

**QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR**

**A**

**THESIS**

*Submitted towards the Requirement for the Award of Degree of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**ENGLISH**

**Under the faculty of Arts**

**BY**

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**Year-2022**

**P.K. University, Shivpuri (M.P.)-473665**



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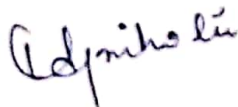
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I declare that the thesis entitled **Quest for Identity in the Novels of Manju Kapur** is my own work conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kavita Agnihotri, at P.K. University, Shivpuri, approved by Research Degree Committee. I have put in more than 240 days of attendance with the supervisor at center.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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It cannot be denied that research work is a very educational experience. However research work is not an easy task. It involves study, direction and deep concentration. My work on Manju Kapur's novels is an experience to find out the message of the writer to his readers. Finding the comprehensive introduction, women's quest for identity, analysis of women's consciousness for their rights, changing face of women in contemporary society, consideration of the relevance of Manju Kapur's thematic concerns and conclusion are all challenge for me.

I would like to surrender myself to the omnipresent almighty, without blessing I would never have been able to complete my research. I express my utmost gratitude to my guide **Dr. Kavita Agnihotri** for her sympathetic encouragement and valuable guidance that I received throughout the process of this research.

I express my heartily gratitude to **Shri Jagdish Prasad Sharma, Chancellor** of P.K. University.

I express my gratitude to **Prof (Dr) Ranjeet Singh, Vice-Chancellor** of P.K. University.

I express my gratitude to **Shri Jitendra Kumar Mishra, Registrar and Administrative Officer** of P.K. University.

I express my gratitude to **Prof (Dr) Dinesh Babu, President of Research Cell** of P.K. University.

I express my gratitude to **Dr Vikrant Sharma, Vice-President of Research Cell** of P.K. University.



I also express my gratitude to **Miss Nisha Yadav, Librarian** of P.K. University along with other staffs of P.K. University.

I am indebted to my parents **Shri Radheyshyam Singh** and **Smt Sarswati Devi** who have always been emotional support and helped me to perform my work. I also wish to thank my elder brother **Mr. Akhilesh Pratap Singh** who supported me morally to complete the research.

I am also grateful to **Mr. Ranvijay Singh**, computer expert who has provided me help in the typing. Finally, I wish to thank all my friends and people who have helped me directly or indirectly to reach my goal. .

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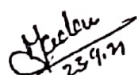
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4. Name of the Supervisor : Dr. Kavita Agnihotri
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## PREFACE

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Manju Kapur is one of the prominent Indian English woman novelists writing today. She is perhaps the most talked about and appreciated contemporary novelist living and writing in India itself. She has six novels to her credit and each of these novels is a moving record of contemporary Indian women's quest for identity.

The very first novel entitled *Difficult Daughters* (1998) sets the tone of Manju Kapur's entire fictional output. Manju Kapur has her own concerns, priorities as well as their own ways of dealing with the predicament of their women protagonists. It is the story of a young woman, named Virmati who engages herself in the act of quest for identity and is branded as a difficult daughter, both by her family and by the society. The novel presents a gripping account of how Virmati is torn between her family duty and her desire for education and illicit love. Obviously, she has to rebel against tradition and find her own way of realizing her desire. In the process, she has to struggle and undergo a lot of trials and torture. Her struggle continues even after her scandalous relationship in marriage with a professor who is already married. The writer tries to assert that although Virmati is educated and self dependent, she has to suffer by being the second wife. However, it is Virmati's brave fight against the old hackneyed values that receives the main focus.

Her second novel, *A Married Woman* (2002) is the story of Astha who is an educated, upper-middle-class, working Delhi woman. Through this novel, Kapur portrays the protagonist's inner turmoil against the background of the demolition of Babari Mosque in 1992. The novel gives voice to women's frustrations, disappointment and alienation in a patriarchal world. It is a novel which provokes our thoughts as to how

Astha, a married woman in search of her identity, registers her protests against existing patriarchal set up and emerges as an independent woman. Astha finds herself trapped between the pressures of family life and social norms yet she makes daring decision about her life. In depicting the inner subtlety of a woman's mind, Kapur displays a mature understanding of the female psyche.

*Home* (2006), the third novel, is a multi-generation family saga, and was short listed for the *Hutch Crossword Book Award* in 2006. The novel is rather more domestic, the generation conflicts that bothers the sub-continent which provide the back drop of Kapur's other novels. She has tried to put a lot of issues in this book which are commonly encountered in a joint family and are usually kept under the carpet to protect the family honour and name. A lot of scheming and bantering goes behind the curtains while maintaining the outer shame of a big happy family. The author has tries to bring some of those issues to the fore and due to this *Home* does not remain a simple story of a Karol Bagh sari seller, but gets a more universal colour and makes an invitatory family saga. Kapur presents Nisha, the protagonist, as bold, educated and balanced and of course, both modern and Indian. Although Nisha undergoes a series of traumas, she finally succeeds to live like a free woman without resorting to any extreme step as in the case of Astha. She asserts her womanhood boldly because she is iconoclastic and modern in her approach to life. Kapur portrays the picture of Nisha as a 'new woman'. This is a fast moving story of an ordinary middle class family's life in Delhi.

Her fourth novel, *The Immigrant* (2009), is the story of Nina who is a thirty-year-old English lecturer in New Delhi, living with her widowed mother and frustrated by how little life has to offer. Ananda has

recently immigrated to Halifax, Canada; having spent his twenties painstakingly building his career, he searches for something to complete his new life. When an arranged marriage is proposed, Nina is uncertain. Can she really give up her home and her country to build a new life with a husband she barely knows? The consequences of change are far greater than she could have imagined. As the two of them struggle to adapt to married life, Nina's whole world is thrown into question. Kapur explores the special challenges facing immigrant wives: the way a young woman's life, already so pressured in professional and reproductive terms, becomes an even more impossible balancing act in a foreign culture.

Manju Kapur's fifth novel, *Custody* (2011), is largely set in the thriving upper-middle class colonies of Delhi in the mid 90s, against the backdrop of the initial surge of foreign investment in India. The novel presents the uncertainty of matrimony. We are introduced to the central couple just as their troubles begin. Raman is a fast-rising marketing executive at a global drinks company. Shagun is his extraordinarily beautiful wife, with his glittering future, her vivid beauty, and their two adorable children, eight-year-old Arjun, who looks just like her, and two-year-old Roohi, who looks just like him; the pair appear to have everything. Then Shagun meets Raman's dynamic new boss, Ashok, and everything changes. Once lovers and companions, husband and wife become enemies in an ugly legal battle over their two children. Caught in their midst is the childless Ishita, who is in love with the idea of motherhood. *Custody* is a riveting story of how family love can disintegrate into an obsession to possess children, body and soul, as well as a chilling critique of the Indian judicial system. *Brothers* (2016) is Manju Kapur's sixth novel, and much like the previous ones, it highlights the lives of women in multiple locations- rural, urban, domestic, and public, offering up for view the happenings within the home with the same urgency as the goings on in



the world. Kapur deftly weaves a narrative that spans eight decades, from World War II to the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It narrates the real life-story of Pramod Mahajan and his family members. The story of Tapti Gaina is intimately linked with the lives of two men, her husband and his brother. Exploring caste, student politics, the freedom struggle and the emergency, *Brothers* traces the history of the Gaina family, beginning with their village origins across the emerging metropolis of Ajmer and ending at the height of political power in Jaipur. It is a masterful portrayal of ambition, desire, betrayal, and anguish, enacted against the shifting terrain of family dynamics.

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# CHAPTER 1

# CHAPTER 1

## COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION

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Indian literature has a long and distinguished tradition of growing all over the world. Early on, Indian authors turned to literary models in their approach to fiction, biography, and political writing, though Westerners imitated them in poetic subjects. There's a parallel here between women novelists and in the history of novels.

Women novelists have played a critical and notable role in increasing the quality and quantity of Indian English fiction. They have further added the women's outlook and womanistic aspects to the novels. These rich contributions have widened the gamut of issues deliberated in the novel. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more women actively participated in India's reformer movement against British rule. It again led to women's literature.

The Literature of India occupies the subject of conflict between traditionalism and modernism. The authors of the postmodern period have raised the issue of evil social customs in the Indian society, Indian English Literature in the postmodern time has comprised the new tradition and shape and the writer of that time explains the customs in traditional Indian social context. The Indian women writers have followed, especially, the great tradition of R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand.

At that time, their chronicle mainly concentrated on the country's freedom struggle. Over the years, the world of feminist beliefs began to influence the English literature of India. Among the women writers, the great poetess, Sarojini Naidu, charmed the readers with her writings. The theme of feminism has also been used by authors like Nayantara Sahgal and Rama

Mehta. Regional fiction themes have been used by Kamala Das, Anita Nair, and Susan Viswanathan. Novelists like Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai captured the image of a woman and the spirit of Indian culture and its traditional values.

Post-modern Indian literature has taken on increased importance internationally because of this increased curiosity in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It has been an all around development not only in literature but in the whole literary history of India. Indian English poets and writers won widespread fame during 1980s and afterwards. Fiction has its major share and importance in the Indian English Literary world.

The female novelist deals with the themes of love, loneliness, marriage, and the search of identity. The discussion of female novelist in the postmodern period is incomplete without the discussion and reference of Kamala Markandaya. She has created the characters in a remarkable manner. Another female author who has contributed to Indian English fiction is Nayantara Sahgal. Her novels throw light on political issues. Her fiction has exposed the political theme and sexual freedom of women in a modern social context. The theme of her fiction showed the torture of broken marriages. Among these contemporary writers, Anita Desai, a famous novelist, takes more interest and concentrates herself on the interior landscape of her mind rather than the cultural, political and social realities of the time. Anita Desai is an exceptional novelist, most capable of evoking the changing aspects of nature matched with human moods through her writings, through her casual mastery of language and use of numerous images and symbols.

Most of the female authors are interested in topics like lust, social interaction, marriage, and personality. It is not permissible to address female novelists in the postmodern era without including Kamala Markandaya. She has done a great job of bringing her characters to life. Another female Indian woman, Nayantara, who has written Indian literature. Her books probe the political landscape. With her stories, she explores contemporary women's political and sexual themes. The central preoccupation of her work depicts the disasters of failed relationships. Although much of contemporary literature reflects on contemporary cultural, environmental, educational, and political realities, Desai is more involved in the landscape of the mind. Anita Desai excels at conveying the shifts in nature and human moods, thus doing so in an amusing manner.

Shashi Deshpande is a famous novelist in Indian writing. She is a feminist novelist in the literary galaxy of the last half of the twentieth century. She is a successful woman, and she was born in Karnataka in 1938. She was awarded the Padma Shree award in 2009. She also got a Sahitya Academy Award for her novel, *Shadow Play*. She has done a very subtle study of modern educated female characters in her novel *Shadow Play*. She shows those women who faced many problems and got an education. Deshpande is a novelist advocating for the independence of women. The research is going to be based on Deshpande's female characters. One who offers a plausible portrayal of a well-to-do, trained, city-dweller in India. She has written about India's urban middle-class, middle-class women, and she shows how little they've changed since the 1920s.

Shashi Deshpande, praised for her book *Grace's Journal* and a recipient of the contemporary fiction award, is a postmodern woman.

She focuses on female self-discovery and character development. Her clear and precise writing in picture form has made an influence on readers. She writes about the personality of the female character in her interaction with other females. Her factual and visually lucid writing has had an influence on the reader.

Another acknowledged female novelist is Shobha De, who is considered one of the most important female novelists in the postmodern age. Her writings are acclaimed for the bold expression of the emotions of their protagonists. To be all things to all people, in all places, and for all time means that we have no illusions of permanence in either location.

Another well-known, legendary writer in Indian literature who made an enormous impact was Arundhati Roy. She is the first Indian English novelist to win the Booker Prize. Her novel, *God of Small Things*, has universal significance and is regarded as the magnificent novel in Indian English Literature. Arundhati Roy, in many ways a towering figure over her fellow novelists and the landscape of Indian literature, began her writing career with three iconic works in a row.

Today, Manju Kapur's innovative nonfiction writing career is one of the finest things to happen to her and her colleagues in the Indian-American community. Today, Manju Kapur is an important Indian creative nonfiction author. She is a popular novelist like Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan. She is the twentieth century's first female writer, having been born on October 25, 1948, in Amritsar, Punjab. Manju Kapur is an accomplished Indian novelist who writes in English. She is married to Dalmia, Gun Nidhi, so she belongs to an affluent family.



In addition to having obtained her post-baccalaureate degree, she gained her M.A. Degree at Dalhousie University in Canada and finished her M.Phil. Degree at Delhi University. She took an early retirement from teaching at Miranda House, Delhi University, in order to focus on her writing career in English in order to pursue her goal of being a writer.

She is acquainted with the sufferings of women and she elaborates on the traditional Indian families and modern thinking of characters in her creations. Her writing is merely an identity and an analysis of female characters.

The novels by Manju Kapur pursue the popular trend of contemporary Indian women's writing in English. Her novels focus on female characters within the territory of home and society. Out of her six novels, only three novels—*Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, and *Home*—are the incarnation of the theme of female bonding in varying shades and degrees. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse into women's consciousness and their interrelations. Her novels constitute a wide range of themes related to women's lives in the context of a patriarchal society: women's lives within the family, their relationships with the male and family members, their ambition for education and independence, their conflicts with other women and men on their journey towards self-realization, their desire to have and possess children, and finally their bonding with other women as a means of emotional support, survival, identity, and empowerment. Manju Kapur skillfully describes the plight of Indian women, though her writing explores the middle-class woman's cultural identity and the struggle for self-determination.

There has been a notable rise in the number of women who identify with the picture of the suffering female heroine and yet overcome certain limits, with the most recent addition being Manju Kapur.

The role of the female in today's society differs from what it was in Manju Kapur's novels. She hasn't written on women's issues in the last few years, and she mostly attempts to delve into their female culture and identities in her fiction now. All of Kapur's female characters are genuine and exist in the flesh. In the works of Manju Kapur's female characters, the feminist ideal is personified as a feminist by a woman who rebels against the existing social norms. They are attempting to break the code that has kept characters from sharing their stories in the past.

There is a different mindset today towards females than there was in the novels of Manju Kapur's age. Her writings are just centred on women and feminine society. Kapur has shown many of her female protagonists to be flesh and blood. Her characters in her novels are symbolised as women who fight against social inequality. Tradition is what the characters in her books actively seek to shatter.

After the 90s, India became a country where women's participation was well-recognized in literature. The key subjects of their novels were Chitra Banjee, Suniti, and Anura's families. Namita Gokhale or Shobha De's novels are exceptionally inspiring. Challenging ideas can be found in the novels of these female authors.

Manju Kapur's novels are based on feministic studies. Feminism, or womanism, is a social movement in which the advocacy of women's rights is based on the equality of the sexes. It shows women's woes and worries

all over the world. In Britain, many of the earlier female writers advocated for women's rights, seeking political, social, and economic equality for women. Some renowned feminist writers like Charlotte Bronte, Barbara Bodichon, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and others raised their voices against gender inequality. Through her novels, Manju Kapur has also raised women's voice, and she tries to provide centrality to women in every aspect. She raises feminist tasks and techniques, which help her convey her message to the readers in an authentic way.

Manju Kapur, a popular novelist in Indian literature, has contributed to the country's English writing as well. She has had six books to her name with the notable titles "*Difficult Daughters*," "*A Married Woman*," "*Home*," "*The Immigrant*," "*Custody*," and "*Brothers*" and has come to be recognised as a well-known author in her own right. *Difficult Daughters* was Manju Kapur's first book to appear in the Commonwealth Press, receiving the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best first book in the Europe and South Asia region in the same year of 1999. As is evidenced in all of Kapur's novels, women's identity, truth, and battle against all evil institutions are deeply and explicitly articulated in each novel. Manju Kapur illustrates her novels by showing her female protagonists in a unique manner. In Manju Kapur's novels, the heroine represents the latest generation of female protagonists.

As a feminist writer, Kapur visualises a society that is based on equality and understanding. She draws her characters in a manner in which they rebel against the old-age tradition and assert their identity and self-reliance. With regard to Indian women's depiction in Western literature, this has greatly shifted from being passive in the condition of a disdained character

to a welcomed participant, where she has come to be a thought leader in several contemporary Her opinion is that Indian women have come a long way since freedom, but there is still a long way to go. We see a new generation of Kapurines.

The portrayal of women in Indian literature as meek and submissive has experienced a dramatic, yet unremarkable, improvement in recent years. She has expressed worry that Indian women have gradually achieved their independence, but far more ground is yet to be gained. The end of dominance among the representatives of the Kapur family starts with Manju Kapur.

*Difficult Daughters* is a book concerning women rather than just women's problems when she attempts to locate the various aspects of their complex humanity, those she might be conscious of and those that might affect her beyond her knowledge. When she looks at the topic of feminism, the novelist views it in the Indian sense. The novel *Difficult Daughters* chronicles her ancestors' battle in India's period of change from a relationship with the British to democracy. The novel starts with the tale of a single woman who meets a married man and gets swept away by her passion for him. The novel throws light on a young woman, Virmati, born into an Arya Samaji household in Amritsar.

She belongs to an observant family who had previously resided in Lahore and has decided to make Amritsar their home since freedom. “She currently resided in Amritsar, in a compact log house that was rented by her husband, Suraj Prakash, and had a glassed-in front porch and a thatched one. It had a sweeping view of the valley below and of the hills on the horizon in the background, with beautiful, vibrant sunshine shining over it.

The dense and fragrant deodar bushes flanked the back door, while blue hydraggenaums bordered the road to the front.”<sup>1</sup> As a child, she has always been subjected to traditional Indian family structures that limit her movements within the home. In addition to the grandfather, who acts as the head of the household, one also needs to be egalitarian in order to believe that education is essential for girls.

Her novel, *Difficult Daughters*, deals with the fending struggle of a woman to establish an identity. In the novel, "Begum Saba Malik, in the presidential chair, believed that the views of women were evolving as female students kept up the fight."<sup>2</sup> It's about a woman who has been overwhelmed by the tension between the conflicting powers and contrasting systems of her life. It furthers the idea that democracy is essential for growth and development.

She plays the lead role in the story to make a choice between family commitments and their own interests. When it comes to the way she handles her body and feelings, she seeks to assign fair weight to both. The novel shows how a single woman of moderate means fights with a family that holds on to old traditions.

The character of Virmati is described as being different from the other two characters, Shakuntala and Swarna Lata. These two women are strong and utilise their energies in different directions. Virmati, on the other hand, is a sharp and successful woman.

She is also known as the worshipful beauty of the Indian goddess Swarna. It represents women's strength. She has great resolve and grit. When she talks about women's issues, she also means it. She says: "Women's duty



has pejorative overtones. It is our pleasure to represent our country's unity. I say not just the economic but also the spiritual, political, and religious partnership between the wealthy and the lower class, between Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs, and various Christian and Catholic cultures. We also invented artificial walls to take hold of nervous and anxious minds. Do not let faith get in the way of looking at the truth."<sup>3</sup> Division takes place in the context of the Second World War and the split of India.

She tells her daughter about the past, about the mythology: "When I moved to Amritsar, I found the fanaticism in the eyes of its inhabitants when they mentioned "ghee" and "milk" and "butter." Perhaps, if I had possessed the same zeal, the time and space walls might have melted away in my hand. However, my preferences vary."<sup>4</sup> Virmati is careful and she knows her duties and responsibilities very well. Her caring nature shows in these lines from the novel: "Her first memories of becoming a babysitter include when she was a little girl. She has found she has enjoyed it. It was important to her younger siblings that she be a baby. To their younger sisters, Parvati was not missed. She was a good second mom, as well."<sup>5</sup> Virmati was emotionally starved from her childhood, and whenever she tried to forge a bond with her mother, she was rebuked. Kasturi always preached to Virmati that marriage is the final goal and destiny of a girl.

There is a second book, entitled "*A Married Woman*," that probes into the complexity of a modern-day woman's life. It is a novel about the cries of women for freedom. This novel exposed the struggle of women against the traditional patriarchal society. In this book, she chronicles the various stages in the life of a woman, from when she is single to when she marries, and before and after her marriage. In a separate guise, the author explores

female friendships in the novel's subject matter of transference of research. The whole plot of the novel revolves around Astha, the main character. Astha is a well-educated woman from a moderate family of middle-class standing. She is the only daughter born to her father and mother.

She explains the stages in the life of a woman that exist before and after marriage in the story in this book. The concept of female bonding often comes up in various ways in the book. The novel is told by the central character, Astha. She is a professional woman who was born into a middle-class household. "She was her parents' only child. Her education, her character, her health, her marriage, these were her burdens. She was their future, their hope, and though she didn't want them to guard their precious treasure so carefully, they did, oh they did."<sup>6</sup> Their parents, all of whom work in prestigious fields, and Astha is a very talented and artistically gifted individual. While her father was a civil servant, she grew up with multiple educational influences in force because of her mother's career as a teacher.

During post-graduation, she meets Hemant, a young charmer who has just returned from the USA. Astha was attracted to him. They loved each other. Astha's parents also give their consent for marriage. "A few weeks later, the engagement between Astha and Hemant Vadera was decided upon," says the author. "The wedding was to be held in June. By then, Astha's MA exams would be over, Hemant's elder sister's children would have their holidays, and his younger sister would be able to come for a month from the States. With all this settled, Astha and Hemant began to date."<sup>7</sup> After completing her education, she gets a job as a school teacher.

On the night of their wedding day, the spring festival, Astha runs into Hemant. They get to live in bliss together under the neem tree as husband and wife. “When the groom entered the temple to marry her, the recorded song of auspicious music began playing in her ears. Sitting next to each other, under a rickety pandal (latched), with a rotary fan and the countryside filled with heathen religions, The swirling, hot breeze from the fan, the waiting for her father to cut his ceremonial beard, the hand on her man's beard that awaited the bridegroom, and the thrill of her boyfriend's waiting to marry her are everything that excites her very much.”<sup>8</sup>

At that stage, the story starts as well she and her husband start off on their quest to have a child. Astha has everything a woman should look forward to having in her married life: a responsible partner, concerned in-laws, and two kids to look after. Astha begins to wonder whether she has really managed to elevate her place into the middle class; throughout the years she has been married, she has developed her principles, and she has, but now feels as though she doesn't have something important to do. She has an inadequate feeling of completeness, has issues, is imprisoned, and is tormented by her problems. Possibly, she feels that she has not found her identity, a phenomenon that marks the feminist concern of the author. The author of this novel, Manju Kapur, seems to have introduced the lesbian love between Astha and Pipee as part of the feminist critical discourse so hotly debated by gender theorists and advocates of women's rights.

Astha's love for Pipee is difficult for her day-to-day because she is unable to focus on what is going on around her. She is unable to forget her life: as a mother, a wife, a school teacher and a painter. In her present love affair, she almost ignored her children, Anuradha and Himanshu. Her relationship

with Pipee affects her actual relationship with her husband, Hemant. Astha's difficulty now is that she was leading a double life. First her love-life with Pipee and then her ordinary and tiring life as a married woman with her husband, children, and mother-in-law. In the meantime, Astha faced several troubles; the poor performance of her daughter, Anuradha, in the exams and a worker's strike in the factory where her husband worked.

Under these circumstances, Astha is unable to maintain her love with Pipee. So, she finally decided to bid farewell, and she declined the love of Pipee for the sake of her family's happiness and interest. Thus, the love affair between Astha and Pipee collapses because of Pipee's aggressive possessiveness in the relationship. Finally, Astha finally sees off Pipee to New Delhi Railway Station with a lost friendship. Astha felt the pain of this broken relationship, feeling emotionally devastated. At the end of the novel, she finally recovers and becomes her normal self, returning to her family that loved her and needed her.

Manju Kapur's next and third novels, *Home*, create an impact on society. This novel presents the pictorial theme of female-bonding within the context of a middle-class joint family in India. So the theme of this novel is different from the other novels by Manju Kapur. Karol Bagh, Banwari Lal lives in a middle-class family. Banwari Lal, the head of the household, was absolutely convinced of the position of destiny in their affairs. Before Partition, he was one of the most well-known fabric emporiums in all of Lahore, in the highly-based commercial district of Anarkali. However, even though he thought he was going to get his way in this universe, he had learned to know that nothing was meant to be everlasting.

Banwari belongs to the middle class and resides in Karolbagh, the head of the family. The household was filled with destiny worshippers. Banwari Lal was deeply entrenched in their superstitions. Before Partition, he had become one of Lahore's most influential textile merchants. He found that, in the natural universe, though, little was certain save for change. Author adds- "The shop had been one of the first to be destroyed, but amid the slaughter that raged, his family survived, and grief for material loss assumed a less significant place in his scheme of life."<sup>9</sup>

This novel by Manju Kapur presents several themes, among which the values of a traditional joint family. The feeling of reunion in a joint family makes it a real "home." Everything is common and shared in such a family. Marriages are largely arranged, and the sense of private property and individual identity remain prohibited sites. The novelist, Manju Kapur, very carefully and skilfully demonstrated how even cases of incest go unnoticed in such a traditional joint family. The sexual abuse of Vicky by Nisha is an example of this. The novel *Home* throws light upon the three female characters-Sona, the wife of Yashpal; Rupa, the sister of Son; and Sona's daughter, Nisha-who each claim their identity in their own way. These three female characters represent the theme of female-bonding in the novel.

The novel *Home* does not abound in female-bonding. We learn about only one bond, and that is between Sona and Rupa. Nisha, the daughter of Sona, grows up in her parent's house with her maternal aunt, Rupa, paying her periodic visits. Prem Nath, the husband of Rupa, has a unique personality: "Rupa's husband, Prem Nath, was small, thin, and dark, with clever eyes, a neat moustache, and sparse hair combed smoothly back." His pastel-

coloured bush shirt hung straight and limp over his pants. He was a mechanical draughtsman with the Air Headquarters under the Defence Ministry. His job was to draw detailed parts of Russian and American planes when something went wrong. This enabled local imitation and removed the need to import expensive components.”<sup>10</sup> Rupa feels attached to Nisha, although she has no courage to ask Sona to take Nisha with her.

Luckily, she gets a chance to see her 17-year-old cousin being humiliated and threatened by Vicky. He told the terrified Nisha that it was their secret and no one must ever know, or else both of them would be punished by the family. This incident left Nisha emotionally and psychologically devastated. She neither ate nor slept properly. This incident of sexual abuse of a child by Manju Kapur, the novelist, poignantly portrays the complexities inherent in a joint family system. Nisha’s maternal aunt knows everything, i.e., about the sexual harassment of Nisha. Rupa advised Sona to take Nisha to her lodgings. The departure of Nisha made her grandmother sad. Rupa and her husband, Prem Nath, were filled with a new wave of joy at the arrival of Nisha. As a result, Nisha performed admirably in her studies and exams. Nisha’s father, Yashpal, and even all the family members loved her most. Nisha was called back to her parental home after her ten-year stay with Rupa and Prem Nath. She has finished her school days and now she has gotten admission to DBS College. During her college education, her love affair begins with an engineering student, Suresh. But when Suresh enters her life, it's a disaster. He is unfaithful to her in many ways. He concealed his low-caste and low-income, and finally, he denied marrying Nisha.

