

## THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

*S. Narmadha (Reg. No: R20161842)*

*Ph.D. Scholar (Full Time), PG Department & Research centre in English, Alagappa Govt Arts college, Karaikudi.*

*Dr. T. K. Vedharaja, Research supervisor, PG Department & Research centre in English, Alagappa Govt Arts College, Karaikudi*

**Abstract:** *As a feminist writer, Manju Kapur's novels deal with the strong protest of the male-dominated society. All her novel voices against the male domination towards women and also it presents the new Indian women voice against the male chauvinism. All the novels of Kapur shows the drastic changes in the life of through her characters.*

**Key words:** *Suppressed, subaltern, male domination, feminism, searching for identity.*

Feminism is a collective term for systems of belief and theories that pay special attention to women's rights and women's position in culture and society. The term tends to be used for the women's rights movement, which began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues to campaign for completed political, social, and economic equality between men and women. It is a body of social theory and political movement primarily based on and motivated, by the experience of women.

In the galaxy of Indian novelists in English, Indian women writers like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Desponde and Manju kapur shine huminously like their significant contribution to enrichment of Indian English Fiction. These women novelists in respect of arts and literary devices in writing their novel. Sumitha pal in her book the mother daughter conflict in manju kapur's difficult daughters says thus:

They resemble, to a great extent Jane Austen, George Eliot, Bronte sisters, Mrs. Gaskell, Dorothy Richardson and virginia woolf in the arts of characterization and portrayal of psychic mind of women(9)

Feminism in India is a set of movements goal at equal polical, economical, and social rights and equal opportunities for women in India. It is the aim of women's right within the society of India. Like manju kapur counter parts all over the world, feminist in India seek gender equality. Equal to health education and equal political rights. Indian writer Nayanthara shagal, Kamala Das, Manju Kapur also have fought against culture specific issues within India's patriarchal society. Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters deals with problems of women by men and women. It critically gives the idea that it is very complicaion because she is a “woman writing about women's issues, but because she tries to understand a woman both as a woman and as a human being pressurized by visible contexts” (jaidev, 1992: 68). The novel opens with:” The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother. Now she was gone and I stared at the fie that rose from her shrivelled body, dry eyed, leaden, half dead myself, while my relatives clustered around the pyre and wept”(1). It is a story of a ten year old girl when we first met her in the novel. She has been brought up with conservative values of a middle class urban arya samaj punjabi family in Amristsar, punjab Ida, the narrator and daughter of protagonist tries o tell secrets of her mother, virmati's life. Virmati is the daughter of kasturi. She has dared to violate the governed rules of her family and decided to get higher education against the wishes of her family. She is impatient, rebellious and intolerant to the fuss and mess created by her sibling in the absence of their mother. She takes care of her brother and sister harshly

sometimes. “on her return home from school she would hunt out the offending brother or sister and shove the cold food down their throats. If they refused to wear the hand me down the clothes she assigns them, she slept them briskly”(6). Her mother wanted virmati to do something all the time for her sibling and this habit of her mother irked her. She at such occasion gives a flat refusal.

The novel *A Married Women* is heavily plotted. It traces the life of Astha from her young adulthood through her early middle years. In the process she dates with a couple of young men of her own choice like her western counter parts, marries aman of her parents choice. Thus, the novel can be read as a feministic study. Manju Kapur is one of her interview opens her mind. Manju Kapur says

I think they didn't really have any choice, they are choosing between two not so very satisfactory things. It's not that life on your own is such a bed of roses either and they both choose to remain within the fold because (a) that's what they have grown up to, they have been socialized to think that's the best thing for them and they are not quite free from that and (b) the other thing is that this is the best out of two choices and that's why they come back ...

In India home is the centre of every family and the importance of the home cannot be negated. But home is the site where conflicts take place. A lot of women accept these conflicts, compromise with the situations only because “the idea of going against the family is unheard of and this influences women's silences.” That is why Astha suffers, Ganga keeps quiet, Kasturi sends away Virmati to Lahore and both Virmati and Astha return within the confines of the home. Both Astha and Virmati live in their own way. But love alone cannot sustain a person and Manju Kapur says

Love is made up of needs, security .... the way people talk of love is very deceptive, it leads to disappointment in many ways and that is why in my books I am always keen to show what happens after you get married.

Manju Kapur's novels enable us to get an idea of the feminist struggle against biases. While reading the novels one gets the impression that a woman's life is like the life of a nation which is passing through various trials and tribulations. Just as Ida struggles to reconstruct her mother's life, Astha struggles to place the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmbhoomi episode in the correct perspective. As the narrative skeins together the different strands, one realizes that Manju Kapur is a skilful wordsmith.

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