



# THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF MOTHER IN *THE SCENT OF PEPPER*

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*Abstract:* This article portrays the real-life mother's love towards their children in the novel *The Scent of Pepper* written by Kavery Nambisan. The mother's love towards her child is unmatched. Her determination even fails the disabilities given by the nature. This paper exhibits a mother's complete determination in curing her son's disability and finally makes him happy.

**Keywords:** Unconditional love, Mother, Lifeless legs, Son, Faith

Kavery Nambisan is an Indian Surgeon and a novelist. Her fiction has been greatly influenced by her medical experience. She wrote for Eve's Weekly and Femina. Her famous works are *Mango-coloured Fish*, *On Wings of Butterflies*, *The Hills of Angheri* and *A Town Like Ours*. Her has analysed the society and showed her perspective on marriages, women entering politics, industrialisation and identity. She also has dedicated her literary work in the Indian Literature as a critic includes – 'New Issues in Fiction.'

Kavery's homeland of Kodagu serves as the setting for *The Scent of Pepper* (1996), a portrayal of the people's way of life and culture from colonial rule to independence as seen through the eyes of a Family.

The novel's protagonist, Nanji showered her son, Subbu who has the lifeless legs with the unconditional love. Nanji had been married into the wealthy and great Kaleyanda family, which was headed over by the Rao Bahadur. Her husband, Baliyanna was a kind-hearted person who wanted to give a second life to Nanji. She was originally married at her thirteen years and got widowed in her fourteens. After that, she started to lead an exact widowed life which was caught in the eyes of Baliyanna. This sight sorrowed him and wanted to

change this kind of cruelty, hence he married her. Not only Baliyanna was a kind-hearted person, but also a medical doctor at a time when British have just taken over their remote province.

At the time of Subbu's birth, even our protagonist, Nanji felt sad on thinking of her son's life. She even called out for her husband to inform that she has given birth to a lifeless leg child. "Call my husband," Nanji wept. "Tell him, I've given birth to a cripple." (SP - 30)

Nanji also adventured on the day of his birth by throwing some pepper into his beloved nose, as he was not crying and lying still. At the breath of the pepper, the infant violently sneezed and started his crying journey. This incident was an unusual one because pepper was meant for its medicinal purpose but to reviving an infant was not included. This shows her faith on the native things and also her limitless love towards her son. It is noticeable, at the breath of the pepper, the child's whole body shivered and showed the movement but his lifeless legs.

Society might be unbearable in these types of situations. Everyone started pouring their ample advices to Nanji on curing her son's legs. This created stress both for Nanji and her beloved son, Subbu. In contrast with his mother worrisome, he dusted away people's comments and did what he could do with his body support. He wasn't able to crawl, but used his waist to raise himself. Even his siblings ignored and went outside and played with other children. This created longingness within himself. But his mother raised him with extra-nutritious food with the hope of his better improvement on the legs. She even imagined that her son would definitely walk some day and take care of her.

As they have named him Subbu, his father, Baliyanna called him, 'Kunta' (SP – 32). The reason behind this naming is his lifeless leg and won't be able to lead the life like other children. This does not mean that his father despised him. But deep down, he was affected by his son's disability. This reflected in minor incidents like naming him and other. But his mother, Nanji was indifference towards him like the other children. At times, she had given extra attention to Subbu. She used to carry him everywhere on her hip. She was the only person who loved him unconditionally.

Nanji made her son to eat all rich – nutritious food which resulted him to be a stronger person. He was even considered to be strong carnivorous appetite person because of his love towards meat. Along with good food, she consistently massaged his legs with oil which developed his whole body including the legs that remained malfunction.

He ate large quantities of meat, bending low over his plate, working the flesh off the bone. He sucked the marrow and chewed the cartilage until it powdered in his mouth. The staggering variety of meat that he was fed on, the massaging with oil and peacock fat, and the bribing of gods spurred his legs to grow in length, girth and anatomic perfection. But there was not a flicker movement. (SP – 36)

Subbu was ignored and disregarded by other people, but he was gladly considered to be the Raja by his mother, Nanji. She even sewed him a dress which might be worn by him, if he ever chosen to be the raja in a play. She sewed the dress in her red silk wedding saree which typically reflected the royal look. She prayed to God everyday unfailingly for her son. He also joins with her in the pooja room and prayed to God. Sometimes, Subbu accused and threatened the Gods for not fulfilling their wishes.

Nanji's determination actually succeeded them. At the age of eight years and nine months, she applied some ointment prescribed by some woman on Subbu which actually resulted with a raging fever. Even doctors remained helpless and she was actually seized with fear. But after ten days, the fever lowered, surprisingly Subbu started to walk like everyone else. Nanji laughed like a little girl with joy and screamed her happiness. Slowly, he started to walk and ended in running rapidly. Finally, their wish was fulfilled. More than Subbu, Nanji was the happiest person by this incident. This displayed her unconditional love towards her son.

### Conclusion

The mother's love is one of the purest forms of love. Even though, she suffers a lot, she won't let her son to feel it. Mother's love is not only specified for human beings, all the animals and birds has that privileged position. This unconditional love of mothers towards their child is also reflected in other works like *Mother* written by Maxim Gorky which is a famous, well known universal Russian based novel.

### Reference

SP – The Scent of Pepper

### Works Cited

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavery\\_Nambisan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavery_Nambisan)