



Ancestral Bonding in Upamanyu Chatterjee's *The Last Burden*

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Family is the basic form of all collective assemblage. Family is where children develop their fundamental conduct. Family is the source of all vital behavior of a child; none touches an individual so intimately like ancestral bonding does. It provides a stable influence on its members. Family is the worldwide association; it is most influential and foremost than other institutions. This family remains the nuclear component of a society in the past, in the present and will remain as the same in the future too. The passing of social values and norms to the next generation is dynamically done by the family setup. Family primarily has two great roles to play in general the first one is social control and the other is individual promotion, in fact the two functions are knotted.

Family operates the socio-cultural setup directly. Indian familial setup has been affected by the western culture in the recent times, which resulted in the formation of nuclear family and single parent households. One of the great qualities prevailing in Indian lifestyle is social interdependence. People are born into groups, clans, community, castes, religions, etc., and are permanently in the sense of being a part of these groups. A person's greatest threat is being attached from society and left alone without social support to face the basic challenges of life. This complicating bonding lets the character build up an individual; interaction with the fellow human being plays a greater role in maintaining the relationship. All social communication presents a constant attention to hierarchy, respect, honour, and the empathy etc.,

In the novel *The Last Burden*,

‘I so wish I could go home’...

When your parents pass away, you have no home at all- only your children do... Home is the hanky-panky of memory-honeyed, quilted-a fabulous once- upon-a- time lull (8).

This line depicts the importance of familial bonding. For a long lasting relationship, maintaining a good family is a desperate need. In Indian familial scenario male is given more important role to play and all the power of family is bestowed in the hands of male, thus leading to the suppression of females.

In the novel, *The Last Burden*, Shyamanand and Urmila loved each other and entered the marital life. In spite of the constant threats of their life without the support of their parents like orphans they started their life without roots and in dearth. They became government employees. Shyamanand remained disgraceful throughout the novel and Urmila as a wife was caring for her sons. With their monthly salary they managed to build their house. When they left the government flat and entered their even house, their elder son got job and moved out the new house and he marries the girl he liked. Shyamanand was always dominating the Urmila that even a simple conversation lead to a big quarrel between them. Shyamanand was very rigid and passed caustic comments at Urmila, Urmila tries to safeguard her children from her husband throughout the novel. This is the natural tendency of every mother. Family objectivity is a condition which is characterized by the disharmonious relationship and breakdown of Co-operation among the family members which leads to the lacking in self control unity and discipline. This state of disorganization occurs in a family which there is lack of proper communication among the family members. Family inadequacy as discussed by William Ogburn states that the consequence of improper family execution. One example of a disorganized family is the gradual increase in broken families signifying unhappy relationship between a man and a woman when their expectations are shattered, comes frustration and these results in failure of relationship.

Upamanyu Chatterjee when speaks about his novel states that, My new 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.

In Upamanyu Chatterjee's novel characters they enjoy the pain of their own family members. They turn completely sadistic for instance when Shyamanand and Jamun were arguing Shyamanand blamed Urmila.

When he recognizes on her face the blind slackness of deep hurt,
and he knows that he will loathe himself even more when
Shyamanand at last is also gutted by the prong's of his sons words
savour your handiwork, our sons. Fostered for decades to hate me.
Like perfect mother, you've kneaded them against me. You're the saint and
I the demon, but notice, they dawn you too (52).

In a family husband and wife relationship is the base for the network on which a family revolves. A healthy family is which gives enough freedom and power to partners and it allows the spouses to perform their role properly in the society. On the other hand conflict in a marital life will end up in disorganization and has it will create a negative impact on their children too. The nature of communication between a husband and wife has a greater impact on the whole family. Burfi and Jamun faced the same in their life. Burfi and Joyce shared their home with their parents but they are irresponsible towards them. They lived together until the death of Urmila that is nearly for eighteen months.

The relationship between Burfi and Joyce turned really bad in eighteen months when they started living together. They preferred to let their children with Urmila and Shyamanand just because it will be a scrutiny for their children. Burfi turned completely selfish and started loving

money more than anything. He by stating that he is lived with aged parents did not pay his rent or the electricity bill. He did not like to invite his friends to his parents instead he yelled and ranted at them whenever he got an opportunity. He was not responsible towards his parents well being. There was no love among them. They existed only by selfish motives.

In tradition Indian family plays a prominent role pride of family set has been handed down from generation. A simple conflict in a family will destroy the relationship between parents and their children; it will create an emptiness and lack of love for each other in family. Burfi turns to be the best example for the generational conflict. Burfi and Joyce familial relationship ends in a disaster, they are divorced. Divorce is the most common phenomena in an unclean family setup. It has a great impact on the children. Pista and Doom always had a fear for their father Burfi, they thought that he is violent and did not respect their mother. They found happiness on with their mother. Their disorganization in Burfi's family leads to the split. The economical independence of modern woman in today's society is one of the reasons for a fragmented family setup. This is what happens in Burfi's family. Being a working woman Joyce left their Burfi and took their children with her. Unlike previous generations the modern families failed to balance their work and home. The developing woman rights has made woman in today's society more aware of their rights, thus resulting in lack of compromises. Because of the youth's quest for desires and dreams joint family system has gradually vanished from Indian society.

Upamanyu Chatterjee has discussed in detail about fragmented families in this novel. He has also pointed out that the younger generation's aspirations, economic independence, lack of compromise, lack of responsibility and love creates failure of familial relationships. It clearly observes the consequences of western culture and it influences to the failure of nuclear family setup. When the woman members of the family started going for the job for earning in this present society. It collapses the traditional association of families. And this affects the children which lead to cultural and traditional breakdown of knowing their morals in our society.

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