

Significance of Being a Member of Society and Abating Self

Abstract

This research paper spotlights the involvement of a person in a society and their alliance rather than being confined to himself in this isolated galaxy of humans. It is society that gives us an identity, acknowledgement and impart us a bright future ahead. Both the individual and the society are interconnected to each other, the dependency of an individual on society, expectations, exigencies as well as the attitude fluctuates according to the changing circumstances. The anxiety, the chaos and the fear, individuals face due to the amalgamation of alienation and depression fostered due to segregation from society. Thus, this paper examines the relationship between self and belonging in social settings as well as the factors that may affect this relationship and human psyche. After all united we stand, divided we fall.

Keywords: Alliance, Chaos, Fostered, Segregation, Alienation, Human Psyche.

Introduction

According to a survey it has been found that living in nuclear families detached from society somewhat proves unfavourable. It outcomes the healthy human psyche to terminate into suffocation in relations, emergence of unhealthy mind and soul. As a matter of fact we are gradually depriving ourselves from the inherited values of our ancestors. Not only in Britain where about 75% people lead life of loneliness, in India too, 50 lakh people are isolated. They are trapped into the cage of depression and alienation not only of the external surrounding but too of internal trauma. Here reference has been taken from Manju Kapur's novel 'Custody'. Kapur touches every dimension of psyche of Shagun and Ishita acutely.

Aim of the Study

The following research paper aims to unveil the neglected advantages of being a member of society and to be with the people actually and not virtually. It is important to know how necessary it is to be connected with the society instead of staying alone without any social support. Yes once it provides solace but in long term a family, its members, relatives and the friends forms a society. Through the reference of popular novel 'Custody' Manju Kapur successfully grooms her idea of discovering new dimensions which define each characters personality uniquely as well as compositely. Though its theme basically deals with the broken marriages and custody of the children still somewhere or the other it reflects the Kapur's ability to bloom every aspect of society in unique way.

Humans are always in social relationships from the moment they are born and they remain part of a network of other people throughout their lives. Burkitt¹

People are supposed to be involved in society and to be the part and parcel of it. Though identity of a person is as crucial to a person as air to a being. Self - Identity moulds the personality of a man, it makes him realize the strength and courage he has to stand in this rat race of the world and differentiate himself among the commons. Basically, we humans are born in a type of social setting where people interact to each other in one or the other way. Thus, we represent society and society represents us.

As Burkett eloquently put it -

"Not only do people in the western world feel separated from others with whom they live and who make up this society, they also feel divided within themselves, riven between themselves they present in relations with others and the individuals they feel themselves to be deep down inside." ²

Thus, selfhood proves to be beneficial until it leads to isolation or alienation. Which is one of the major issue of 21st century world. Alienation is the result of loss of identity.

Kapur's novel proves nothing else but the flaw which is found in one of the major characters of the novel 'Shagun', she the most energetic wanted more and more dignity.



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She after leading a happily married life so far with Raman and their two kids, she decides that she is bored of being just a house wife and now wants to start working. The twist begins with the entry of Raman's bold boss Ashok.

Manju Kapur with the characters in her novels shows that woman now has become a crucial component in the social organization and whose quiddity cannot be neglected. Here we found Shagun's dilemma of being self-constructive or self-destructive in order to surrender to the social conventional traditions. When she decided to follow her passion and the man she loved, Ashok, with whom she had extra-marital affair, society never accepts this and she was considered as malicious content, but her annotations were different. On the other hand her mother requests Shagun that not to disgrace her family by this act. Of course one has a right on his/her life or to take decisions as they want still it is required to maintain the dignity of society means the family we live in.

So custody novel scans the real picture of the society in which the imaginary actors signifies the real life actors who face adverse situations of life in a courageous way. Because we ourselves are the foundations of the society and implementers. It all depends on us how we cherish, formulate and transform our life, so the fruit comes out with flying colours. I would like to emphasize on the significance of being a member of society. In today's technical world all human beings want to fulfill their materialistic desires, they seldom think to fulfill the inner and spiritual desires. Rationally my motive is to clarify the difference between the unity and isolation. Which requires emotional faith and trust on our surroundings, people we live with and the energy we consume in moulding our own individual identity. Yes of course personal status and identity is as much important to show once presence and prove oneself. But as we come across the character named Shagun who chooses to be free and devoid herself of the benefits of having a good family members and fails to respect her beautiful relations of being a wife, mother, daughter-in-law as well as a daughter of an expectant mother, who all loved her, focused her attention on her and expected nothing just a gesture to show them what did they really meant to her. Towards all of them she had a responsibility if she has decided to settle in a marital relation.