Nisha's parents are worried about her getting married. They are busy searching for an appropriate proposal. "Night and day, day and night, the issue of Nisha's marriage was canvassed. How does she know how she could really not have recognised the award that she'd gotten herself into? Richer, richer, and from a family with growing expectations. No thanks, dear child. Even though you were to think about the guy who would not allow you to dress yourself any higher, think about all the possibilities open to you. Having the right to marry someone who can plan for your family's future and/or the opportunity to marry someone who will guarantee that your family will live happily for the remainder of their lives. We have rejected many proposals in our search for you, the least of them better than this nobody of a man."<sup>11</sup> Nisha's second proposal of marriage also fails, so she decides to set up her own business, the business of readymade ladies' suits. Her father helps her. In the meantime, she gets another marriage proposal from Arvind, who is a widower. Her marriage was settled with Arvind at last. She agrees to marry Arvind on the condition that she continues to run her business. Now she is entering a new house after the marriage. She was surprised to find she had turned into a new page, into a new phase in her life, "to find herself that she had already advanced to a level or life stage well above where she was previously living. But for the moment, in Karol Bagh, they had encountered none of the sort of green grass, scruffy shrubs, and the rustling of a few birdsong and an area of clear sky. She built a new home where her husband's business was located. It came from the scow's rakesite path into the ravine, a dumping ground for waste products. For one thing, the bajri had completely collapsed into a puddle of muddy water, and it was also laced together with detritus and bricks."<sup>12</sup>

"The long, boring process that produced these children has served as an unfortunate counterpoint to the story of Nisha's life; a tale of woe. A quote that the twins said about their mother afterbirth: a woman and a child only. Ultimately, her work was done; whether she might accept it or not, she knew that God had fulfilled His promise. "<sup>13</sup>

She influences the present by playing a pastime; she chooses to pursue a lifestyle different from her family. She sees her existence as having significant meaning by accomplishing something significant. She makes a proposition to her husband: "Why don't you take me to my mother's home, if you won't talk or exchange information with me? You have fulfilled your obligation to get married and now bear me a child. When the kid is born, you will have the opportunity to receive it."<sup>14</sup>

She has a lot of faith in her assertions. She tells her husband: "Why don't you just return me to my mother's house if you're never going to open your mouth or tell me something to my face? In return for what you've done, you've given me a kid. When the kid comes, you will sweep it up and save it."<sup>15</sup> She considers herself highly regarded.

Manju Kapur chooses her novel's theme and attaches her personal emotions to it, which makes her novel debatable and analytical, which comes to have, therefore, a universal appeal. The reader, while reading her novels, at once establishes the identity of his feelings with them and regards himself as sharing characteristics with them. Manju Kapur has created a series of comic and worldly novels dealing with the common concerns of middle-class Indian women.



Manju Kapur's other remarkable novel, *The Immigrant*, appeared in 2008. The novel explores the terrible loneliness of a woman. The novel unfolds the theme of "self" and cultural identity. It shows the picture of the struggle for existence in another country. This novel is an excellent example of how the cultural conflict between East and West is presented in an excellent way. Manju Kapur has exposed the immigrant experience of an Indian couple. The protagonist of the novel, Nina, has experienced unfriendly people in her country, Canada. Her aloofness was efficiently presented by the novelist. The novel *Immigrant* contains the theme of cultural identity.

This novel shows a picture of the conflict of existence in a foreign land. Nina, the protagonist, belongs to the middle class and is bound by the fetters of cultural differences in the isolated land. After marriage, when Nina comes to Canada with her husband, she has no idea about the foreign culture, living standards, and behavior. The story of the novel is an excellent presentation of the cultural conflict between the east and the west.

Their story is the tale of two refugees, Nina and Ananda, and their 40s-era Canadian union- "Nina had nearly thirty years of experience in education as a teacher, based in Delhi. Her friends and colleagues commiserated with her by telling her that she had very lovely skin and jet-black locks, but she did not seem to care. Nina's skin will still show her age, even if she tries to cover it up by making those faces in front of the mirror."<sup>16</sup>

The novel attempts to address the issues of immigrants and how diverse groups of individuals respond differently to such things as shifts in their neighbourhood and the good old, who oppose all, while the old ones keep their heritage and hope to find the core of the modern. Not all types fit under any category. In the new group, you have those who accept it

wholeheartedly and those who simply want to uphold their tradition; in the middle are you, who might be unaware of the future trends. And on the other hand, Nina is educated, has perfected the art of speaking English, and has a long experience of teaching. She loves this profession and wants to work in an academic field. In the book, the concept of ambition is finally brought into the open. For special emphasis, the importance of a woman's determination and her readiness to lead in the public world outside of the home, in addition to being an intrinsic part of the definition of womanhood, for good measure, she even compensates for her lack of experience by giving special attention to her schooling.

And then, she would rather die of starvation than betray her intellectual independence. If her mother had had a stockpile of failed marriage applications, she may have given up on men a long time earlier. In a foreign society, a young woman's life is further compromised by the difficulties of needing to deal with both a career and reproductive stress. Nina breaks down after she learns that her mother has died in Delhi. Nina, the heroine of *The Immigrant*, discovers that she has received nothing but hollow protection in exchange for giving up her love and her artistic ambitions.

In her view, "marriage is a question of adjustment." <sup>17</sup> She is educated and a modern woman who aspires to self-hood. She dissolves her marriage and leaves Canada in search of fulfillment.

In the novel "*Custody*," Manju Kapur throws light upon the thriving upper-middle class colonies of Delhi in the midst of the 90s. *Custody* depicts the rise of upper-middle class settlements in Delhi in the decade prior to the present.

Manju Kapur has tried to discover the implication of a divorce both pre and post. The novel represents the uncertainty of marriage. The novelist refers to the responsibilities of a woman towards the family, the husband, and the children. She indicates the liabilities of the woman in the novel: "For how long can a sad and discontented person remain while they are married to an attractive and loving other person? That night would have been a success if you had fed and done your woman's hair. Catered to her while she screamed, and seemed to find it amusing? A woman who has experienced being broken up with somebody, who has been dumped, and who has known both positive and negative feelings of brokenness and loneliness? Without a single word being said, a woman can find herself suddenly thrown at her feet by female working mothers."<sup>18</sup> We get well acquainted with the moment they get in the middle of stuff.

The story takes us through the life of Raman. He works for a leading soft drink manufacturing company. He gets paid handsomely for this respectable job and leads a decently contented life. Raman is certainly getting recognition as a multinational marketer within the beverage industry. Shagun is an attractive female character in the novel *Custody*. The novelist shows her as a lady with an attractive and impressive personality. Raman also gets attracted to her when he meets her for the first time.

He learned this was what Shagun had in mind, realising it would provide him with the ability to model. Yet, although she decided to be a model, her mother firmly resisted it. And now she told him, 'Do what you want after you get married,' but then there was a girl. "We found her arguments difficult to defend given that she was happily married, had a supportive family, and had acquaintances who didn't seem to mind their bottom

lines."<sup>19</sup> Shagun is an exceptionally stunning wife with two cute children: eight-year-old Arjun, who has his mother's looks, and two-year-old Rohi, who closely resembles him; and their dazzling boy, Arjun, who has his father's looks plus a touch of allure, is obviously eager for more glitter

The childhood quarrel between two unknown and innocent children is shown in the novel. Shagun advises Arjun to be careful about his studies. Raman is a devoted employee and completely absorbed in his work, so he spends even less time with his family. After leading a happily married life, Shagun decides that she needs to start working because she is bored of being just a housewife. There is a twist in the story of the novel and also in the married life of Raman and Shagun. Then it all goes downhill for Shagun as she sees his new boss, Raman.

The story of the novel has changed, and this is also the climax of the novel. For Ashok, it was love at first sight. He tries to manage this affair and also convince Shagun about their love affair because she was already married. But slowly, the relationship begins to get serious and Shagun is forced to choose. Ishita, on the other hand, is a diagnosed and dynamic lady. To take the marriage of Ishita, the parents were so worried that they engaged in the search for a dynamic young man for her. "Every week, two divorced parents look through the advertisements for new mates. They were offered fewer options, yet, most definitely, Ishita found her Mr. Right. A girl with love to share, whose home is well decorated."<sup>20</sup>

Because happiness is not usual, her marital life has become very challenging. The manner in which her family adjusts results in her being as soon as she begins to suffer, ending up as a divorcee. Before she encounters Raman, she dedicates herself to various social projects, and

although leading a stress-free life becomes possible, she only prioritises her efforts on the work of Raman's projects. Shagun wants to be there with her husband when he is overseas, and the matter is taken to arbitration. The children had little to do about it. They are stuck between their two sets of parents: Shagun and Raman, who get remarried and re-enter the world of Mityavishakhsha later. This poet, in the book, tries to show the many difficult times a family can put themselves through, producing a transcendently beautiful environment in the process.

The course of the future is made up of a hundred measures. The more Shagagana becomes upset, the more challenging his new stepmother and new stepfather become. While in the west, in families in which men compete for custody, it is typically a question of money. The central question of concern revolves around the kids. In Indian families, it revolves around the integrity of the wife, and the husband's brother-in-law, the integrity of the wife. She would like to understand that males tend to deny a divorce while females are normally more effective in seeking joint custody of the baby, but declines to generalise or generalize. Perhaps this demonstrates the societal reticence that has re-emerged in the post-1990s economy, in which family values have been set aside in favour of a greater emphasis on self-esteem. In her novel, *Custody*, the novelist Manju Kapur emphasises the concept of the partnership between a woman and her husband as solely decided by her position as a mother. Kapur says women get attention and affection in the patriarchal culture because of their bodies, and if their bodies struggle to maintain tradition, their relationships are placed at risk.

So, *custody* is purely a deliberate depiction of an Indian modern woman. Manju Kapur shows how the new woman is emerging in contemporary India. No man has yet come up with a complete definition of marriage in literature. Based on the novelist's experience, an understanding of how frustrating and uncomfortable being trapped can be arises from the wife's frequent feelings of being suffocated, as well as the husband's, which are additionally done with integrity and realism. Custody of one's kid is an economic problem as well.

*Brothers* is another famous novel by Manju Kapur and it is a well-known novel among her six novels. She contributes herself by writing novels of different kinds. All her novels show different styles, themes, and patterns. In each novel, she presents the characters as being of middle class standards. All the characters reveal their own identity, own acquaintances, and own reality. Like previous novels, *Brothers* throws light upon the lives of women in multiple locations: rural, urban, domestic, and public as well.

These stories illuminate the lives of people, rural, metropolitan, and domestic alike. The title of the book is very appropriate. It is a novel about a woman, Tapti Gaina, the wife of Mangal Singh Gaina. The novelist indicates the lifestyle of women who served silently and solemnly. When Tapti was in her final year, her wedding ceremony was arranged. According to the novelist, her wedding ceremony was held at: "Tapti was in her third year when her wedding ceremony took place in the neighborhood, a pandal-covered colony park affair. The cooks blocked the slip road; the band with their gas lights blocked another road. While the pair got married in a corner, interminably through the night, the guests ate, drank, and left. In the morning, the bride rested in her own home before

leaving for Jaipur, where the reception was going to be held.”<sup>21</sup> The novel takes the lives of Himmat Singh Gaina and his younger brother, Mangal Singh Gaina, whose lives were fairly intertwined, to indicate. The elder brother of these two sons is Dhanpal Gaina, who is from the village of Lalanga in the Ajmeri region. Additionally, there are two other siblings, Dhanpal and Virpal.

The book is about two children, Himmat Singh and Mangal Singh. Dhanpal Gaina is the father of both sons, and Lalbha lives in Lal Village, Lalgana, in the east of Ajmer. Kaur and Singh, Dhanpal, Singh, and Vir are brothers.

Dhanpal is younger and Virpal is elder. Both are the sons of Lal Singh. According to Dhanpal- "his father was the most powerful man in the world. If his brother never came back, and as the years went by, this seemed more and more likely, it would be Dhanpal who would one day head the clan. He would be the name that would make everybody quake in their shoes. It was a future he earnestly looked forward to. His body stored up each blow to be delivered with interest when his own wrath acquired status and sanction."<sup>22</sup>

Vir leaves the village, and he is pitted against other castes such as the Jats, Malis, and Gujars in a state of rivalry. Mangal's wife is Tapti, and an on-off lover of Himmat. She lives in: "Home was A-1/43 Mahavir Udyan, one of the best addresses in town. She has been able to acquire this land through a lottery because of her brother-in-law. She got the loan to build a double-storeyed house because of him. It was a small white bungalow. Around it was a garden, with one lemon tree, one pink guava tree, one mulberry tree, a night jasmine, multiple flowering hibiscuses, and a vegetable patch towards the back. On the veranda was a metal-framed swing sofa. Inside,

apart from the drawing-dining, were four bedrooms: the mezzanine for her mother, and the three upstairs ones for her daughters and herself." <sup>23</sup> Virpal is the brother of Dhanpal and the uncle of the brothers. He disappeared from rural life by heading to the town of Ajmer and joining Gandhi in protesting against British rule. Dhanpal and Virpal, both brothers, escape the fatal consequences that such life twists could produce. By chance, a childless Brahmin comes across Virpal sleeping on the street and takes him in.

The novelist keenly observes the notion that success is due to destiny rather than character. The family of Himmat believes his rise is built on fate and connections. Mangal, the brother of Himmat, expects a similar sponsorship. When Mangal's projects fail, he is resentful and he blames his brother. This growing jealousy provided a solid foundation of envy between the two brothers. The tension mounts, and Mangal becomes determined to carry out his brother's murder. The following lines show the cruel murder of a brother by a brother: "The pistol's snout glints as it is uncovered. Their eyes meet. Mangal raises the gun and empties three golden beauties into the older man. The chief minister falls, blood oozing from his chest. For a moment, he stares at Mangal, then his eyes flicker shut. A siren begins to wail. Security men quickly cordon off the area. The crowds are hurried out. The ambulance that is always in attendance can be heard coming up the driveway. More security men surrounded Mangal; his arms are pinned behind him, his weapon snatched. There's no need for this; Mangal hasn't moved from his current location. His gaze is fixed on the slowly spreading red stain on the front of the white kurta. Not many present know that a brother has shot a brother. All that will come later. Himmat doesn't die at once, but as far as Mangal is concerned, the story of the Gaina



brothers is over."<sup>24</sup> Himmat Singh and Mangal Singh are the main figures in the novel. They are seen at the very beginning of the novel.

Himmat Singh's political aspirations are somewhat irrelevant as compared to his uncle's, who was ineffective due to a lack of connections in the sector. Himmat rejects his son and marries the daughter of a politician in order to solidify his position. Like Dhanpal and Virpal, the younger Singh brother, Mangal, was expecting his brother to assist. After his brother Mangal was found guilty of killing Himmat Singh for his benefit, the charges against him were upgraded to premeditated murder by the judge: "There is speculation that Mangal might plead insanity in order to escape punishment. Overcome with rage, party supporters congregate outside the Jaipur prison. Stones are thrown, slogans are shouted. Mangal should be awarded the death sentence immediately. Some young IPPP party workers threaten to immolate themselves in front of the prison gates if their demands are not favourably considered."<sup>25</sup> The story of Mangal Singh Gaina, who is weak and unsettled, looking up to his brother throughout his whole life, is hated and dependent on his wife, and he waits for a turn, which never comes.

The story of the novel actually begins after a climax. The story begins in a village with two brothers. The younger was always ready to co-operate and was devoted to his life for the elder brother. And so he gifted his elder son to his elder brother. The boy grows up and hates the standards of the village and dreams of a new life. This is the most effective part of the novel, where the novelist is at his most effective. The elder brother, Himmat Singh Gaina, is good-looking and single-minded, and wants to get everything. Mangal, the villager, is less educated. Life is simple for him. Money and

power are the ruling symbols, and politics is the means to that end. The character of Mangal in the novel is almost like an edifice without the top floor.

In conclusion, we can say that the above novels, written by Manju Kapur, are milestones in the field of fiction. With the help of these novels, she tries to give them a new depth, richness, and significance. She demonstrates the women's self-esteem and their need for self-worth in the latter novels. In her novels, she highlights feminist issues that are prevailing in Indian society. She attempts to convey the fact that it is difficult for the woman to establish her personal identity. In the modern context, women rarely secure their personal identity because they are trapped and entangled within the limits of religion, tradition, social norms, and other boundations. With the help of her novels, Kapur's attempt is significant and appreciative that she raises women's voices and demands in society. Thus, the novels of Manju Kapur are the pioneering images of women because they are based on feminism. In her social and political attitudes, she is a feminist and much concerned with the rights of women.

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## CHAPTER 2

### **ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S QUEST FOR IDENTITY**

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We might think that the search for personal identification begins in early puberty, throughout the era of socialisation, and stays strong during that time. People seem to change and develop their personal identities throughout their lives, particularly when they undergo new and challenging experiences. When we undergo a personal journey from adolescence to maturity, we witness a broadening and development in awareness of diverse forms of lifestyles and decision-making processes. When we look for existential significance in our lives, we consider questions such as work, family, and our purpose, and we scrutinise our most important choices. However, as we advance in age and improve our cognitive skills, we gain more perspective about the meaning of our lives and will make critical decisions. We don't conform to social norms as well because our peers and our parents no longer control us. When we have travelled widely and thoroughly, we will be able to form our own unique identities. The search for our personal identity is linked to our spiritual journey as well.

Manju Kapur is a well-known Indian contemporary author today. I wonder if she receives more respect in India than the other English women as Shashi Deshpande, Gita Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, and Shobha De, since they all started off in the same vein. She's written her tales about women as it pertains to their sexuality, their issues, and dress. Manju Kapur, a Lithuanian novelist, emerges as a significant novelist who adds new perspectives, flexibility, harmony, and significance to contemporary English works. She successfully combines personalities and societal problems in her books to demonstrate what is at stake in the situations she

writes about. In Kapur's novels, she tries to portray females' self-knowledge and their inner psychology. More and more Indian people are beginning to write in English, and it is widely acknowledged that Indian literature has its great value. India is a rather diverse place. The world of literature the world over has been influenced by revolutions that have had a particularly great impact on one region's literary sensibility. Let it be known that it is a reality that Indian literature is multiethnic and socio-historical.

With the contribution of some great writers of regional and national fame, Indian literature has reached its highest point of creation. She provided a new point of view in the evolution of Indian literature with works by Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan, and Shobha Despande. Men want to point out the value of female self-assertion to women. Any of their protagonists' attitudes indicate drastic reform is impossible to keep. In this search for personal identity, the main characters would have to confront any twist and turn of fate.

Arundhati Roy holds an important position among Indian female novelists. She has her own ideas about how women should behave. To prove the identity of the women, they were searching for their own. This was in part the cause of Arundhati's self-quest for Roy's identity as a novelist, as she didn't think she should until she had written from inside herself. The principles of Roy's designs are an instinctive product of her motives and compulsions, which are both to advertise herself and to seek public recognition. As far as plants are concerned, it is only as it should be. While the majority of the protagonists are female, she builds a compelling gallery

of diverse ones. Her characters overreact because women are hypersensitive.

She modified the behavioural patterns of Indian literature by writing about women's issues. People nowadays are much more active in reading the works of contemporary English authors penned by women than they were while Jane Austen was alive. The prominent theme in the novel is the new woman and her quest for her own self-worth and meaning. They all transcend their conventional gender roles and acquire a new sense of self. In Deshpande's works, the all-consuming drive toward an authentic and actual self-awareness is evident. The procedures of self-consciousness and self-awareness that Vasanti Deshpande includes allow her heroines to advance through a series of personal metamorphoses before they have been granted permission to be who they really are. These women's quest for self-identity comes from the many experiences of their lives. They strive to transcend their social conditioning and conventions, rising to the challenge of becoming cultural heroes in the process. When actually free, people no longer want to be told what to do but want to take the lead role.

Githa Hariharan is a well-known novelist in India. Initially, she worked for public broadcasting. She received her BA in English from the University of Mumbai and her MA in Communication from Fairfield University. She won the Commonwealth writers' award in 1993 for her first book, "The Thousand Faces of Night". In the latter half of 1994, her short stories were included in an anthology. Githa was a writer who dealt with topics such as female castes and social matters. She portrays the ways that have changed the way women see themselves in the modern and postmodern eras.

At a time when she was in her mid-twenties, she had a book of short stories written. Githa Hariharan is an author who has written on female social status and caste in India. For better or worse, she chronicles the ever-changing female archetype in the modern and postmodern periods. Because Indian society is conventional and believes in this, she shows the social system and patriarchic system in her first novel.

In her book, women's generation looks forward to having the environment and education, but it is at least attributable to the propensity of society to segregate them into conventional roles. Through their novels, Githa Hariharan tries to bring the pathetic condition of Indian women and their desperate struggles to the readers' awareness. Indo-Aryan literature is not associated with Indian literature in English. There is a goodly representation of Indian female novelists in English fiction. She was the mother of the feminist movement in many parts of the world. Anita Nair's accurate portrayals of female characters are very remarkable.

A woman's identity crisis is a situation where she simultaneously achieves her own humanity when battling against those who restrain her. Before, women tried to define themselves in terms of their position as wife, son, mother, and daughter. She happily accepted this identity when it was approved of her. Nowadays, though, the identity of a mother and a wife has fallen out of favour. She has now understood the artificiality of this persona that the community has forced on her, and therefore will attempt to resist its norms and customs. She also felt a human being should be able to rise on their own two feet, able to live in a world where men and women are on fair terms.

English literature has journeyed to achieve its present glory and grandeur. At present, various women writers, through their writings, analyse the world of women. Among these women writers, Shobha De has earned her special name. Over the years, she has become a sort of icon for showing us various ways in which women can achieve equality and emancipation, especially in the manner of human relationships.

The chief benefit of the team members' work is their study of female protagonists and dealing with the difficulties of developing their own identities. The upper-class families in India are often the subjects of her writings. She is experienced at dealing with gender-related problems. Most importantly, she demonstrates a woman's ability to deal with difficult ethical and spiritual issues through her work. In recent decades, she has written about the Indian upper class. She is open to discussions about women's topics.

It is said that several of the novels by Shobha De describe the modern Indian woman's language. She tried to find liberation for the first time to create a modern Indian character who appreciates many phases of existence, with regard to Indian women's identity. In Indian culture, after birth, the girl child is never appreciated or welcomed by family or society. Her novels shiver with patriarchal supremacy.

These women are becoming profoundly mindful of their sexual and psychological capabilities, as well as their own sexual and personal desires. To really understand her setting, she gets to know it on her own terms. Shobha De's novels and her protest books focus on gender-based obstacles that keep women from speaking up and doing stuff. She is one of the most



prominent authors in both Indian and foreign circles. Nair is known for drawing realistic women in her stories.

She has already written her first volume. A book consisting of short stories is the second (*Ladies Coupe* is the first) that has been published and has been dubbed into over twenty-five languages around the world. In recent years, many women have found Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* well worth mentioning in India because of its topic. The lack of thematic representation in the post-colonial economy as a fundamental to traditional Indian society is the gender position for women as becoming a decorative object that requires suppression. The story takes up womanism and presents it to the reader in a novelistic form.

Anita Nair has written the novel "*Ladies Couteau*" ("Lady with a Knife"), which describes a woman's struggles to gain control, autonomy, and maintain freedom. So, it is the tale of six people, and one of the passengers, Akhilandeswari, who meet on a train, listens to the five others, and eventually solves their conundrum: can a woman be happy without a man? The narrative moves from the past to the present to the future, which shows more than the five women who are in humiliation, with women degraded and embarrassed. The problem with India is that it has attempted and failed in several respects to subjugate, belittle, and degrade women in terms of their identity. That would not just put into doubt conventional man's place in our capitalist culture and misogynistic society, but it might mean the very life of an alternative.

In present times, she (Ms. Manju Kapur) received her M.Phil in English from Amritsar University in Delhi and has come into prominence as an emerging Indian scholar. Her works in Indo-English literature have had a

deep influence on the culture. She began writing poetry and novels at the same time. It was simple. Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*, the first book, was critically acclaimed and hugely successful. This book was named Commonwealth Novel of the Year and is the first of its kind. In modern times, women are more important to the culture than ever before. They carry out every possible role. Each constructive action a woman takes can point toward genuine liberation. A woman is the architect of national destiny. Though fluttery and fragile as a bit of lily-petal, she has a core of brass. She's the driving force behind every man's movement. Surely that has been carried out legally, but the societal transition with respect to women has not yet taken place.

Indian culture describes the birth of a woman as creating food, doing the laundry, and taking care of the family. She has no right to inquire about finances, but she also has the obligation and responsibility to support and meet the financial needs of her spouse. The same topic that occurs in the sequel to her book, *A Married Woman*, also appears in it. In Indian literature, a woman is portrayed as someone who struggles in silence. Female novelists, including Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, and Shashi Deshpande, have pierced the silence of misery and defied conventional stereotypes, claiming that women should be independent rather than attempting to adhere to them. In her first book, *Difficult Daughters*, in 1998, Manju Kapur attempts to showcase women's personalities. Her writing is little more than a study of women and their sexuality. In her case, she does the kind of woman justice to the position that you'd see in the movies or on television, but not the "dumb bimbo" characters that we are usually led to expect. One of her best novels depicts a new female fighting the prevalent societal evil of her time.

This chapter is dedicated to the exploration of the topic of "women's quest for identity." This implies that personal identification has a lot to do with the overall impression and nature of the characters in the play, as well as the specific details of their talent and concept. People who are searching for their identity in today's environment may be seeking to locate a deep past identity from others from whom they have inherited their ancestors or links to their lineage, or trying to prepare for a life in the future with the origins of the examples they will find. This is due to the fact that they are suspicious of her motives. People and social transformation are also affected by beliefs and attitudes; certain people need to recognise and embrace new ideas in order to become new themselves, while others are unable to see significant change. Identity is something we will have a hand in; it is not something imposed by biology, but something that is discovered, a finding that is made, and a decision that is made.

