

## A PORTRAYAL OF INDIAN MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN IN MANJU KAPUR'S DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS AND A MARRIED WOMAN

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### ABSTRACT

*This journal entitled "A Portrayal of Indian Middle Class Women in ManjuKapur's Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman", where women are an essential image who play a vital role in the world. In India, women were dominated by men. So there were many writers emerged and wrote about their quest for self-identity. They wanted to get freedom from the patriarchal society and its tradition and family boundaries. From the above mentioned novels, the writer viewed how women were suffering under the patriarchal society. Kapur portrayed her novel very clearly about the Indian middle class women. When a woman accepts patriarchal society, she submits herself to a man. She thinks that submission of herself to a man is the nature of a woman. But when a woman goes against to the tradition and its boundaries she has to face a lot of problems. Though she endures much problems, she becomes more matured as she faces problems by herself alone. Even society thinks that it is a great sin that women go against the traditional society.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Feminist Writings of Indian English, To Independent Thinking and Makes, Patriarchal Society*

### INTRODUCTION

The novels of Indian English women writers consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that have existed in the society since long. Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and childhood to complete womanhood. Writing by women has given a new dimension to the Indian literature. In the 20th century, women's writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writings of Indian English literature.

The contribution of contemporary writers approaches about modern themes in Indian writing in English. The writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalai, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, MalatiChendur, Gauri Deshpande, NamitaGokhale, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy and JhumpaLahiri. Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and ManjuKapur have discussed the problems of women in today's male-dominated world.

ManjuKapur (born in 1948 in Amritsar, India) is an Indian novelist. Her first novel, Difficult Daughters, won the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize, best first book, Europe and South Asia and in 2011 The Immigrant won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. She teaches English at Delhi University under the name Manju KapurDalmia. She studied and

received an M.A. in 1972 from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, and an M. Phil from Delhi University. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia and they have three children and three grandchildren, live in New Delhi. She projects a new vision of Indian women in her fiction. She is the author of five novels. They are *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009), and *Custody* (2011).

This journal entitled *Portrayal of Indian Middle Class Women in ManjuKapur's Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman*. ManjuKapur portrayed Indian middle class women in her novels very clearly. She clearly shows the dilemma of women who carry the burden of their family as being female as well as the added responsibility of being mothers to members of their own sex. In the traditional society mothers and daughters exist, marriage is regarded an ultimate goal and destiny from which these women cannot escape. Kapur's female protagonists are mostly educated, aspiring individuals caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking and makes them intolerant to family and society. The mother and daughter relationship leads to the dilemma in the daughter's life. Belonging to the same gender, they are supposed to be united in a bond of understanding besides love and trust. But sadly, in reality, bitterness, resentment, dislike and envy are the dominant feelings in their relationship. Mothers want their daughters to be like them, but daughters want to learn from their own experiences. This crisis of self-identity strains, their relationship.

The novel *Difficult Daughters* focuses about different kinds of women. It is about the roles of women in particular. Which deals with the yearning struggle of women to establish an identity and how a woman faces the problems of going against the rules of society and family. The novel analyses the image of Indian women how they are struggling to establish themselves. It also reveals that some women accept the patriarchal society when some women do not accept it. Generally the mothers in the novel like Kasturi, Lajwanti, and Kishori Devi are the best images of Indian middle class women with *Difficult Daughters*. They accept the patriarchal society and they impose their daughters to do the same, but their daughters are not ready to accept it. Because of this they are suffering and struggling to prove themselves, but often they led in misery. Though they are trapped with many problems often, they become more matured. Even they have learnt the life of lesson in the patriarchal society. Virmati faced lot of problems before and after her marriage. She was the second mother to her ten siblings and took after her mother. She felt hard to do household works and studies at the same time. When she has finished her school, her family members thought that she is eligible to get married. So they have decided to arrange a marriage. Then she was engaged to an engineer. But she was trapped with Harish's love and she refused to marry with whom she was already engaged. However, she opposed her family, then she has gone to do her higher studies. During the time she faced many things. It is very clear that Harish had been an already married professor. When Virmati's family comes to know that she is in love with already married man they all were against her and gradually Virmati also started to go against her family tradition. Then Harish married Virmati, which is not acceptable and this caused Virmati's family to hate her. As second marriage is not very much entertained in India when the first wife is alive.

