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Theme of Marriage in Manju Kapur's Novel: '*A Married Woman*'

Dr. Chandrakant R. Mandlik

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Abstract

Marriage is a significant event in the human life. There are different categories of marriage. They are arranged marriage, love cum arranged marriage, and love marriage. Manju Kapur's novel 'A Married Woman' is the best example of arranged marriage between Astha and Hemant.

Key Words- Marriage, arranged marriage, love-cum arranged, love marriage.

Introduction

One of the significant decisions in the human life is marriage which gives status to man and woman in the society. They are generally decided by the elders in the families. It is right of every individual being to make a choice of part and parcel of the life. There are many doubts and questions regarding marriage. They are how to choose a bride? or bridegroom? When to get marry? Where to marry? There are some compromises in the fixation of marriage. All things do not take place according to an individual's wish. The role of tradition, society, custom, and the elders in the family is very important as they are considered as decision makers.

Categories of Marriage:-

It is necessary to focus on different categories of marriage. They are arranged, love cum arranged love ranging from tradition to socially rebellious. All these marriages have limitations in the tradition and cultural bound society. The first category is arranged marriage in which all the things are decided by parents. They also impose their own views regarding selection of bride-groom. The relationship between husband and wife in such marriage is directed by the interfamily bond. Dowry in the arranged marriage is discussed and decided by the leading members of both the sides and is given to the bride as per the decision taken by both the parties.

The Indian authors discuss the issues regarding the arranged marriage in their novels. The examples of arranged marriage are '*Alterwards*' by Jayshree Mishra, '*Mistress*' by Anita Nair, Anita Nair's '*The Inheritance of Loss*'. Manju Kapur's novel '*Home*' is the best example of arranged marriages. The pairs are Sunita and Murli, Pyare Lal and Sushila, Rupa and Prem Nath. The marriage between Rupa and Prem Nath is an instance of happy and healthy arranged marriage.

Love marriage is another type of marriage in which a boy and a girl are involved. In this type of marriage they love each other and decide to marry. They do not need consent of either parents or elders in the family. The parents and elders expect their children marry within the caste and religion. They always want to observe old custom, tradition and moral laws. In this type of marriage the couple does not get support of parent because the role of parent is not taken into consideration directly or indirectly. Jim and Shyam in Shashi Deshpande's '*Moving On*', Mr. and Mrs. Mistry in '*Inheritance of Loss*' are the examples of love marriages.

The third category of marriage is love cum arranged marriage. In it a girl falls in love with a boy. In parents of both the girl and the boy do not object their decision regarding their life. They approve of each other. In this situation they permit their children for marriage. There is no sign of hesitation. The examples of this type of marriage are Shivani and Naren in '*Mila in Love*' by Dina Mehta, Baba and Mai, Gaytri and Rama Krishana, Balram Krishna and Kamala in '*Moving on*' by Shashi Deshpande and Yashpal and Sonu in '*Home*'. Love cum arranged marriage is generally preferred by educated women.

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The parents generally try to arrange marriage because of social traditions and conventions. They don't bother about their daughter's education or career. The parents give more importance to their traditional values. An arranged marriage is a part of their routine life. It is common in all communities. Women mostly agree arranged marriage. One may witness social binding of obeying the parents. This type of marriage is treated as an ideal marriage because it is decided by parents and relatives. The girl and the boy get support in such marriage. The educated girl is given a choice to choose a partner.

Family system in India:

Family system in India is mainly focused, in which joint family and nuclear family are the two types. In the joint family system head of the family and elders are concerned with all decisions. They are respected by the younger's through obeying their thoughts and responding their action. The role of daughter-in-law is always subordinate who works under the supervision of mother-in-law. She has to please, respect and take care of all the members in the joint family. The wife in joint family moves in with her husband and husband and wife live independently with their children in nuclear family. In the present time nuclear family system is mostly preferred by the

women because they are free from all old restrictions. Instead of sparing lot of time for domestic roles they think of career. They can enjoy freedom in all corners of life. Sona, Yashpal's wife in the novel '*Home*' is the best example of joint family system. Sona, Yashpal's wife attempts to keep her mother-in-law happy. She does not like Sona because the marriage was not arranged.