Someone who considers herself to be a misfit would struggle against both the repression and injustice of women. Manju Kapur's first book, *Difficult Daughters*, details her attempt to sort out her personal beliefs and role in society. Every Manju Kapur's novel poses a distinct intent and a shifting female self-image. The professor attempts to look at and work on topics and questions that affect women who are in the middle class. It's because the novelist wants to highlight the challenges women face on the road to womanhood and the personal conflicts they experience that he is involved in creating. Most of Kapur's female characters have main characters who are both trained and fully developed. Her protagonists may be quite powerful, but they are confined to society's boundaries. They are intelligent and free to learn, however limited by their upbringing. Though every woman is self-motivated, all of them are trapped in a certain kind of

different fight. It is widely accepted that half the world's population is female, but women are seldom considered equivalent to men.

Womankind has both analytical and spiritual capacity, but she is perceived to be at a disadvantage. In that case, the issue of seeking out a self is vindicated. A woman is generally characterised in terms of her family roles: mother, wife, sister, and (she has a lot of power) in the sense of the family, but little of her own personal identification in that of society. Manju Kapur is well-known for her belief in equal harmony between men and women in society, with each playing important artistic roles. She reveals the roles of mothers and daughters in her novels.

Her protagonists are mostly educated, and they are the representatives of the female folk. The women of Kapur's novels are the symbols of female imagination, and her novels are stories of struggle for liberty and a search for an identity. The novelist searches for new ideals and heroes, but her characters seek to preserve harmony with their loved ones and the society around them. Talking about the oppression that women have to endure in a patriarchal society is a theme used in the works of Manju Kapur. She is an author who writes about women continuously involved in an uphill struggle to achieve value in their lives.

*Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur includes those who survive and suffer within the patriarchal system. She has published several books about women in pursuit of meaningfulness. She hates tradition and her efforts in search of an identity are beautifully described in the book's title. This novel reveals the women who try to establish their own identity. The story of the novel centres on the character of Virmati, the protagonist of the novel. It

represents the women of three generations: Kasturi, her daughter Virmati, and Virmati's daughter Ida.

In the second generation of characters, the majority of the plot seems to be about the daughter of the Venetian nobleman family, whose tumultuous childhood influences the destiny of the Venetian aristocracy. Virmati is the major character in the book. The protagonist, Virmati, was the eldest of the eleven children of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash. Since she is the eldest girl, she bears the onerous pregnancy. She lost her childhood because her mother, Kasturi, never gave her emotional security, and on the other hand, Virmati, engaged in mothering her younger siblings.

As girl, she had grown up on the classic Indian folklore-“I saw the fanatical gleam in the eyes of the people when they spoke of ghee, milk, and butter. Perhaps, if I had possessed the same zeal, the time and space walls might have melted away in my hand. However, my preferences vary.”<sup>1</sup> Virmati is careful and she knows her duties and responsibilities very well. Her caring nature is shown in these lines from the novel- "Her first memories of becoming a babysitter include when she was a little girl. She has found enjoying it. She was invaluable to anyone who was next to her, not just to her infant Parvati, but to her younger siblings as well."<sup>2</sup>

Virmati was emotionally starved from her childhood, and whenever she tried to forge a bond with her mother, she was rebuked. Kasturi always preached to Virmati that marriage is the final goal and destiny of a girl. Virmati is a talented young woman from Amritsar. She is being informed in the story by her daughter, Ida. To begin the plot, in the book, Virmati dies. Her daughter Ida is telling a tale about her mother's demise.

She seeks to reconstitute her mother's history. In this way, she visits people who were related to her mother, Virmati, and those who had known her intimately. Ida visits the places where her mother lived personally. According to Ida's method of narration, the life history of her mother, we learn how Virmati was torn between family-duty and illicit love. The life story of Virmati is nothing but a story of sorrow, compromise, love, and suffering.

One has the power to demonstrate the essence of Virmati's mindset and wish after death- "When I'm dead, I want my body donated to science. When I am gone, I would like my body to be used for scientific research, please. I'm donating my eyes, my heart, and my kidneys, or whatever organs will be of use. And after I died, somebody would remember me and revere me as someone who was valuable. I don't want credit, I don't want anonymity."<sup>3</sup>

Now that she thinks about it, Ida longs to recall her mother's words to her. She says that her mother was an angry divorcee who revolted against the traditions of the community. Virmati is searching for her sense of self in the traditional Indian community. She had forgotten who she was in the middle of caring for the boys. In the book, the author exhibits the hardships and day-to-day problems of Indian women in their homes. She's regulated by the strings of the man. This symbol is a favourite of Thomas Hardy's: "Man is the slave of circumstance." This shirt costs \$10 but looks like it was made in a sweatshop since it was produced in a Third World country. A woman's destiny, according to Virmati's mother, is to marry. Kasturi, Virmati's oldest daughter, was compelled to take care of all of her siblings.

When her mother was breastfeeding, Virmati still had her hands full of house chores. She was responsible and kind. She's been taking care of the children since she was a young child- "Virmati had been caring for children since she could remember. She wasn't just important to newborn Parvati; she was also like a second mother to her younger siblings. She was irritable and intolerant of commotion. If they didn't eat their meals, she would seek down the offending brother or sister when she got home from school and shovel the cold food down their throats. She slapped them hard if they refused to wear the hand-me-down clothes she assigned them. In most cases, one was plenty. She tried to be nice at times, but it was exhausting labour, and she was nearly always fatigued and harassed."<sup>4</sup> Virmati was obligated to endure the pressure of the family in her youth. This then continues her portrayal of an ordinary Indian woman by the poet.

Her precious time has been invested in housework. She needs to enjoy her time having fun without feeling obligated to do so. For the first time, we'll be granted independence in Amritsar. Virmati appears to be a champion of the movement for gender equity in the book about her days in Amritsar. "When they were visiting, she dressed in her Parsi-style sari with the pallu draped over her right shoulder, as per Shakuntala's advice. The saris were small, but the outer border was made of silk. Blouses of the same lightweight, gauzy cloth had decorated loose sleeves. She parted her hair on the side, then brushed her hair back and it lay in a knot against her neck. The shoes she was wearing were a dark black patent with a high heel."<sup>5</sup> The lifestyle of the typical Indian family closely mirrors that of the villagers in small towns across the subcontinent: slow, simple, and quite boring. One of Virmati's cousins even went to college in Lahore, but held a house as well.

Shakuntala is drawn to the free-wheeling lifestyle, and that attracts Virmati. Kapur portrays two separate women in the book, one of which is active and one of which is passive. Shakuntala is trained, though she has no family obligation on the other hand Virmati is a typical Indian woman. She is constrained by family commitments, therefore, she can't travel. She gave up on her hopes and wishes in everyday trials. Manju Kapur has cleverly taken advantage of the disintegration of the colonial order. Often, she explains the battle for self-determination in Virmati. Virmati wants her life to be unencumbered with responsibilities and free of obligation, much like Shakuntala.

Virmati wished to study further, but her family rejected her wish. Even though she is not supported by her mother, because her mother, Kasturi, also desires the early marriage of Virmati. Through the protagonist and other female characters, the novelist exposes the reality of Indian society. Virmati cannot decide who she loves, but she has to finish her school education first. She tries to take her own life because she is unable to feel compassion. She eventually plans to visit Lahore in order to finish her studies. The entire family is deeply opposed to her choice, but they can do little.

She achieved her ambition by receiving a B.A. from A.S. College, Amritsar, and a B.T. from Lahore. While she was studying for her B.A., Harish, an Oxford-returned professor, entered her life. This secret romance between Virmati and Harish continues, and Virmati attempts suicide when her family arranges her marriage with an engineer, Inderjeet. Virmati denies marrying Inderjeet, and to avoid any humiliation, Virmati's younger sister Indumati is married to Inderjeet at the appointed time and date.



Virmati insisted on her further study, so her father, Suraj Prakash, and her grandfather, Lala Diwan Chand, sent her to Lahore for further study of B.T. study. Virmati was very interested in doing B.T.—"Virmati loved doing B.T. It took up her day from nine to three-theory classes in the morning, practical teaching in the attached SL girl's school in the afternoon."<sup>6</sup>

In South Asia, Lahore, she is joined by her roommate, Swarna. She is politically and professionally active. She is a feminist who has her own opinions and shares them, and wishes to do everything on her own. As she becomes SwarnaLata's companion, Virmati tries to discover what communal issues the Indian independence movement was grappling with. The novelist found a way to draw the relationship between the movements of the antagonist and the antagonist's personality into play with fluidity in Virmati. In the process of attending numerous parties and seminars, Virmati had heard and spoken several times about political discourse. Kapur writes- "The hands of Virmatis clapped as loudly and as long as the others. The welcoming talk was then given by Miss Saubhagya Sehgal, chairman of the reception committee. Virmati wondered aloud, I didn't realise we were still in the welcome stage."<sup>7</sup>

During her education, she falls in illicit love with a Muslim friend, and the result is that she becomes pregnant without the professor knowing it. Swarn Lata also confesses this fact: "Yes, she was pregnant, said my old lady, slowly and carefully. Though she only told me when she had to."<sup>8</sup> Instead, she shared this problem with the help of her roommate, Swarna, who managed to get an abortion on the unwanted pregnancy.

After the tragedy in her parental family, i.e., the untimely death of Virmati's father, Suraj Prakash, her grandfather, Lala Diwan Chand,

completely broken by his son's death. Virmati is now completely immersed in herself. She feels that her love affair and education failed to give her a stable identity and an autonomous existence. She had, in fact, paid a much too heavy price for her independence. In her whole life, she longed for the love of her mother, who never allowed herself to be emotionally together with her daughter. Her emotions and needs were fulfilled only to a small extent when she was with her husband, the professor of the college. In fact, Virmati is alone, although she had an abundance of emotions like love, affection, care, and a spirit of togetherness with other women. Ida was the daughter of Virmati, who was childless and a divorcee.

When Ida narrates the story of her mother Virmati, Virmati's brother Kailash Nath offers his unconditional support and co-operation in the undertaking of unearthing the details of Virmati's past and connecting them together in a logical pattern. Ida feels that her relatives gave her one view, whereas she wanted another—a real and full view of her mother's life. Ida says to her mother in the novel's first lines -“The one thing I had desired was not to be like my mother. Now she was gone, and I stood there, dry-eyed, leaden, and half-dead, staring at the fire that rose from her shrivelled body, as my relatives gathered around the pyre and wailed.”<sup>9</sup>

According to Ida, Virmati's childhood was not a typical happy childhood under the wings of her mother, Kasturi. Virmati was almost tired and harassed because she was burdened with the care and responsibility of her younger sibling. She asserts her independence as a single woman who has equipped herself to fight the battles of life alone.

For Ida, it was not an easy task to recover from her mother's past. She asked about Virmati, the way she was before she knew her. She came to learn that Virmati's parents had eleven children. The female children were: Virmati, Indumati, Gunwati, Hemavati, Vidyavati, and Parvati. The male children were: Kailashnath, Gopinath, Krishnanath, Prakashnatah, and Hiranath. Ida noticed that her relatives were polite and respectful of the dead.

Virmati felt emotionally deprived of her mother's love and affection. Now she has to accompany Kasturi to Dalhousie. Virmati was now much closer to Kasturi and her youngest sister, Paro. Kasturi always encouraged Virmati to do some domestic work in order to make herself useful. After sometime, Virmati's aunt, Lajwanti, arrived and began writing to her daughter, Shakuntala, to visit them in the meantime. Shakuntala arrived in Dalhousie. She is the eldest child of Virmati's household. Shakuntala was the daughter of Virmati's father, Chandra Prakash, and aunt Lajwanti.

The love-affair of Virmati with the professor and her impending marriage with the engineer, Inderjit, had torn her apart. Now, suicide was her only escape route. She planned to slip out of her house, but Paro noticed her plan because Paro was attached to Virmati very passionately. After an attempt at suicide, Virmati became a more courageous and fearless young woman. She denies having an arranged marriage with Inderjit and expressed her resolve to further study. Shakuntala is now Virmati's only hope and source of inspiration. Virmati wanted to be like her. Shakuntala had managed a room in which Virmati was to share with another student, SwarnaLata. The new room partner, SwarnaLata, supported Virmati at every step and situation. As a room partner: "The next day, Swarn Lata,

the room-mate, came. She shone as long as they were together, and she was kind, and her life was abundant with the gold she gave away.”<sup>10</sup>

Swarna’s loving and sympathetic gesture softened Virmati, and she shared with her the secret of her love-affair with the professor, explaining her conflict caused by uncertainty. Despite Swarna enlightening Virmati about life and women’s roles, and encouraging her. Virmati was suffering between two worlds. First, she was not satisfied with her B.T. exams. Second, she now discovered that she was pregnant and on her way to becoming an unmarried mother. She was terribly shaken by the fact of the pregnancy, and she was unable to communicate her feelings to anybody. She found a real friend in Swarna, who understood her and could both suggest a way out of it and support her in every possible way.

Ida, who is Virmati’s daughter, identifies and sympathises with Virmati because Ida herself has undergone an abortion. Ida reflects sympathetically on how poor Virmati must have suffered from the unwanted and socially unacceptable pregnancy. In such a crisis, Virmati looked up to Swarna as her only support and shared the secret of her pregnancy. Swarna did not look shocked or surprised, but cautious. Virmati knows very well that government hospitals do not permit illegal abortions. However, Swarna finally managed Virmati’s abortion with Miss Datta’s help, and hired a male doctor to perform the task. This incident shows the female bonding between Virmati and Swarna Lata.

Driven by her parents' love tale, Manju Kapur, stitched bit by bit and eventually permitted it to subside. Her history is pieced together using photos, what her family has told her, her scattered memories, and details she's collected, all blended together to create a plot about her mother's

town. It is quest to identify herself by fulfilling her mother's wishes and thus relieving her mother's pressures has led her to self-discovery. Ida, the narrator, is a troublesome daughter who spends the novel delving into her mother's life. As she says at the end of the novel- "All along, I felt the rush of discovery, the pleasure of fitting narratives into a discernible legacy. Each phrase in this book is a brick in a mansion I built with my intellect and my emotions, weaving a connection between my mother and me. Mamma, go ahead and live in it, and leave me alone. Do not bother me any more." <sup>11</sup>

In all her attempts, though, she is unable to finish constructing a mansion or home for her mother. It creates a clash of identities. The daughter continues her quest for her identity when she learns of her mother's resemblance. Whenever she takes an interest in something, controversy inevitably erupts. Ida "strives to be the model daughter" <sup>12</sup> as she grows up. She insisted it was for her own good, "My mother tightened her reins on me as I grew older; she adds of the pressure to perform better. As a result, I'm always on the lookout for ways out."<sup>13</sup> She rebels and eventually admits, "I was nothing, husbandless, childless.I felt as if I were a pencil mark on the societal outskirts."<sup>14</sup> Then she says, blaming her mother- "For extended periods of time, I was enveloped by sorrow, depression, and despair, I'd lie in bed for hours, unable to sleep, feeling sorry for myself for all I didn't have, hating my mother, myself." <sup>15</sup>

Manju Kapur's second novel, *A Married Woman*, investigates the different stages of a woman's life, both before and after marriage. The theme of female bonding appears in the novel in a different way. The novel's whole plot focuses around Astha, the novel's protagonist. Astha comes from a

middle-class household and is well-educated. "She is the only female child of her father and mother. Their weights were her education, her character, her health, and her marriage. She was their hope, and though she didn't want them to defend their prized possession with such vigilance, they did, oh they did" <sup>16</sup>. Her parents, both of whom are employed, Astha is a talented painter. Her father is a senior bureaucrat and her mother is a teacher by profession.

Marriage is a very holy and dedicated thing. It holds great significance in Indian culture and tradition. It is supposed to be a union of two souls. It embodies trust, cooperation, commitment, and understanding. Both of the counterparts revolve around the duties and responsibilities necessary to run a married life smoothly. Traditionally, all of the duties, understandings, compromises, and limitations were assigned to women. Women were confined to four walls. Gradually, it caused suffocation in them. They rebelled against the puppet treatment of the patriarchal system. It results in the emergence of a number of new revolutionary stars in the literary sky. Women have left indelible imprints on the world through their works. Woman writers in our country have fought for their space and convinced the world that women are not condemned to silence and that speech can empower them. Their work is significant in making society aware of women's demands, providing a medium for self-expression, rewriting the history of India and reconstructing and reassuring the status and position of women.

It's a talk focused on advocacy rather than a lady's position as an authority since it concerns crucial topics regarding ladies not concerned with ladyhood- She attempts to identify with both the apparent and subtle

pressures put on women who differ from her with respect to society's definitions of what is ladylike. She learns about the cultural identity of a middle-class woman and her struggle for self-acceptance. In the novels of Manju Kapur, the role of a woman has undergone a significant change. Her writing is merely an investigation of female character and cultural identity. She describes a female character in a real way. As she narrates the inner journey of a female psyche, Kapur has shown an evolved view of the feminine psyche.

The woman in the novels by Manju Kapur is presented as a new woman who struggles against the social evil system. The protagonists of her novels try to break the tradition of silence. She is concerned with and is actively looking into the sources of human misery. Women experience oppressive pressures and are thus more likely to be burned in the kitchen. To a greater extent, they have sex-specific traits. The concept of gender bias is reflected in the works of Manju Kapur. Her protagonists strive to maintain equilibrium between themselves and the social world. The exploration of the Indian woman's troubled mind incorporates aspects such as depression. Her protagonists, often sensitive women, seek life-altering epiphanies. The characters' search for interpersonal connections, reactions, and comprehension is met with great misfortune. The marriage problems of an Indian woman weigh heavily on her soul. The framework for oppressing women in Manju Kapur's novels poses a fresh obstacle for contemporary feminists. Tradition is what the characters in her books actively seek to shatter. Since she considers these issues to be so vital, her prose comes alive with empathy and goes to great lengths to find the source of human misery.

Women, exposed to traditional male domination, have to do most of the housework, but they often suffer physical and social abuse as a result. They have more gender-based characteristics and are more susceptible to alternate gender role-expressions. A significant theme of Manju Kapur's works is that of women's subjugation in society. Her characters struggle to reach the fine line between being a person and their culture, with some diving into the former and others taking refuge in the latter. She highlights the aspects of the Indian woman's troubled mind that relate to her feelings of isolation and alienation from society. She has specialised in writing novels about emotionally over-sensitive women in need of something significant in their lives. One feels deeply for her characters because of their fruitless search for emotional comprehension, intimacy, reaction, and engagement. As long as the psychological sufferings exist in their marital existence, she is nervous.

Even when people condemn people who have opted not to get married, they claim they want not to follow a home life of freedom but choose to lead a lifestyle of their own. It is through self-control that the influence of women on liberty is highlighted in Kapur's book. She has thus made an important contribution to Indian literature and psychology. Kapur's book, *A Married Lady*, is a subversive feminist text. This book is a reverent acknowledgement of a woman in a poor relationship.

Kapur emphasises the things that restrain women from enjoying their lives, developing their potential, and achieving their full potential. Religion, custom, and myth have been frequently used to allow women to embrace their inferior position, resulting in much undue pain and restraint. The female characters take on and reject ideas of social conservatism to



reinvent themselves. As part of her native Indian English literature and feminist psychoanalysis, her studies have been hugely popular. From Manju Kapur's view, the wife in her novel, *A Married Woman*, has become a kind of protest from the woman's perspective. This novel is about a woman who, on the verge of a tragic marriage, embraces her personality cult wholeheartedly. The novel raises the sensitive issue of homosexual partnerships in a bold way. This is becoming increasingly apparent in present life, whether we like it or not.

The novel "*A Married Woman*" revolves around the character of Astha. It talks about the different stages and steps of a woman's life, pre and post marriage. By keeping the traditional values, Astha's parents are hopeless about her marriage. Astha's mother has this opinion: "There is plenty of time for anything. The girl is maturing, becoming more beautiful by the day. The fruit must be harvested before it is about to be collected or it will be overripe and gone bad. There will come a time later when she falls into such bad relationships and we may have to curse our own life. With an engagement at this age, she'll have a clear understanding of the problems that she'll face during her wedding. It is not realistic to expect us to expect that we will live forever."<sup>17</sup>

Hemant holds an MBA from the U.S. and works as a Management Assistant at a financial institution in India. When they got married, his aspirations about what a good husband should be and a wife should have in life fell into place. She seemed to have come to achieve her pre-teen ideas of what a perfect husband and wife should have. Astha is from one of the middle-class families and has therefore broken the pattern of being one of devoting her whole life to the interests of others. This lady fell in

love with a guy named Bunty before she got married. Right from the age of her puberty, she's had one of these unrequited thoughts of affection. However, this encounter is short-lived when Astha's mother confronts Bunty's parents about it.

Astha is the central character in the novel, and she is a married lady. She details the many phases and measures in a woman's life prior to and after marriage. According to Astha's parents, her prospects for a good marriage are limited because they don't want to change any of their principles. She's finally coming into her own. During her final year of graduation, her aching heart finds relaxation in the luxurious atmosphere of Rohan. Rohan goes to Oxford for higher education and leaves her deserted. In her early days of marriage with Hemant, she enjoyed life. Then their marriage falls into the expected pattern. When Astha was expecting her first child, her mother-in-law wished she had had a boy. Kapur depicts such tugs of war within a world of gender politics, where male figures and female agents of patriarchy set the limits within which women must struggle for their version of individuality. Their first child is a girl. Since he yearns for a baby, Hemant's happiness is disturbed.

When Astha was pregnant, she enjoyed her pregnancy. "Every part of Astha's pregnancy was enjoyable to her. She got increasingly bucolic as the story progressed. Teaching was exhausting, and she had little energy left for anything else. She spent much of her time at home sleeping. Hemant enjoyed what was going on in front of his eyes with a lady,' he added, putting his hands over her enormous and full belly, and over her breasts, which were undoubtedly larger and fuller than they had ever been."<sup>18</sup>

In terms of the background of the play, “everybody was almost as pleased to be able to see the birth of Astha's son as they were ashamed of it.”<sup>19</sup> She spends most of her time ruminating on strange topics, hoping to be a source of laughter and trouble in her husband's mind and a lifeline to her kin. At the academy, Aijaz leads her down a path less travelled into the streets and helps her see a very different part of the city than she might have on her own.

She has husbands and adolescents that belittle her thoughts and beliefs by generally attempting to foist their duties on her. She makes a 180-degree change in her life when Aijaz arrives at the academy. He asks her to script a play about the demolition of the Babri mosque incident; there were many deaths of both Hindus and Muslims, and the entire matter turned into a political debate. “This was an interfaith committee presided over by the British Resident, with members comprising both Hindus and Muslims. At the start of the Indian Mutiny, however, the British attempted to bifurcate the road to the mosque, and in the ensuing year of 1859, the mosque was torched. They started off from opposite ends of the peninsula and met in the center.”<sup>20</sup> Until now, Astha has always viewed men as her companions. This is the first moment that she meets someone who appreciates her abilities and gets involved with him. The first time she sees a guy who can see the merit of her talents, but he is savagely murdered.

Her aching and tormented heart gets some relief in the caring words of Aijaz. Everything makes sense in terms of her emotional needs. Being married, Astha matures into a permanent wife and becomes a self-sacrificing mother. For her part, her highly volatile relationship with her organisational thought processes requires her to assume the role of both a

mother and a father for her children. Many couples find this hard to accept. If his career doesn't keep him occupied enough, this seems to destabilise their union.

There is an utter emptiness that exists in the rest of the life of a restless individual, and that person experiences family constriction through having responsibilities, subtlety, and in her liberation, which feels very much like strangulation. She is being hemmed in by the increasing demands of her family and managing everyone's desires at the same time. An uneducated woman, when it comes to her financial obligations, is more of a financial burden than a burden in India, as in other places, and is often seen as a social and emotional handicap in her marriage.

Her restlessness leads her to utter solitude and the exclusion of family links. She's drowning in her family's burgeoning needs and has to accommodate everybody's demands on her time. From an Indian perspective, Astha understands a married woman to be a servant or slave in the home, but she thinks divorce would mean social and economic death in Indian status. She gave her husband enough to satisfy the biological need, but didn't put a lot of herself into the relationship. "Hemant's wife needed a prepared body at night, a compliant, available body in the morning, and a willing wife who would do what she was told was all the necessities for her husband."<sup>21</sup>

The book is strewn with a lot of events that viewers would be able to connect with. It has countless dimensions that no person will really comprehend. While Astha was wary of her husband's influence on her personal finances, she went along with his orders so far just as she had to with him and her father-in-law for the sake of her children and family's peace of mind. It has a great number of events that one may link to it. It

opens up a myriad of possibilities that cannot be ignored. He is reluctant to negotiate any financial issues with her, and she endures this farce only to preserve the facade of a stable family existence. Astha's state of mind and her sensitive nature cannot be understood by Hemant and her family.

And, with this, she is exploited and humiliated by her elders as well. Kapur claims that the woman wants more than just bread and cheese; she also needs a husband who can offer encouragement and be affectionate. To take control of their thirst, they want to be cherished by guys. Astha is headed to Aijaz as she wants to lead a routine life as a Hindu woman, something that does not attract her. Dedication to her identity has driven her to her search for freedom.

In other words, Astha's duties are confined to the coliseum of the domestic household. Similarly, her national identity is also brought into question, as her mother-in-law subscribes to the idea of Hindu Nationalism. It becomes evident from their talk that Astha's mother-in-law is incapable of separating her religious and national identity. On one hand, Astha's place is set within the boundaries of home and home lovingness, and on the other hand, she is denied the freedom of thought. The religious space that Astha's mother-in-law imposes upon Astha is undermined by Astha's own agency. Astha faces obstacles from her husband and his family, but Astha is able to exercise her agency in forming her own views on national and religious matters through a conscious decision that she makes.

Astha's conscious decisions are helped by her interchanges and close contacts with other characters whose national and religious identities do not follow the pro-right-wing sentiments of Hemant and her in-laws. Her growing awareness of religious conflicts that exist outside the safety of her

home comes about through her interactions with Aijaz Khan, a secular Muslim. Manju Kapur creates the turbulence inside Astha's life against the backdrop of religious upheaval in India, with the Hindu-Muslim battle over sacred site in Ayodhya. Her marriage gets contentious once she becomes involved in the rebellious and protesting worlds. As a result, it might be implied that a nation is fractured by religious divisions and political forces, whereas a marriage is destroyed by problems that cannot be reconciled.

What makes the book fascinating is Astha and Peeplika's relationship. Particularly for readers of the age of thirteen and up, it's based on patience and mutual love. Moreover, the lesbian relationship is demonstrated by the author through what occurred between Astha and Peepli. "Pipee gently turned her around and approached her like a tree trunk of life by putting her arms around her torso first. One could tell from the pressure of her hands on her elbows and hips and the beginning of her thighs that she was becoming more relaxed. As she undid her shirt buttons, she stopped to examine her face in the mirror. She started to feel her back."<sup>22</sup> Aijaz, the husband of Peeplika, is deceased. People feel lonelier and less of themselves and have the belief that they can never find another lover because of their current lack of opportunities to meet people.

