iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 9 **Issue:** VI **Month of publication:** June 2021

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2021.35157

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.429
Volume 9 Issue VI Jun 2021- Available at www.ijraset.com

Thematic Voyage, Images and Symbols; Household Disagreement and Post-Colonial Situation in Upamanayu Chatterjee's The Last Burden

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Abstract: ***Upamanayu Chatterjee is born in 1959 at Patna, Bihar. He is one of the original brilliant Indian writers of the modern generation. He is a commanding emergent voice in Indian postcolonial creative writing. He has written a handful of short stories and fictions. His English, August: An Indian story was first published in 1988 and reprinted in 2006. This is one of the significant urban Indian coming-of-age novel. His other novels include The Last Burden (1994), The Mammaries of the Welfare State (2000)- a sequel to The English August, Weight Loss (2006) , and Way to Go (2010)-a sequel to The Last Burden.***
Keywords: Burden, middle class family, portrays, patriarchy, emotions

I. INTRODUCTION

The Last Burden is a depiction of life in an Indian middle-class family by the author. In the novel, he portrays the lives of diverse people constituting a combined family, superbly picturing their emotions, requirements, wishes and frustrations. The novel portrays the economic, societal and emotional issues that make people support a nuclear family in difference to a joint family. The novelist employs somewhat sturdy language but absolutely makes the readers aware of the real frictions that exist within the joint family construction. It stylishly portrays the decisions and sacrifices made by dissimilar people in a family and the frictions and the disappointments thereby. It also portrays the fight of the newer age group in order to move into a nuclear family structure from a exactingly hierarchical joint relatives structure where even the elders have an even more elderly person who speak the terms, having two fold construction of patriarchy of the Indian civilization, of the State and family. The novel tells about Jamun, a work less young gentleman and his old father, Shyamanand, his dying mother Urmila. The novel begins at the death bed of Urmila and takes us throughout the story of this middle-class family. The emotions and significance bind the readers to the story and keep him occupied till he is through it.

The story is telling the slow series of events that follow Urmila's heart attack and Jamun's voyage to his house to see his mother on deathbed. The recitation goes back into Jamun's childhood reminiscences, tracing the pathway that has brought the family its current condition. The novel beginss with Jamun preparing to go home after hear that his mother has had a heart attack and ends with Urmila's death and Shyamnand's decision to reside with Jamun most probably as the latter's "last burden." The novel tells Jamun's recollections of a usual derisiveness and Urmila's weary criess filtered though the English verbal communication and the world of "hamburgers and levis, blues and heavy metals." It paints the world full of nonfigurative existential darkness. Jamun's family which is constituted by the dreadful tensions of the culture creates the atmosphere of bleakness.

The utilization and miserliness of the exterior world become entangled with the demands and resentments of the household life here. And the associations that stretches but never breaks in the relations. It is a archetypal Indian family unit where Urmila and her husband, Shyamnand, share small in common, but they continue to live rival bitter by to their sons' loyalty. The great contract of action of novel revolves around the understanding of the family members, their common exchanges and Shyamnand's intensely felt fury at the vicious power that is institutionally invested on him as the family head of Urmila from her early days had witness the influential role of the patriarch in her father's ancestors. As a kid she had watched her father beat her much-loved brother Belu because he uttered his desire to marry outside his caste. Unable to bear the disgrace Belu had swallowed rat poison but opposite to survive.

As the novelist's innermost subject is the family connections among its members their daily discussion includes the novel in to the sphere of the sensible novel. Urmila's infirmity brings the family together. Her piles erupted into rectal tumour and Jamun in order to execute his familial obligations takes leave of his civil provision job and goes to his house and is grateful to hang around. In the resulting months his mother undergoes heart surgery, recovers, relapses and ultimately dies. Thus the novel depicts growing up years of Jamun and Urmila's 'disastrous marriage'. Although Jamun, like the hero of the conventional bildungsroman, grows from

boyhood to adulthood, in fact this method of ripeness turns out to be deceptive at the end of the novel. The Last Burden presents Jamun's effort and the unique relationships within an Indian family.

