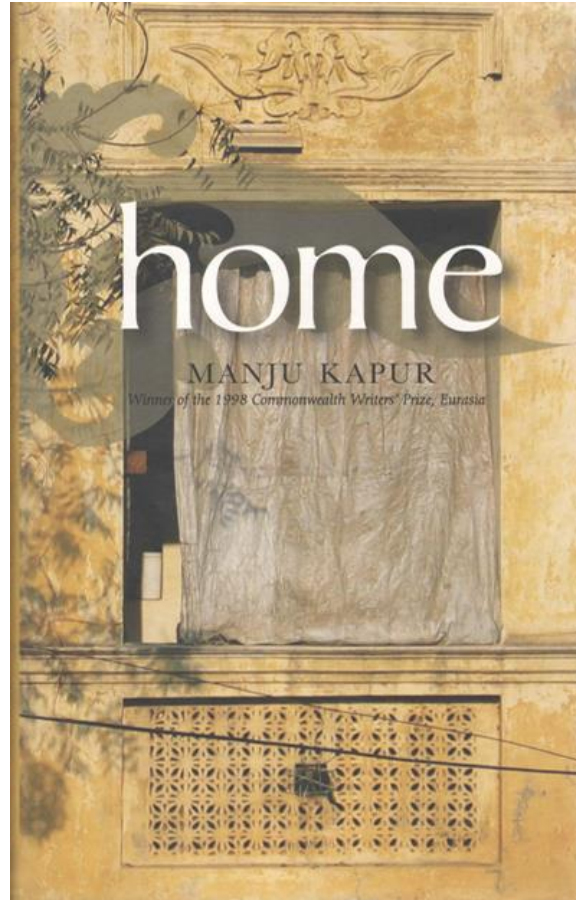


**Delineation of Nisha as a Dynamic Entrepreneur in  
Manju Kapur's Novel *Home***

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**Abstract**

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been defined as the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which typically begins as a small business, such as a startup company, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire, and the people who do so are called 'entrepreneurs'. Women entrepreneur can be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organise and run a business enterprise. Manju Kapur, an Indian female author has also portrayed the emergence of a strong and successful female entrepreneur, Nisha who exalts

herself as a 'new woman' through her finely established business in the field of fashion designing. She presents herself as an antagonist who fights against the age old tradition of patriarchal ideologies and tries to implement the concept of female empowerment.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, andro-centric, woman entrepreneur

## **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been defined as the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which typically begins as a small business, such as a startup company, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire, and the people who do so are called 'entrepreneurs'. Women entrepreneurs can be defined as a woman or group of women who initiate, organise and run a business enterprise. Manju Kapur, an Indian female author, has also portrayed the emergence of a strong and successful female entrepreneur, Nisha who exalts herself as a 'new woman' through her finely established business in the field of fashion designing. She presents herself as an antagonist who fights against the age-old tradition of patriarchal ideologies and tries to implement the concept of female empowerment.

## **Manju Kapur**

Manju Kapur, one among the Indian prominent writers who speaks for the middle-class women has published five novels *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009) and *Custody* (2011). She had been acknowledged by The Commonwealth Writer's Prize for her debut novel. She chose the aspects and prospects of feminine life in a male-dominated society.

## **Kapur's Third Novel *Home***

Kapur's third novel *Home* takes us through a brisk and strangely captivating account of three generations of Banwari Lal's family. In an interview Kapur accounts that: "Literature by women, about families, always has these larger considerations, with years of studying texts, it becomes almost second nature to look beneath the surface at social and economic forces, gender relationships and how they are played out in an arena that in my writing happens to be the home. But then, all sort of things happening outside do affect what is happening inside the home."

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## **Lala Banwari Lal and His Family – Patriarchy Norms**

The novel revolves around the family members of Lala Banwari Lal, a patriarch who has faith in living in a joint family. He is the head of the family and runs a sari shop in Karol Bagh assisted by his two sons, Yashpal and Pyarelal. As the story unfolds, Nisha the daughter of Yashpal and Sona emerges as a self-dependent empowered woman entrepreneur in the novel.

