

SUFFERINGS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MANJU KAPUR'S NOVEL DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS

Article Particulars:

Received: 30.12.2017

Accepted: 03.01.2017

Published: 20.01.2018



R. GUNASEKARAN

Research Scholar, Salem Sowdeswari College
Salem, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Manju kapur has presented an exciting account of women of the 1940s in her novel 'difficult daughter' generally the novel is one of the genres among different genres in literature and the events revolve around the backdrop of Indian Independent and women's liberation. She is one of the greatest writers in saying about female's sufferings. This great writer Manju Kapur was born on 1st January, 1948 in Amritsar, India and she won commonwealth writer's prize in 1999. She teaches English at Delhi University. She is a prominent novelist and has given a new direction to Indian English novels like other renowned female novelists Anita Desai, Kamala Markendeya Jhumba Lahari, Nayantara Sagal and Arundhati Roy. Those writers have perceived the gender issues that disturb women and presented women as individuals who fight against suppression and oppression of the patriarchy and have highlighted the consequences of rebelling against their traditional roles and breaking the shackles.

Keywords: *difficult daughter, women's liberation, Manju Kapur, gender issues, Punjabi life, feminism*

Sufferings of Female Characters

Manju Kapur successfully portrayed early twentieth-century Punjabi life and has effectively captured the relationships. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughter*, begins with a daughter going back to Amritsar carrying her mother's ashes to meet her maternal family. The narrator alternates between the past and present with the mother and daughter speaking to each other through places and events.

Manju Kapur documents in her novel the women's dilemma. She has portrayed female characters such as Virmati and Ida, daughter of Virmati. And both of them are very regrettable characters. Feminist issues are discussed in different perspectives in the roles of Virmati and Ida. Virmati pursues higher studies and overcomes difficult situations by acting decisively. The novelist says that woman should develop inner strength and maintain her individualities without violating family structures. When arranged marriage is the social norm Virmati falls in love with a professor who is a married man. She is the difficult daughter of second generation and her mother could not digest her daughter's love. Virmati finds it difficult to cope up with the ideas of her mother.

Manju Kapur's novel brings out the lives of women in 1940s who were trying to assert their identity. Shakuntala, Swarnalatha, and Ida are the real images of modern woman who are conscious, educated, emancipated and having the zeal to assert their identity and to find their place in society. Ida is a difficult daughter for Virmati that she is a divorcee with no child. She sets out on a journey to collect information about her mother's past from her mother's relatives and acquaintances.

Manju Kapur has joined the growing member of modern Indian women writers who have significantly contributed to the progression of Indian fiction. Kapur is a postcolonial writer in a patriarchal society who deals with the problems of women. The stressful time of partition and its aftermath is much elaborated in the novel and may have caused a rift in relations.

This novel is a pointer to how a mother, who is traditionally a personification of sacrifice and goodness, can become a person who shows resentment to children due to her difficulties. Virmati spends her time as nurse and mother while her mother Kasthuri spends her life in reproduction. Virmati is attracted towards English professor who falls passionately in love with her because his

illiterate wife can never prove to be a soul mate. She is in thirst for love as a result of failing to get motherly affection and this illegitimate affair leads to many problems. She suffers at the hands of the parochial society, her family and even her paramour. The novelist seems to say that a woman can maintain her individuality and pursue her interest without threatening the family structure. Thus a woman can basically strive for a fine interdependent partnership.

Virmati is an easily impressionable young woman. When she meets the professor and listens to him she is all admiration for him. When the Oxford educated professor Harish tells her about his illiterate wife who is not prepared to learn anything and cannot share his ideas or understand music, she sympathizes with him and is convinced of his need for companionship. Manju Kapur has depicted only Virmati listening to the learned professor and his western music. She has not portrayed Virmati participating and discussing any literary or political issues. He always explains aspects of beauty in nature, literature and painting. She is a passive listener and learner. Later when she talks about politics and women's movements she does not like it. The novel not only refers to the difficult daughter but also alludes to the several other difficult daughters who left the confines of their household and engaged themselves in the national struggle for independence.

Virmati is depicted as a new woman of colonial India and her urge to acquire education and freedom resembles the nation's quest for identity and selfhood, but she fails to completely live up to her wishes. Kapur sets Virmati story against the background of changing India. There was filled with political affairs like anti-Pakistan conference, Urdu conference and All India Sikh league. Virmati comes across women engrossed in the national movement. They all appeared remote to Virmati for she is enmeshed in her own problems and trials. All the female characters of Manju Kapur are seen as women struggling against all odds.

Conclusion

Thus the impact of feminism is obvious in her writing. This is overtly seen in the struggles of woman characters for self-identity and liberating attitude and in the portrayal of female psyche and female biological world. Hence Manju Kapur proves that women suffer physically and mentally in male dominated society. The protagonist, Virmati, who meets much more problems of melancholy expression in her life and the endless problems of life make her a matured woman she tramples and defies the patriarchal constraints and expectations to assert her identity and achieves self-satisfaction and self fulfilment in her life

References

1. Kapur Manju., 1998. *Difficult Daughters*. New Delhi: Penguin Books
2. Showalter, Elaine. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essay on Women Literature and Theory*: New York. Pantheons Books, 1985
3. Sing Sushila. *Indian Novel is English*. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1980.
4. Gur Pyari Jandial, 'Evolving a Feminist Tradition: The Novels of Shashi
5. Deshpande and Manju Kapur', *Atlantic Literary Review* 4:3, 2003 pp108-28.
6. Annie John, Manju Kapur's "Difficult Daughters", *Indian Stream Research Journal*, Vol 1, Issue 1, February 2011.