



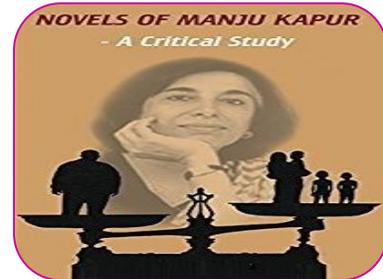
SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN SELECT NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

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ABSTRACT:

Manju Kapur is an Indian novelist. Her first novel, Difficult Daughters, won the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. She is a well known post-colonial woman novelist writing in English. She has written five full length novels. Her following novels Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, Home, The Immigrant and Custody.

This research paper is an attempt to explore the nature of postcolonial era with burning issues like Predicament of women in their novels. From Pre-Independence the condition of women was very wretched. They pointed very minutely all these thing in their novels. It also important from social point of view that the Journey of women towards very difficult. Manju Kapur's five novels with images of women reflecting on them. Her female protagonists are fighting hard for their rights in a patriarchal society. Her women protagonists are struck between tradition and modernity the novel Difficult Daughters sensibly shows the position of women and her longing struggle to establish an identity.



KEY WORDS: Quest, identity, Marriage, Education, Male Dominance, Struggle for Identity,

INTRODUCTION:

Manju Kapur, a well known writer is known for her feministic vision. The women in their novels come across the image of new women who have been carrying the burden of reserve since ages and want to break that ritual of make gentle now. In the traditional social environment of her novels she shows the existence of mothers and daughters, it is the same society where marriage is regarded as the ultimate goal and destiny from which these women cannot escape. Manju Kapur's female protagonists are the representatives of that female folk who long to be free from the stale social customs and traditions but are never allowed. Her female protagonists are mostly educated. Their education leads them to independent thinking, for which their family and society becomes intolerant towards them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they plunge into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women with faultless backgrounds. The novel Difficult Daughters is an suggestion to the significance of a woman, who strive in search of an Self identity, is considered as the difficult daughter by the family and society. Difficult Daughters presents the image of women who try to establish their own distinctiveness

In this novel Kapur projects the problem of women's education. Virmati's mother Kasturi never bothered about her education. Virmati's grandfather thinks that basic education is necessary for girls. But he too agrees with the societal norms that higher education should be prohibited for girls. So Virmati rebels against her mother to do higher education, which reveals her rebellious character. The novel focuses on the struggle of an educated young woman against the norms of a family that cherishes old values of arranged marriage.

The novel begins with the death of the protagonist, Virmati. Ida explains the story of her dead mother. Manju Kapur, in order to know about the story, unfolds the tale of Virmati.

The novelist also describes the nature of Virmati and her desire after death shows her attitude

All her novels consist a variety of women characters as well as her all novels are women character centric. Her women characters bring forth the various shades of the lives of women. Through her women characters, she shows a mirror to the society saying what the condition of middle class women is in a patriarchal society. All the images of female protagonists are compared with each other to find varieties in images portrayed by her. Her female protagonists Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Aastha in *A Married Woman*, Nisha in *Home*, Nina in *The Immigrant* and Shagun and Ishita in *Custody* are studied in detail. Manju Kapur describe secondary women characters very appropriately. Virmati, the protagonist is in *Difficult Daughters*, is on hand a optimistic and courageous woman in a meticulous civilization. The novel is set on pre independent India, 1940 and at that time Viramati opposes the tradition of arranged marriage. Then she gets education with a hope of living her life in her own ways. But as it happens with Manju Kapur, the crisis come when she falls in love with a professor and at last, out of compelling circumstances gets him married being a second gender. Astha in 'A Married Woman' represents the journey of women through hope and despair. It is a journey of Astha from being only a wife to having an independent identity. She is married to Hemant and settles in New Delhi. Initially she is happy even gives birth to two children. But after some time, she feels alone and need to explore life in Hemant's timeless situation. Meanwhile, she comes in contact with Pipee, a widow, and their loneliness turns into an intimate relationship. After sometime, she feels, as it, caught in a traumatic situation of not being able to remain on any of the sides. It a story of Misha, who tries to make her life on her own way but her parents do not allow her. A long background of Misha's family has been described beginning from Banwarilal. Once she is sent to her relative Rupa's house. There she falls in love with Suresh, a boy from low caste. Due to the caste of the boy, Suresh, she is not allowed to marry him. Then after being failing to find a suitable Mangli boy for Her, she starts her own business. Mean while, a Mangli suitable boy, Yashpal is found and married to her. Misha continues her business after marriage but soon she gets pregnant and leaves business. Meanwhile, Manju Kapur comes with a new set of characters with new issues - inter-caste matrimony finding a Mangli suitable boy within a caste, running business by a woman etc.