The scheme of the novel is simple one, two pettifogging govt. servants who have an miserable marriage, two sons and two impertinent grandsons and a house their own and after Urmila's death the head of the joint family and Shyamnand sells it after the death of Urmila his wife and decides to live with his son Jamun who is more thoughtful than Burfi his another son. The 'burden' of love, custody and ties is the most marked in the correlation between Shyamanand and Urmila. Even 40 years of married life, they have not been able to ascertain and evocative relationship and live in a vicious atmosphere of bickering, squabbling and accusations. In Shyamnand and Urmila we find typical case of a husband and wife falling out but not untying. The novelist vivifies the acidic relationship through different images and Jamun's pity would oscillate between Urmilas wrinkled face and Shyamhand's uneven stillness. Urmila is harrowed by her shattering marriage. It is only when Urmila suffers a stoke and lies fading in the hospital at last Shyamnand shows some anxiety and Burfi loves her only when she is not present and dying. The solitude of Shyamnand after his withdrawal affects his health, he develops companionship with his fellow citizen, Chandrakant Mohanty. Shyamnand's paralytic stroke fills Urmila with horror. The family splinters with Urmilas passing away and Shyamnand feels that he is deserted by his sons.

The novelist depicts the cruel and tragic nature of monetary tensions and emotional burden is nowhere most equipment than in the association between the parents and the two sons and the elder's sons' wife. Expatriate from Calcutta, their enriching roots, Burfi and Jamun, have grown up into westernized rootless individuals. And because of bicultural ethos each member of the family in his own way unable towards form lasting relationships and they fail to classify themselves in terms of their culture and religion also. Both the brothers wait excitedly for the death of at least one of the parents amid a critical atmosphere of internal strife, bickering and accusations. The novelist shows the absurdity between the two generations parents and sons. Jamun goes one step in front during the five days which Urmila has depleted in the ICU. Jamun hasn't visited the Nursing Home even once and she justifies her exploit saying that, she is not a fraud to move up and down about her mother-in-law's bed looking pathetic, while speculating every second when it is okay to move smoothly away. After their mother's death Burfi and Jamun contribute in the rituals but their hesitant attitude about these superstitions is obvious.

II. IMAGES AND SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL

The novel is scattered with examples of conscious writing and is overburdened with imagery and symbols. The novelist believes that he must use images in every line but since he is determined for effect the images have a sticky affect on us. For example the depiction of Mrs.Jeremiah nuns as she bawls and struts up to him, udders and hams jouncing like ill congealed pudding. The woman ophthalmologist has been described with her ". . . Bull lips that will not bestride her teeth . . . (p.23) the palms tassel the our pert like enthralled women votanes with hauneh length hair (p.35) The dialogues in the novel seem fantastic and overformal the free flow of the dialogues gets impeded by the addition of difficult words. He has consciously used some proper names with associative reverberations Shyamnand, Joyee (ironical), Kasturi, Jamun. Even though the novel is overburdened with imagery, it has three effective symbols one is 'Aya's passing away' which becomes the symbol of the death of closeness in the family, the other is 'the maroon cinema hall' which becomes the objective correlative of the protagonist's essential loneliness in the family torn apart by conflict dissension. There is of course the cactus plant which has to be clopped off to be replanted in the new house, suggesting the essential root- lessness of the characters.

III. FAMILIAL DISAGREEMENT

The novel presents malicious familial discord. All the characters in the novel are totally impulsive and their random conduct towards their kins creates tensions in the relations. He tries to depict social principles which are present in usual joint family structures and are rare things in modern times. Self interest has been becoming the major motif of the younger age group. Carelessness and ungratefulness to the elders has become the fashion. The novel depicts the disagreement and clashes of the three generations of middle group Indian family of the 20th century. The novelist depicts the weight of family ties. The destructive relationship between the father and mother, between the mother and the two sons, between the father and the sons and elder son's wife and finally between the elder son and his wife. It is a family unit that is peopled with human beings deeply inconsolable distrustful and missing in warmth. Shyamnand and Urmila have not been able to establish a meaningful relationship even after their forth years belligerent life. Their marriage is not joyful. The novelist depicts the mordant relationship of husband and wife through two significant imagery. One is image of Urmila's pulped face and other is an image of home as their miniature bedraggled garden. The burden of love and possession is obvious in the relationships of the family members. The novelist presents the nasty association of Shyamnand with his wife. Once Shyamnand mistook his wife for one Shireen Raizada of his office and by that phase of their wedding, husband and wife has beyond their sexual life and bedded down in divide rooms.

