

TRIUMPH OF WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to reveal the triumph of middle class women in Indian society. Manju Kapur expresses the empowerment of women among the struggles and sufferings. They show their power for the welfare of their family. Women protagonists in Kapur's novels are not submissive and subordinate to others. They are adjustable but outspoken. Kapur proves that self-motivation of women give them strength to win in the modern competitive world. Women characters of Kapur raise their voice while the unbearable situation comes. Sometimes the protagonists cross the conventional familial norms while they are no longer willing to grieve and started thinking about their personal contentment.

In *Difficult Daughters*, (1998) Manju Kapur depicts the sufferings of Virmati while she loves a married professor Harish. Virmati searches for education and career. As an unwed protagonist, she faces mental depression while she gets conceived. Virmati knows very well the seriousness of home-done abortions and its dangerous consequences she is very bold to abort her child. She is cautious that without the recognition her child should not suffer in future. While Harish tries to meet her stealthily, she talks harshly: "Why have you come? First tell me. Why have you come? Is it going to be the same story all over again?" (DD 88-189). It is embarrassment to her to live with the love affair of the professor.

Kapur depicts the three generation women characters in *Difficult Daughters*. Kasturi, Virmati's mother fears to talk to her husband about her childbirth, Virmati frankly asks Harish to marry her. Above all Virmati's daughter Ida divorces her husband and lives as single. Ida never gives importance to deep-rooted sentiments and she proves her rights. She decides her life and not allows others to take decision. Ida motivates herself and never permits other to overrule her.

Virmati's cousin Shakuntala is a role model. After she met her she wished to continue her education. Shakuntala makes Virmati to understand that education is empowerment. Swarnalata, Virmati's roommate encourages her for the freedom struggle. Swarnalata continues her political activity after her marriage and says: "We have plenty of married women working with us. I'm married, aren't I?" (DD 252) Swarnalata is also a good speaker. Heavy applause breaks out while

Swarnalata finished speaking. In the conference she says “how large an area of life women wanted to appropriate for them” (DD 132) Virmati understands the opportunities are waiting for women to empower. Her victory proves her confidence. Without the support of others, she grows her daughter Ida.

In the second novel, *A Married Women* Kapur portrays the protagonist Astha’s fight for her right at home. Astha, the heroin likes economic freedom. She continues her teaching carrier and concentrates on her passionate job painting. She earns twenty thousand rupees for the painting in Yatra and she receives two lakhs of rupees on her painting in an exhibition. Hemant dislikes sending her to school. Astha “I want something of my own. My own money.” (AMW 148). Employment and economic freedom of women make changes in society. Astha boldly opposes her husband’s restriction. Astha takes care of her family, shows much concentration on her career and involves her in politics also.

Kapur reveals the other woman character Pipeelika, Astha’s friend. Though by birth Pipeelika is a Hindu, she marries a Muslim but in Ramjanma bhoomi Controversy, he is assassinated. Being an activist, she is unable to face the sorrow of her husband’s death by the Hindu fundamentalists. Both women use the association for their personal resolution. Astha and Pipeelika are consoled by each other from their personal bitter familial experience. Astha renders her service to create political awareness about Ramjanmabhoomi controversy through her paintings.

Mrs. Trivedi, Pipeelika’s mother, after her husband’s death, she takes care of her children Ajay and Pipeelika without the help of others. Trivedi’s suffering bears fruit. Ajay stands in the first position in schooling and with MIT scholarship he gets the chance to set got in US. Her widowed mother’s sacrifice provides settlement of her son’s life and Pipeelika also fulfils her mother’s hopes on their native. This shows empowerment of an individual mother’s toiling and its success.

In the third novel *Home*, Kapur describes the struggles of the protagonist Nisha’s internal conflicts start from her childhood. She recovers herself from her sexual abuse. Nisha argues while the family members reject her love:

Why is he not suitable? Give me one reason. Do we live in a village? If we do, why don’t you just throw me down a well and be done with it?’ They can’t force me to me to marry someone I don’t want to.’ (HO 206)

Nisha explores her strengths and weakness and decides to overwhelm them with her father’s influence. She convinces her father and gets loan to start her garments. Nisha begins to define her independence and starts ‘Nisha’s Creations’ with her father’s full cooperation. She has the confidence to develop her business and show artistic appeal. Finally she learns all techniques to empower her. Nisha’s garments develop and become very famous she gains profit and repays the loan and invests more in her business and she develops her business and becomes a successful business woman with several workers under her.

Asha is another woman character in *Home*. She fights for her rights. Asha insists her husband to provide her adequate facilities. Without fear she arrows questions to the elders of the family to provide the equal facilities to her family like others. She knows her husband’s economic condition. Asha encourages her husband to start new business. Even Vicky feels proud of his wife and she gets triumph in her argument finally.

In the fourth novel of Kapur is *The Immigrant*. Kapur explores the special challenges facing immigrant wife, stressed in professional and reproductive terms, suffered in adopting a foreign culture. Nina has pursued a career as a teaching staff at Miranda College.

Women in Kapur novels are educated. Women enjoyed freedom of movement in freedom struggle and were accorded a position of dignity and respect in the family and society. Social reformers emphasized that women in ancient India had participated equally in all aspects of the family. Women involve them in communal ritual and political activity.

In the novels of Manju Kapur the women characters are very frank. They fight for their basic rights. In *Custody*, Shagun desires to get her rights from her husband and the society. The liberty she has been given from her childhood. As she loves Ashok, she tries to repel for her freedom. She forgets her position as a wife or a mother. She dares enough to oppose her family and break the smooth situation of her family. The life of the children becomes a question mark between their father and mother. Shagun considers about her happy life. Manju Kapur portrays her as a selfish woman in her novel. Though she has a lovable and dedicated husband, her foolishness makes her to go in a wrong way. Shagun is a courageous woman but she breaks the rules of Indian culture.

Shagun boldly explains about her husband's annoyance to Ashok Kanna: "He was sure I was having an affair. He said he had photographic proof. Anyway, he knows, and I – I did not want to deny it" (CUS 90) Shagun never considers about the society, culture, parents, relatives and her children. She has the rights to live with Ashok Kanna as a wife and she never feels ashamed for her ability. Many times Ashok has told her that woman has the right to decide their own. Women are playing higher role in that entire ownerships responsibility from workers to investors.

Shagun fights for her own freedom. She has different face that gives her strength. If a woman gets a full-fledged empowerment, they have reached the high peak of happiness. Shagun writes a letter to her mother: "Sometimes I feel so happy, Mama, I wonder how I am among the lucky ones. Ashok and I danced too, he said he would never have gone to such a tamasha if it hadn't been for me..... say I have given him & new lease if life." (CUS 272)

Women's higher education is essential to reduce the gender gap. Education quality and economic development give empowerment in women's life.

Modern women have achieved a lot at present times. They have mental strength to face the following problems of malnutrition, poor health, and maternal mortality, lack of education, mistreatment, and lack of power, marriage issues, dowry system, female infanticide, foeticide, divorce, and recreational activities. The western impact changes the mode of Indian's life style. It leads their cultural changes and societal chaos. The two types of cultural impact merged in India and the dilemmas of following the culture. Women empowerment is course of development that qualifies women to identify about their self-confidence, consciousness, flexibility, adoptions and management power. It helps women to control over their jobs, work environment and enhance the contribution to their society to their society. Women in Manju Kapur novels are cultivated, educated, sophisticated, refined, cultured, stylish, classy, bold enough, more than that they are employed. So their financial independent makes them empowered.

Workcited

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