On a whole a family and relatives represents society in which every individual dwells and prospers. But Shagun is of different nature she keeps herself, her so called 'selfhood and selfishness' on top which I don't think so proved beneficial to anyone. Because this state transforms into stress, alienation that may be social or personal and finally leads to depression. As seen in many countries not only in older generations but also in younger which is really alarming.

Manju Kapur who is great in dealing with the characters of explorative and adventurous characters in her compositions which reflects the image as clear as from a mirror of a society. She captures her own fantasies and take them to another level with acute preciseness which make her characters appear real and performing not just virtually through letters in a printed book but an original outlook it provides. In my point of view Shagun who had everything to proud on, she still wanted her own happiness over others, so she left her well settled family with the man who never understood the importance of family as he himself was successful professionally but not personally. So the same he taught Shagun. On the other hand a girl Ishita quite sympathetic and supportive as well as reverend elders and relations, faced disrespect by her in-laws, because here they failed to understand her state of body and mind. As she could never conceive she struggled a lot, taunting behavior of in-laws and ignorance of husband and the treatments she had to bear for positive results. But nothing seemed to be in

her favour, she started doing social works and spend her crucial time with the orphan children. She had a really big heart who could love other children so truly whereas Shagun disappoints her own kids and husband by leaving them. Ishita not being the biological mother of Roohi nurtures her, and got successful in winning the hearts of family of Raman. (Custody)³

Therefore, there is a world of difference between the two citizens of society named Ishita and Shagun. Ishita obviously a character whom everyone admires and relate with as she knows the vitality of a family, being a member of a family that forms a society, feelings of the family members. But Shagun proved emotionless and selfish, leaving behind duties she picks up the fame, money and a man whom she loved rather than her husband. It becomes much important when considered in the context of India where a lady is supposed to be loyal to her family, respected when she respects her relatives and relations. Because only money and fame which she acquired has no value and significance when related in the social context. She is a mere failure to choose that path, which separated the siblings with each other, father with a son and a daughter with a mother. Divorce and then the fight for the custody of children continued for time and resulted in traumas, isolation and alienation due to their own formed boundaries and foundations. As it is quoted by David Ogden Stiers "Family means no one gets left behind or forgotten."⁴

Manju Kapur in the novel discovers the nature in satirical manner, novel is impressive in its skills and heart-rending in its honesty. Kapur mainly focuses on the broken relations of marriage, detachment with the children, pitiless behavior towards woman due to her being infertile. Thus, the real value of a family in a society is there with the trust and mutual understandings among the family members. As when experienced it is noticed that a person is quite happy and listened if he/she is a loyal and active member of society not just mere masks with selfish motives, which results in continuous traumas and broken relationships. Because the basic consequence that adversely affects an isolated man is the further depression a man suffers from due to his/her blunders. By "Society" Whitehead simply meant "a Nexus with a social order" where common elements of form are prehend by each other.⁵

So, according to my point of view if we consider the assertion, Selfhood versus membership of a society, it's always an advantage to be a part of society. As Kimball young writes, "Socialization will mean the process of inducting the individual into the social and cultural world, of making him a particular member in society and its various groups and inducting him to accept the norms and values of that society. Socialization is definitely a matter of learning and not of biological inheritance".⁶

Conclusion

Thus, I would like to conclude with the lines- So powerful is the light of unity that can illuminate the whole earth.

Endnotes

1. *Burkitt, I. (1990) Social Selves. Theories of the Social formation of personalities, London: sage 225 pages. Interdisciplinary overview of theories of the social formation of personality.*
2. *Burkitt, I. (2014). Emotions and Social relations. London: Sage.*
3. *Kapur Manju. Custody. New Delhi: Random House India, 2011.*
4. "David Ogden Stiers Quotes". *BrainyQuote.com. BrainyMedia Inc, 2019. 1 July 2019.*
5. *Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (1929; rpt; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), 4.*
6. *Kimball Young, Social Psychology (New York F. S. Crofts & Co., 1930).*