



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## REVELATION OF FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP IN UPAMANYU CHATTERJEE'S "THE LAST BURDEN".

Mrs.v.sangeetha ma<sup>1</sup>, mrs.s.selvapriya m.a<sup>2</sup>,

1. B.ed., m.phil, assistant professor, department of english, nadar saraswathi college of arts and science, theni.
2. M.phil, pgdca, (ph.d.), assistant professor, department of english, nadar saraswathi college of arts and science, theni.

**Manuscript Info****Manuscript History:**

Received: 18 January 2016  
Final Accepted: 26 February 2016  
Published Online: March 2016

**Key words:****\*Corresponding Author****Mrs.v.sangeetha ma.****Abstract**

India is a museum of languages and literatures and Indian Writing is an experience of its people, their culture, tradition, and the way they lead their life. The distinct quality of this Literature rests on multi – lingual, multi – cultural and multi – racial. The intercourse of Indian Literature with other Indian languages and dialects enriches the true essence of the treasure of fiction immensely and as the same, western cultures, Literatures, traditions, and aesthetics are also placing their position to withstand the role of fiction. Upamanyu Chatterjee is a great voice in Indian Postcolonial Literature. His novels always try to dig the truth of society in this way or the other. His second novel, "The Last Burden" (1993) recreates life in an Indian middle class family at the end of the Twentieth Century and through which the writer probes the relationship of father and son, husband and wife under the rays of modernity. He has tried to represent the modern world with different eye where growth and progress runs parallel with death, decay and alienations of one own self. It also illustrates the struggle of the newer generations in order to move into a nuclear family structure from a strictly hierarchical joint family structure where the elders have an even more elderly person who dedicates the terms, having two fold structure of patriarchy of the Indian society, the State and family. This paper tries to elucidate the destructive relationship between father and mother, between the mother and her two sons, between the father and his two sons, and the elder son's wife and finally, between the elder son and his wife, pointing unmistakably to the existence of a family that is pitted against itself.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2016., All rights reserved.

**Introduction:-**

"The Last Burden" is a brilliant depiction of life in an Indian middle class family at the end of the Twentieth Century. One of the great themes pervading Indian life is social interdependence. People are born into groups: families, clans, castes, sub-castes, and religious communities – and live with a constant sense of being part of these groups. All social interaction involves constant attention to hierarchy, respect, honor, the feelings of others, rights and obligations, hospitality, and gifts of food, clothing, and other desirable items. Finely tuned etiquette help facilitate each individual's many social relationship. The novel opens at the death bed of Urmila and the story is narrated through Jamun, a workless bachelor, the son of Urmila and Shyamanand. His elder brother Burfi, has married to a Christian girl Joyce and has two children Pista and Doom. Shyamanand and Urmila had a love marriage and it seems that it was not approved by their parents. They were refugees, grew up in poverty and without roots.

They were Government employees. Throughout the novel, Shyamanand's behavior remains deplorable whereas Urmila, as a wife and as a mother is cared for by her sons to a certain extent. They manage to construct and share a house built on their 'Own clod of earth' (87). As soon as they leave the Government flat and shift into their own

house in a colony near the sea, their elder son moves out to a job. And soon gets into matrimony. Shyamanand always had differences with Urmila which escalated to such an extent that a minor topic could also take a mammoth proportion. There were many instances when Shyamanand could barely be civil to his wife. He was rude, passed snide and caustic comments at his wife. Throughout the novel, *The Last Burden*, Urmila tries to shield her sons from their father as mother's natural tendency. Whether it was to take Jamun to the ophthalmologist to get his eyesight checked and then trudge to get his glasses or wait for Burfi and then later on for Jamun to return in early or late hours from their university, all the time wondering about the company they moved in. Urmila's concern for the welfare and well-being of her sons incensed not only the sons but their father also.

Family disorganization is a condition of a family characterized by the breakdown of the harmonious relations and co-operation among the members, or breakdown of social control, or unity and discipline. A state of disorganization in the family also exists when there is role of conflict among the set of members, such as between husband and wife, parents and children or daughter-in-law, or brothers and brothers. Upamanyu Chatterjee's novel, *The Last Burden*, is concerned not with growing up but with family ties. It takes a close look at an Indian family, the complexity of relationships and how this change as cataclysmic event occurs. The members are adept at inflicting misery and enjoy other's emotional pain. When Shyamanand and Jamun have an argument, Shyamanand is quick to reproach Urmila: "Savior your handiwork, our sons fostered for decades to hate me. Like a perfect mother, you kneaded them against me. You are saint and I the demon, but notice, the damn you too" (*The Last Burden* 52). Jamun is aghast. He is left to wonder how he had looked for alleviation from his father who so bitterly needed alleviation himself. Husband-wife relationship is the basic and most important amongst the network of relationships on which a family revolves. Healthy relations facilitate the spouses not only to perform their roles effectively but also help in proper socialization of their children. On the other hand, marital conflict leads to family disorganization and has negative consequences on the upbringing of children. The quality of interaction between a husband and a wife has repercussions on the whole family. Urmila and Shyamanand's children Burfi and Jamun faced the consequences of their parent's attitude in their life.