The book's other focus is Astha and Peepli's friendship. Their relationship was seen across the novel between Astha and Peepli as they stood there together. Pipeelika provides her with a lot of comfort because they are both going through the same thing. Her anguish forces her to become trapped in an unavoidable circumstance. Astha's need for a purpose in life other than being a wife and mother is explored in *A Married Woman*. In this work, she discusses a variety of feminist concerns, including female education

and empowerment, financial independence, and so on. She relates major concerns of class and nationhood in post-colonial India to the rising notion of female identity. Manju Kapur believes that education may help people gain dignity, honour, and authority. It's worth noting that education is quite significant in the lives of women. If it fails to liberate them from the shackles of male dominance, social tradition, and popular prejudices in some cases. It also empowers people to doubt and question in order to assert and modify their life. Her work *A Married Woman* gives us a sense of the feminist battle against the pursuit of unique individuality.

Astha's life has been ruled by her mother since the beginning. Her mother's decisions were constantly placed on her daughter. She devotes all of her efforts to making Astha into an ideal wife, daughter-in-law, and mother in the traditional sense. Astha's parents want her to educate to the highest degree possible in order to meet the marriage requirements. Astha desired to live a liberated life, but her first attempt—a love affair with Rohan—failed, with Rohan abandoning her as he left for Oxford to further his education. Her parents wanted her to have a better education, so she was forced to enrol in an M.A. programme. She meets Hemant, a young charmer who recently returned from the United States, during his post-graduation. Astha was attracted to him. They were in love with each other. Astha's parents agree to the marriage as well. Soon after, both parties agreed to work together- "The alliance of Astha and Hemant Vadera was resolved a few weeks later. The marriage was scheduled for June. By then, Astha's MA examinations would be over, Hemant's elder sister's children would be on vacation, and his younger sister would be able to visit from the United States for a month. Astha and Hemant began dating once all of

this was sorted up." <sup>23</sup> After completing her education, she gets a job as a school teacher.

“Astha encounters Hemant on the eve of their wedding day, the spring festival. The barat arrived at night. When the groom entered the temple to marry her, the recorded song of auspicious music began playing in her ears, Astha was summoned to garland her fiancé. They sat next to one other beneath a little rickety pandal with a fan aimed on them at the fortunate hour. In a daze, she realised this was the beginning of the life planned for her. The warm air from the fan, the smoke from the fireplace, the look of her father waiting for her to take his place in the procession next to her groom triggered the realisation of her life's ordination for her.”<sup>24</sup> Astha kept herself and was loyal to her family despite being a teacher and a married lady with two children "Being a teacher meant that her days of weariness were over. She couldn't spend her time daydreaming about her love any longer; she had to get up early and go to work. She needs to revise workouts and prepare lessons. Following the principal's proposals and with her support, she formed a reading club, a writing club, and a painting club. Her universe has now expanded to encompass a large number of schoolgirls. Her head and emotions were both busy, and life was looking good.”<sup>25</sup> She executes each responsibility very well. She maintained herself and was fully devoted to Hemant, her husband.

She tries to fill her incompleteness with the pursuit of art. She takes to painting and her canvas is included in art exhibitions. After successfully completing the pregnancy period, she gives birth to “a baby, a girl, named- “Anuradha, born in March, after fifteen hours of labour at a private nursing home. Six and eight pounds, nineteen inches in circumference. He has an



unshaved, unkempt, pre-birth monkey-like fur, a visage of skin that is the colour of an unripened carrot, long curled nitty-gritty nails." <sup>26</sup> The husband of Astha was always preoccupied with his business activities. So, Astha needed a companion to soothe and comfort her emotionally as well as physically. She meets Aijaz, who is a wizard or a magician and also a lecturer in history. He has immense knowledge in the field of drama.

Aijaz is a competent guy. He really is a history specialist, but he learns a lot about drama. He has written original plays and songs, but he has also set one of Brecht's, Shakespeare's, and some Greek tragedy to modern Hindi text. People grumble about the lack of activity in the school, but when it comes to giving our students exposure, they come up with all kinds of objections. Where is the school spirit? "<sup>27</sup> Astha was highly impressed by the learning and talent of Aijaz, and soon her impression was changed into infatuation. After some time, she falls in love with him and they become lovers. She discloses to Hemant that she knows Aijaz and his humane activities very well. "This should not have happened, don't get me wrong. You must, however, bear the consequences if you meddle in matters that do not interest you. He was a Muslim, and he should have stayed on topics related to his faith."<sup>28</sup>

When Aijaz arrives at the school where Astha teaches, her life takes a turn for the worst. Aijaz, a street playwright, commissions her to write the screenplay for a play on the Babri Masjid. Astha remarked on this— "I'm not sure where to start. It's such a complicated history that leaving one component out would make it imbalanced. Furthermore, it is still utilised for a variety of political goals today. Astha had only just realised this the day before. So far, the Babri Masjid has been a source of irritation in the

headlines, as if it were a nuisance that would not go away. I really hope you'd compose it or come up with the idea for it. I'm sure you know a lot more than I do."<sup>29</sup> Astha happens to find a guy who acknowledges her ability and loves it, and she feels down for him. Aijaz is assassinated while conducting a play discussing the events leading to the demolition of the Babri Masjid and Ram Janambhoomi. This is where Astha falls off the reservation entirely and deviates from her family's expectation of where she is to be.

Meanwhile, she meets Peeplika, a social activist who is considerably younger than her, and they begin a relationship that defies all expectations. Before Astha meets and gets to know Aijaz's widow, Peeplika Khan, Kapur gives a profile of Peeplika Trivedi, an enthusiastic, intelligent, and independent woman who married Aijaz in an interfaith marriage. Peeplika's mother, like Peeplika, was independent when she married, despite her parents' desires. Astha and Peeplika's relationship, which forms as a result of their encounter in Ayodhya, is unusual and socially forbidden. Astha and Pipee's friendship deepens, they appear to have similar feelings and difficulties. Astha paid a visit to Pipee at her home, and Pipee confided in her about her worries. Pipee supports her morally, and after some time, the meetings between Astha and Pipee increased. Pipee phoned Astha regularly and frequently. Love increased between the two young women. Astha and Pipee's friendship blossoms and develops. Like a spider, Pipee entangles Astha in her web of lesbian love. Astha is trapped fully, and she begins her love affair with Astha in a different way.

Astha's love for Pipee is difficult for her day-to-day because she is unable to focus on what is going on around her. She is unable to forget her life: as

a mother, a wife, a schoolteacher and a painter. In her present love affair, she almost ignored her children, Anuradha and Himanshu. Her relationship with Pipee affects her actual relationship with her husband, Hemant. Now Astha's difficulty is that she was leading a double life. First her love-life with Pipee and then her ordinary and tiring life as a married woman with her husband, children, and mother-in-law. In the meantime, Astha faced several troubles: the poor performance of her daughter Anuradha in the exams and a worker's strike in the factory where her husband worked. At the same time, she knows that Hemant is suffering from chest pain because of hypertension.

Under these circumstances, Astha is unable to maintain her love with Pipee. So she had finally decided to bid farewell, and she declined the love of Pipee for the sake of her family's happiness and interest. Thus, the love affair between Astha and Pipee collapses because of Pipee's aggressive possessiveness in the relationship. Finally, Astha sees Pipee off to the New Delhi Railway Station with their long-lost friendship. Astha was emotionally saddened by the agony of this shattered romance. At the end of the novel, she finally recovers and becomes her normal self, returning to her family that loved her and needed her.

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### **CHAPTER 3**

## **ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THEIR RIGHTS**

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Manju Kapur is a highly acclaimed novelist among Indian English novelists. Her novels reveal the lives of women and show women's consciousness of their rights. Modern female writers portray protagonists who are aware of their rights and speak out against mistreatment, exploitation, and misconduct. Their consciousness is quite evident in the works of Kamla Das, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Rama Mehta, Arundhati Roy, Geetha Hariharan, Kiran Desai, Kamala Markandaya etc. Modern women novelists are now expressing themselves freely and boldly, and narrating what they feel about Indian women and their lives in postmodern India. The women novelists, in the beginning, had to be very cautious and tender in pointing out the problems faced by women in Indian society.

The Indian literary legacy goes back to the end of the 19th century. What's most significant about the appearance of female authors in this era is the fact that they appear at all. Prior to statehood, the authors grappled with the clash between Indian ideals and those of Europe and America. Democracy brought with it an urgent and deliberate effort to bring the problems of women to light and to solve them.

Rama Mehta's literature explores the inner world of a contemporary, educated young lady who succeeds in forging her own identity in a male-dominated, tradition-bound culture. She attempts to convey an accurate

portrayal of her champion, Geeta's pain, anguish, and disappointments. Like the author, the heroine is a bright, free-spirited, western-literate young lady. She was chosen for the Indian Foreign Service after completing her studies at Nainital and St Stephen's College in Delhi. When she marries Shree Jagat Mehta, a fellow IFS official, she gives up her coveted profession. She resides in Udaipur, her husband's hometown. Their home, which is actually a residence, is called "Jeevan Nivas," and she has been cared after by two maids, 'Pari' and 'Duppa'. Mehta has given birth to a son, who has been given the name Vijay. All of this is mirrored in Geeta's story, which is intelligent and full of life. She is married to a traditional and traditional Udaipur family. The essential aspect of defining women's position was deftly integrated with other pertinent issues of Indian life, such as family relationships, religious conflicts, history, culture, politics, and social discrimination, giving women's writing legitimacy and creating literary space for their voices. Women were empowered by the authors, who gave them an identity, mobility, and freedom of expression that they had previously been denied. As a result, in the late twentieth century, women's literature played an essential role in changing perceptions regarding women's roles in Indian society and literature, and it continues to play an important role in the development of women's writing today. Because of the immense effect of national movements and the reach of modern education, the image of women in Indian novels has shifted towards a feminist undertone, with a female heroine who opposes the social order. Rama Mehta was born in the town of Nainital in the year 1923. She was a sociologist who was well-known. She conducted research on educated Indian women who are torn between tradition and innovation. She also served as a professor and published her first novel, "Inside the

Haveli," in 2005. *Divorced Woman* and *From Purdah to Modernity* are two nonfiction pieces she has published. *Ramu: A Story of India* (1966) as well as *the Life of Keshav: A Family Story from India* (1969) are her other two works. Rama Mehta is one of the most well-known modern female authors. Her works are mostly concerned with women's issues and their search for identity.

In the last decade, women have become the topic of much coverage in literature. If you want to go far, go alone. If you want to go far, get a woman (social support, political support, and economic investment) to help you. Kamala Markandaya's novels revolve around a woman's journey toward independence and the struggle she faces in a tradition-bound community. She wrote her novels with empathy and realism in Kamala Markandaya's informative manner. She started introducing feminist fiction in India with her two novels: "*Nectar in a Sieve*" and "*Some Inner Rage*." The phrase "female autonomy" refers to the notion that women should have power over their own preferences and actions when it comes to parenting their children. Her emotional handling of women is special, but she is not personally involved in figuring out what they are thinking; she simply uses their perceptions as reference content. In addition, they explore women's problems because of the structural inequality in society. A significant advancement in female characterization and physical independence has been shown in her portrayal of women in works of fiction. For the most part, the women in Markandaya's novels adhere to the societal and moral standards that exist in their respective social circles.

In her first book, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmani, a peasant woman who had no land and no income, married to a tenant farmer who owned nothing. She



has an amazing capacity to embrace harsh reality. Kamala Das was one of the most prominent postcolonial feminists. She wrote in both Malayalam and English, her home tongue. She attempted to give words to a generation of women who were bound to their homes and saw marriage as a commodity to be traded in her poems. She laments feeling alone in a male-dominated culture that she could never call her own since it had no space for women in her poetry "A Widow's Lament" where she describes feeling isolated in a male-dominated society that she could never call her own, because it had no place for women-

*"This has always been the case.*

*It's not my world, it's someone else's.*

*The axis is formed by my guy and my sons.*

*While I, as a mother and wife,*

*Climbed the glass panes of their eyeballs."*

<https://feminisminindia.com/2017/03/31/Kamala-Das-essay/>

Her literary efforts brought her a great deal of acclaim and countless awards. In 1963, she received the P.E.N.'s Asian Poetry Prize, the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award in 1969 for the short story Thanuppu (Cold), and the National Sahitya Academy Award in 1985 for the story. In 1984, she was also nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In modern Indian English literature, Anita Desai is a dependable feminist writer and a colonist of psychological novels. She depicts the consciousness of objective reality as viewed by the intellect, rather than the experience of the outward thing. She exposes the emotional world of the second sex through her in-depth and keen analysis of women's psyches,

exposing various unfathomable shades of human personalities and feminine senses. She also believes that feminism is never static and that it is influenced by people's socio-cultural and geographical origins. Anita Desai delves into the minds of her female heroines and the realities of their life in her novels. Desai's novels are thus a depiction of a woman's disordered mind as a result of male control and isolation. They do, however, however, they find a way out through self-discovery and self-analysis. Womanism is a major and important theme throughout Desai's fiction.

Anita Desai is accomplished at both novels and short stories, but to her credit, she has also published a variety of full-length books. As soon as she joined the work force, she became a public figure. Her work on feminist topics in the first psychological novel in India brought her fame. Although she delves into characters who are all female, she employs modern approaches to discuss the issues of mothers, sisters, and daughters in her work. While Anita Desai tends to dig into the collective female experience, she avoids using the term "feminist" to characterise herself in her writing. In general, she seems to represent a cynical, hopeless, disillusioned woman who seems to be on her own. In arguing against Indian cultural expectations of women, she highlights the lack of happiness these women have in their marriages and relationships. Anita's women seem to be on the lookout for the boredom that makes them sound like relatives, brothers, girlfriends, and good friends. Desai has fostered a feminine literary debate, reflecting her dissatisfaction with the oppressive conventions of the status quo. Family members, regardless of who has thrown their identities on her, generally want a means of self-preservation. for a woman, Desai takes a different path to demonstrate against the prevailing male norms. Her

protagonists are generally female, but plagued by a sense of doom, so she withdraws them into the cramped, neurotically depressed room of her apartment and renders them insane. She refuses to have anything to do with questions which only pertain to the sphere of feminist thought and analysis. There is a definite difference between feeling and doing, between sensitivity and specificity. While women play only as big a part in this job as men, she believes that they must all be equalised so that they can be kept to the same expectations. While trying to focus just on the historical cruelties and oppressions, a contemporary woman looks for opportunities for change, possibilities, and problems. Like the female author, Virginia Woolf, she's muddled her characters, creating them to be more and less conventional. They want emancipation, to go from indecision, or transition from vulnerability to dominance, or, as they say, "switch from slavery to power."

In the long run, we are all dead, but in the short run, we are all actors. "In the West, a woman is the other half of the human race. In India, the ideal of womanhood is motherhood: the marvelous, ever selfless, nonjudgmental being who struggles with the pains of others and has the power to endure everything. With her back against the sun, Anita Desai, a well-active Indian author for more than 40 years, has earned various distinctions, both in India and elsewhere. Anita Desai's work is mostly based on things that have to do with the lives of people. Anita Desai is an uncommonly emotional novelist who places her main characters' emotions on the screen.

Desai first came to prominence in the Indian literature scene with the release of her first novel in 1963, *Cry, the Peacock*. The cross-section of her novels through the era is important in order to distinguish her theme

and viewpoint. Shashi Deshpande tells stories about the experiences of female characters in India in the 1970s and 80s. She was really worried about the women's never-ending quest for survival. The main protagonists of her novels are liberated women who are not constrained by the ways in which people in the environment and community are permitted to think. Jaya, in '*That Long Silence*,' Saru in '*The Dark Holds No Terrors*' and Indu in '*Roots and Shadows*' display it.

As the study of Shashi Deshpande's female characters reveals, her portrayal of women needs to be studied from a feminist angle. As an author of the '70s and '80s, she mirrors a realistic portrait of the contemporary middle-class, educated, urban Indian woman. Her novels portray the unhappy plight of contemporary middle-class, urban Indian women and also analyse how their lot has not changed much in the twentieth century. Despite her vehement denial of being a feminist, Shashi Deshpande has made audacious efforts to give voice to women's regrets and frustrations. A glance, at her novels, will reveal her treatment of major female characters and will show how the themes in them are related to women's difficulties. In her first novel, *Roots and Shadows*, Shashi Deshpande exposes the gross gender discrimination and its fall-out in a male-dominated society. In the novel, she depicts the agony and suffocation experienced by the protagonist, Indu, in a male-dominated and tradition-bound society.

Shashi Deshpande has revealed the unique and lonely situation of Indian women whose human rights are denied by conventional society. Because orthodox society expects women to be landowners, their self-identity is constantly pushed to the sidelines. Her feminism talks about the liberation of women not only legally but socially too. Women are not going to

improve from their deprived state until they are socially acknowledged as human beings. Even economically independent women find their lives torn asunder between traditionalism and modernity. Being an Indian, Shashi Deshpande has conscientiously and sharply revealed the Indian social system and the conventional norms designed for its women. She has portrayed modern, educated, middle-class Indian women who want to attain their self-identity as well as restore their family ties. All of her novels feature female protagonists who are entangled in various complexities of marital life and the relationships they pursue. There is a persistent urge in them to solve the labyrinth of their lives in an effective manner. Shashi Deshpande has portrayed different kinds of women. She highlights in her novels that modern women are more assertive and confident, yet they are unable to liberate themselves from the limitations associated with each role assigned to them. Deshpande penetrates to the heart of issues related to women and their lives. Her feminist ideology not only advocates the social emancipation of women by repudiating submission to patriarchal oppression, but also suggests that women should realise their potential and assert their self-identity. In her novels, she has projected modern, middle-class Indian women who are struggling to overcome their subordinate position in the male-dominated society. Her women have an optimistic attitude towards life and hence solve the predicaments of their lives with hope for a better future. They do not ignore and oppose family life.

The orthodox culture strips Indian women of their human rights, which have not been provided to them in Indian law, which he has made known by offering specific examples. As a result, their individual self-worth is lost. Deshpande's activism works for the empowerment of women in the civil and political realms as well. As long as they are not afforded dignity

as human beings, women can stay in their marginalised condition. Most women are divided between custom and modernity in their everyday lives. An Indian, Shashi Deshpande, has knowingly and explicitly dissected the nation's cultural systems as well as traditional customs, especially those intended for females. She showed how trained middle-class Indians want to do both. There is no heroine in her books who gets out of marriages unscathed. The need to deal with their lives' maze in a practical manner. The work of Shashi Deshpande helps one to compare various styles of women in a single motion picture. There is an undercurrent of contemporary women's strength in her books, but they remain bound to positions they hate. Deshpande talks passionately about the ways women and their lives affect each other. Her feminist philosophy doesn't merely imply the surrender of male power over women; it also gives women the opportunity to revolt against it. In her books, she has, with creativity, projected the new, middle-class Indian women who are attempting to disentangle themselves from their conventional gender roles. Her women are positive about life, which leads to their solving their problems and a vision of happier days ahead. You should realise that they do not turn their hands on the family.

Contemporary Indian women novelists have improved modern Indian English literature. A study of feminist elements in the novels of Githa Hariharan was a challenging subject. In the study of the novels of Githa Hariharan, one cannot ignore the female subjects because women have a significant place in her novels. Feminine consciousness is the soul of her writings, and feminist elements truly represent her progressive ideas in all her major works. On the one hand, Githa Hariharan has conducted dialogues with family and social life, and on the other hand, she has

reflected on the exploited Indian woman who is searching for justice and equality. She has exploded patriarchy, gender bias, and neglect towards women. After a careful study of Githa Hariharan's works, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, *When Dreams Travel*, *In Times of Siege*, and *Fugitive Histories* were selected and analysed in the present research work. Any literary contribution by a writer can be described as part of the struggle and conflict she/he has undergone throughout his/her life. Githa Hariharan's close observations of social realities and cultural changes have been reflected in her literary work. In her various works, inclusive of novels, short stories, essays, newspaper articles, and columns, she has published her various works. Literature is a mirror of the author's life experiences. She is not an exception to this phenomenon. In the novels of Githa Hariharan, the feminist elements seriously occupy a place with themes like women's existence, gender injustice, identity crisis, and patriarchy. She erodes the age-old wisdom contained in folk tales, myths, and beliefs. Githa Hariharan is one of the most imposing women writers to have produced a body of Indian literature that is committed to feminist issues.

After being an important figure in contemporary literature, thus highlighting the daily habits and problems our country is facing, Arundhati Roy has only chosen to write on socio-political problems. Of course, when we delve through the annals of writing, we can find that they sang the same tune early on, and many of the contemporary authors tried to boost their voices in their pieces to further popularise and influence culture with social concepts. She won the prestigious Booker Prize for her debut novel, "*The God of Minor Things*" (1997), which not only described how small things in life effect people's behaviour and lives, but also upheld various societal

warfare themes that still exist in current society. After that, she concentrated on socio-political topics and published several articles, short tales, and other works in which she exploited the socio-political tensions that our nation is still experiencing today, as she was more or less renowned as an activist than a novelist. 'Without fear or favour', Arundhati Roy has spoken on certain subjects somewhat the opposite. In other words, she had received several awards for her attempts to depict practical topics, such as maintaining such themes as peaceful coexistence in her fiction, including the Sydney Peace Prize in May of 2004.

In the same way, Namita Gokhale, too, has had her contribution to feminist writing written in the autobiographical mode. Her novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is about *Paro's* rebellion and her rejection of culturally imposed sexual repression. All her inhibitions and moral barriers come to an end, and she becomes a nymphomaniac in search of sexual variety. In the character of *Paro*, sex is symbolic of the quest for identity as a free woman. Her sexual exploits are an expression of the free woman—the symbol and prototype of emancipation and individuality.

*Paro* is a legendary heroic temptress who is both seductive and ruthless. She is continuously observed by the acerbic Priya, lifelong voyeur and diarist, who connects strongly with the protagonist of her favourite classic, *Rebecca*, and lives vicariously via the melodrama of *Paro's* life. Priya is smitten with her employer, the alluring B. R., a sewing machine mogul and "housewife's buddy." *Paro* is destined to marry. B. R., on the other hand, was just one of many fans who had been lured by *Paro*. *Paro* eventually succumbs to life and circumstances, as in many moral stories, but not before the reader has been enthralled by a social comedy unlike any other



in Indian literature. Namita Gokhale's debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, is a woman's poignant critique on the Indian upper middle class's sybarite decadence. Through the delicate portrayal of two female characters—Paro and Priya—who have been constructed as foils to each other, the story lays naked its beauty and banality, privileges and cynicism, schisms and intrigues before the reader. Priya's story highlights the constraining problems of traditional alternatives accessible inside the institution of marriage in a society that systematically limits a woman's options. Paro's severe action of committing herself, on the other hand, demonstrates the futility of revolutionary bohemian protests in a culture that has always implicitly backed attempts to kill women who defy societal norms.

The tone of Indian women novelists has gradually revealed a consciousness of alienation, deprivation, and a quest for a new identity for women. Manju Kapur saw life full of troubles and suffering but has left a significant and positive impact. Her protagonists want to assert their individuality, carry their responsibilities on their own, and prove their existence in a culture where individualism, marital bliss, and a woman's role at home are the central focus.

In displaying a mature understanding of the female psyche, Kapur displays the inner subtlety of a woman's mind, as if she can read the minds of the characters. The depth of a woman's thinking is seen as she displays the inner workings of her psyche. She has intellectually described, through their novels, the different states of a woman's mind in different circumstances. She writes about a middle-class woman and her problems. She goes through her whole life.

For all the female protagonists, the existence of their gender is inherently tough. One can tell she is a feminist from her writing style. This is distinctly seen in the female protagonists' helplessness and hopeful struggle, as well as their difficulty in getting back to normal as they search for their identities as well as freedom. Since Kapur's first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, was written, she discovered she had been deceived by conventional gender stereotypes. Sona is like a bird that was locked up in a cage. At the core of her being, Astha experiences the pain of isolation. Nisha must enable her desire to overrule her familial expectations and alienation, which makes her sexual frustration inevitable. She's been raised in a female-headed family where she can't expect much other than child care and household chores. In her search for understanding and to fulfil her future, she feels kept back by both time and place. The reason she defies higher education and insists on a right to go to university is because she is strongly indignant about it.

In her most convincing novel, *Home*, Manju Kapur attempts to shift the outlook of society, above all, the way it regards women, elevating their self-image and the respect they earn from it. She has previously addressed this topic and has always wanted to make a serious statement about the difficulties that females face in a male-dominated culture. In this book, she depicts the social underbelly of a capitalist culture, a gender-biased one. We see a big shift in the number of female authors like Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, and Anita Nair, who explore and give voice to the abused women who live in their world, taking place in the creative world as well.

In recent years, many well-known female authors have shifted to presenting the dilemmas that Indian women face. She is a professional artist when it comes to character creation. It is her fundamental strategy to empower women from the constraints of male supremacy. Her works thus deal with physical, mental, psychological, and physical pain. She wants to be sovereign and self-sufficient rather than dependent and subordinate. She was not putting on a confident face. She was just addressing matters like they were. Her identity is at the core of nearly all of her artistic endeavors. Normative women campaigned for gender empowerment and did their utmost to drive them out of the norm.

Manju Kapur is a well-known Indian author of English literature. It now seems that more and more contemporary Indian women are writing essential positions in Indian novels that are emerging on the scene. Kapur clearly sees that women are disadvantaged in a patriarchal system, and chauvinistic culture. Her novels represent the female need to figure out who they are and their place in the world. Her feminine characters prevail and give voice to patriarchal limits and constraints and desires to attain self-satisfaction and fulfillment. There is an unmistakable feminist tenor to her novels. Reviewers also compared Manju Kapur to Jane Austen because she captures everyday life in surprising yet realistic scenes.

The novel *Home* masterfully blends the common human experience of competing loyalties, intrigues, successes, as well as tiny rebellions and severe power struggles. The novel is a story of three generations of Indian families whose lives and hopes are locked in the Banwarilal fabric shop. Manju Kapur has done an excellent job portraying female characters in general and Nisha, the heroine, in particular. Nisha must fight to define her

individuality and live in a society ruled by men. The patriarchal culture is explained in the narrative, and one of the daughters defies the norms by defying the rules with shifting social equations. The ancient house and textile shop flourish against individual goals and legal limits because the story states forcefully that the interests of a business family come before personal considerations. *Home* is a brilliant story about the acts of generosity, compromise, and secret that underpin every family. Manju Kapur's characters in all of her works are strong women who face adversity. In her works, Manju Kapur has always attempted to provide a deeper image of a woman's sorrows. When viewed through the lens of cultural critical thinking, Manju Kapur's books take on a whole new meaning.

