

## INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY IN MANJU KAPUR'S DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to study new woman in the novel of Kapur. So taking into account of the complexity of life, different histories, culture and structures of values to be discuss in socio- cultural situation. Woman under patriarchal pressure and control are subjected to social group. They are discriminated and biased in the society. They live under problems and unfair treatment of closed society is reflected in Kapur writings. We see beginning of new woman, women emancipation and their empowerment in her novels. They are not puppets in the hands of others, but someone who try to design state of their own identity in this world. Kapur portrays the women struggle and how they are dominated and neglected from their rights. In society they are treated as subordinate in all the fields. But nowadays the condition fades away from the society. Yet few women restricted to come out and survive. But most of the women shows their power and potential both qualitatively and quantitatively. Thus, this paper deals about Virmathi and herself Identity.*

**Key Words:** *gender, Identity and Society.*

Indian English fiction had women writers who focused on man's world where the presence of woman was only incidental. There were writers who selected women protagonists. But their portrayal was to compare with the real life woman. The suffering wife, widow, mother were the only images found in fiction. Traditional and cultural perspective dominated this story. All the women novelists write from their personal experiences almost all of them end up in one or other form of feminism. Some of them give us their life style in fiction and all identity with their female characters. Manju Kapur writing reflects the experience of woman in real world.

She writes about personal experiences problems spaces and identity crises. She writes what today's woman can relate easily and see her novels as of their own life. She deals with the traditional and modernist ethos, women trying to find their identity. Her women characters Virmathi and Astha argue for the values like freedom of thought and expression, liberty from oppression and marginalization and equality as quest for dignity are chief moves offer her imagination and creativity.

The perspective of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent sufferer and upholder of the tradition and cultural values of family and society has under gone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. Manju Kapur novels presents women who try to establish their own identity. The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true

female, independence, much remains to be done. 'Difficult Daughters' is the story of a young woman named Virmati born in Amritsar into an strict and high minded household. The story describes how she suffers between family duty, the desire for education and elicit love affair. She is the main character of the novel, fights against tradition and is urged by the inner need to feel loved as an Individual than as a responsible daughter.

The title of the novel ' Difficult Daughters' is state brief the message that a woman, who tries to search her identity, is named as difficult by the family as well as society. This is a story of sorrow, love and compromise. The main part deals with Virmati's love affair with the professor and remaining part deals her struggle for realization of her own independent identity during this period, Virmati's relationship with professor goes extreme. Meanwhile she finished her FA and hesitate marriage. After that she sent to Lahore for her higher studies where too her relationship with professor develops and it leads to her pregnant with the help of her roommate Swarnalata she aborted her child while she went to Delhi for her career, suddenly Virmati and Harish happens to get married. Though she is a wife of Harish she feels incomplete and inconvenient in Harish's house. After that she gave birth to Ida.

Virmati has to rival against the power of the mother as well as oppressive forces of patriarch symbolized by the mother figure. Kasturi , mother of Virmati reject her education which leads Virmati's strong decision to study further. It makes controversy between mother and daughter. Because Kasturi born to a ancestral family where she brought up by the traditional values and ancient habits. So, Kasturi wants the same from her daughter Virmati what she has learned and what she has done in her family and she expect the same in her children generation. For that Virmati just opposite to her mother Virmati insistence on education is her chief step to resistance. The young heredity inspired by freedom struggle seeks out ways for individual freedom as well. The fore runners thought of nationalist movement and the ideas of women's education provide the independent thinking.

Inspite of resisting the patriarchs, Virmati had the feeling that whatever she did was not write. She had failed in her duty and that she would be punished for it someday. Her family's repeated trial to see sense failed. They told her that "men or not to be trusted" (81). Virmati in Difficult Daughters is termed as difficult because she rebelled and defined the age old traditions. She does all the household works and she never raised her voice against anyone in her house. Though she behaves like archetype of daughter she longs for the freedom as like her cousin Shakuntala who enjoys the ' Wine of Freedom'.

Manju Kapur's novel present the changing image of women away from traditional portrayals of enduring women , self sacrificing women towards self assured, assertive and ambitious women making society aware of their demands and providing a medium of self expression. "One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or

economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; It is civilization as a whole that produce this creature” says Simon de Beauvoir. Identity suggests our thoughts and feelings, Our place of habitation and desires. The individual identity is formed through a series of random and frequently unusual growth.

A psychological identity relates to self image, Self esteem and individuality Anthropologists have often employed the term word identity to refer the idea of selfhood based on uniqueness and individuality which makes a person different from others. The construction of an individual sense of self is achieved by personal choices regarding who and what to associate with such approaches are liberating in their recognition of the role of individual in social interaction and the construction of identity. Indian women’s connected to and denied by the societal and cultural norms of a particular familial structure. A woman is never regarded as a autonomous being since she always been a subordinate and a relative position.

Simon de beauvoir says, “Man can think of himself without woman, She cannot think of herself without a man”. When she denied her marriage Kasturi said, “Leave your studies if it is going to make you bad tempered with your family. You are forgetting what comes first (21). She had to rival with her to assert herself and it was education at first she used as tool to achieve her identity. In this argument against to consider the roll she not only clears her FA exams but also enters A.S College, the bastion of male learning (45). She asserted herself not only through education but also through her choice of groom. It was during her years in A.S collage that she develops feelings for Harish, professor in college and a tenant at her place. This was a match that everybody would have envied otherwise but it become most unsuitable choice in case of Virmati; as professor was already married.

In a way she had an illicit relationship with him for she even bore the confinement. This relationship even leads her to commit suicide as she was not able to define her position neither in her family and nor in professor’s. Here she is moving from foreclosed identity; where everything was defined for her by her family to moratorium where she was to search for her own identity. This conflict rises in her mind as somewhere she felt cheated, professor being not loyal to her. A man professing his love for her on one hand and making his wife pregnant on other cannot be apparently dependable. At this juncture, decisively and brusquely she cuts him saying that “You thing you can do what you like so long as you love”(105). It was during her confinement that she tried to find her, self, in ‘Virmati’.

The most constructive period in Virmati’s life was Nahan where she led her life like a free bird without anything to worry about. She works as a headmistress which gave her economical independence; it is hear she gains greatest degree of control over her life. She earns respect all the responsibilities were to be delineated by her. This gave new turn and

life to her. She has no anything even her families but she has self autonomy. She has her own place to live. Thus Manju Kapur novels reveal that her women in her novels are of ultra modern era who wants their individual. This story subsequent challenging difficult life marks the stages of development from individual crisis to identity achievement.

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