The novel *A Married Woman* focuses about the physical and emotional growth of a woman from a young girl to a middle-aged woman matured by experience. The novel portrays the relationship between man and woman and between woman and woman in particular. The novel proposes how a woman leads her life before and after her marriage. It also portrays how a woman leads her life when all the family members are against to her including her mother in the patriarchal

society. It is Astha, who candidly reveals that going through the mundane responsibilities is not only exerting but also boring at times. The novel is a comment on husband, wifereationship, with emphasis on a woman's place in marriage. It also draws our attention on a woman's place in marriage. The novel deals with women's issues in the present context. It is an honest and seductive story of love, passion and attachment set at the time of political and religious turmoil in India. Driven by a powerful physical relationship with a much younger woman, the main character of the novel risks losing the acquisitions of her conventional marriage and safe family. The novel raises the controversial issue of homosexual relationships in a challenging way. This novel also depicts Astha's quest for self in her travails as a daughter, a wife, a daughter-in-law, a mother, a teacher, a social worker and as a homosexual. Kapur presents the stark realities of married life in her depiction of Astha and Hemant. Prior to her marriage with Hemant, Astha did experience the adolescent feelings of love. But after her marriage, she felt emptiness in her life, even though she was blessed with a good husband and two children.

In Indian male perception, Kapur describes the traumas of her female protagonists from which they suffer, and perish in for their triumph. ManjuKapur is well known writer for her feminist vision. Her novels announce the Indian women's socio-cultural predicament caused by their entrapment in male dominant patriarchal society. Her female protagonists are well equipped, most educated and middle class wives of India face struggle for their own. They are searching of their identity and equality with men. Their sufferings and suffocation within the family norms and marital bounds is clearly reflected in her novels.

It is very clear that women who go against tradition are sure to be singled out and oppressed by society, rejected even by their own mothers. Thus, this novel has presented the life of women in the middle class family in the background of the nation's independence struggle. Virmati and Astha stand at the crossroads neither too conventional to accept all notions blindly nor too modern do discard the traditional values altogether. They stand between the conventional and the unconventional and becomes the face of New Women.

## CONCLUSIONS

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction is well portrayed as they were the silent victim and they accept the patriarchal society. But we see the emergence of new women in ManjuKapur's heroines, who do not want to be rubber dolls for others to move as they will. The reason for the women to their self-freedom is they want to live their own life apart from husband and children. But society binds them with their family and responsibilities.

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Manju Kapur is the author of four novels. Her first, *Difficult Daughters*, received tremendous international acclaim, won the Commonwealth Prize for First Novels (Eurasia Section), and was a number one bestseller in India. Her most recent novel, *The Immigrant*, was called 'intensely readable' in the *Daily Mail* and 'admirable and enjoyable' by the *Guardian*, and has been longlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. She lives in New Delhi. No customer reviews. Manju Kapur articulates the nature of female desire in *Difficult Daughters*. She subverts the rigid social gender norms and explores her protagonist's struggle for self-identity and self-determination. The novel is set mainly in pre-partition Punjab. It foregrounds the story of Vimati, a young woman who dares to resist patriarchy and is married and a traitor to his wife can never give happiness to any woman. He is a worldly person, caught in his own desires. Nothing solid (81). In the course of time their words turn out to be true and Manju Kapur's women contest and defend their domestic territories because they are contesting not only for power, but for their self-esteem, identity and individuality. The home obviously is a gendered living space of an everyday life, and that young Indian women are not accepting traditional roles conferred by "home" onto them passively; instead, they seem to be (re)traditionalizing their strategies of housework and childcare responsibilities. Family Structure in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* and *Home*. *The Indian Review of World Literature in English*, Vol. 7 (No. 2 July 2011), 1-11. Kapur, M. (1998). *Difficult Daughters*. The Danger of Gender: Caste, Class and Gender in Contemporary Indian Women's Writing. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons. Phukan, B. R. (2015). Manju Kapur (born in Amritsar, India) is an Indian novelist. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, won the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize, best first book, Europe and South Asia. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia; they have three children and four grandchildren, and live in New Delhi. 2011: DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, short-list, *The Immigrant*. 1999: Commonwealth Writers' Prize, best first book, Europe and South Asia, *Difficult Daughters*. *A Married Woman* by Manju Kapur Faber £10.99, pp272. A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas, and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus, it is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, was set against the historical background of India's partition. It is the story of a young woman who falls in love with a married man, a hitherto condemned passion in her narrow social circle.