There is a revitalization of the family market, except that it does so contrary to individual will and government law. What happens a million miles away from home is magnified a million times as it happens there. It's normal to see the characters in all the novels by Manju Kapur as someone else who is oppressed by society, seeking to come out ahead. During her career, Manju Kapur has written from a woman's viewpoint. When read in the context of cultural rational thought, ManjuKapur's novels make an incredible discovery. Women's lives have been described as turbulent and full of restrictions in the novels by Manju Kaur. Kapur has her own way of addressing her female characters' problems as well as her own goals.

The image of women in Indian literature as the victims and maintainers of family and heritage has undergone a massive transformation, no longer in the conventional manner. Women's lives are full of struggle, as represented in Manju Kapur's books, under the repressive systems of a closed society.

As a result, she has her own concerns and interests, as well as her own solutions to her female protagonists' position. Women in Indian English novels are no longer portrayed as passive characters, but rather as silent unfortunates and upholders of family and societal customs and traditional beliefs. Her works explore the complexities of the Indian family and depict a variety of topics that are deeply embedded within it, including the family's rebellion against age-old customs, the search for identity, marital conflicts, and women's battle for survival. Manju Kapur's female characters, particularly the heroines, are typically educated, ambitious women trapped in a restrictive culture. As a result, they are begotten by their family and society. Tradition and modernity are at odds with them. Their particular disputes with family and society are what drove them to make a concerted effort to carve out a name for themselves as accomplished ladies with impeccable backgrounds. It's an interesting narrative of family life in the midst of the Banwari Lal fabric store's hustle and bustle.

*Home* also exposes the negative beliefs about the education of girls in India. In *Home*, Kapur portrays the transformation of the heroine, Nisha, from an infant to an adult on her lifelong search for self-identity. The report demonstrates Nisha's need for shelter and protection. Unfortunately, for the woman in India, home is never a place of comfort, but rather an adversary. The book explores the daily lives of a middle-class family in Delhi. Physical violence against children is mentioned as well, in relation to Nisha's sexual violence against her cousin, Vicky. A girl is an object of sexual desire, so she can dress in a manner that garners notice. Nisha's mother has made sure that Nisha is still presentable, well-dressed, and at the top of her game. She holds her outside of the playground because her

skin tone can darken. The strain and suffocation that characters inside the limitations of stereotypical marriage and family settings are able to reveal through their experiences is seen in this book.

In the book, the emphasis is on the house, both the real and the spiritual, and these elements are critical. As generations succeed one another, the notion of a common house is constantly being transformed into a room of status, caste, and therefore generational conflict. In this fast-paced novel by Manju Kapur, we witness three generations of the past. Banwari Lal arrived in India after the partition and used his wife's beaded sari-designing skills to set up a shop in Karol Bagh, Delhi. He waits a long time for success, which he procures reluctantly, and marries his daughter Sunita when she refuses to yield to him. The family is impoverished, and Sunita's death in a kitchen fire leaves behind a son called Vicky. Vicky is no longer good for us. As a consequence, his grandfather blames himself, but there is little responsibility on him, but there is no pressure on his younger brothers and their growing families. The death of Sunitha, who leaves Vicky behind, coincided with the birth of Sona, Banwari Lal's first daughter-in-law. One would think Sona would be overjoyed, but she dislikes the kid and finds it difficult to accept him when the elders force him upon her.

Banwari Lal's demise brought the world into modernity, and the family into mini-units. The company must bear the cost of the joint family and thus pay the price of fragmentation to varying degrees. Novel's heroine, Nisha, is the only one to condemn the sedate decline of the family members. Kapur's statement on the value of joint families illustrates the fact that they both conserve and influence the individual. When Nisha finds herself in

this situation, her life takes an abrupt turn for the worse. She didn't want to have the girl in the first place, but fate dealt her a harsh blow when she was stopped by the relatives, and her appearance robbed her of her looks. Meanwhile, she's unexpectedly demoted to a junior member of the family when the youngest daughter-in-law arrives.

Nisha is subjected to her first sexual experience by her 14-year-old cousin, Vicky. After Nisha is sent to live with her aunt, Rupa Masi, she grows up to be a well-behaved young lady. It was something that was inevitable. On her tenth birthday, Nisha needed to observe her first Karva Chauth fast also. An outstanding illustration of faith being misused to demean women may be Savitri Katha's description of the tale of the life of Savitri to her family members, which led the latter to degrade themselves. Despite the family strain, Nisha develops a crush on Suresh. Nisha's relationship with Suresh completely destroys her reputation. Another negative thing about her is that she has lost one marriage proposal on this ground. Her skin condition has worsened as she has gotten older. All this disappointment helps Nisha get on with her education, but she just keeps plugging away at her options until she finds one that works for her. At the novel's end, Nisha finds herself more and more of a designer. And though she is married to a man who is six-and-a-half years older than her, she has no answer to her desires. The culture deprives her of professional advancement, fame, and identity in marriage and childbirth.

But she's no longer as attractive in the eyes of the community as she was during the joint family days. She believes that a girl can be ambitious no matter what kind of medium she is employed in, given she is able to guide her ambitions. When her romance causes unrest in the home because

Nisha's family believes Suresh is unable to marry her since he belongs to a lower caste, Nisha supports Suresh and rebels, touched by his nobility "These days, who cares about castes? You really want to sell me on the market, don't you? "She screamed in outburst of rage. Just sell me and call it a day. So, what exactly are you waiting for?"<sup>1</sup> She has no intention of ever dating, much to the consternation of her relatives and friends. She doesn't want to be made into a sales girl anymore. Nisha's quest for self-determination and respect are key elements in Manju Kapur's take on feminism. While they meet with Suresh, they realise that their talk with Nisha was fruitless. Here, we see a case where the conventional approach to power differs markedly from the male-governed approach. The sight of Nisha suffering from skin disease and becoming unemployed is difficult.

Nisha feels lonely and believes she may go insane if she stays inside the house. She aspires to be like her brothers and work in their store. She begs with her father, revealing her deep need for self-sufficiency. It also wants gender equality. She takes a reasonable and tranquil attitude to deny the patriarchal system in a cool, quiet, and collected manner. Meanwhile, she has the notion to establish a Salwar-suits company. With this in mind, she asks her father for a year to show her worth. "Give me a chance to show you what I'm capable of?"<sup>2</sup> she asks. There's a new woman in town, and she looks to be self-assured and certain. She takes the risk of declaring her intention and belief. Yashpal has complete faith in her. Yashpal believes in her without distinguishing between his son and daughter. Both are given the same treatment.

She is allowed to go into business regardless of her terrible plight. Yashpal found it impossible to do so, which was incredibly frustrating for him. "He



found it tough to continue. The housewife had never worked before. There isn't one. And here he was, sending his precious daughter out into the world because she lacked her own place to call home.”<sup>3</sup> As a professional businesswoman, Nisha approaches any scenario with her own innovative solution. While she uses her mother's support, she does not encourage Pooja to engage in the decision-making. Finally, it confirms that Nisha is decisive and self-confident. Meanwhile, an engagement ring arrived. "If I'm going to marry him, I should be allowed to say whatever I want," <sup>4</sup> she tells her mother. In her encounter with Arvind, she expresses her independence. She wants to travel a lot but not bind herself completely to her home. Thus, she accepts the terms of the marriage contract so long as she is allowed to operate her company without restriction.

At the individual level, or on a personal level, Nisha is really happy and secure in her own room. She is self-determined and socially astute and wouldn't have permitted herself to be viewed as an entity that sought to be described as a human. Her struggle for self-discovery, her search for economic self-preservation, and her battle for equality with men are mutually interdependent. The story vividly illustrates how it's possible to see something from a fresh perspective after enduring a hardship. Nisha is shown to be most content when she least expects it. She becomes an entrepreneur. She devotes herself to activity for two years, and then works randomly for the rest of her life. Not having to rely on others gives her a feeling of accomplishment in life. Her performance drives her determination to marry and satisfy her dream of having a house of her own. Feminism is a movement that identifies and fights against racial inequality. In a number of her novels, Manju Kapur wrote about the physical, mental, and psychological burden that female authors endure. She engages in the

many conflicts that have existed within the family for generations. Kapur focuses on women's personal empowerment, self-satisfaction, personal realization, female displacement, and self-actualization.

When the family has moved from Lahore to Delhi, women change from their home town of birth to their spouse's home. Finally, however, Nisha moves to her husband's house to stay closer to him and their children. When BanwariLal finds him in a house where his mother's death has turned hateful, Vicky returns. When Vicky is loathed, he leaves "the house his mother's death had rendered repulsive to him"<sup>5</sup> to live in Banwari Lal's house. He leaves his grandfather's house and winds up in other locations. Individuals, therefore, are relocated to different locations and placed in new environments. As a result, people are uprooted from their homes and forced to relocate. While attempting to cope with the loneliness and un-homeliness that engulf the people, ancestral connections are serviced and new attachments are formed. As generational differences become more apparent and signals of rebellion emerge, the dynamics of family ties and individual rights are reshaped. The old strain eventually fractures under the growing pressure of the new and fragments. Home utopianism is destroyed when it consumes people's lives. There is a steady attenuation of the atmosphere, resulting in a weakening of the home. The fictitious characters are despised, manipulated, and pushed to the margins; their physical environment becomes a problem, and there is a constant sensation of being quasi and not at home pervades the narrative. Maaji believes her life has become pointless since her husband's death. Others, Sona believes, are encroaching on her home. Nisha, Vicky, and Asha are reminded on a regular basis that their current residence is just temporary. The home

becomes insecure, unattractive, and deceitful in terms of security as a result of Nisha's sexual trauma.

As Nisha is raped by her cousin Vicky in her house, the pious relationship between brother and sister has fallen apart. In terms of Nisha, it has a tremendous impact on her mind. When she learned she was in the house, she started to have dreams. The novel *Home* is far more about the problems that successive generations are facing in India than in Kapur's other works. Manju Kapur has brought up many topics that are associated with families and normally swept under the rug to shield the reputation and good name of the family. Bold, new, and open-minded Nisha is brought to life in the novel. *Home* depicts two distinct women: Rupa in one frame and Sona in the other, both refined and polished.

Though in the grips of depression like Sona, Nisha, and Rupa, but with far more particular aims in mind, they are looking for personal worth and respect, and want to use their talents to make things beautiful. The images of their careers are a representation of their artistic view, whereas their images as creative people are in darkness. They're making an effort to look past their intellectual lack of importance. In self-preservation, they're willing to protect their autonomy even under prescriptive rules and regulations. For Rupa and Nisha, the journey is one thing, while Sona stays in her original state. Rupa and Nisha try to depict the repressed need for personal freedom in an understandable manner. The primaeval mother has had to defend not just her freedom, but also her identity, ironically.

Her conservative boss, her aristocratic father, her impetuous and dictatorial mother, and her controlling brothers; her husband, who believed he had married a slave with whom he could take to bed, bear his children, and

whose same body might be subjected to unreserved bashings when he was intoxicated. Politics, home, society, and economy did not recognise her space, thus the woman had to rise and grasp her condition of being. She could have children and raise them while her army husbands were away, but the law did not provide her custody of the children. The woman has been struggling for decades and generations, and she has had to give up things in order to acquire the right to vote, wealth distribution, and freedom from social oppression. And she continues to struggle to assert her presence, value, and role in society, as well as at home.

Women also make important and influential contributions to our knowledge of creative literature. Efforts by feminist writers like Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer resulted in more works like *Beloved*, Toni Morrison's book, being discussed and praised for their richness in language. This isn't an out-of-this-world narrative, but it's where the woman's questions are finally answered. "From now and then, Nisha's mother requested her daughter return home to be trained in the Banwari Lal household's customs,"<sup>6</sup> Sona, Nisha's mother, wishes. The reason why Nisha fell in love with Suresh was that he did not reject the western notion of marriage. She believed that an equivalent number of films was the hallmark of a simple-trait of insanity: After being accepted into college, Nisha fell in love with Suresh, a lower-caste lad who grasped the concept of a contemporary marriage. "Nisha threw her head back and forth. She spoke of all the films she had watched, with their numerous permutations of uneven origins between boy and girl: rich-poor, Hindu-Muslim, Hindu-Christian, high-low class, educated-uneducated, while she reflected on the love that had motivated her own parents to marry. The huge difference was bridged by love. All that mattered was personal value. The pristine mind

and the heart's sensations."<sup>7</sup> Nisha's interpretation of "personal worth," "pure mind," and "heartfelt thoughts" in relation to marriage goes against patriarchal beliefs.

Contrary to what her family believes, she isn't completely crazy. In Kapur's novel, *Home*, Nisha is a new woman that colour has taken the reigns at home and runs it like a well-oiled machine. Her assertiveness as a young college girl and her confidence as a grown woman mirror each other and are very different; she asserts her womanhood with boldness as well as self-reliance. Her aggressiveness as a freshman in college and her mature independence are two sides of the same coin.

It is daunting for a woman to select a career of her own will, or should be, for herself. As a consequence, she's been subjected to a lot of confrontation. Her family doesn't think working in a store is a suitable occupation for her. Discovering her desire for emotional liberation and self-realization. In the character of Nisha, Manju Kapur believes the ability to concentrate on a number of goals exists within the education of the new Indian woman.

Patriarchy suppresses her modern and 21st-century sensibilities. While she experiences a number of traumas, she ultimately becomes a free woman without having to succumb to any desperate measures, such as suicide. As a progressive feminist, she declares her womanhood and that she is iconoclastic. When one reads through the novel *Home*, it is difficult to tell if the character is about to be a person or a nation. She focuses on how difficult it is for women to achieve a developed state in a traditional culture that is trapped by faith and customs. Kapur gives her novels unique perspectives on the global, political, and social hardships that people face in India. She has gone out of her way to help girls grow into a new

generation of grounded females. One must definitely add Kapur's works to the English heritage of Indian literature for it to be completed.

Kapur's novels depict working-class women's fight against the capitalist structure. Concepts can be offensive. For *The Immigrants*, it's the most current, though not the most recent time that Indira Gandhi enacted the state of emergency. To describe the narrative, the novel features alternating locations in India and Canada. Immigration took effect after the great Asian emigration waves of the early 1900s, when the United States and Canada modified their immigration laws for the first time. Alienation, cross-ness, hybridization, and globalisation can be seen in the book's title. While taking place in the seventies, the feelings of alienation and loneliness that Manju Kapur describes will resonate with immigrants today.

At two levels in her book, the female protagonist embarks on a mission to find out who she is- as a woman and as an immigrant. Her model of personality emphasises mobility rather than imposing a boundary on it. The novel may be regarded as a female bildungsroman, in which the female heroine is shown as a work in progress, with the focus on how she deals with her subalternity and identity problem. Nina, a 30-year-old English professor, and a newly arrived guy, Ananda, or Andy, a dentist from Dehradun are at the centre of the story. The novel is separated into three sections structurally. The uninteresting past and current lives of Nina and Ananda are alternately brought into emphasis in the first half. Nina's voyage to Canada is depicted in the second section, and Nina's unintended but unquestioning embrace of Canada as her home away from home is depicted in the third half.

*The Immigrant* tells the story of an Indian woman who finds herself in a strange and humiliating nation. Feminist literature is characterised by an investigation of women's anatomy and physiology. Nina's mother is anticipating her daughter's engagement. In Canada, she is Ananda's wife, a dentist. Following engagement, Nina has the opportunity to hear about becoming a refugee. Ananda gives every amenity and luxury to her friends. However, it becomes increasingly apparent that Ananda's sexual appetite isn't heavy. And with the distractions of fame and wealth, Ananda continues to stay in his practice. Nina is made to experience isolation, alienation, and fear as a consequence. She's employed part-time, and she signs up as a student more time at the library. She forms an additional relationship with Ananda. Finally, Nina succumbs to her self-loathing and regret. When the unexpected death of a mother in India causes her to see India, she tears up and goes there. She dresses for the launch of her new life at the novel's conclusion.

The novel starts with Nina's life in a cramped apartment in New Delhi with her widowed mother. Nina finished school- "It took seven years. Seven years in which Nina finished school, migrated to Delhi to do English Honours at Miranda House, followed by a postgraduate degree from the university, to end up with a lecturership at her alma mater. Seven years and six months to find this room in Jangpura Extension, and bring her mother to live with her. In Delhi Nina hoped her mother would lead a fuller life; in Delhi the mother imagined a husband could be found who would give her darling the home she deserved."<sup>8</sup>

In New Delhi, Nina believed her mother would lead a more satisfying existence; in fact, she wished she would have a complete life. In fact, she

pictured her getting a husband who would give her a perfect house. Life from that point became difficult and tedious for the daughter, and draining for all of their energy. It was a search for sustenance from that moment to moment. Nothing, in her opinion, is worth trading for any amount of humdrum. Nina notices- "Yet, education was a gift and she would not exchange the life of the mind for any humdrum marriage. If she was going to settle, she would have settled long ago for one of the men her mother kept dredging up with desperate hope from marriage advertisements."<sup>9</sup>

Nina infatuated with her lecturer during her M.A: "He was fifteen years older than her, a lecturer in the Arts Faculty's English Department. Rahul was a devoted romantic. Tragically for Nina, he had a strong resemblance to her father. She gave him her heart in exchange for his, confident that the combined energies of youth and love would persuade him to commit."<sup>10</sup>

Nina did not allow this arrangement to be known to her mother because she felt like it would ruin her reputation. Nina is adamant about keeping her mother in the dark about their relationship, she stated: "She kept this relationship a secret from her mother because she wanted to discover love on her own terms, free of convention and respectability."<sup>11</sup> Rahul takes advantage of her being on his own on the weekend. Naggingly, he waits for her to say she was selected for the position. Finally, she understands that he has misled her over the past four years. Yet, in the mother's mind, neither of these aspects are clear. The mother found her daughter to be holier and chaster than before. Nina was seen as a fine, unspoiled child. "Mothers would prefer the things their children endure to remain conventional. Now she was explaining to Nina how incorrect she believed



astrology to be.”<sup>12</sup> The book's protagonists are Nina and Ananda. Both NRI refugees and NRIs were attracted to the 1970s in the U.S.

Ananda was dispatched to Calcutta, India, when his parents were murdered in a rickshaw crash. He is ambitious and eager to become a Canadian dentist like his uncle. Nina left Delhi to be Ananda's spouse and for this Ananda's sister and her mother had managed all the things. To make it in the U.S. as an immigrant, the girl who arrives as a spouse is a different species. The greater the job she does, the easier it is to come by. She is a woman right now, and she will be all day: "The immigrant who enters as a wife has greater challenges. If she can get job, it will be in the future and after a lot of relocating. She is currently just a wife, and a woman spends a lot of time alone. Even books will become ineffectual at diverting at some point. She realises she is a permanent immigrant when the house and its luxuries can no longer be totally charmed or compensated for."<sup>13</sup>

Over the course of their relationship, all sorts of griefs were experienced, which they all came to terms with. Nina's father, an accomplished philatelist, made a sad and abrupt exit, leaving his widow in reduced circumstances. Kapur addresses the unique difficulties faced by immigrant women; the difficult task of juggling two cultures where young mothers and wives are placed in even more jeopardy. Nina breaks down after she learns that her mother has died in Delhi. Nina, the heroine of *The Immigrant*, discovers that she has received nothing but hollow protection in exchange for giving up her love and her artistic ambitions. She says: "Marriage is a subject of adjustment."<sup>14</sup> A trained, modern woman who longs for personal satisfaction leaves Canada to find her husband has divorced her.

The book provides encouraging advice: "The globe was overflowing with individuals fleeing painful pasts. She, too, was on her way to new regions, a new set of circumstances, and a floater in the Western world." <sup>15</sup> Like her, he was embarking on a new adventure, too. There are a tonne of Kapur's tales about Nina immigrating to a foreign country, and it places a division between her American self and the Kapur's fictitious existence.

The closing lines of the novel give us an impression: 'When one was reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home. Pull up your shallow roots and move. It was once possible, and it would be possible again.' When one was re-reinventing themselves, a foreign country was their home. You've got to take those superficial roots out and put fresh, deep roots in. If you miss everything else, there is always scope to create new friends and develop new relationships.

Today's and tomorrows new women look for an unambiguous description of themselves. Kapur effectively depicts her protagonist's gender neutrality in their homeland. Nina's personified personality is changing and always moving with the rhythm of life. Nina leaves Ananda at the end of the book, not understanding what the future will hold, but with no doubts over her willingness to do so. As one would expect, this makes her reassume a whole new persona. To sum up, Manju Kapur writes about Nina's immigration as a physical journey in which her female body serves as the portal. Following the subject of migration, it often opens the door to self-discovery. Her life's mission is to help others find inner peace and happiness, too. *The immigrant* tale is made up of collectivities, several trips, and boundaries spanning multiple points, which contribute to a transition in the general way of life. Experience arises from one's country

of economic standing, one's personal expertise, and interactions with his or her colleagues.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CHANGING FACE OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

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In Indian society, women have occupied a significant position and they are the most precious subdivision of our country. Women's duties play a vital role in any progressive country. It depends on sound and harmonious family relationships and its constancy depends upon women as housewives. They carry up their children as mothers, and they have contributed to the progress of their children and family for their future.

Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Shobha De, Kamala Markandaya, and Arundhati Roy, among other prominent feminist novelists, declared the rise of a new wave of feminism around the world. They occupy a prestigious position in Indo-English fiction. Their writings reflect a variety of shades, colours and visions. The assertion of identity in their writings deserves a better treatment at the hands of their male counterpart. The spirit of revolt against mechanical life and mismatched marriages was obvious in their writings. The protagonists of their novels are women of a typical Indian society. The plot of their story is woven around the women who negotiate the oppression of a patriarchal society.

Prominent feminists like Nayantara Sahgal, Desai, Deshpande, Gokhale, and Markandya all announced the emergence of a modern feminist movement in the global context. They are fundamental to the work of the Indo-English book. Their prose reflects a broad spectrum of diverse moods, hues, shadings, and vignettes. Considering how strongly they identify

themselves in their writing, they need an accurate description from their male equivalent. The criticism of traditional ways of existence and unions was published in bold letters. The key characters in the heroes' tales are Indian women. The narrative is an interplay of the women's fight against patriarchal patriarchy.

Indian authors have contributed the most to the novel as well. As a genre, Indian novels have significantly increased in diversity and complexity. This decade was critical for the growth and production of Indian English novels. And a few encouraging women wrote their first novels during this time frame. Many artists released work that attested to their strength of character all along. Both the works of these Indian female novelists are unique and ground-breaking in their own way. Indian literature now exists and must be acknowledged as a true thing. Both in India and abroad, lately it has captured a huge amount of publicity. Mulk Raj Anand once stated: 'Indian authors have made the most wondrous contribution to world literature and, as he claims, will be part of it for decades to come. The early novels by the current novelists in the country underestimated the power that this type of literature has, but you may get a better understanding of the extent of the possibilities if you compare the current novelists to their predecessors.'

However, contemporary Indian literature gains fair attention compared to the literary narratives of other countries. However, the female authors did their utmost to claim power within the masculine milieu that they were put in. Moreover, South Asian women authors have risen to fame in their native and foreign markets. Indian women writers have provided a rather clear portrayal of woman's position and influence by the use of their

literature. It was, beyond exception, a valuable resource for all literature everywhere. Despite their apparent focus on regional problems, they managed to hit fundamental issues. India is an enormously diverse nation. Because of this great flexibility, the authors were free to go where the story wanted.

Native American women writers often used history, culture, philosophy, and religious facets of human existence in their novels. If they see it, American Indian women's literature has dealt with issues concerning human nature, the feminine aspects of society, and exploratory studies and technology. Women from India made significant contributions to world literature. The excellent achievement of India has been rendered by novelists written in English. Numerous authors on the contemporary stage have channel their artistic energy in English and bring acclaim to Indian English literature. In the modern English literature, the scholars enthusiastically come up with new topics and strategies to discuss new themes. An author arrives at his or her writing project with no preconceived ideas about what they are writing for. This inspires people to think big and afraid, enabling them to spread their ideas around a broad and insecure landscape.

In a globalised world, it could be simpler for female authors from India to write about social shifts and gender problems since the medium of conveyance is one that the country's literature does not have. Since they are used to living in the west and are fluent in English, these individuals have become well informed of contemporary trends such as post-modernism and certain aspects of magic realism, respectively. Today's youth reflect today's atmosphere better in Indian literature than in any other

literary genre, especially poetry and drama. Novels, by definition, project social truth because they cannot convey verisimilitude. It's not surprising, then, that the most insightful books from this period were written by Native American women authors.

These recent Indian female authors have helped to promote a rebirth of Indian English literature in the third wave of Indian women like Nayantara Sehgal, Desai, and Deshpande, and have created the voices of third-generation Indian women like Shashi Deshpande and Gita. The works of women novelists from the third century are fundamental to the current literary framework. Without a doubt, their impact on world literature is very evident, particularly with their broad and talented control of language. They also earned national and international acclaim differences are evident in all these authors' work because of freedom Writers usually spoke for the middle class, their own perceptions as part of the middle class.

Culturally, the term "woman" has maintained a position of preeminence since the Middle Ages, not only in literature, but also in memoirs, religion, art, politics, and culture. In these days of social, political, and personal upheaval, women have come to stand for the facts. Kamala's novels advocate the awakening of a woman's consciousness and the difficulties created by it in a culture still conservative. In addition, they explore women's problems because of the structural inequality in society. We've seen a gradual metamorphosis in which stereotypical female characters are replaced by free-thinking females who can make decisions and behave on their own behalf. She is fascinated by the evolving role of the Indian woman in the contemporary world – from her position as a dependent wife to an ambitious professional woman willing to participate in forming her



own future. The reality is that women in India are based on conventional and cultural traditions and perceptions.

For the most part, the women in Markandaya's novels adhere to the societal and moral standards that exist in their respective social circles. In her first book, *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukmani, a peasant woman who had no land and no income, married to a tenant farmer who owned nothing. She has an amazing capacity to embrace harsh reality.

As her first novel was being written, she found herself working as a tenant farmer who owned nothing. When you look at her closely, you discover she has an incredible capacity to meet the hard realities of life. There are multiple shades of women in Markandaya's novels. Indian people cannot be compared to white women because they grow up in different social environments and have different lifestyles and worldviews. Although there are obvious differences between these two groups of women, there are also some characteristics that we have found to be shared by all of them. It seems that most Native American women have an aura of arrogance about them. They are brusque, stubborn, haughty, and condescending, yet kind and gracious, loving. Bonest portrays her protagonists with their optimistic as well as their detrimental qualities. His woman emerge from obscurity, ending their bondage, and expect to share with him his accomplishments and wisdom.