Banwari Lal's family is rooted in traditional and patriarchal norms. They practice the pattern of men working out of the house and women within. But the new woman Nisha refuses to reconcile with the patriarchal and male dominated family structure and tries to make her own individual identity. She leads a suffocating childhood where she is never permitted to go outside and play with her brothers. She is provided with nice dresses and everything else yet, unfortunately her outfits did not match her inclinations, "I want to play in the park," she whined periodically." (53)

## **Vicky's Sexual Abuse of Nisha**

The nightmarish episode of Vicky's sexual abuse of Nisha leads to a turning point in her life. The psychologically and mentally affected Nisha is sent to her aunt Rupa's house and there she enjoys the complete care and attention of Rupa and her husband Prem Nath. As a contrast to the traditional approach towards girl's education, Rupa and Prem Nath promote Nisha to excel in her studies. Nisha is highly influenced by the thoughts of Rupa and starts to deviate from the paradigm. "There is always time to learn cooking, but only one time to study."(125)

Nisha's stay with Rupa modifies her mind according to the ways of her uncle and aunt. She gets highly influenced by Rupa, who runs a pickle business and wants to lead a life like her. Sona fails to accept the change in her daughter and tries to reorient her towards the traditional pattern of their family. "We are traditional people. Tradition is strong with us. So is duty."(123).

## **Disturbing Home Truths**

Through the novel *Home*, Kapur tries to plot some disturbing home truths that still exist in our society. She reveals in an interview that, “I teach in an all-girls college and *Home* was first conceived in response to the home situations of some of my students who came from conservative backgrounds.”

The thoughts of emancipation strongly stuck on Nisha when her three years long love affair with Suresh gets destructed. The end of the affair was an end of her love and hopes. Nisha starts her journey towards empowerment and she wishes to do something valuable in her life. She desires to study fashion designing and to be economically independent. It is her first attempt towards empowerment that is obviously opposed by her traditionally rooted mother.

She pleads to her father, “If only you could take me with you, Papaji,” she carries on, “I have seen girls working in shops. Why should it be Ajay, Vijay and Raju? There must be something I too can do.” (268). This reveals her deeper quest for independent existence and selfhood. In her mind, she denies the patriarchal system and considers herself equal as her brothers. Considering her request, her father permits her to join a play way school near her home instead of going to the shop and attending the customers. Frustrated with the sort of job, within no time she quits it. Through this Kapur needs to highlight the struggle faced by a woman to adopt the profession of her own choices. she reveals that it is not easy for a woman to chose the profession of her own choice. In order to achieve her mission, she needs to struggle a lot and cross over the tradition bound restrictions and laws erected by the society.

### **Nisha’s Creations**

Pertaining to the realities of life, Kapur presents the changes in the moral foundations of the Banwari Lal’s family. Nisha reluctant to dance to the tunes of conventions and wishes to live a carefree life. She commences her own business with the support of her father, a boutique, named ‘Nisha’s Creations.’ This increases her confidence for now “Her father trusted her as he would have trusted a son.” (291)

Nisha borrows money from her father and makes all arrangements for her business like hiring the tailors on monthly pay and collecting the material from her father’s shop. Nisha’s

customers like her suits and dresses thus paves way for heavy orders and she becomes a successful and acknowledged 'business woman'. In her field, she proves to be a responsible working business woman. Within a short period of time, she returns half the money of loan to her father. She keenly invigilates her workers and in an exuberant manner ensures the smooth functioning of her enterprise. She fails to accept any negligence in her work. "My reputation will be spoiled. Do you know how competitive the market is?" (294)

### **Marriage for Nisha**

Even when Nisha successfully exerts her identity through her entrepreneurship, her family wants her to be settled in a traditional pattern of family. They manage to arrange a marriage for Nisha with Arwind, a widower. As Clara Nublie comments: "Being a woman in modern India means to be entrapped into the inescapable cage of, 'being woman-wife-mother.'" (Clara 12)

Manju Kapur's third novel *Home* too projects the theme of female subjugation and emancipation. Most of the female protagonists of the Indian novels are mostly educated aspiring individuals caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking for which family and society become intolerant of them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with family and society, through which they plunge into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women with faultless backgrounds.