IV. POST-COLONIAL STATE OF AFFAIRS

The novel can be analyzed from the postcolonial viewpoint. It presents the hybridization of civilization and language on the well-built scale. We find the novelist trialling with the language. He uses Bengali, Hindi and Marathi words which are the result of post colonial development in India. The experimentation with language is one of the attempts to produce Indianness and genuineness of work. On thematic stage family of Shyamnand is at the centre of the novel. It represents the typical middle class family in India after Independence. The socio-cultural and trade and industry factors have changed the customary joint family structure of the family creating so many exertions for the persons.

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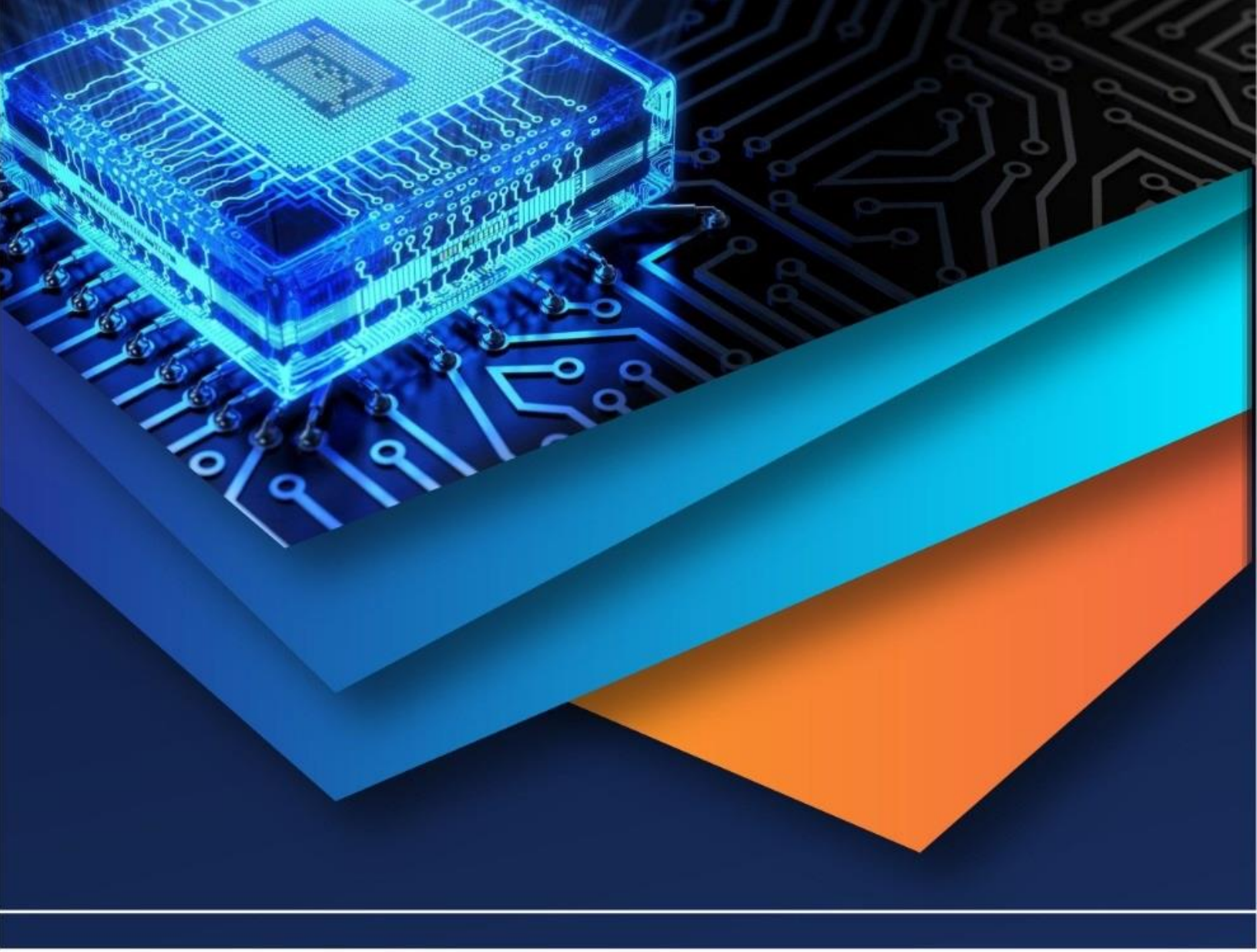

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