Women are waking up to a new understanding of their place and role in family and society. Conscious of her individuality, the woman has been trying to assert her rights as a human being and is determined to fight for equal treatment with men. The following chapter focuses on the woman's

awakening consciousness and her encounter with a male-dominated, tradition-oriented society.

Nayantara Sahgal was born into a family of freedom fighters, which had politics in her very blood. Sahgal has indeed written political novels of high quality. Authors like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, and Anita Desai have chosen the main theme of their works to be related to the problems and issues faced by women in today's male-dominated world. For instance, some of the novels by Anita Desai, like *Voices in the City* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, have portrayed the complexities of the relationship between a man and a woman. She has tried to explore the emotional aspects of the lead protagonists. As a result, the female novelists attempt to raise awareness in order to effect social change.

The novels of Nayantara Shahgal seek the independent existence of women. She sees women as victims of conventional Indian society, struggling in their quest for identity. She has a political background and it helps her with her political news. She is also different from feminist novelists because most of these writers speak about feminism in a domestic way. But Nayantara Sahgal's perspective is a political view. In almost every novel, Nayantara has a central female character, which gradually moves towards an awareness of her emotional needs. The emotional world of woman is explored and analysed with admirable insight and sympathetic perception. Her concern for the women who are caught in the dilemma of liberty and individuality or stability and protection of marriage is understandable. She has shown tremendous understanding of the problems and the predicaments of the women she has exploited her skill in projecting convincingly the agonised mind of the persecuted women.

Her portrayal of female characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to their feminist approach, outlook, and perspective. Her keen observation of the lives of Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner minds are evidenced by their vivid and panoramic portrayal of their plight. There is a heightened awareness of the position of women in the family and society. Knowing she was different, the woman had been seeking to assert her civil dignity and fair justice as much as she could. Attention is focused on the woman's rising consciousness and on her conflicts with a male-dominated, tradition-oriented culture-focused community. Sahgal was a part of a combat family; the content of her novels was not altered by that reality. Several authors, among them Anita Desai and Kamala Markandaya, have decided to centre their works on the difficulties women face in today's modern society. Other novels written by Anita Desai, for instance, depict the various difficulties of woman and man to their relationship? He also sought to bring out the complexities of the main characters' feelings. Creative goals of female novelists are to inspire a revolution in society.

It is interesting to notice that the novels of Nayantara Sahgal remain outside of the literary mainstream. She believes women are oppressed by the traditional Indian way of life. She has a strong tradition of participation in politics, which she happily discusses with us in her role as a journalist. She differs from other writers, though, in that she usually treats feminism as a subject of the home. Sahgal's viewpoint is political. In almost every book, Nayantara's key female heroine has an emotional need exposed as the plot progresses. A woman's relational world is portrayed and understood with gentle sympathy and competence. Well, to say that her concern for women trapped between a choice between peace and individual liberty is

understandable she has expressed deep awareness of the suffering and struggle that exploited people went through. She tends to present her female protagonists as feminist approach, viewpoint, ideology, and perspective in each of her novels. Her insightful observation of the life of Indian people and their preoccupation with their inner consciousness is made apparent in their colourful and sharply detailed paintings.

Feminism is an aspect which expresses women's right in all walks of life. Nayantara Sahgal novels are primarily deals with feminism. She is a writer of feminist perspective and her heroines are dibber from other women. Sahgal imposed her personal emotions on the characters she created in her novels. *The Day in Shadow* there is a change in the character and attitude of Sahgal's heroines in these novels. The heroines such as Smriti in *The Day in Shadow* grow bold enough, as Nayantara did in her own life. A reform is felt necessary in the code bill conferring some basic rights to women.

Shobha is well-known as a national author and one of India's bestsellers. She was born in the Indian state of Maharashtra in the year following India's partition and raised in Delhi and Bombay. She was educated at St. Xavier's College in Bombay, where she completed her studies in psychology. Because of this, she started a career in magazines in the 1970s. She began and published three noteworthy magazines: "Stardust", "Society", and "Celebrity". Shobha De is a writer with a tremendous talent for exploring the complex subjects of human interactions with delicate sensitivity. Her description of the various and/or individual human relationships in particular is fabulous. She has incurred the wrath of the orthodox in India because of her discussions of sexuality. As her fiction

has shown, European and non-European readers alike have reacted strongly to her prose. Her books are familiar to all, including teenagers, the college set, and the down-and-out dopes. The old adage that says, 'To the victor goes the spoils' does not apply here. The fact is, as a woman novelist, she is extremely different from Indian writers who write in English.

She is a writer who believes in absolute open-heartedness. We don't find anything reserved in her fiction writing from narrative point of view. In my opinion, she is the last person to care for what orthodox readers say about the subject-matter of her fiction. As a creative writer, she is becoming immensely popular day by day. Most of the readers enjoy her extraordinary narrative technique as well as her subject-matter. One of the major reasons of Shobha De's popularity as a writer is her intimate understanding of the psyche of woman and her problems. Her treatment of the contemporary urban woman's position and the challenges she faces is not without significance. Thematically, Shobha De's novels are highly complex. They offer sufficient stuff to the critics to interpret them in varied ways. Shobha De gives vivid picture of the society and culture of the high society of contemporary India.

Shobha De is essentially a feminist writer. Like Nayantara Sahgal and Shashi Deshpande, she concentrates on women's problems and gives a new approach to them. She is a modern novelist who recognises the displacement and marginalisation of women and attempts to turn this pattern upside down through her writings.

Shobha De is a dyed-in-the-wool feminist. Like Nayantara and Shashi, she gets to the heart of women's issues and offers new solutions. She is an odd

contemporary writer who tries to do something unique with the notion of reversing the marginalisation and displacement of women in her fiction.

Namita Gokhale is a functional writer who understands women's position in traditional society. She has the capacity to project women's problems in various aspects. She uses female characters and projects to challenge men in a man's world. Her female characters create a new trend by rejecting the norms paved by the men. Her characters are more courageous to face struggles in their lives and their treatment towards the problem is totally different from others. They act more independently with freedom and individuality to themselves to change the image of woman. They develop their own principles to lead their life and neglect the rules developed by the male society. Namita's women characters create a new dimension with their new and non obvious experiences in various writings. Namita tries to present a new shade of woman through this character, who chooses as a prostitute for livelihood. In a traditional society, it is treated as a sin. But if they follow the rules of the society they may not get an opportunity to lead their life. Later, with her younger brother's suicide and her daughter's unhealthy conditions lead to troubles in their life.

Though it's true that Anitha Desai is far from being the only contemporary female author whose work is well known, she is a famous one. Rather than any other contemporary author, she is able to command an audience. It is to be noted that she has contributed most to Indian literature. Her writing fuses aspects of Indian, European, and American urban experience with American influence. As she described in her book, she is a writer of psychological literature. Her books are not meant to be stereotypes of Indian culture or individuals. Unlike Mulk Raj Anand, she avoids

exploring social issues in her writing. She interprets societal problems from a personal viewpoint, not as often as she presents them in her characters' emotional sense. Much of her practise is meditation on the mind. Her travels, though, gave her a unique insight into various individuals and locations.

What about the case of Shashi Deshpande, who's a feminist as well as a writer? She did an outstanding job. In addition to writing novels, she has published series of short stories, biographies of major figures of American history and many children's books. She had to put up with in the bullying and threats suffered when she married a doctor in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) depicted the life of a lady who marries a doctor and suffers from dehumanisation as a result. Her courage and dedication built inside her to help her to overcome civilization, the rules of convention in order to stand out from the crowd. She's doing really well for herself because of her fiction. Indian middle-class mentality is still something that she explores in her books. The main character of her story emerged from traditional Indian middle-class society. The novel opened her up to us: It exposed us to a woman who rejects conventional family life in the city and goes to the country to live as a migrant farmer. She ended up marrying the man of her own free will, unconstrained decision over time, she comes to understand that city life is just like living in the country, only more boring

Many have thought that the publication of Shashi Deshpande's novel, *That Long Silence* (1988), marked her emergence as a major author. This book was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award for best novel in 1990. Jaya, an upper-middle-class Indian woman from Bombay, keeps her word and struggles to save her home in this book. This book beautifully depicts a

woman's unadventurous existence. Though wanting to get married to a rich man and having children was seen as a measure of achievement in the past, in her opinion, this view has changed considerably since it is now possible to raise well-educated children outside of marriage. She seeks to represent three generations of female human interactions in another novel, *A Matter of Time* (1996). As we read her most recent work, *Small Remedies* (2000), we become aware of her possessive attitude. This is a book about parenting and its varied facets. The book follows the paths of the mother ship not just in the behaviour of the soldiers but in their minds, to a greater extent, their thoughts as well.

Arundhat Roy is one of the brilliant young voices of our time. She is among the scholars who have discussed the experiences of downtrodden women and Marxism's effect on their lifestyles. When Indian people were considered to be sceptical of politics, Arundhat Roy was the reference for Indian women. Her book, *The God of Small Things*, has catapulted her to the top of all other writers, so far, and received rave reviews from critics. What she's done so far has made her an equivalent to Salman Rushdie and others. She has absolutely outstripped Vikram Seth's success to 'A Suitable Boy'. The protagonists are completely fictional and don't have any resemblance to actual people. Arundhati Roy names renowned Marxist E.M.S. Namboodiripad by name, but then fabricates stories about him, sparking enormous outrage in Kerala, where he led the world's first elected communist administration.

It can also be defined as a work of social protest, such as displaying atrocities committed against the weak, young, and people with disabilities. In a male-dominated genre, these feminist authors attempted to assert their



control the best they could. For several years, women had to overcome centuries of patriarchal authority, banal opinions and beliefs, and anti-feminism to liberate themselves and speak out on issues that were really important to them. Moreover, opponents claimed that colonialism treated women and men differently. This stemmed from the fact that as colonial slaves, women, they are generally discriminated against, and as women, they are prejudiced against in terms of their sexual purity and dignity. One should consider the work of woman authors of the 1990s like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Arundhati Roy to this period of great literary productivity. Undoubtedly, the male-dominated public is mindful of how culture has handled those who've dared to cross its arbitrary and oppressive gender lines, how prevalent and common those misfortunes are.

The discourse on the pernicious influence on women's lives of colonial cultures also pertains in many parts of the world. Feminism, to a great degree, struggles with the influence of vocabulary and representation on subjectivity. Words were often needed in both cultures in order to decide who was a patriarch and who was a matriarch, and to develop their subjectivity. There are types of nonsexist vocabulary that help to subvert sexism and to gain more equitable control for women.

In present era novelists like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, and Manju Kapur have explored human relationship and trap their emotional and mental springs. We can observe any character's psyche by inspected through relationship and communication with family members which modules their future.

In addition to this, Indian women are on the cusp of foreign attention as well as important literary acclaim. Now their work is seen as simply

melodic or understated. On the bright side, it can be argued that their popularity as authors is tied to their ability to delve through the workings of the human heart and tap into the powers of empathy and compassion.

Among the prolific women novelists like Kamla Markanday, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande; Manju Kapur is also a distinguished figure in the world of novels. Society, morality, and values are like bondage to them, so all of them are leading forward in an ambiguous manner in the midst of relentless urbanisation and far-reaching western influences. The shifts in contemporary ideals and norms in our culture occur at an unprecedented rate. The author created this series in the final decade of the 20th century, and the characters are definitely above the age of consent. For becoming a contemporary novelist, Manju Kapur has addressed current issues. She used her first novel *Difficult Daughters* to detail the challenge and persistence of life for lower-class women in India's middle-class community. Female characters make up the entirety of the ensemble of Manju Kapur. It is solely in their capacity as subalterns that underlings that they have been formed. Society puts a focus on women, as men are evidently dispensable. Generally, men see women as stronger and more talented than their male equivalents. When people are less knowledgeable, they want to equalise themselves. In other words, Kapur has the upper hand in all of her job. She moves on to the offence when her tactic becomes nonsensical to the male. There is no hope that she will be vanquished, however she will resolve the emotions and disappointments she arouses in men.

According to Manju Kapur, a woman is a certain kind of woman. With the emergence of the New Woman in the 1960s, the gender identity of the

conventional woman became blurred. She can be entirely young, conscious, self-assured, and forceful, but she is still potentially vulnerable. She typically doesn't cope with problems the way the world interacts with people, but she's able to express herself. She has retained her centrality thus distancing herself from the other. In certain ways, she might have risen beyond prejudices and mores put on women of the male-dominated culture. She's developed her own beliefs, and knows when she's in the right and when she's in the wrong. The struggle is not merely with ordinary people like envy, arrogance, and individualism. So far, women have been used as a symbol of wealth, and have mostly welcomed it with no opposition. Yet modern women may have begun to revolt against those thought because of this inequality, heading their own way. Manju Kapur attempts to present an important shifts in the place of the female characters who are self-sufficient. The thought of relying on their fathers, husbands, sons, or other male peers frightens them.

They are very assertive in nature, practical in their deeds, and strong physically. She might be a new woman, but she's solved them all by herself so far. It's from the genuine portrayals of women in her books that we decided to make this adaptation. In terms of depictions of new Indian women authors, Manju Kapur is known to be one of the very first.

Women are considered the mere shadows of men and are treated as such. They are accepted as a second sex. However, in this fast changing world, the role of woman in the society too, has been changing fast, affecting greatly the sexual mores and social norms prevalent in the society. Manju Kapur protects against the male dominance and strongly detests the

marginalisation of women. She does not depict her female figures as slaves or just helpmates at home.

Although it is often accepted that men are defined by what they do, women are often defined by what they are not. Biologically, they became second-class people. While woman's influence on culture has increased in the modern era, sexual mores and societal standards have shifted drastically. Manju Kapur strives to keep women in the plurality. She seldom depicts her woman employed as anything but family members in her paintings.

The status of metropolitan males is no longer appropriate in this context due to women's having learned to think for themselves. It was the increased understanding of inequity and violence done to women that motivated them to call for change and progress. This consciousness was the birthplace of the second wave of women's liberation in the West in the early 1960s. It became the most popular of all at the same time. It's a highly significant change that will help women in any nation. She is amongst the most well-known authors of Indian civilization today.

She does not only depict the vulnerable situation of women in Indian society but also delineates how they are kept ignorant of all the matters of emancipation. She gives in her novels vent to the gender discrimination that is still overtly prevalent in the fields of education, jobs, and many other things.

Through portraying the sad but still, she reveals the pitiful condition of women in Indian culture. She also highlights how they are held in the dark over anything from puberty to general emancipation. She expresses gross bigotry in her novels in schooling, jobs, as well as in various other realms. Several feminist scholars have often focused on how gender inequality

hinders schooling. Although after more than six decades of Indian democracy, women's liberation, the situation has never really improved. Up to independence, the plots in Manju Kapur's novels depict the plight of women.

Manju Kapur has built an intimate environment where family groups sleep on the roof in the open air and bathe in the dewy chill of the yard. Women are afraid of making love, and it is urgent because another wife could be listening, so their lives become a complicated dance of domestic duties such as cooking for the entire family, washing their clothing, weaving and repairing, growing, picking, chopping, mixing, and so on. In this second novel, Manju Kapur has constructed a wholly conceived, sophisticated universe, which was rare in the first. She provides her female protagonists liberty and a unique personality in this post-modern work with a conventional and traditional strand.

In her attempt to represent women in various respects, Manju Kapur exposes women's various forms of subjugation under male dominance. Efforts to criminalise women in Indian culture have often been the central themes in her novels. Today's women are happy with their role in the household and in general. And, more than ever, people have come to realise their gender roles are unacceptable and tried to rebel against them. They denounced and advocated on a wide variety of social and human rights. Manju Kapur often serves as a sign of how starkly male and female things are separated in our culture. For her time, she focuses our attention to the topics of women's treatment, women's status, and women's treatment. The double expectations related to women in a male-dominated culture are

profound. For her efforts, she reflects on issues like women's roles and care. There are deep assumptions for men in a male-dominated community.

While a writer like Manju Kapur emphasises women's issues of self-realization and respect, she views women as partners in their emancipation. She believes that women should have self-respect and a human thought process. Being strong and understanding what opportunities are accessible to her allows a woman a more innovative and self-fulfilled one. In Indian society women have occupies safe seat and signifying spaces. They are most valuable and have great significance. Younger has contributed at large level in progress of our country; their part can't be neglected in the progress of our country. Women's duties played vital role in the any progressive country. It depends on harmonious family relationship and its constancy depends upon women as wives and house wives, she as a mother carry up her children and she has contributed her immense role as a woman in the progress of her children, family and their future. She gained a better understanding of modern women's inner and outer life as they went through custody hearings in their search for self-worth and self-recognition; “the mother was still fighting for dignity, while the daughter wept in compassion.”<sup>1</sup>

In Mnaju Kapur's favourite novel, *Custody*, Shagun, the heroine, represents the current Indian female landscape in the narrative. She is involved in adultery and infertility cases. Novels in this area also examine the weight of individuality in modern marriage, as well as the detrimental repercussions for children and families in foster care.

The novel's research also shows that a childless marriage is frowned upon. Infertility is recognised as a reason for divorce, and the guilt is always

placed on the female. The book also discusses the rejection of raising children in a marriage. In divorce, the blame is frequently placed on the woman. The attitude and morals of inhabitants in metropolitan centres have changed as a result of greater urbanisation and industrialisation. The novel is set in the prospering upper-middle-class mid-nineties colonies of Delhi in the mid-1990s, "Never mind that this was a rather quiet street in an aristocratic colony's inner alleys in South Delhi"<sup>2</sup>, against the backdrop of India's initial influx of foreign capital. The considerable first inflow of foreign investment into India went hand in hand with neocolonial prejudice. Shagun fulfils her own longings and lustful needs rather than meeting the expectations of others. Her own prosperity and self-serving desires drive her. It depicts a point in a woman's life when her personal backdrop was becoming increasingly globalised. A marriage and a family in India do not come to an end without a slew of extra cultural, legal, emotional, and financial obstacles.

The novel explores the terrible impact of divorce on several family members, including the wife, husband, children, and in-laws. It is about an arranged marriage that fails, leading in divorce and remarriage for the two divorced people. For Ishita and Suryakanta to be happy, for Shagun and Ashok to lead the passion, and for Ishita and Raman to adjust, Shagun represents beauty and Raman represents intelligence. Due to Ishita's infertility, Raman adapts his maternal instincts for his daughter. This novel examines the marriage relationship from a very different angle. Shagun, the gorgeous female heroine, her husband Raman, and Ishita, who later marries Raman, are the three key characters in this story. Shagun has been married to Raman for twelve years and has two children with him when she decides to divorce him. She has gotten so contemporary that she has

become self-centered and greedy, and she has no qualms about cheating on her dedicated and loving spouse.

Shagun's character explores the idea that, if a lady thinks entirely about herself after decades of operation, society should not raise an eyebrow at her. Raman is baffled as to why Shagun has abandoned him. He is a hardworking, honest man who provides his wife with every convenience and a lavish lifestyle. He is, without a doubt, such an innocent individual who has no concept about his wife's infidelity and is always easy with his work in order to fulfil monthly objectives. Shagun was equally dedicated to her spouse, but it has been noted that women do not only remain the same by supplying them with infrastructure, but they also demand something more from their husbands. She needs certain sentiments as well as more time than she had before to the birth of the children. She needs an emotional atmosphere when she brings the kids, which she gets from Ashok Khanna. She expects some physical pleasure and more attention from Raman, which she does not receive. Raman is an innocent, hardworking, and honest guy who attempts to provide more worldly luxuries for his wife, but he overlooks the fact that she has an additional craving for these types of amenities. He becomes a victim of circumstance and must endure great hardships in order to continue his life without his beloved wife. In the absence of their mother, he is a good father who looks for his children as if they were his own.

Shagun has no qualms about having an affair and prefers to listen to her brains over her heart since the heart demands honesty and the mind prefers growth. She is the mother of two wonderful children and has all she desires. Despite all of this, she is looking for passion and falls in love with Ashok



Khanna, Raman's boss at the firm. Raman has enough money to live comfortably for the rest of his life. Despite this, Raman was denied the family's leadership role.

Her two children are beautiful, and she has all she wishes. It should be remembered that in spite of all, she falls in love with Ashok Khanna, the manager of the business who seems to have zeal. The income is more than sufficient to enable them to live happily for the rest of their lives. In spite of all this, Raman failed to hold the family's leadership role. There is only one reason to get a divorce from Raman-and that is because she wants to marry with Ashok. It is specifically prohibited in Hinduism for a man or woman to marry more than one wife or husband at a time. Her husband, Raman, wants her to be free to marry him. She understands that divorcing in the court system is a lengthy operation. "For the remainder of the day, her appeal ran around in his brain like a constant loop. It was fairly apparent she had neglected the children so that he might realise she had been considerate of their needs. Divorce was really significant. It's difficult to say no to someone who does not like what you like; they should be flattered instead. For several years, a great deal of time and money were wasted on delays as their lives steadily passed by, or were overlooked in the stress of the drawn-out process of court wrangling."<sup>3</sup>

If it weren't for the constitution's restrictions, Shagun would never approach anybody for assistance in marrying Ashok. When Raman refused to divorce her, she even abducted the children. The struggle continues to the courtroom for justice, where it is further delayed before being resolved via mutual agreement. Meanwhile, Arjun and Roohi, the children, suffer much through no fault of their own. Only because of Shagun's adultery

does a lady deviate from the standard of cultural behaviour. In this tale, another marriage—Ishita and Suryakanta—fails owing to Ishita's infertility. Ishita and Raman, two divorced persons, are brought together by Kapur as a successful pair. For twelve years, everything goes smoothly, but then she falls in love with Raman's attractive and flamboyant employer, Ashok Khanna. He had never been in love before, but when he meets Shagun, he intends to marry her at any costs. Shagun deals with extramarital affairs, and she isn't afraid to tell her mother and husband about them. She even insists on enrolling her kid in play school before she reaches adulthood in order to spend more time with her boyfriend.

She still convinces herself that she is a decent and dedicated mother by sending her children to visit Ashok at her mother's house. Apart from that, Raman is a dedicated and hardworking husband who never understands why his wife is abandoning him. He eventually divorces her and battles for legal custody of their children. In this scenario, the children's "custody" differs from the ordinary rule. Arjun, a boy, lived with his mother, who now lives with her lover. Roohi, a girl, stays with her father. We can observe how marriages are similar to children's playthings. Shagun transforms into a new woman who defies patriarchal expectations. Despite the fact that she had been through a lot, she didn't give up. Despite her own preparations to bring her son. Arjun has a similar appearance to her, whereas Roohi has a similar appearance to Raman. She thinks in a way that is distinct from the majority of women in society. Marriage is a special relationship. In this situation, despite having opposing views on one other, a guy and a woman are loyal to each other and willing to sacrifice their lifestyles.

Shagun fights for her freedom, which she had been denied for a long time, but at the sacrifice of her children and a happy marriage. Manju Kapur discusses the complications that result from the ending of a relationship. In order to free herself from harassment, Shagun pays a price. It may be claimed that there has been a breakdown in modernity in isolationism. When it comes to individualism and personal freedom, individuals also transform into apologists and dissenters. As a product of childhood injustice and repression, the rebel aspect of Shagun has grown worse. Instead of passively embracing her destiny, she protests and rages against it.

The concept of family shame and social propriety is remained at the background and Shagun's infidelity is not discussed. Both children are separated from each other. Everybody in this novel has to pay the price for their wanting. Husbands and wives also become redundant during marriage, leaving the spouse without the other to feel like an alien. Parallel to Shagun's story runs Ishita's story that has been deprived of her rights.

It's evident in Ishita's life, in which a woman is severely penalised because of her inability to bear children. Her mind is easily enslaved because there is no one to save her. Even though her husband is supporting his parents, he always loved her and hadn't given up on her yet. In this culture, the woman is judged harsher than the man. Ishita's mother-in-law, like most mothers, treats her daughter like a daughter and her daughter-in-law like a daughter-in-law. She never once expresses sympathy for Ishita's situation. Many activists and authors have written about their varied issues. *Custody* is a book about female voices, their hardships as well as their joys, and how they realise their dreams and ambitions.

In this sense, both Shagun and Ishita are presented as fresh women. Shagun achieves her wishes and ambitions at the expense of her family and her children's separation. Ishita never loses up hope and works with slum children via an NGO to help them overcome their loss. She is a dedicated teacher who enjoys working with youngsters: "She found it simple to teach rudimentary English to slum children. Endless repetition, tolerance, and good-natured ranting were all that was necessary. In the meanwhile, her gaze was fixed on Ishita, whose view of Leela Kaushik had been much enhanced by this one gesture of social generosity."<sup>4</sup>

Manju Kapur's stories portray a woman who, rather than being a puppet in the hands of fate, attempts to establish and create her own identity in an all-male society. She shares her own troubles, struggles, and identity conflicts. She writes in a way that today's women can connect to, and her novels may be seen as extensions of their own lives. She explains the contemporary woman's dilemma in embracing either a traditional or a modernist attitude. Her work consistently and vehemently defends principles such as freedom of opinion and speech, oppression emancipation, and equality. Her works are centred on the modern Indian woman's desire for dignity. Manju Kapur is an accomplished setter who has rescued the female heroine from the image of a suffering lady and transformed her into a fearless and wonderful woman. She has given the Indian lady a new image of self-assurance, bravery, and confidence. Manju Kapur's work also explores women's roles as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers.

Manju Kapur's heroines work hard to achieve freedom and a decent social standing. Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Astha in *A Married Woman*,

Nisha in *Home*, Nina in *The Immigrant*, Shagun in *Custody*, and Tapti in *Brothers* are all revolutionary heroines in the true meaning of the word. The female characters are middle-class women who oppose the hierarchical socio-cultural order. They are educated, contemporary, clever, aggressive, and forceful in their social environment. Manju Kapur is one of the new generation of female writers who, in their writings, have questioned conventional family ideals, particularly from a female perspective. Manju Kapur's writings are a defiance of deeply ingrained societal ideals.