Arranged Marriage in Manju Kapur's '*A Married Woman*'

'*A Married Woman*' (2002) by Manju Kapur describes arranged marriage between Astha and Hemant. Arranged marriage is a natural activity. Astha, a girl is married at the age, 22. Arranged marriage is a tradition in the Indian family system. It is called long lasting marriage. Everything in such marriage goes very smoothly according to tradition and the custom. The wife has to behave as per moral laws of the society. She does not dare to violate moral laws of the society and the family rules. Even though Astha loves Rohan in her college life she has to marry Hemant through the system of marriage. Hemant is foreign returned man still thinks marriage as a holy and spiritual deed. He marries Astha after coming back to India from United States of America. He wants to marry Indian girl because there are many reasons. He has seen different types of relationships in America such as pre-marital, extra-marital, homosexual and lesbian. He strongly views that Indian women do not think of these relationships. Therefore Hemant decides not to marry American girl but an Indian. Indian women are adjustable. They do not question like American women. He wants to impose his superiority on his wife. It is only possible if he marries Indian woman.

Hemant looks after Astha very well. But she does not forget her boy friend Rohan with whom she spent time. Before deciding a marriage parents must ask daughters about their love relationship. They arrange the marriage finding that their daughter free from any kind of emotional relationship. Otherwise both the girl and the boy feel unhappy during their wedded life. In arranged marriage the woman wears a dress that her husband likes we find certain dress code. Hemant forces his thoughts on her about wearing dress that he likes. Astha has her own likings about wearing dress. Hemant has influence of sexual manuals of dress so he wishes his wife to look sexy.

In the old days women obliged desires of husband and tried to satisfy their wishes. They learnt etiquettes and manners through tradition and custom. In the modern and post-modern time women are educated. They are conscious of the developments and progress. They also have started thinking about their self-respect. They do not feel need to behave or act on the words of husband. Astha is M.A. She is inspired by her husband to develop her knowledge in painting because he has remarkable talent in painting. When Hemant begins

manufacturing black and white television in partnership with his sister he cannot spare more time for his wife and little daughter Anuradha. Astha's mother-in-law suggest her to find a teaching profession for her. But she does not show any interest in doing the job. We underline how and what way a role of the

Mother in law in Indian families is imposing. Without saying a single word Hemant supports his mother. There is one more issue for the conflict between Hemant and Astha and that is his business of construction with sister. He also has begun Television Company which does not allow him to spare time for family happiness. It leads to communication gap between them. Hemant was unhappy and not affectionate towards his family because his wife Astha delivered a girl. But very soon the situation changes. Atmosphere in the family is enjoying pleasure because Astha delivered second time and they have male baby who is named as Himanshu. The novelist Manju Kapur reflects Indian attitude of father in the Indian society through the character of Hemant.

Traditional Indian family is reflected through the characters in the novel '*The Married Woman*'. It is by tradition believed that a male baby is the 'Lamp of the heir'. Therefore baby girl is hated right from her birth. The family members in the family arrange programmes to worship God for the arrival of a baby-boy. Robert S. Gnanamony expresses his views on the Indian attitude and ritual rights: Manju Kapur gently digs at the Indian attitude of preferring a baby-boy to a baby-girl in the novel. When her daughter Anuradha was four, Astha conceived again. Her mother brought in a poojari to perform a special to propitiate the gods to Grant them a boy for Astha. (Robert, 2005:107)

Indian fathers are care takers of their children. They love their children. Like typical Indian father Hemant tells his wife to look after baby in a good way. According to him it is responsibility of mother and not father to take care of the baby. After the arrival of the baby Himanshu there is change in the Hemant's attitude. Astha suffers from headache due to stress on the mind. Hemant insists her for giving a job. But she does not like to give her job. Astha does not want to stay at home without doing anything. So she is not agree with her husband's opinion. Astha is very much interested in teaching but she does not think it as final career. She also likes painting. She earns handsome money from selling her paintings in the exhibitions.

Conclusion

Marriage is one of the important stages in the life of human being as there are different seasons in the nature. Everybody has to go through this stage of marriage. Without marriage there is no perfection in human life. It is one of the causes to continue generations and human race.

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