### **Other Women Characters**

The novel *Home* depicts the life of many women characters mainly focusing on the life of Nisha and her mother Sona who is an ordinary girl, married into a prosperous Banwari Lal family. Her mother-in-law treats her with contempt for having bewitched her son by her good looks and forced him into marriage. Later only after ten years when she gives birth to Nisha and then to Raju, she attains a respectful position in the Banwari Lal family. Ironically in the later section of the story we come across this same Sona, who has borne suppression, contempt and fought the fierce battle for equality treating her daughter Nisha inferior to her son Raju. But Nisha questions and argues for her equality along with the boys.

This sort of discrimination is seen throughout the novel. Sona feels that a girl has no right to choose her place of happiness. She states, “What is there in happiness? A girl has to be happy everywhere.” (Home 135)

Nisha is criticised for her zeal to take up higher educational also, her mother says: “This is the life of a woman to look after her home, her husband, her children, and give them food she has cooked with her own hands” (Home 140).

### **Battle for Education**

At the end, Nisha succeeds at last in her battle for education. Her family consents to her desire thinking, “Higher studies were just a time pass; it was not as though she was going to use her education. Working was art of question, and marriage was around the corners”. (Home 142)

Nisha finds her college life adventurous, making her modern and bold in her decisions. She begins to act independently and react to her rigorous upbringing at home. She needs to negate everything her mother stood for. Her initial step was to cut her long hair that her mother treasured as indispensable for womanhood.

“To encourage her rebellion she thought of the girls in her class, girls with swishing open hair, wavy, curly blow-dried, or hanging straight framing faces with fringes, flicks or stray tendrils she thought of her own, in the thick, rubber banded plait, never falling free, ugly, unimaginative.” (Home 147)

### **Delay in Getting a Spouse – A New Emancipated Woman**

Meanwhile Nisha fails in her affair with Suresh and the bad reputation of being ‘Mangli’ further delayed her marriage. The arrival of the rich, educated sister-in-law Pooja intensifies for misery.

In order to escape the turmoil, she thinks about other opportunities and it leads to a strong motivation within her. She does not want to escape or turn back; instead she wants to face the odds

in her life. She needs to analyze her strengths and ideas wish to fuse them with her father's influence.

As a new emancipated woman, she decided to start a business in readymade garments. She boldly discloses her plan to become a business woman to her orthodox family, and even manages to get a loan from her father.

“She wants to be better than Pooja. She would not only be the daughter of a prosperous man, but be responsible for wealth herself. After all, her father's blood flowed in her, the blood of traders” (*Home* 287).

The establishment of Nisha as a new entrepreneur was something unheard of in a joint family set up where women stayed at home while the men were the only bread winners.

Nisha's father trusted her completely and visualised an emerging business woman in her whereas, her mother was little bit disturbed with her daughter's new turn. Nisha proves her mother wrong and become a successful business woman with several workers under her and her 'Nisha Creations' being sold in all the leading stores of Delhi.

### **Independence in Matrimony**

Nisha claims her independence in matrimony also; she wishes to marry a person who allows her to continue with her business. According to her wish, she gets married to a thirty-four-year old Manglik widower, Arvind, who also consents with the proceedings of her business. Nisha is much alert about her business and future identity even after marriage. Even after her pregnancy too, she carried on with her establishment. She bears the four-fold responsibilities of being a wife, daughter-in-law, mother and business-women.

The complications and the post-pregnancy period make Nisha to move away from her business field. She hands over her establishment to her sister-in-law. Pooja with an intention to strengthen it one day.

Thus, Kapur presents Nisha as the 'New woman' who stands out as a woman entrepreneur of determination to break free from the shackles of male domination and patriarchy. She searches for her own identity, for selfhood, to understand her own self in order to have a more authentic life than the one she experienced. At last she realises that happiness is in being and sharing herself with everyone.

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