

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

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Abstract

Feminism is a broad socio political movement specifically advocating women's welfare in society. Deriving upon this philosophy many women writers, thinkers and critics have formulated a school of thought that searches for such instances in literature. Though Feminist literary criticism is the direct product of women's movement of 1960's, its earlier instances in the eighteenth century were found in some writers. The most prominent names among such pioneers are Simon de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf. In modern context can be seen a host of feminist thinkers across the world such as Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The main task of feminist literary critics seems to stand guard against the curbing patriarchal norms which have been inherited perpetually. Thus marginalizations of women, their predicament, struggle for identity, finding their own space, celebrating the female body are the chief subjects of this trend.

Key Words: feminist, identify, literature, patriarchy, suffering, society, welfare, women.

Introduction

All the female characters of Manju Kapur are seen as women struggling against all odds. The strains of feminism are obvious in her writing. This is overtly seen in the struggle of her woman characters, their vulnerability and struggle for identity, liberating attitude, the female psyche and the female biological world. The protagonist of her first novel *Difficult Daughters* feels betrayed by the strong bars of traditional patriarchal norms. Sona in *Home* is like a caged bird. Astha, within her heart has to feel the pangs of alienation. Nisha has to acquiesce her will under the pressure of family and Nina faces loneliness, hollowness, sexual dissatisfaction. Virmati has been brought up in a family where the woman has no identity of her own, no right to higher education. She wants to study and have career but is restricted by social conventions of the time and place. She rebels and insists on her right to higher education. Dipika Sahai (2004:09) in this connection opines: "As a rebel she is conscious of her emotional needs. Herself assertion goes to the extent of having illicit love with the married Professor whom she subsequently marries. The hardship and suffering involved in fighting against an established order, the shattering experience of rejection by her family on becoming the second wife of the professor, and the resultant alienation from society forms the theme of the novel. Her life is a continuous struggle. She wants to establish an order through defiance. She rebels against the accepted and existing moral codes and social norms." But Virmati asserts, feels liberated and makes no compromise in materializing her path and resolving the conflict. In connection with the theme of women's vulnerability in Manju Kapur's novels, Arpita Ghosh (2013:126) remarks: "Virmati fell prey to professor Harish's desire. Slowly but surely such desire swallowed up Virmati; she transgressed the laws of the threshold and got involved in an illicit affair with Harish both physically and mentally. He forcefully enters cottage and makes love without Virmati's prior consent to the act. In spite of Virmati's protest Harish beastly pounces on her and quenches his thirst for lust. Thus another violence committed in liaison, Virmati was doomed forever."

Manju Kapur is a widely praised Indian author who has five books amazingly, *Difficult Daughters* (1998) *A Married Woman* (2002) *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009) and *Custody* (2011) She ponders the blending of customary and present day ethos. All ladies writers base their fiction around the encounters that they have had in their own lives and in this manner intentionally

or unwittingly diminish in the domain of women's activist statements of either kind. The works of Kapur constitute a talk that does not simply aim at subverting the man centric ideas overseeing a ladies' life yet she likewise gives a profound understanding into relationship of man and woman. She offers a nearby view on the relationship between a man and a woman enmeshed in constrained masterminded relational unions, relationships that are not acknowledged by the society (ranging from additional conjugal undertakings to gay connections), betrayal, sexual brokenness, reception, separate and so on. "The ladies hero or female saints" of Kapur's books go through these confounded relationships and develop into independent and self-sufficient elements.

Manju Kapur's first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) is composed against the foundation of India's parcel. The tale is the account of Virmati seen through the eyes of her little girl Ida, the storyteller and a divorced person, from whom her mom's past has dependably been stayed quiet. Virmati's desire for instruction had hints of her having an autonomous wish. She needed to have her won space, her own character. Virmati, who winds up in a bind in view of her exhausting family obligations and the craving to think about, is made up for lost time in the snare of an unlawful undertaking which from one perspective, satisfies her scholarly thirst while on the other, traps her into a whirlpool of miseries. It is her inclination to set up herself as a person that captures her in the terrible methods for this world. Virmati battles and sets up her will to have advanced education. She doesn't have faith in organized marriage especially early marriage which she feels is huge obstacle to instruction, in this way she gets ready to remove the framework and what might be its results.

She is misled by conditions. However, she thinks about her enduring as destiny. Virmati's wants to change her destiny from being a simple spouse and mother in a customary family, yet her adoration with the Professor makes her select the demonstration of coming back to a relationship that has just brought her only untold misery. Virmati's anguish portrays her as a sincerely starved being. The Professor's affection fulfils her passionate needs and it makes her rebel against her proposition to be engaged, with the goal that she could concentrate further.

Manju Kapur expounds on hopeless predicament of ladies sufferings under their harsh and rude spouses. So man-lady relationship brings characters into estrangement, withdrawal, androgynous issue, forlornness and absence of correspondence that often happens in her books. Kapur's *A Married Woman* depicts the pressure between a delicate spouse Astha and the normal husband Hemant. It stresses the triumph of life over confusion and of workmanship over life.

The substances of ladies' lives appear to increase more prominent hugeness step by step. Ladies authors have investigated the position of male bullheadedness and monstrosities submitted against ladies. Exploited ladies advocate for themselves in various ways as indicated by their view of good and bad which itself experiences a change, bringing about changed frame of mind towards ethical quality and modalities of life which come to be called present day. Unfortunate casualties are those against whom outrages have been submitted for the sake of culture, custom, religion, social acknowledgment, false reverence and man's in humankind towards pursue individuals. The significance of men and their predominance has been a piece of Indian social mores for ages.