Just like in her other novels, which featured women who reside in a wide range of locations, Manju Kapur's sixth novel, '*Brothers*', details about agricultural, metropolitan, and domestic activities are given equal attention. The title "Brothers" refers to siblings Himmat Singh Gaina and his younger brother Mangal Singh Gaina, sons of Dhanpal Gaina of Lalbanga village, east of Ajmer. Dhanpal and Virpal are brothers. Dhanpal was younger and Virpal was older. Virpal grows up in the city and also joins a party, the Indian Independence People's Party (IPPP). However, Himmat also had political ambitions and he proved himself without any advantages of political support or the support of the name and fame of the family. "He had proved himself without the advantages of political lineage, or the appeal of name and family. In electing him, the people had elected one of their own, he announced. He would justify that faith if it was the last thing he did."<sup>5</sup> It was "the first time in Rajasthan history, a Jat was chief minister."<sup>6</sup> He proved to be a popular and very active chief minister. The novelist depicts: "Himmat Singh Gaina proved to be a very visible chief minister. He was frequently seen on TV talking about foreign investments, international collaboration to help green the desert, attracting industry and

creating jobs. When he was in Jaipur, he started a weekly, Jan Sunwai. From three to four thirty in the afternoon every Saturday, anybody could meet him, rich, poor, farmer, city dweller, anybody."<sup>7</sup>

In Kapur's latest book, *Brothers*, it begins with the climax! The chief minister of Rajasthan, Himmat Singh Gaina, has been murdered by his brother, Mangal Singh Gaina. Mangal's wife, Tapti, is grieving more for the deceased brother than for her own husband's plight in jail. Of course it does! When Pramod Mahajan was shot cruelly by his younger brother, Pravin Mahajan, the press and media frankly exposed an affair between Pramod and Pravin's wife, Sarangi. At a college function where he was the chief guest, Pramod had personally picked his brother's bride. In the same manner, Himmat also picks his younger brother's wife from a college function.

It is a tale of two brothers. It is a tale of their political quest and family disputes. Though the title of the book may be 'Brothers', this book is about a woman and it is the life of a woman in the true sense. Tapti Gaina, the protagonist of the novel, is the main thread of the novel, and around her character the whole story revolves and women's discriminated lives are knitted together. Through the character of Tapti, the novelist depicts an educated, beautiful, and modern woman who suffers from a troubled conscience. Kapur covers a large span of time from the 1930s to 2010, and she tries to provide a complete view of a woman's changing face in society in these years. Because this was the time when Indian social reformers were devoted to eradicating social evils, i.e., child marriage, sati pratha, purdapratha, and widow remarriage. In the first generation, Mithari has to face the evil of child marriage: "Virpal and Mithari, both children of village

sarpanches, had been six and five when they married. Immediately after the ceremony the bride returned to her parent's home to wait out the years until puberty. When the girl became a woman, her father sent word to her husband's village, but to this surprise no reply was forthcoming."<sup>8</sup>

Kapur includes both, World War II and the first decade of the 21st century in the story as part of the plot. At its heart, it is a tale about Tapti Gaina, Mangal's wife. No doubt, Tapti is the symbol of an educated, assertive, and working woman who defines the boundaries of her motherhood. After giving birth to two daughters, she clearly shakes off the responsibility of producing a male heir to her husband's family. She makes use of prophylactics without sharing them with her partner and brings fulfilment to herself by living independently. "Through the ceremonies attending the birth and the naming, Mangal remained unshakeable in his belief that this was just the beginning. By the end of it, Tapti couldn't wait for him to go away. She needed space to distance herself from Mangal's desires. Like an oyster reacting to a grain of sand, she vowed to establish a professional life, becoming someone who could not even remotely be construed as a stay-at-home breeder of male children. "<sup>9</sup>

She made a different decision than other characters in the game-she had no urge to have more children, she wanted to concentrate on herself, and she struggled for the chance to help her daughters. She doesn't comply with her actions, but neither does she condemn them. Tapti also uses her character to indirectly make fun of the Gainas, her family's mentality toward women, and makes the point that women, even if humans may often view them as child-making devices. Her husband's stress is exacerbated by his lack of

equality with her rural peers. Manju Kapur uses the perspective of a woman to speak about the world.

In a male-dominated society, Kapur has addressed the issues of an Indian woman in a mixed household. Her books raise awareness against patriarchy, which silences women's voices and restricts their freedom. Manju Kapur paints a realistic image of Indian women's sorrow, concern, and anxiety, as well as their quiet or modest personalities, violent or aggressive behaviour, and humiliating and degrading treatment in a male-dominated culture. The myth of the new woman is no longer true. She's standing up and asking strange, unpleasant questions. She's debunking the clichés of purity and virginity while examining the myths of parenting. The struggle for sovereignty and a distinct identity is still ongoing. Manju Kapur is rightfully referred to as the 'great chronicler of the modern Indian family'.

The novel, *Brothers*, begins with the protagonist Tapti's husband, Mangal Singh Gaina in jail. It seems that they rarely spend time together and have anything in common between them. Tapti and Mangal Singh Gaina are not at good terms with each other. And the husband is now imprisoned which will irritate their solitary status furthermore. Mangal Singh Gaina is in jail, as he killed his brother Himmat Singh Gaina, who is a politician. It is out of jealousy and also for the latter's illicit relationship with his wife, Mangal Singh Gaina shoots him dead. Tapti's mother blames the fate of her daughter for marrying the short-tempered villager. Inferiority complex or insecurity leads to marital disharmony.

Himmat Singh Gaina, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, visits the college, where Tapti, the protagonist studies. As a chief guest, he goes there and



identifies Tapti's potential. He chooses her for his brother Mangal Singh Gaina. Their married life runs smooth in the initial stages, later it disintegrates because of Mangal Singh Gaina's insecure and inferior temperament. He is ambitious and also because of his indulgence in wrong business deals, he faces severe loss in his cement factory. Tapti tells Himmat Singh Gaina - "The sale of the factory had devastated her husband. If Himmat should be concerned about anybody, it should be his brother."<sup>10</sup> The cement factory seems to be her husband's dream which has now gone out of his hand. Besides, Tapti clears her IAS exams and becomes an efficient IAS officer, which turns Mangal Singh Gaina even more jealous of Tapti. Extra marital affair in the novel brings about a doom of the characters. Himmat Singh Gaina speaks to Tapti about his brother's ambition to become a big man. Tapti responds with little interest in Mangal- "I too want to do something significant. Why should I sit around doing nothing, just because I am a woman?"<sup>11</sup> Like the other girls of her place, she hates to sit idle at home.

Often in married life, the repressed and burdened feelings of women lead to infidelity, and Tapti's is an apt example of that-"everything, but she could never ask, because even if he did, what could she do? Nothing in her marriage was as she had expected. The ache, the dissatisfaction, the yearning for something more refused to be contained within boundaries; it stretched through days, months, threatening to gobble up years as well."<sup>12</sup> Already, Mangal suffers from a lack of confidence and lowliness. When he comes to know of his wife's relationship with Himmat Singh Gaina, his own brother, Mangal Singh Gaina, kills him and surrenders before the police. Himmat Singh Gaina is shot dead when he is seen listening to the grievances of the people of his region. The incident happens as such: "The

pistol's snout glints as it is uncovered. Their eyes meet. Mangal raises the gun and empties three beauties into the older man. The chief minister falls, blood oozing from his chest. For a moment, he stares at Mangal. More security men surround Mangal; his arms are pinned behind him, his weapon snatched. There is no need for this. Mangal has made no move to leave the spot. His gaze is fixed on the slowly spreading red stain on the front of the white kurta. "<sup>13</sup>

Not many present know that a brother has shot a brother, all that will come later. Mangal Singh Gaina finds it difficult to tolerate the success of his wife Tapti. Besides, his deficiency of love and concern towards his wife leads her towards his brother Himmat Singh Gaina, the opportunist. Lack of love in married life leads Tapti towards infidelity and lack of Tapti's fidelity drives Mangal, the husband kills his own brother. On the other hand, Himmat Singh Gaina, gets his first wife divorced to marry Sonal, the daughter of his political mentor, Bishnoi Sahib, so that he can achieve his political goal. It is only in marriage two souls which belong to two different families unite, inspite of their difference in ideas and viewpoints. Himmat Singh Gaina sends his brother Mangal Singh Gaina to get his wife's thumb impression in the divorce papers which is very poignant. The nameless first wife of Himmat Singh Gaina begs for a chance to her brother-in-law to be united with her husband. Whatever happens, it is the women who suffer in the end. Kapur, a writer of high profile, chooses women from the Indian middle class society as the protagonists of her novels and, through their experiences, highlights the sordid realities of the sufferings of Indian women. Kapur succeeds in delving into the mental and emotional despair of marginalised women and exposing their deprivation and loneliness.

Familiar connections, particularly those between couples, worry her. Her books provide a remedy to a feminine issue. Frustration and the storm that rages within the female protagonist's inner self are two variables that add to her plight. Love and marriage should be complementary to one another, or else the marriage would be in disarray. The reality that the women are mute victims who can neither fight for their rights nor break the manacles is confirmed by a reading of Kapur's novel. They are doomed to suffer as a result of patriarchy's harsh rules. Even if they discover that their spouses are unjust, they are helpless to correct the situation. Kapur's works provide new perspectives on women's life and assist them in seeing how patriarchy has hampered them. Her research focuses on the intimate experiences of women. Patriarchal domination results in women's silence and subordination. Men should consider the difficulties that women face. Ultimately, women in Kapur's tale, whether they succeed or fail in their marriage, continue along the dark halls of existence.

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## CHAPTER 5

### CONSIDERATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF MANJU KAPUR'S THEMATIC CONCERNS

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Because she's a feminist, her novels have a theme. She's an Indian guy, which has broadened her awareness of the problems Indian women face. There are key thematic and symbolic concepts in her books, including marital, kin, mother-daughter, and husband-wife relationships, as well as extra-marital relationships in hers. Perhaps the main topic of Manju Kapur's fiction is marriage. There are many colours of friendship to be found in every union. And on the other hand, certain individuals get married because of their own free will. In India, after marriage, you are not just a person; you are also a member of a family.

When people got married, they were deemed, as they are now, to be coming together for the best or for worst, for wealthier or for poorer, to create one kingdom too. Today, as long as Indian culture is concerned and marriage is concerned, the fact that you are a married woman comes with certain advantages. Another part of marriage as a family affair has its good and bad features. Manju Kapur has used her own sensibilities to study and find out what it's like. She is of Indian origin, was raised in India, is currently living in India, and is quite successful. Outside of India, after marriage, a woman's life shifts either subtly for the better or gets worse, not for the better or worse. Suffering small changes, as in India, a woman strives to maintain her union but needs to retain her identity. Globalization and rapid transportation have led to Western cultures becoming adversely affected by the sanctity of marriage in many Asian nations, as well as India. Manju Kapur reflects on the most relevant topics, delving into the dynamics of

love and relationships. Kapur is doing an excellent job of taking this theme to life in her new book, *Custody*.

But in other books, she vividly depicts Indian families that have many variations and serve as microcosms for the lives of her protagonists. Marriage is a link to a similar partnership, including mother-in-law and sister-in-law, in-law, among others. A marriage cannot be tested on its ability to bond unless the feelings and depth of the partnership are included as well. When marriage must be tested, the evolving equations must be taken into account. It's not a question of getting joy out of the wedding, but staying in your place. For Indian parents, it's about spiritual and social obligation when it comes to marrying their daughter. Mentally, they're relieved. In several instances, a woman who is financially self-sufficient is seen as lacking confidence and therefore is discriminated against. Society reduces a woman's achievements by devoting focus to the stereotypical 'warrior guy' and lover of home'. To sum it up, marriage is a kind of consolation for what she loses: the freedom to claim and govern. Given that she is aware of this undercurrent, the female characters may also be able to reside in the clichéd domestic milieu and express the interior values that she shares with other Indian women, a description of "marriage" for any one of these characters.

Nayantara Sahgal, a well-known Indian English author, focuses her work on the issues that educated women face. She discusses a new Indian woman's problem. Sahgal also discusses how women develop their resilience in the face of adversity and make several sacrifices and concessions. They take on life's issues head on, with grit and drive. Later female authors, such as Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, went further

into the origins of women's difficulties, offering them full attention and focusing on learned women's concerns. Nayantara Sahgal has a secure position in the history of Indian English books as an author. As a dedicated writer, Sahgal goes to great lengths to ensure that his work is free of errors. As a dedicated writer, Sahgal pays close attention to the currents of national consciousness.

Manju Kapur's works reveal her thematic perspectives. *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2009), and *Custody* (2011) are just a few of the novels that shed light on the diverse facets of Indian social life and culture. Her works have an Indian perspective, and she does not write to amuse western readers. She picks out the Indian setting, characters, and themes. She enjoys portraying an Indian life that is morally upright. Traditions, traditions, and cultural values all have an impact on how people live their lives. The novel *Difficult Daughters* is set against the backdrop of India's division. It's the story of Virmati, a young lady who falls in love with a married guy, a forbidden love in her little social group. She's divided between familial obligations, a desire to further her studies, and forbidden love. It's a story of disappointment, love, and sacrifice. She portrays the heroine, Nisha, as brave, intelligent, and well-balanced. Hegemony has stifled her feminist sensibilities to a large extent.

Manju Kapur brings together three generations of different characters in the spotlight. There is a complicated ground of Indian family issues explored in the novel, including how to take care of families, keeping with rituals, rebelling against the ages-old customs, the problem of marrying someone of the same faith as a female and then dealing with the gender

question. Manju Kapur's protagonist works for the right to build and to pursue a career with a decent wage. Either Virmati, in the novel *Difficult Daughters*, or other, she is mentally equipped to solve the problem. Women's dilemma can be seen quite clearly in Manju Kapur's books, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *The Immigrant*, *Home*, *Custody* and *Brothers*. The women of these novels are the modern working women who criticise the current social and economic structures that serve as barriers to gender equality. In a civilised society, they are well-educated, forward-thinking, modern, and confident. Even when they aim to deconstruct social hierarchy, they also find lost and they suffer substantial psychological injury because of the lack of a coherent substitute, known as feminist theory.

As a result, Manju Kapur eloquently illustrates the problem faced by women who bear the burden of being female while also bearing the additional obligation of being moms to members of their own sex. Marriage is viewed as the ultimate objective and destiny from which these women cannot escape in the novel's conventional and social context, where mothers and daughters survive. Her female advocates are typically educated, ambitious women who are trapped in a restrictive environment. Their education teaches kids to think for themselves and to be intolerant of family and society. They are torn between their fleshly desires and their desire to be a part of the current political and intellectual movements.

*Difficult Daughters* describes women's problems, namely the battle between tradition and modernity. It is the tale of a daughter's quest for her own identity as she follows in her mother's footsteps. The title should not say that it's just about tough daughters, but about the various hard-to-have



women of our day as well. In comparison to the conventional concept of East vs. West conflicts, the postmodern novel reflects on how custom and modernization interact with each other. Bold depictions of passion, sex, and unorthodox perspectives on marriage are contained in several novels by this novelist. She has depicted marriage as having lost its importance as well as its sacredness. One of the key problems in the book is the erosion of conventional customs owing to a lack of confidence in their reality. She is a modern-age writer who has questioned the conventional family values she saw in her work place, especially when they pertain to women. Three generations of females: mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother Kapur's daughters reflect three generations of attitudes. She employs three generations of daughters, each with their own set of ideas. These three generations of women demonstrate the evolution of invention, and they all centre on the Indian concept of marriage. Kasturi, Lajwanti, Harish's mother, Kishori Devi, and his first wife, Ganga, make up the first generation. Their unions date from before the country's independence. They prioritise family over school, it is God's will, Lajwanti stated vehemently: "Still, it is the obligation of every lady to get married, Kasturi calmly observed. She doesn't live for herself; she lives for others, but what can she do? That is how everyone in our family is. And, as a result of all this reading and writing, females are marrying later."<sup>1</sup> Even Ganga believes that marriage is a waste of time "Some things take precedence over studies, said the woman with a smile. It is the appropriate moment."<sup>2</sup> They all extol the concept of marriage and regard it as the final goal of a young woman's life. With her husband's second marriage, Ganga's look remains unchanged "Ganga's public declaration of individual identity remained her spouse. Her

bindi and bangles, toe rings, and mangal sutra all articulates the impression that he was still her deity"<sup>3</sup>

Virmati, Shakuntala, and Swarna Lata make up the second generation. They depict the social climate around the period of independence. They are the outlaws who battle and defy long-held conventions. "My friends are from different origins, and all have families dissatisfied with their decision not to settle down, as they call it," Shakuntala said, "My friends are from diverse backgrounds, and all have families displeased with their desire not to settle down, as they call it." "We travel, have fun in the evenings, keep up with each other's work, read newspapers, go to seminars, and so on."<sup>4</sup> This is true not only for Shakuntala, but for the entire generation that is undergoing change. They are motivated to think independently by European principles. Virmati likewise follows in the footsteps of her cousin Shakuntala and continues her education, first refusing to marry but subsequently marrying the Professor. As a result, she rebels against her family—"After all, she was a lady who had opposed her own relatives for many years."<sup>5</sup> Swarna Lata, her flatmate, also challenges her mother's choice, admitting that she was quite clear about what she didn't want to do: "I was very clear that I didn't want to get married."<sup>6</sup> She is politically engaged and mature, as seen by her statement about marriage: "Wedding is not the only thing in life, Viru. Women are leaving their families as a result of the war, the Satyagraha movement, and other factors. Taking employment and going to jail are also options. Awaken from your dreary slumber."<sup>7</sup> Through Virmati, the writer demonstrates a form of feminist liberation that entails not confining women to their old roles, but rather broadening and waking them to a variety of different options and their own awareness. "Most families see a daughter's wedding as a holy duty—or

sacred responsibility. We are fortunate to live in a period where women may pursue other interests. During times of conflict, even in Europe, women acquire more respect. And now we have that battle, as well as our satyagraha."<sup>8</sup> Swarn Lata, without a doubt, is a product of the modern day. Virmati admires her individualistic thought, but she can't imagine "thinking about a life for herself without marriage," which she finds bizarre and unnatural. It meant she'd be on her own, and she wasn't sure she could handle it."<sup>9</sup> Virmati expresses her emotional condition. In Manju Kapur's novels, there is a woman's dilemma: *Difficult Daughters* and *Home* is a contemporary thinker who respects tradition and advocates in matrimony. She even denies to marry the professor, claiming in a correspondence that "marriages are not created like this in her family."<sup>10</sup> However, her passionate inclinations triumph over custom, and she eventually compels him to marry her "She obeyed the gate with her painful feet. They got outside and strolled softly down the tree-lined road, away from the position they couldn't get out of. Virmati's former residence stood at the end of this road. She couldn't believe how far away she was! She was deprived even though she was married."<sup>11</sup> She was born into a world of conflicting values. She aspires to be more than a mother, wife, or daughter. The shift from custom to innovation is represented by the second generation.

Ida, Virmati's daughter, and Chotti, the Professor's daughter, emerge in the third generation. Chotti joins the IAS and never marries, having witnessed her parents' disastrous marriage. Ida and Ida's marriage is similarly a disaster, since it is shallow and concludes in divorce. They desire a place within the hierarchal system, a "room" within masculine dominance. One

thing is certain: no daughter aspires to be like her mother, despite of generation. Ida later decides that she does not wish to follow in the footsteps of her mother. They walk away from the reality and ideals of Indian social rituals and practices in an endeavour to become more self-reliant in their thinking. English liberalism and free love appear to enchant them. Kasturi's daughter, Virmati, is a challenging child. Virmati is first shown as her brother and sisters' governess, but she is drawn to Shakuntala's contemporary thinking and wishes to learn more. Kasturi, on the other hand, sees things differently.

According to Kasturi, only an elementary education is necessary. She aspires for her daughter, Virmati, to follow in her footsteps. Virmati, on the other hand, never feels at ease with her mother. Here, the sense of belonging that is at the heart of each successful relationship is lacking. Virmati has yearned for affection and compassion since she was a youngster, but her mother has neither understanding nor time for her. There's no sense of being wanted here. "Feelings had never flowed freely between them, and this threat was supposed to reflect all her unfulfilled desires."<sup>12</sup> Kasturi never expresses any feelings for Virmati. Kasturi, affected by the sobs in her daughter's eyes, untwisted enough to offer her an emotional farewell as she departs Virmati at the hostel for BT-"When the farewell took place, Kasturi, moved by the tears in her daughter's eyes, unbent enough to give her an affectionate farewell"<sup>13</sup> Swarna Lata, Virmati's friend, has a mother who is similar. Swarna is only in hostel for higher education since her mother was irritated with her- "I wish my mum agreed. Swarna licked her index and middle fingers. My sole reason for being here is because of my father. My mother desired that I marry. She stated that I had completed my BA and that was sufficient. What was the

point of all this research?"<sup>14</sup> They are self-aware and desire their own position in society. It is the result of a libertarian education. Kasturi's estrangement from her mother and her attraction to Harish stems from a lack of conversation between her and Virmati.

Harish's affection brings her happiness and relaxation, since she has been bereft of love and care since infancy. She might not have fallen prey to Harish's affection if her mother had encouraged her academically. Virmati, on the other hand, has the misfortune of never being able to interact with her mother and share her joys, sufferings, and thrills. Between them, there is a boundary that Virmati never attempts to cross. With the Partition, this boundary between them dissolves. She was summoned by Virmati's mother- "The attack turned out to be a hoax, but it did serve one function. Kasturi had no choice but to let go of her hatred as the times dictated. Virmati moved to her mother's house, where she assisted with the cooking alongside the other ladies, because the necessity of the hour was to feed the hordes of people escaping the mobs in Pakistan. Nobody brought up the past. The present seemed far too harsh for such opulence."<sup>15</sup> Finally, she reconciles with her mother, who provides her with relaxation and convenience of mind.

Though *Difficult Daughters* is taking place in the tumultuous pre-independent India in the 1940s, Kapur wants to give readers an insight into Virmati, a woman whose character is focused on traditional patriarchy. Since Virmati is well-educated and financially independent, however, she continues to be second-bested in her relationship with the professor. Although the existence of Virmati demonstrates that learning and economic freedom are not equal to gender equality, gender roles will

remain ingrained in society. The necessity of being and the strength of asserting one's identity are the same. The two main characters, Virmati and Astha, are representations of a new kind of woman. The simple vision of a woman's life is to set her free from patriarchal restrictions. Manju Kapur's fundamental concept to women's life is to free them from patriarchal oppression. Manju Kapur's new woman, Virmati, was born in Amritsar into a strict and elevated family. The story portrays her conflicted feelings toward her family, her yearning for an education, and her clandestine love. She is her parents' eldest daughter.

Manju Kapur examines the family's role in making crucial decisions that benefit the whole family. A person's job is planned and implemented by his or her family. Family ties help form marital partnerships, and the family also ensures continuity across ages through ownership and authority. The ladies in the narrative emerge as strong personalities as they meet the various demands of the family through three generations. She argues that the universe she analyses in her books is based on her scholarly life's intellectual expertise. Her fundamental strategy is to free women from patriarchy's repressive methods. As a result, the protagonist in her work goes through physical, mental, and psychological hardships before ultimately achieving their long-awaited independence to a large part. Manju Kapur's works provide readers a glimpse into the female fight against prejudice. Her insightful depiction of women's difficulties is both Indian and worldwide, straddling the line between natural coexistence on the one hand and unrestricted independence and space on the other. Kapur has selected a period of political, economic, and social transformation in which a woman must rethink her new role and set its boundaries for herself and society.

"*A Married Woman*" is the second novel by Manju Kapur, devoted to her, which was published in 2002. In this novel, she establishes a new kind of revolutionary theme and integrity. It's a captivating narrative that attracts an amount of publicity. *A Married Woman* tells the story of a painter, Astha, whose work defies the limitations of middle-class life. Astha is the protagonist of this novel. She is an educated woman and an artist. She carries the reader through the tale. Manju Kapur explores Astha's deeds and mental agony with the same passion and vivid precision as she describes the compelling political scenario. In this work, however, Kapur enables her protagonist Astha to stand up to sexism by criticising society's dictated conventions. Astha opposed her hierarchical subjugation by adopting an unusual lifestyle. She lives and develops herself by taking this unusual path. She is able to achieve psychological independence and individual requirements in her life as a result of this.

Astha is portrayed by Manju Kapur as a new woman who is aware, analytical, intelligent, and wants to build out a life for herself. Astha's parents, who are about to retire from the Indian civil service, turn down every proposal until she meets Hemant, a progressive thinker who spent time at university in the United States. Or at least that's her hope. Each of her comments is infused with the desire to be acknowledged as an equal creature. Manju Kapur appears to be claiming a niche in society that is comparable to man through the conduit of Astha. Later, she deals with the lesbian love of the protagonist, which is an uncommon thing in Indian society.

She has gotten married to Hemant. At first, she enjoys marriage life with Hemant. But later, she gets different types of disappointment. In this

situation, Astha meets Pipeelika and both of them have a sexual relationship with one another. It is not a common story in India. Manju kapur shows how Astha protests against her husband's attitude and reconciles with her family. The story begins in the middle age of Astha.

For her parents, Astha is their only child. Their parents are sure in their belief that parents would die before their daughters marry. Every Sunday, her mother scoured the wedding papers for her "Now that Astha was at college, her mother was preoccupied with their major parenting responsibility. Every Sunday, with a pencil in hand, she methodically examined the marital sections, circling adverts. She planned to present them to her father later."<sup>16</sup>

Astha infatuated with Bunty at first, but her mother breaks off their relationship. She then becomes emotionally attached with Rohan, who physically abuses her and refuses to marry later. Their romance ends when he moves to Oxford for his higher education. Astha meets Hemant when she is in her last year of M.A. and accepts his wedding proposal. Astha's married life is quite cheerful for the first several months, but then it gets rather uninteresting. Hemant is quite busy with his business, therefore she displays herself to be a devoted wife, submissive and dutiful mother. He is unconcerned about his wife. She has a son and a daughter. Despite the fact that she is bored and loveless in her life. This kind of unhappiness leads her to look outside the house for answers to her questions about life.

In her final year of MA, she meets Hemant. After that, she accepts Hemant's marriage proposal. In the first few months of marriage, life is very happy for Astha, but later it becomes very dry and dull. She becomes a faithful wife, an obedient daughter-in-law, and a dutiful mother, but



Hemant is very busy with his work. He doesn't care about his wife. Joya Chakravaty says that Manju Kapur tries to hint that, If Hemant had been more appreciative and sensitive to his wives' needs, Astha would have felt like a more complete woman. She has a daughter and a son. She gets very bored in this loveless life, so she wants relaxation from this type of life. This type of dissatisfaction forces her to search for the meaning of life outside the home. She decides to join the nearby primary school as a teacher. At first, Hemant encourages her because it has engaged her very busy life. Her teaching life helps her to know the social and political movement and take part in it. She begins to dare to take her painting seriously- "She had to wake up early in the morning to be at work. She needed to revise exercises and prepare lessons. Directed by the principal's proposals and following through with her support, she created a reading club, a writing club, and a drawing club."<sup>17</sup>

Hemant observes all the attitudes of his wife and finds them totally different. Astha likes her job as a teacher. She is appreciated and valued in school life. When she is dealing with her two children, husband, servants, and job-related matters at that time, she has a pain in her forehead. "Her headaches worsened, and she spent many evenings after the kids finished their homework on the sofa, drenched in balm and drowsy from painkillers. She vomited as the agony became unbearable. She tried to disguise this from her husband by fully participating in his social life."<sup>18</sup>

She becomes hypersensitive. She had a headache as a result of being out in the sun, eating the wrong foods, and sleeping late at night. Astha meets another man, Aijaz, who is a history teacher and the organiser of the street theatre group. She likes his personality. She likes and maintains a

relationship with Aijaz. She justifies her love for Aijaz: “His physique was sleek and he stood at a medium height. His skin was a clean, soft, beautiful brown, as if it had just been showered on. His eyes were black and small, and his lips were a deeper brown than his complexion.”<sup>19</sup> She paints and writes poems. He praises and prizes her paintings; it gives her strength to be an artist. She spends her afternoons drawing the paintings. So she finds it difficult to work inside the house. Passers-by and relatives to his home begin gossiping about her paintings. She wants freedom in her home. So she wants a separate room for her paintings. She asks her husband and mother-in-law, but they don’t accept it.

