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Marginalized Women in India: A Thematic Analysis of Manju Kapur's Select Novels

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Abstract

This paper aims to present a thematic analysis of the Novels of Manju Kapur. In her novels she had handled various issues like mother daughter relationship, importance of education, joint family system, motherhood etc., in all her novels the protagonist suffers a lot in the society and earn lot of lessons of their experience. Manju kapur focus her women as a modern woman those who always fights for their survival and nature of suppression against the patriarchal society. In this paper the idea which was shown is to present the theme of two novels namely Difficult Daughters and The Immigrant. The protagonist in these novels was educated, caring and mainly they search their identity to live a peaceful life in the society. The education which they had leads them to think that the society and their family become intolerable to them. Not only her novels show feminism but more about the society in all the aspects.

Keywords: Marriage, Education, mother hood, importance of education, search of identity.

1. Introduction

Women are an integral part of civilization. The development of the society always depends on the involvement of the women. Without their involvement things can't move or the progress of the world will be stopped moving from a place. But in our society, we keep the women in a place where they can't shine and bloom. It is also differ from each and every culture. We have to accept the fact is that woman still has not even thought to be equal with men, in our life and in the literature. Why because we have seen the woman were portrayed as a soul of week person who never ever open their mouth for their rights to ask to their husband and their son. This kind of themes were portray the woman in the older Indian novels, by some famous authors "R.K.Narayanan, Kamala Markandeya, Shashi Deshpande" etc., Some new writers wished the woman to take bold decisions in their life and they also portrayed them and through their novels they asked them to take "the road not taken". Such women are independent, assertive and even defiant in their view.

Manju kapur's literary achievement is 'Difficult Daughters'. The theme of this novel says about a young woman named Virmati roll herself between a hidden love, passion for education and family duties. She was born in Amristar in an austere and honourable household. Because of her fate she is in the position to accept or lead a secret love with her professor who was her tenant and neighbour, got married already and had kids. Later then she married him eventually and went to further studies in Lahore, got job and settled with her husband at last after a long struggle. This novel makes us to read the various issues handled by the author in the society.

This novel proves Indian women's powerful aspirations though it was innocent, her struggle against her societies, tradition, self-doubt, resolution and acceptance. In Sunday Times, Meggel Gee gave her review as

“This is a skillful enticing first novel by an Indian writer who prefers reality to magic realism.”

The novel takes its themes as education for girl. Virmati is a peculiar character which lives in this full novel as a half protagonist. She yearns for love from her childhood.in her family she is the first of ten. Her mother leaves Virmati to take care of her young ones. When Virmati enters from the school she had to take care of the sisters and brothers after she had completed all her house hold duties only she took her studies. Though she is soft to see but very strong and as will power to do everything. She can resist all kinds of things like family and social pressures. Although she strong but in one issue she is weak, because she cannot kick the professor from her life. It is clearly notable thing that, this is not love and it is lack of love.

He mentions that learning history is not a one-way process. One has to learn the present in the light of the past, and the past in the light of the present. History requires the selection and ordering of facts about the past in the light of some principle or norm of objectivity as accepted by the historians which includes elements of interpretation. Without this, the past dissolves into a jumble of innumerable isolated and insignificant incidents, and history cannot be written at all. Hence, the function of history is to promote a profound understanding of both past and present through the interrelation between them. Within this framework, both Toni Morrison and Aleisa Phyllis Perry recreate African American history by selecting, ordering, and combining past and present.

She had great passion in education especially in English literature. This leads her to love the professor though he gave so many assurances to marry her and sugar coted letters from literature cotes. The novel starts in India at a Punjabi family has been nicely portrayed by Manju kapur. Virmati's mother kasturi needs her daughter to get married soon and Ida the granddaughter of Kasturi, 'never want to be like her mother'. Virmati started her first struggle with her education. Women were not allowed to study as their wish and there was no possibilities to go abroad for their higher education on those days. through rebel for her further studies. In between these struggles she also went to the other extreme to save her love and a real marriage life. Through the professor, her husband makes her to realize the value of education and the essential things in life based on education.

