

Concept of Indianness in Upamanyu Chatterjee's The Last Burden and Way to Go

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Upamanyu Chatterjee's stories are more about the Indian middle class families. He brings out their sufferings, tensions, privations, irritations, pains, anguishes, emotional bondages and family relationships. His stories suggest that compromise is what characterizes the life of the common people of the middle class families in India. Upamanyu Chatterjee writes mainly about everyday India - A society in which Indians breathe and a culture which Indians belong. His major concerns emerge from his own environment and from the middle class families holding up mirrors to their own lives and the family ties and responsibility. His works, particularly the novels, *The Last Burden* and *Way to Go* demand undivided attention from the readers, so that they understand the world that is being presented to them without any decoration.

Amit Chaudhuri says,

The peculiar American-English is which this book is written signifies the drifting, deracinated world of the Indian urban middle class to which the central character, Jamun, belongs; people in India who have grown up listening to rock music and reading comic books have recourse to no other language.

Upamanyu Chatterjee focuses on the Indian middle class relationships in all his novels. He brings out the emotional bondages of the members in the middle class family and about the relationship of the people in the post modern generation in the Indian society. The emphasis is not on the development or mechanics of the relationship but on the forces which work together to make the relationship in their day to day life.

Upamanyu Chatterjee brings out the Indianness clearly in his novels *The Last Burden* and *Way to Go*. He highlights the problems that emerge in the Indian middle class families. The characters chosen by the author in these novels reveals the life style of Indian families. The characters in these novels bring out the Indian tradition, Culture, places and etc in the entire novel and the author clearly states the responsibilities of the Indian family members clearly. The setting of plot brings Indian concepts clearly. He has also used many Indian words and phrases in both his novels *The Last Burden* and *Way to Go*. For the names of the characters, he has used the names of the 'Indian sweets' which are used specially in the urban places. Thus Upamanyu Chatterjee has used these kind of names in order to make the Indian readers relish their land.

Amit Chaudhuri says,

Indian readers will note with amusement that they have, in all probability, never personally known anyone called Jamun, or Burfi, or chhana or Pista; and also thus these are the names of Indian sweetmeats or their ingredients.

Upamanyu Chatterjee has also used the common names that are used in the Indian society such as Shyamanand, Urmila, Mukherjee, Kasturi, Naina Kapoor, Madhumati, Kasibai, Monga, Vaman, Raj Kumar, Baba, and etc, in order to make the Indian readers feel their day to day life situations.

Pradeep Trikha says that,

The setting of the novel is non-western, the writer frequently uses Indian words and phrases as Salman

Rushdie does, does not provide any glossary at the end assuming that it is the readers' responsibility to search his meanings for words like "Thakuma," "Thakuda," "grihasti," "Charpais" and several others. Even names Jamun, Burfi, Pista, Channa, as one of the reviewers points out, are the names of delicious things. "This choice of names seems to echo a dominant theme of the book: the devouring nature of family relationship." (125)

Upamanyu Chatterjee has used Indianness in his works with reference to the things which are exclusive to India. He has given more importance to Indian culture, tradition, food, places, names, styles etc, and has portrayed Indian tradition and culture with its emotional bondages and strained relationships in the Indian middle class family, focusing mainly on the relationship between the parent and children.

Works Cited

Primary Source

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