

**An Insight of Indian Middle-Class Women represented by Manju Kapoor's
*Difficult Daughter and the Immigrant***

Reva Rani

Ph.D Reseach Scholar

Department of English

CT University Ludhiana

Punjab (India).

Dr. Ashwani Rana

Associate professor

Department of English

CT University Ludhiana

Punjab (India).

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Abstract: In Woman writers has tried best to focus on various literary works through the centuries. In the modern age of change and development in every aspect, no one can deny the half of the population. The woman writers of Indian English have tried best of non-attachment and they begin to investigate and to acknowledge the position of woman in male-dominated society and patriarchal issues that were present in the Indian Societies is undergoing drastic changes from time to time. There are lots of changes in Indian From spiritual ascendancy to clashes in different religions, from dependence to independence, from farm land to internet facility. In a modern feministic world, the concept of womanism and image is the very important issues for Indian women writers. It is obvious that woman are exploited and subjugated on the basis of caste, class, creed and social patriarchal setup. Indian Woman have been exploited and subjugated from ancient times to the modern era.

Key words: Discrimination, Emergence, Exploitation, Patriarchal, Self-reliance, Tradition etc.

Introduction: The portrayal of an Indian woman in Indian English literary work as the victims who never make hue and cry, accepted old customs and traditions of their families and societies, has undergone drastic change and in modern era they articulate about their subjugation and sexual assault. However, in every era, there is a protest against gender discrimination by various social reformers and activists. Manju Kapoor's representation of woman as heroines in her works, who do not want to be silent and will bear each and everything by male-dominated society. Their patriarchal set up enforces them to be-confine to their homes. But they affirm their personality, desires and wishes through education. Manju Kapoor unravels the issues and highlights that are prevalent in Indian societies from ancient civilization to understand how far and difficult is for a woman to challenges old traditions of patriarchal societies and arrive at a state of peace and tranquility. She tried to present her own views regarding the evolution of new women in reality.

Manju Kapur's all five novels have different themes but deal with the typical middle- class dreams, hopes and aspirations. The background of these novels is urban in nature and catches the city life with ironical detachments. The various consequences of changing human relationship between men and women have been represented with detail and graphic observation in all her novels. She shows her deep insight in telling the tales of common people in daily life. There is a unique tone of experience in the so-called journey in this world. Traditions, conventions and customs all these things are linked with a unique sense of freedom which has been recognized as the essence of modernity. According to K.K. Singh, "Compassion, sympathy, sacrifices and cultural loads are linked with womanhood. Kapur's unique sense of feminism in her novels is well displayed in an outstanding manner. She presents human beings in the context of conflict; especially family conflict has been reorganized as the core issue of her novels" (1).

In her all novels, Manju Kapur seems to be always dealing with family as the central issue. Her novels are the tales of the people living in the family. Family teaches them to understand human relationship which is the

essence of the continuity of human existence. Family is the source of developing strong relationships in the sense of devotion, mutual understanding and respect to each other. The relationship between father and son, mother and son, mother and daughter, father and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law man and woman, lover and beloved can easily be noticed everywhere in her novels right from the beginning to the last one.

Manju Kapoor in all her literary works investigates the various problems faced by woman with in the Indian societies which have been dominated by their male males. In her first novel *Difficult Daughter* present the narrative tale of the central character Virmati. She was not good dealing with her daughter in proper way. But Virmati has pounded with new aspects to deal with the issues against for the right of education, in choosing their life partner and economic independence. Virmati opposes the oppression and she symbolizes among the girls who want to choose what she wants in future and declines the economic dependence on their male flock. She did not want to be treated like sex toys. In this way, we can say Virmati as “New woman” who is want to be educated and wants to develop her life in a very good manner. Ashok Kumar comments, “A major preoccupation in recent Indian women’s writing has been a delineation of the inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women’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” (2).

Manju Kapur stands as a voice of women through her feminist writings, presents the character of Nina in *The Immigrant* who strives for her own liberation and attains a voyage of self-identity in the foreign country, Canada. Her failure in a love affair obligates her to live lonely in Delhi. Nina has to marry with NRI dentist living in Canada. Nina, who is born and brought up in Indian culture shifts to Canada with her husband where she becomes unsuccessful to cope up with the culture of Canada, in short, Nina falls into the dilemma of her traditional mindset of Indian middle-class society and her solitude, disappointment growing into the western culture. Nina, the central character of this novel, shifts to Halifax, Canada, after marrying Ananda, who is a dentist by profession. She has to resign her job of lecturer in Delhi which is in the true sense, her loss of individuality. Nina’s educational qualification proves to be worthless in Canada which entraps her as unemployed. They even fail to produce a child which stands as a big reason for their broken relation. Though she is fond of reading books, she fails to escape from her feelings of alienation. Hence, she gets indulged into the dilemma of east and west.

Ananda labels her as “the perfect mix of east and west.” Manju Kapur, too, writes that “Her devotion to her mother and her willingness to consider an arranged introduction proved her Indian values, while her tastes, reading, thoughts, manner of speech and lack of sexual inhibition all revealed western influences. Due to her experiences as an immigrant, Nina learns the fact that east and west have tremendous differences which can’t be equal. This fact ruins her dreams about a foreign country as well as married life. This is an ordinary picture of an immigrant who can be seen as alienated due to the entrapment of outlandish people and surroundings as well as a new culture. Mahnaz Afkhami rightly points out: “Along with the loss of their culture and home comes the loss of the traditional, patriarchal structures that limited their lives in their own land. Exile in its disruptiveness resembles a rebirth for the woman. The pain of breaking out of a cultural cocoon brings with it the possibility of an expanded universe and a freer, more independent self.”⁶

Manju Kapur is a prolific writer from India. All her novels focus on the life of female characters. Her protagonists struggle for their individual identity in the patriarchal setup. Her novels reveal the lives of women describing their struggle for basic rights, the quest for identity and survival. In the last novel custody, Manju Kapur tries to present man-woman and husband-wife relationship in terms of legal aspects. Her feminist stance is quite evident in this novel also because she analyzed the basic points of a successful or unsuccessful relationship between man and woman with woman’s perspective. Here Shagun stakes the custody of her children at the cost of her freedom to marry Ashok. Arifa Akbar calls it as a gendered battle. According to her, Kapur addresses the gendered nature of custody battles in India- men often refuse to grant divorce while women usually have a greater claim to the children-but she refuses to generalize or moralize.

Conclusion: Manju Kapur’s womanly central characters are symbols of those female flocks who desire to be free from the social patriarchy and customs. Her protagonists are highly educated which leads them to be broadminded and self-dependent but their patriarchal society and family did not allow them to do. It is their individual effort and struggles with patriarchal customs and traditions of their family and society through with the delicately themselves plunges into carve personal identity as qualified women with the poor and reckless background.

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