The *Immigrant*. The novel begins and ends with a same point of Nina's life. Here, Nina's journey has been shown in three stages where in first stage she falls in love with Rahul. Then she marries Anand and both of them migrate to Canada for their new life. They have sexual conflicts both fall in love with other characters, Anand with Mandy and Minar with Anton. It is shown that in her all experiences, she is treated as an object and misused. At the end she returns back to her home in India. This novels depicts life of Nina in a Modern situation, having freedom or taking freedom to have many relationships but ultimately being Despaired. While the novel 'Custody' depicts the lives of two couples Ashok Custody' depicts the lives of two couples Ashok - Shagun and

Raman- Ishita. Where in earlier Shagun and Raman are married but later get divorce and then the story of the custody of their Children take place. Here, Kapur comes with all together, different characters and situations.

All these characters create various images of women in Indian past and present society. Her novels present the women as protagonists with their own problems like the problem of Woman's independent identity, taking decision for their own lives, having freedom of love, caste system, infertility as a curse, divorce, extra marital affair in want of love, economy independently

The title of this novel *Difficult Daughters* is a suggestion to the message that a female, who strives seeking an identity, is branded as the difficult daughter by the family as well as society. In this novels come across all women described in difficult crisis. They are all searching for their own identity . Their unique identity come across. Society and tradition played very considerable role in their novels. The image of women is very restricted in the society. All their characters try to revolt against this system. It is also important from the our point of view. It is really interesting novels written by novelist. It is humanistic point of view, it is really worthy to fight against their family members and society. They are ready to learn higher education . The image of women is restricted between the walls. They are so interested to learn higher education. *Difficult Daughters* presents the women who try to establish their own distinctiveness In accordance with Sunita Sinha that Kapur speaks of the idea of independence- independence aspired to and obtained by a nation and also independence yearned after by a woman." Manju Kapur's novels focus on female protagonist rebellious to break the shackle of patriarchy and are investigation of identity against the code of beliefs of social and cultural critical thinking. A Major preoccupation in recent Indian women's preoccupation writing has been portrayal of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationship. They have to exist subjected to patriarchy. Manju Kapur is a post-colonial writer who intuitively perceives the situation of women in male dominated society. Her novels present the struggle of women to establish an identity. She has attempted to make a space that women have to occupy in domestic relationships .*Difficult Daughters* is written against the background of the Indian Freedom Movement. Manju Kapur's protagonist Virmati is portrayed not only as are evolutionary writer who fights her right to educate herself but as one who manages her situations in moments of crisis. The struggle for freedom from the British, the quest for identity and the sense of oppression has become a shared experience both for the nation and for women in India. The central theme is the futile attempts Virmati makes to succeed. Because of the incredulousness of her family and of the man whom she loves and marries later, she is condemned whenever she tries to liberate her and aspires to live a free life. After meeting Shankuntala whom she adopts as her role model, her protest grows stronger and it starts with her wish to continue her education. It is an attempt to focus on identity crisis in their novels. Identity is an important factor to develop their role in the society. It is really worthy among the society. It is also remarkable in the society. In modern era in very sector women played considerable role in this society. All these things very minutely presented in their works. This is an burning issues presented by the novelist. It is also important to expose their reality.

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