



MANJU KAPUR'S *BROTHERS* AS A FEMINISTIC NOVEL

Dr.Elinore Geetha Mala & Padmaja, S. V.

Professor, Dept of English, Sharnabasva Unviersity, Kalaburagi

Ph.D.,, Scholar Dept of English, Sharnbasva University, Kalaburagi

Abstract

Manju Kapur , belonging to the community of Jats and a rich family from Panjab, has emerged one of the major women novelists of India. She is a Diaspora writer , travelling from different countries. She has published six novelists on India inlcng the *Brothers*(2016). In almost all other novels she depicts the educated Indian women of middle-class struggle to emancipate themselves and enjoy greater freedom outside the family and attempts to free themselves from the clutches of husband and children; but they fail to do so. The protagonists are in a dilemma whether to surrender totally to the patriarchal setup or liberate themselves to have economic independence and self-reliance. However it is a binding for those female characters to hang on to the husband from the beginning of their married life to the end. Sp they suffer due to their own weaknesses and weakness of their husbands. *Brothers* (2016) narrates such a story of four women- Gulabi, Mithari, Tapti, Mrudula and Mansi who depend on each other for their joys and suffering . Inthis sense it is a feministic novel.

Keywords: Jats, Diaspora, emancipation, patriarchal set up, dilemma, , joys and suffering

Manju Kapur is one of the prominent Indian English woman novelists of the contemporary times. She becomes to the rich family of Jats in Punjab and she is married to Nidhi Dalmia and has children. Now she lives in USA. She has published six novels so far- *Difficult Daughters*,(1998) *A Married Woman*,(1999) *Home*,(2006) *Immigrant*, (2008) *Custody*,(2006) and *Brothers* (2016). She won the 1999 Commonwealth Writer's Prize and the First Best Book Europe and South Asia.

Her contribution 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. In this sense it is a feministic novel. She portrays the dynamics of human relationships and the emergence of New Women.”² Feministic novel is one that deals with “ economic independence and liberation from orthodox traditions of society.”³ In the traditional society women are always relegated to the secondary position and they are suppressed whoever educated and employed they are. In this novel, the female protagonists are- Gulabi, Mithari, Tapti, Mrudula and Manis. Mrudular and Mansi are the daughters of Tapti. In true sense of the term, Tapti is at the centre.

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.

The murder of Himmat Singh Giana, the elder brother of Mangal who is the CM of the Rajasthan. The murder being the “climax”, is not of a common man but of a Chief Minister, a political leaders as the murders of political leaders in our country has become unusual and rare phenomena. So it assumes importance on a grand scale as a ‘murder novel’ or a ‘thriller.” Mangal, the younger brother, kills Himmat Singh Giana, the CM, in the garden of his brother mansion on the occasion of some festivity. He shoots the CM in the Jan Sunawai programme with pre-plan (Brothers, 375) as he is heavily wounded and admitted to the hospital. sAfter two or three days he dies. The murderer, Mangal, is arrested by the police and put behind the bars as it is of grave importance.

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... 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- 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 Virups'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 was 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 (Brothers,3-5) and next he is shifted to the biggest Tihar Jail, (Brothers-41-43) 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 as the North and South Poles (Brothers,17) 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. Amar 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 (Brothers,108) 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 jewellery for pledging into the bank for loans, he discovers the diamond necklace and inquired his wife about it 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 ion the Central Jail of Jaipur. The novel covers the pans 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 Lalbanga, 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.

In conclusion it may be said that Tapti, the wife of Mangal, gets married when she was still student and beget two daughters. Afterwards she passed Civil Service Examination and becomes Government officer. In spite of her education and employment she suffers due to the misdeeds and rudeness of her less educated and aggressive husband, Mangal. So are Gulabi and Mithari. Men do not hear to the good advice to their wives; so they also suffer because of their obsession with profession, wealth and power “women empowerment, and suffering” She registers “her concern for women in this novel. She dwells upon the feministic issues ...female education and their empowerment, financial independence, eradication of child marriage,etc”⁴. . It may be concluded that *Brothers* is a feministic novel.

REFERENCES:

- 1 Kapur, Manju. *Brothers*. New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2016.
- 2 Srivastava, Shalini. Manju Kapur; A Critical Perspective. Chennai:Notion Press, 2018, p.vii
3. Simon De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*. Ed, &Trans, H.M. Parshley (1955) Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1986, p,126
- 4.Kumar, Ashok. Novels of Manuju Kapur: A Feministic Study. New delhi;Swaru book Publishers, Pvt. Limited, 2010, p.36.