Burfi and his wife Joyce lived with the parents but had little to offer them in terms of respect or meals. Joyce always looked down at her husband's family. Her husband's family had a lower-middle-class mindset especially his father. They had been in the same house with parents for eighteen months before Urmila died. In eighteen months the relations were abysmal. The grandchildren, Pista and Doom, stayed around their grandparents and in their shelter after school. Burfi and Joyce took advantage of this fact. Renting an accommodation outside would not only be expensive but this care and a watchful eye on grandchildren's activities could at least give a sense of security. Burfi did not pay for anything in the house. Neither water nor electricity payment was done by him. He also managed not to invite friends and saved money. He always had an excuse of living with aged parents. His selfishness had no boundaries. He however, did not feel a niggle when he shouted and rated that it was because of his parents wellbeing that he continued to reside in the house rather than accepting his responsibility towards them. There existed no filial love. Here only an egocentric motive persisted. Jamun felt consistently that the inmates have ousted from their house the warmth and light of consanguinity. The conflict of generations weans away the relationships-destroying relations between parents and their offspring's. It is responsible for lack of love and respect for one another in a family. No filial harmony can exist in such families. Burfi is the epitome of generational conflict.

Burfi and Joyce ultimately separate. Divorce has risen among urban families. The disharmony caused in the family due to divorce has a strong impact on young children at home. Pista and Doom had seen Burfi, their father, being violent towards their mother. When Joyce returned from work children were excited and happy. They sat together while Burfi sat in his den hoping for a call to join them. However, that never happened and eventually the family split. Since Joyce was a working woman, she preferred to be economically independent and took her sons with her. Women were economically independent in middle class families earlier also but their balance of home-life was significant. The changing mores have made the woman more conscious of her rights. She is unwilling to make compromises anymore and wants the equality which has been denied to her. In her quest of aspirations joint family system is no longer preferred.

In "The Last Burden" it can be said that the author has discussed fragmented families rather than bonded families. The trains of a disorganized and disharmonic family make the family members cynical and emotionless. The younger generation which is affected by the western culture to a large extent believes in nuclear family concept which provides more economic independence, a consumerist lifestyle because both a man and the woman are earning members in the family, and deviation from the cultural moorings of a traditional Indian society has affected

the familial relations and the children are no longer taught the values and ethics, which were the core principles of an evolving society. In the novel, "The Last Burden" we see the antihero is trying to shed the 'burden' of the family ties, the terrain of his operation being the personal world of family relationship. The antiheroic protagonist, Jamun, reflects the average Indian mega polis and feeling constantly that he will be more at home in New York or London than in a small place of India. The crisis lies in his surrender to the alienating forces. Jamun basically cares for his mother and want to do her bidding but knows that it is not his cup of tea and gets sucked into the vortex of modern youth's dream of good life. It is the unbearable burden of family ties, as Jamun the antiheroic protagonist comes to realize when he returns home after being informed that his mother is critically ill, that is the thematic load of the novel.

Chatterjee turns to a far more inward-looking narrative in "The Last Burden". This inwardness is because of the family setting around which the narrative of the novel revolves. It is not a simple inwardness of emotional warmth and attachment; rather, the inwardness here is shot through by a somber hovering of hatred and revulsion. Here the suffering and mutual cruelty are experienced by almost one and all. We can say that all the characters that belong to the family of the suffering father, Shyamanand, are sufferers in equal measure. Sometimes one has the uneasy feeling that the burden consists not in attachment but in the unreal world that the novelist has created: Two pettifogging government servants who have an unhappy marriage, two sons, one of whom is bisexual (Jamun), a Christian daughter-in-law (Joyce, via Burfi), two impudent grandsons (Pista and Doom) and a house of their own after years of saving towards it. All the intricacies that inhabit this world be it financial pressure, lost love, unwanted but unavoidable obligations are all given a free rein. The novel depicts the financial, social and emotional issues that make people favor a nuclear family in contrast to a joint family. It elegantly pictures the decisions and sacrifices made by different members in the family and the frictions and frustrations thereby. "The Last Burden" gives sharp insight into middle-class Indian family life and partly explains why the majority of populace abandoned the traditional joint family structure in favor of a nuclear one.

### **Bibliography:-**

1. Chatterjee, Upamanyu. "The Last Burden". New Delhi: Faber & Faber, 1993.
2. Trikha, Pradeep. "Emotional bonds in Uppamanyu Chatterjee's The LastBurden" Indian Literature Today: Vol.I: Drama and Fiction. R.SDhawan(Ed.) New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.