A house is a physical structure which is utilized for dwelling or obliging spot by the general population however a house can be called as a home just when it incorporates unlimited connection, support, sustaining and insurance of relatives towards one another. *Home*, (2006) the third novel of Manju Kapur is an immersing story of family life, crosswise over three ages of Delhi Shopkeepers. It has three female characters-Sona, her sister Rupa and Sona's girl Nisha, who guarantee their voice in their own particular manners. In one of her interviews Kapur said that, maybe it would be increasingly suitable to state that she investigates the space that women involve in

local connections. It is a world she knows and comprehends the numerous signs of the Indian women's jobs. She is a spouse, a mother, in reality there are such a large number of parts of a lady's life that regardless she has to expound on that.

The Immigrant (2009) manages the subject and region which is moved from India to Canada. At its most profound the novel dives profound into man-lady relationship. A lady needs to adapt to society and family to the extent her free presence is concerned and Manju Kapur has been attempting tenaciously to make her female heroes striking and reluctant. Nina is on our concentration on the off chance that we break down relationship between the male and the female as she is the person who has distinctive association with various men at various occasions. Brilliant, youthful instructed young ladies are eager to be rushed off by some more unusual and after that getting really frustrated when things don't turn out true to form. Nina obviously, makes a life for herself and that is really charming so far as the topic is concerned. Nina's first relationship started with Rahul, Rahul was, "15 years older than her, a teacher in the English Department of Arts Faculty".

Therefore she could just pick her forlornness at better and bargain with her destiny. Relationship of Nina began very aerogram with enthusiasm and warmth. The primary letter enkindles a flash of sentiment in Nina yet at the same time some suspicion of disappointment in assumed relationship was in her mind keeping her destiny in record. Be that as it may, she appeared to have traded off with it having less open door in her karma. At any rate the correspondence promoted to closeness. Sweet talk began, both made each other commonplace of their individual universes and works which thusly prompted their thoughtful yearning to meet. Energy followed in Anand's psyche to exhibit some blessing and desire in Nina for the equivalent. Warm blessing offering function was trailed by contacting, complimenting and energetic trade of comments.

The first night demonstrated to be the defining moment in their recently hitched relationship. It was the evening of satisfaction of Ananda's bodily love and for Nina it demonstrated to be the evening of thunderclap on desire. Ananda's sexual brokenness left an awful impact on her. Ananda appeared to offer joy to himself instead of thinking about Nina and Nina automatically begun contrasting him and Rahul, her past lover. "As she lay in bed she tried to transform reality into a scenario that would not confuse or upset her. Togetherness was the important thing. To be critical of how it was achieved was against the spirit of marriage."

The story of *Custody* (2011) is set in the scenery of urban upper white collar class group of Delhi who in spite of being wealthy are ruined in qualities and ethics. Kapur investigates the void of present day life as the story rotates around Raman and Shagun who are couple alongside charming Ashok Khanna, Raman's manager and Ishita, a childless divorced person. Kapur utilizes the foundation of marriage in this novel to show the tale of four grown-ups and two youngsters. A progression of question tracks with arguments, warmed discourses, uncovering the malevolent side of separation. Kapur uncovers without agreeing with anyone's stance the intensity of the extramarital undertaking which can separate even a strong marriage. Ethics and morals don't work or to say have no spot with regards to cherish. Ashok Khanna is a genuine advertiser who has never failed. When he understands he is enamoured with Shagun, he ends up savage to accomplish his target, Shagun at any expense. He feels this sort of adoration he had never experienced with any other individual. He continues to catch the psyche, body and soul of Shagun and feels glad like a pleased conqueror regardless of whether it intends to devastate one's life by all accounts upbeat wedded life. With the flavor of affection Shagun rebels for opportunity which was for quite some time denied to her. She battled for the opportunity she had since a long time ago needed yet it was at the expense of her kids and an upbeat wedded life. She sets out to leave the defensive condition of the tranquil family setup. Kapur in all respects masterfully weaves the plots and the sub-plots and

illuminates the destiny of the kids in such relational unions.

Kapur is effective in uncovering the reality of how a little girl in-law is disposed of from the family unit and the family for just one reason. Ishita needs to hold up under the expense of her barrenness. The topic of forlornness in marriage is running all through the novel in each plot and subplot. Generally ladies need to tolerate the weight of depression throughout everyday life. Simone de Beauvoir reaches the determination, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman."

The idea that all women were meant to get married and be submissive to their husbands was given a second look when we read the novels of Manju Kapur. While Manju Kapur's first novel is a family saga against the historical backdrop of partition, her second novel *A Married Woman* (2002) is a work of investigative reporting on the most controversial and political issue of the demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman's obsession with love and lesbianism. The novel is a kind of narrative on a woman's incompatible marriage and resultant frustration and the contemporary political turmoil in its historical context. Her third novel 'Home' explores the complex terrain of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family the revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage; and lastly the women's struggle for her survival.

In the first phase, the women's question emerged essentially in the context of the identity crisis of the new educated middle class. Manju Kapur's female protagonists are mostly educated, aspiring individual caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking for which their family and society become intolerant of them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they plunged into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women with faultless backgrounds. The novelist has portrayed her protagonists as a woman caught in the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a yearning to be a part of the political and intellectual movements of the day.

Conclusion

We see the emergence of new women in Manju Kapur's heroines, who do not want to be rubber dolls for others to move as they will. Defying patriarchal notions that enforce women towards domesticity, they assert their individuality and aspire self reliance through education. They nurture the desire of being independent and leading lives of their own. They want to shoulder responsibilities that go beyond a husband and children. They are not silent rebels but are bold, outspoken, determined and action oriented. All protagonists know they cannot depend on others to sort out the domestic situation and proceed to tackle it on their own.

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