This novel is written in the era which was a strange, contradictory time in Indian history. When the traditional Indian values had nearly modernized. Mahatma Gandhi encouraged women to involve in the struggle against the English. This leads to the women those who are really talented highly and feel democratic have taken part in the movement of nationalist politics. Manju kapur has portrayed her characters successfully from a pre-Independence period, a Punjabi family. Manju kapur shows the theme of quest in Virmati's life though she got mature in her professional life but in family she missed to search a good pair. Within a few years her experiences made her from an innocent girl to a matured woman through suffering she started to search a true love to share her life independence, a self with pure sense, finally she, a self with pure sense, finally she decides or come to a conclusion that the fact is things are not always clear to see by the reality is they change.

Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* indicates an innocent women who searches her own identity in family for independence, self-realization named as "Difficult Daughters" by the society and the family. This is a story of a young girl who torn between duty of the family, the desire for education and pure love to share her whole life. But here the author shows us another two characters Shakuntala and Swarnalatha who put their own path against the will of their parents for their independence and they proved in their own voice. Virmati always feels about her inner desire to be loved by someone than she don't want to show her as a responsible daughter on the other hand kapur's best novel "The Immigrant" deals with the themes like acculturation, Identity of a young woman. "The history of immigration writes Oscar Handlin is".

"The history of alienation and its consequences for every freedom won, a tradition lost. For every second generation assimilated a first generation is one way or another spurned. For the gains of goods and service an identity lost and uncertainty found"

Kapur has shown the disillusioned dreams, longing to go home, a feel of dislocation and isolation, a loss of their identity, search for their own self and an awareness of culture and personal feel. Kapur's "The Immigrant" is the fourth novel. This novel carries a lot of questions about quest for identity, martial relationship, and adultery etc., "Identity" we always mean that it differentiates individuals, this word always meant with individual basis but with a limited structure.

The Immigrant is the story of two persons who are immigrants from India to Canada. Ananda is a dental doctor who leaves his town New Delhi to Canada after his parents died in an accident. He is an ambitious and determined person and a qualified Canadian dentist. At first he started to stay in his uncle's house in Halifax and then through his friend Gary he started to live in a separate house. Both started a dental clinic. He misses his intimacies of his home land. He slowly changed his habits towards Canadian culture. His marriage life started with Nina through Ananda's sister in Delhi. Nina is an academician and a beautiful girl living with her widowed mother. Her father died suddenly leaving the family to suffer alone. Nina has pursued a lecture job as his career in Miranda House College. When she attained her 30th birthday she got fixed with Ananda. When both met eventually she accepted him. After the marriage she leaves Delhi to settle with her husband. There started everything leaving her homeland is such a strange thing and it makes us to test our self the strongest beliefs and values we had.

In Canada Nina faces more trouble with her husband. Sometimes she was deep seated in her feelings and unhelpful sometimes the consequences of this struggle was most strange than she imagined. Her immigration from her homeland to Canada was totally changed. She leave her job is her total loss of her identity. This leads to ends the couple life, to suffer in dissatisfaction, disappointment and nostalgia Andy (changes his name in Halifax) he extends his career and improves as a famous dentist in Halifax. But Nina was helpless in Canada based on her teaching profession on most important thing to listen is they didn't have children there starts their struggle for livelihood.

Nina has deep reading habit at first it helps her sometimes from her loneliness, but soon she was fed up with that and suffered with eastern and western values. Kapur in her words says,

"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".(86)

The two solutions which help the immigrants to find in assimilation or acculturation they themselves in the comfort zone. Both immigrant tried to follow the foreign culture. But some racial discrimination they have to make in a foreign country unpleasant. Nina felt very unpleasant about the argument which was taken place in Toronto airport where she need to go to Canada. They asked her questions not related to the issue for example humiliating and embarrassing questions were asked to her. There her identity

was stake. Rage fills her. Her husband also faced this kind of situations already. He never wish to live in his uncles's home, he slowly changed his food habits towards Canadian.

2. Conclusion

Through her novel Kapur raises some questions. The dilemma of an immigrant is whether she or he has to preserve the cultures of their own country from the threat or to adopt the culture of the alien country is the thing they had always in their mind. Kapur analyses the challenges facing by the immigrant's wives. How they are blind in a new country having stress and pressures in their professional life and how they are balancing everything because to survive in an alien land.

Thus, in our society so many woman no longer surrenders or submit to the will of her counterpart but they always live a life of their own. In this way Manju Kapur has achieved a success of great achievement in portraying her female characters in this light without any hesitation.

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