and hatred rose between the brothers in connection with the monetary relationships. Of course, at every step Himmat, being Minister, helps his brother when he faces loss in the Cement factory, by selling it over to the Dalmias and encouraging him to have a patrol bunk from which he gets steady flow of money without much exertion. By this time, Tapti, having passed IAS, after begetting two daughters, becomes the central government officer and stands by her husband. In spite of her assistance and suggestions, Mangal is not satisfied with the Patrol Bunk, he intends explore further his business, by buying the surrounding lands, creating a *dhaba*, entertainment Park and other places for his friends who visit at night with lorries. In one instance, he shows his pistol, which he bought recently hid in the metal box. She thinks that it is dangerous weapon which might be used against the Dacoits or anyone who displeases him. Bishnoi, the father - in-law of Himmat, dies and funeral takes place. Amir and Shwetha, his children attend. Amar comes all the way from America. Due to misunderstandings, the gap between the brothers increases, leading to a climax of 'tragic' conflict.

In the later part of the narrative, there is another dimension of sexual liaison between Himmat and Tapti, his brother beautiful wife. Although she is unwilling to succumb to his sexual advances, he entices her by giving a diamond necklace and sleeps with her. Mangal and Tapti live separated life because of her administrative job. Mangal is busy with the business and his sleeping with the village girls in the secret room behind the *dabha*. She develops love for the rising Himmat who in course of becomes the Chief Minister. Mangal's wants to take his brother's help in expanding his business. On his first visit, he is insulted by Sonal, his *bhabi* and it was not fruitful as he could not meet his brother. On the second time, he succeeds in meeting and having morning walk discussing his improvement in business and demand of monetary help for which he agrees. As the time passes, there is no hope of getting the promised assistance. He feels that he is humiliated and becomes revengeful towards Himmat. When Mangal checks the store of jewelry for pledging into the bank for loans, he discovers the diamond necklace and inquired his wife about its purchase. He threatens, abuses and beats her holding pistol to her chest, and suspecting her that some rich man like his elder brother gave it to her for something in return. Although she argues that nothing wrong with her and later she confirmed that it was given to her by Himmat. He prepares to kill his wife and himself for honour but changes his decision. He wants to kill his wife and spare his brother but he spares her, considering his daughters' future. At last he decides to kill his brother, Himmat, planning to throw the pistol first in the house-garden over the compound wall and then get into his lawn to attend the *Jan Sunawai* meeting.

The novel has the circular structure like, "snake having its tail in its mouth". The novel ends in Murder and begins with imprisonment of Mangal his brother- murderer in the Central Jail of Jaipur. The novel covers the spans of eighty years from 1930 to 2010. In the narrative the author takes us backwards and forwards and deep into the past of 1930- dealing with the childhood and boyhood of Virpal and Dhanpal, the father of Himmat Singh Giana. It is a long winding narrative of two generations. Gulabi, the wife of Dhanpal and Mithari, the wife of Virpal his brother suffer from the male domination. Virpal runs away from the village of Labanga, leaving his child wife behind. Mithari was a doubtful widow. She has to suffer as widow without knowing that her husband is alive or dead. But luckily her husband, Virpal is alive in a remote city, doing business and returns to the village and accepts his wife. Gulabi also suffers when Dhanpal joins the British Indian army and goes away to far off Africa to fight against the enemies of the British during the World War II.

It may be concluded that *Brothers* is a political novel that deals with the complexity of Indian politics and how the men suffer for their greed for money, wealth, power. It is one of the famous political novels in Indian English literature.

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2. Quoted by Trivedi, Harish, Ed. *The American Political Novel*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, from J. Blotner's *The Political Novel*. p.5.
3. Quoted by Trivedi, Harish from Irwing Howe's *Politics and the Novel*. p.6.