After some time has passed, Astha travels to Ayodhya. At Mukti Munch, she runs across Pipeelika, Aijaz's wife. They discuss their emotions and experiences throughout their first encounter. Their feelings for each other expanded and flared, and they both ended up in a lesbian relationship. Astha and Pipee are in love. Astha desires a sexual connection, although this is an unusual relationship in the classic sense. Between the two of them, lesbian love begins-" Pipee wrapped her arms around her slowly. Her hands were on the narrowness of her back, the beginning spread of her hips... they were encircled in a circle of stillness, the only sound being the sound of their breaths, which were close together and intertwined.”<sup>20</sup> Pipee is single and has no objections to this connection, while Astha is married with children. As a result, she finds being away from home for a lengthy amount of time challenging. Astha, on the other hand, wants to keep this connection going for a long time since it provides her with greater pleasure and comfort. Astha avoids her spouse since a lesbian connection gives her greater joy. Pipee has no troubles because she lives alone in an apartment.

Astha, on the other hand, has a spouse and children. Being away from home for an extended period of time gets challenging.

To keep this connection going, Astha begins to tell lies. Because this connection provides her with greater joy and comfort, Kapur tackles a new sort of subject rarely addressed by previous female authors. Astha avoids her spouse since a lesbian connection gives her greater pleasure. She feels liberated and relieved of all her worry once she returns from Ayodhya. Astha discovers the condom the next morning while unpacking her bag. Astha begins to feel estranged from her spouse as a result of this. The lesbian love between Astha and Pipeelika, on the other hand, had a bad influence on Astha and Hemant's marriage. Astha fights Hemant's intercourse with her one night since she doesn't enjoy it. Hemant is taken aback by Astha's attitude. It's the first time she's turned it down. Astha informs her husband that he is just interested in her body. Astha uses this method to heal rifts on her husband.

Sita, Astha's mother, is a devout Hindu. Astha's mother relocates to Rishikesh after her father's death and lives in an ashrama. As a result, Sita has sold her apartment and given the proceeds to Hemant. It is quite widespread in India. Women have little influence in the home, and they have no economic independence. The wants of women are met by male companions such as dads, siblings, and spouses. Kapur investigates the subjugation of women in patriarchal homes. She portrays her female role as a supporting character to the male characters, who are the family's centre of gravity and make all financial choices without consulting the ladies. In India, this is the situation for women.

Astha and Pipee's lesbian relationship shows, there is no need for a man for their sexual relationship. Both women fulfil their needs. Astha falls willingly into the arms of Pipee without having endured the guilt of being with a man. Padmini Mongiya Comments in the Hindu newspaper: 'It would have been refreshing if Kapur had dared to allow Astha to fall in love with Pipee, with herself or with her art. Only then would Kapur have done justice to the protagonist.' At the end of the novel, their lesbian relationship comes to an end. Pipeelika decides to leave India because she wants to go abroad for higher studies. This separation affected Astha heavily. She doesn't accept this, but this is an unchanging one. Astha automatically turns her concentration on her family. She reconciles her desires between her home and her activities outside the home. She tries to manipulate being a good wife, mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law at home in addition to being imaginative. Through her social awareness and involvement in the public arena, she tries to reshape her own identity. Astha comes across various stages through various relationships.

Though she has her spouse, baby, their familial state, and comfortable surroundings, she is still dissatisfied with her lot. In order for her to really succeed, these aspects do not satisfy her. After thinking it over, Astha agrees to return to her home and does not give up. It is not required of her; it is a choice she makes on her own. She goes back to the basics, but brings with her a new blend of personal flavour. So therefore, Astha embodies the New Delhi's values: that in her Orthodox cultural setting, she wants a private area to create her own definition of what she sees as meaningful. While she struggles for her own liberation, she voices objections towards the male-dominated culture. She also worked hard to show that we should not forget about pain, and she has often tried to gain and safeguard her own

freedom from it. She strives to maintain the bond between herself and her parents while keeping her siblings happy.

Kapur's characters is fresh, introspective, self-aware, and informed to some degree. Before withdrawing from the Indian Service, Ast's parents believed he had been a truly left-wing democrat. It might happen, but she's doing all she can to make it seem less likely. This constant need to be given fair status flows across her entire sentences. It seems as if Manju Kapur demands the equivalent position in society. Here, the novelist establishes a new kind of revolutionary theme and integrity. She deals with the lesbian love of the protagonist, which is an uncommon thing in Indian society.

*Home*, the third novel by Manju Kapur, delves into the difficulties of a shared family structure in which emotional upheaval and competition lead to the dissolution of familial bonds. Kapur follows the members of this conventional family into the uncertain environment they find themselves in with unwavering attentiveness. She crafts a tale as complicated, calm, and sparkling as the fabric woven by the family from the frenzied soundscape of modern metropolitan India. *Home*, told in a continuous conversational manner, is striking in its scope and eerily true in its portrayal of bleakness and optimism. *Home*, an in-depth investigation, is a worldwide voyage to analyse the personalities of a family who communicates with one voice to the world.

Emotional tension and competition within the extended family were the guiding factors of Manju Kapur's novel. Kapur observed this family with rapt interest, concentrating single-mindedly on the people around them. Moderately paced and luminescent in urban India, she writes a novel as convoluted, nuanced, and complex as textiles. This is a story you have to

listen to in order to appreciate. *Home* takes in both the enormity of the tragedy and the grim implications of optimism. *Home* is significant because it forces you to unify the many personalities in your family by speaking to them in the dialect of the protagonist while at the same time taking you across the country. All the members of the family may have their own ideas, but in the end, they have to answer to the voice of the whole. Each person's voice may speak, mumble, and ask questions within the house, but they must all finally become silent in deference to the family's wishes.

The book follows the characters and the course of an average middle-class family in Delhi. Kapur depicts a curiously engrossing tale of three generations. Sona, her sister Rupa, and Sona's daughter Nisha are the three main female characters. Despite the huge range of characters, the novel's first half centres on the second generation, particularly Sona and her sister Rupa. Both sisters are sufferers of "thwarted maternal impulses," but they approach the situation in opposite ways. Because Sona and Rupa had the same upbringing, the difference in their attitudes stems from their schooling. The third-generation Nisha asserts herself midway through the novel. She chooses to marry Suresh regardless of his race or religion. The tale portrays how the next generation disregards familial conventions. Her family, however, forces her to abandon him and establish a company. The writer emphasises the notion that a woman is not born "as an unhappy being," but is socially sculpted to be such, and that this procedure is began by the woman herself, through characters like Rupa, Sona, and eventually Nisha. Banwari Lal arrives to India after division and establishes a sari company in Karol Bagh, New Delhi, with the aid of his wife's jewellery. He wedded his daughter Sunita to a man after a few years. Notwithstanding

his affluence, Sunita's husband abuses her and finally kills her. She has a son named Vicky, who is raised by Banwari Lal. Home isn't only about the rich and the poor sisters; it's also about how weddings may alter relationships with individuals both inside and beyond the family. Home is also the story of Nisha, who is forbidden from marrying the man she loves because he is from a lesser caste. She begins teaching at a school as a result of her frustrations in life, and subsequently, like her aunt Rupa, she becomes a successful entrepreneur. She marries a widower who lives with her mother after some time. She marries and has twin daughters. Her company takes a back seat while she is pregnant. "Nisha didn't mention that Pooja's Creations was probably taking up the same amount of room as a newborn."<sup>21</sup> It was weird how far away she felt. With the baby kicking inside her, she sensed no sorrow, remorse, or nostalgia, simply a slight memory mediated through the enormity of her belly.

The sacrifice of a woman is anticipated and required. Even after making so many sacrifices, a woman is expected to be content. "Twins were born ten months after Nisha's marriage. One male and one female. Her mission was completed: God had been gracious, despite how difficult it was to trust. Nisha sat in front of the havan for forty days, gazing through the haze at her little infants during the naming ritual. They were the same colour as she had been before the defects entered her life. The tiny boy was cradled in her lap by her mother-in-law, who sat next to her. She whispered, much like his grandfather, as she touched his face, a comment she made every day, to everyone's approval. The larger child sat on her mother's knees, eyes closed, baby cap adhered to her scalp. Nisha grabbed her daughter to her breast hard."<sup>22</sup>

As Sona did against Nisha, the power of repression is used by a woman against the other woman. This confirms the artifice that gender is determined exclusively by feudal humanity's cultural conceptions, not by biology or anatomy. Sona, despite having all of the world's wealth, is emotionally tormented by her mother-in-law because of her infertility. Her devotion to her family, as well as her quiet suffering, are utilised to further punish her. Her cries for peace and acknowledgement go unheard by her husband, who prefers to leave her alone with her thoughts. Sona is attractive and married to a wealthy businessman, but she is sad since she is childless after 10 years of being married and is responsible for Vicky. Rupa, like Sona, is barren, but she establishes her identity through relating to her family and job. Kapur pushes for a master plan that may be implemented for the welfare of women, first via Rupa and then through Nisha. Rupa recognises her creative nature and uses it to propel herself forward into the future. Similarly, Nisha tackles her feelings of inadequacy by realising her status as an outsider following her skin condition and opening a store.

As a result, Rupa and Nisha may effectively fill their husbands' "provider" positions, enhancing their strengths. They maintain their attitude with recognisable pride by battling against threats to their life and prestige. Nisha and Rupa build their own unique environment where their essential cognitive and economic requirements for existence and growth are protected, while Sona represents unification with repressive home forces. Nisha's marriage and subsequent pregnancy demonstrate that a woman's intellectual freedom does not undermine her physiological status as a nurturer. Kapur's argument for the modern woman's fate is not a polemic; rather, she creates a compassionate image of a woman's quest to find her



place in the world. Nisha and Rupa, like Sona, carry out their social tasks, but unlike Sona, they seek for a clear assessment of their character and competence. Their efforts go beyond their emotion of despondency. In a world of pre-determined conventions and behaviours, their identity allows them to maintain their originality. Nisha and Rupa progress from nothing to anything, while Sona stays the same. Rupa and Nisha make a special effort to portray the suppressed desire of women to establish their sovereignty in a strong way. Male dominance has stifled her feminist awareness to a large extent, but it has not been slain.

Through all the suffering Nisha has had, she is now living independently, as strong as she may be. It's hard to say that she hasn't proven herself a real feminist. As the expression has it, she is a fearless, iconoclastic, and up-to-date woman. Despite her family's betrayal and Suresh's persuasion, she remains an outspoken supporter of women's rights. Through her survival, she will develop an understanding of the strength and special place women have in the family and in the community. One parent finds their daughter to be an extension of themselves and their infant to be an essential part of their own personality. The loss of support from Sona's mother represents Sona's resistance to self-expression. After Arvind's wife had passed away, Nisha remained unaware of whether or not she should be afraid of her mother-in-law's behaviour toward her. To rule her feminine world, she resolutely places herself as a wife. Nisha has to separate herself from him in order to achieve independence. As twins are born, her offensiveness has dissipated. Nisha wants support from the girls and surrenders her non-conformist ways to get it. Her voluntary submission symbolically manifests itself as she puts her granddaughter on her mother-in-law's lap and tenderly pats the baby. He realises an exceptionally well-rounded

picture of the female mind in this novel and reveals the many facets of her underpinnings of womanhood.

Compared to her previous novels, which concentrated on foreign matters, Kapur's latest books are far more rooted in her own society. Manju Kapur has made an effort to resolve conflicts that usually arise in a joint family and to maintain the family's image by preventing attention. There's a lot of jockeying and posturing while preserving the facade of a large, stable family behind the scenes, there is a lot of planning and flirting going on, all while keeping the outward appearance of a large happy family. The author has attempted to bring some of these difficulties to light, and as a result, the house no longer remains a basic story of a Karol Bag sari merchant, but rather takes on a more international hue and transforms into an inviting family drama. Nisha, the heroine, is depicted by Kapur as brave, intelligent, and balanced, as well as contemporary and Indian. Male privilege has inhibited Manju Kapur's feminist intuition to a significant extent. Bold, new, and open-minded Nisha is brought to life in the novel. Patriarchy suppresses her modern and 21st-century sensibilities.

Despite a series of tragedies, Nisha eventually achieves her goal of living as a free woman without turning to extreme measures, like Astha did. Because she is rebellious and progressive in her outlook on life, she freely expresses her womanhood. The image of Nisha is that of a "new lady." This is a fast-paced account of the life of a typical middle-class family in Delhi. Banwari Lal, the founder of a fabric company, resides in Karol Bag, a modern Delhi neighbourhood. Banwari Lal is a staunch proponent in the traditional customs, believing that a male should work outside the home while a woman stays at home. Nisha succeeds and enrolls in college to

further her education. She meets a young man and agrees to marry him despite his caste and ethnicity, but she fails, and subsequently, despite all her cognitive and emotional accomplishments, she is forced to wait for a long time due to cosmic causes. The strands of familial ties and the dilemma of marriage run through the novel *Home*. Manju Kapur's writings generally deal with a woman's sensitive character from emerging twenties to her early middle years. Relationships play a central role in the plot, yet the structure of the book is woven with the cloth of maternal character. Manju Kapur's novels trace the transitions from early adulthood to middle age on a woman's fragile hand.

*The Immigrant* by Manju Kapur is her fourth book. The story shifts the attention away from India and towards Canada. It's a tale of cultural and traditional clashes. It's about a cultural change from conventional to strange. Kapur's care for and comprehension of human characteristics is seen throughout the story. Her work sheds light on women's lives, their fight for equality, identity, and existence in the home and in society. Not just in *The Immigrant*, but also in her earlier works, the author addresses several cosmic themes concerning middle-class Indian society.

The novel presents Kapur's concerns and understanding of human characters. Her novel throws light upon the lives of women, their struggles for their rights, for identity, and for survival in the family and society. She presents a picture of an educated woman who is a modern Indian woman and fights for her rights. Kapur also discusses the man-woman relationship here. Nina, the heroine of this tale, is a woman who strives for happiness at all stages of her life.

The writer paints an image of a modern Indian lady who is learned and battles for her privileges. Kapur also talks on the man-woman interaction in this episode. Nina's life takes several twists and turns throughout the narrative. Her path from India to Canada is one of self-sufficiency. "Wedding is an issue of adaptation,"<sup>23</sup> Nina's mother said of her daughter's marriage. The writer indicates that Nina's fight is distinct from her own throughout the novel. She has stood up to the patriarchal ideology, but she also has to contend with her loneliness and dissatisfaction. The book concentrates on NRI marriages in which both men and women are bewildered and uprooted; they are unable to make the proper option and go to another country. As a result, they are both lonely, frustrated, and disappointed. Here, the novelist reveals that Nina's struggle is different from hers. She has opposed the traditional way of doing it, but she is up to a few things of her own. She has clashed with tradition but has still had to battle isolation and the accompanying depression.

Communities have evolved a system of norms and beliefs defining the roles men and women perform in such societies, nurtured by stereotypical cultural ideas. These responsibilities are in the process of being modified, and they are altering gender stereotypes as well. "They were the people with whom he, and now she, wanted to spend the rest of their lives, and it was critical that they be understood for who they were rather than stereotyped."<sup>24</sup> Nina takes on a variety of roles throughout the story. She helps her mother as a child, as a woman, she earns money, and as a wife, she persuades her husband.

In *The Immigrant*, the novelist describes immigrant men and immigrant women as well as trying to establish themselves in a new world, which

proves to be difficult, and it's much more difficult for those who marry an immigrant and find themselves struggling with their new country. Because of their loneliness, their lives are left with constant anger and dissatisfaction.

Nina was a great combination of East and West as an immigrant. Her loyalty, affection, and readiness demonstrated Indian principles, but her thinking, reading, tastes, speaking style, and sexual restraint demonstrated western influences- “She was the ideal combination of the East and the West.”<sup>25</sup> Her loyalty to her mother and readiness to entertain a planned introduction demonstrated her Indian values, yet her interests, reading, thinking, demeanour, and lack of sexual inhibition all suggested Western influences. She would exhibit the same attributes as a wife, bringing empathy and care to any little disagreements that could arise- “The immigrant who arrives as a wife has a more tough time. If she can get job, it will be in the future and after a lot of relocating. She's just a wife right now, and a woman spends a lot of time alone. He realised now that much of his trouble with women in Canada stemmed from his need to prove himself. Nina and he had the privilege of getting their entire lives to figure things out.”<sup>26</sup> All immigrants hope for a better life, but on their first travel to a strange nation, everyone feels disoriented and bewildered. Nina, like many other immigrants, feels alone. Ananda recently relocated to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where he has spent the most of his professional life. He's looking for anything to bring his new existence to a close.

Nina is unsure when an arranged marriage is proposed: can she truly give up her home and country to start a new life with a husband she barely knows? Change has far-reaching consequences that she could never have

predicted. Nina's entire world is put into doubt as the two of them struggle to adjust to married life. Nina, who was first hesitant, finally accepts. She leaves her home and nation after the two marry to start a new life with her spouse. But marriage is much more than courtship—"Marriage was a foundation of society, she recalled herself. Its successful operation necessitated a certain proportion of deception."<sup>27</sup> Nina uncovers both sexual and emotional secrets about her spouse. "To her, Ananda portrayed himself as an eligible, well-off professional, situated in a first-world nation, an honest, decent citizen, a man who learned about nurturing and sharing, someone Nina would never regret selecting,"<sup>28</sup> says the author. As a result, we sacrifice the allure of the extremely affluent and the very poor, as well as dentists and librarians, in such a tale.

Nina eventually leaves behind all of her life's ties and embarks on a different journey of freedom. She has made the decision to break free from all false ties and start moving forward. Among all female characters, her character is presented with a significant amount of progressive principles. Nina's life has been drastically altered, and she is now suffering from pressure and isolation. She finally decides to return from Halifax: "She grabbed her belongings and boarded a Greyhound bus bound for Fredericton. She had a gut feeling she'd get the job. She had always found interviews to be simple. Her attention was drawn to the landscape's vacant beauty. Her mother's ashes had been on her lap the last time she looked at moving landscape. There was no longer anything binding her down. She was attempting to flee Halifax by yanking at the ties that bound her."<sup>29</sup>

As a result, *Immigrant* explores the deep loveliness of Indian immigrants seeking understanding and nationalisation in other places. Only household

tasks enhance Indian women's problems as a result of their estrangement. The story explores the isolation of Asian women as their lives become increasingly difficult.

Her works cover *Difficult Daughters* and *The Immigrant*, as well as her new novel, *Custody*. This one takes place often in the vibrant and affluent middle-class neighbourhoods of Delhi along the river Jamuna, where this tale takes place. It deals with the question of matrimony, which is incomprehensible. This book varies in many important respects from Kapur's previous books. As we've already discussed in the previous pages, we've looked at her long-term trends and design. Earlier, she seems to have written extensively on her earlier issues, which seem to have gone out the window with this book.

*Custody* is Manju Kapur's fifth novel, and it follows *Difficult Daughters* and *The Immigrant*, which were both critically lauded. "Indraprastha Extension, located in East Delhi across the river Jamuna, was a region riddled with residential properties, and the impoverished colonies committed to supporting them,"<sup>30</sup> says the narrative, which is set in the prospering upper-middle class colonies of Delhi in the mid-1990s. The novel depicts the unpredictability of marriage in a way that can't be imagined. This novel differs significantly from Kapur's previous works in a number of respects. We've discussed this in previous chapters, but there is a feeling of continuity in themes and approaches in her earlier works. In this work, there appears to be an abrupt rupture from her previous thematic interests.

On the one hand, *Custody* is a continuation of her previous works, while on the other hand, this book is also about internal affairs. In a male-dominated

world, the tale is about a radical woman who outrages against social, economic, cultural, and sexual dominance. Various topics of family, marriage, morality, decency, and the struggle between husband and wife are examined. *Custody* is an effort at a role reversal by a writer who has spoken so passionately about the systemic oppression and exploitation of women in her previous works. The emotional figure who begs for pity in this scene is a guy, not a lady. It should not be forgotten that Raman, a guy who begs and pleadings for his wife's empathy, is not just a regular middle-class Indian man, but an Indian big success. He was a gifted student, an IIT graduate, an IIM postgraduate, and a successful employee of an Indian multinational company. The hero of the book, Raman, is the pride of any upper-middle-class Indian family. Narrator says: "Raman and Shagun's marriage had been organised along typical lines; she the beauty, he the one with the shining prospects."<sup>31</sup> Despite having two children, he requests and pleas for his wife's sympathy. The principal couple is introduced soon as their problems begin. Raman works as a marketing executive for a multinational beverage firm. The couple seemed to have it all, with his bright future, her vibrant beauty, and their two gorgeous children – eight-year-old Arjun, who looks just like her, and two-year-old Roohi, who looks exactly like him. Everything changes when Shagun meets Raman's energetic new boss, Ashok. In a bitter court struggle for their two children, husband and wife, who were once loves and buddies, became foes. Ishita, a childless woman who dreams of becoming a mother, is caught in the middle of it all.

The tale begins with both Raman and Shagun having nothing in common, nor do they appear to have any chance of a bright future that would ensure a good life ahead of them. He works at a prominent soft drink manufacturer



and puts in long hours. It is the dawn of globalisation, and emerging Indian businesses are expanding their operations throughout the country and beyond. Raman is a dedicated employee. We see him in his typical roles as father and husband at the start of the story: as the leader of the family who goes out into the globe to battle and get money; as someone who must be looked for when he returns home, but also as someone who does not care much for his own wife or children. His business existence appears to have cast a fog of doubt over his personal life.

It quickly made Shagun understand that there was nothing positive about her wedded life. As a consequence, the marriage became riddled with difficult questions: "Bereft of the diversions of the workplace, Raman was obliged to be more strategic, with thoughts that fed obsessively on adultery and betrayal. He informed Shagun that if she stayed in this house, it would have to be as his wife. Living like this was excruciatingly difficult for him. He was a basic, ordinary individual. He was prepared to forgive her if she saw she had made a mistake. However, if she refuses to give up her other connection, the marriage should be ended."<sup>32</sup>

*Custody* is both a terrifying critique of the Indian court system and a gripping tale about how familial love can descend into an addiction to control children, body and soul. It solidifies Manju Kapur's position as the great historian of the modern Indian family, since it is written with humour, tenderness, and vision. *Custody* transcends social critique to become a work that portrays the universal terror of modern marriage, with its stress of independence. The talent of the narrative is excellent, and its honesty is sad. Raman and Shagun look to be a perfect match. He's the diligent "decent person" with a high-paying, high-pressure marketing career; she's

the lovely wife who faithfully births a boy, Arjun, and a daughter, Roohi, and attends office parties with him. In another area of town, Ishita's marriage falls apart once her in-laws discover she is unable to bear children. Kapur discusses the gendered aspect of custody fights in India—men frequently utilise shelter to seek divorce, while women typically have a stronger argument to the children—but she declines to stereotype or moralise.

For the both sides, the legal process is deteriorating in various ways. Kapur also doesn't dwell on whether Shagun's affair scandalises community, rather to focus on how it impacts her characters. The ideals of familial guilt and societal decorum are well entrenched. Shagun is presented as a "fresh lady" in *Custody*. Kapur is well-known as a smart and engaging historian of Indian middle-class life. Caught between their country's ancient traditions and the more Western ambitions that have come with increased riches, these individuals are a gift to any author - and Kapur takes full use of them once more.

The narrative is nearly Victorian in some aspects, as the gorgeous Shagun weary of her steady, unexciting husband Raman and gets her mind turned by the modern Indian counterpart of the local mill-owner: an executive in a worldwide firm. The children sit silently in the foreground until the novel's second half, amid the requests and hysteria of the four grown-ups in this narrative of shattered marriages. Then we see the devastating consequences of the difficult custody battle, the "dictatorship of blood," and their suffering, "torn between two moms, two homes, and two nations."

The cycle of rage between Shagun and Raman not only continues, but is exacerbated by the new stepmothers and stepfathers obtained via second

marriages. Kapur is a specialist at working with this delicate family situation and the uneasiness it creates for both the stepparents and the children. In Ishita's problems, as evidenced by the second wife's frantic desire to substitute the biological mother, while Ashok displays a more equivocal sort of caring. She also doesn't dwell on whether Shagun's infidelity surprised society, preferring to focus on how it impacts her characters. The notions of family guilt and social decorum are firmly entrenched. Ishita's life in prison is ruined by her inability to have children. Maternity completes a woman's psychological destiny. Ishita and Suryakanta marry on a lucky date in the summer. Marriage is freeing for them. A feminine comparison is unique for Suryakanta. And as the months passed, there was no evidence of a pregnancy, which worried her mother-in-law. Although the pair is young, it is preferable to demonstrate that the equipment works early in the relationship. Mrs. Rajora believes that having grandkids is a natural commitment. There's no need in upsetting the kid, but she can't sleep like a person whose life's work has been completed.

Her worries irritated her spouse. The mother couldn't get her mind off her daughter. She could be unable to breathe. Fifteen percent of couples are barren, albeit not necessarily sterile. Medications are accessible for both drug-related disorders; if both are lucky, the content acts pretty rapidly. Even if the typical analysis is lost, she has numerous choices, but she has to chat to the couple before she can provide an opinion. "All she wanted was hope, and terms like 'fertility issues' and 'loss of normal anatomy' didn't cut it. She remembered the pre-marriage focus on the girl's homeliness, on the tiny Suryakantas she would bring into the world, with a sorrowful heart. Mrs. Rajora realised her husband was correct; she was tensing up for nothing. Everything would be OK when Ishita and SK were

young.”<sup>33</sup> Ishita's father, on the other hand, is relieved that his wife has ceased her harmless fretting. He had no idea that Mrs. Rajora's helplessness was so acute that she opted to stay in the present and pursue the classics.

Though after eighteen months of marriage, SK's relatives began to make complaints, but no result was forthcoming. Her mother-in-law has accompanied her to the gynaecologist, who has advised them to wait six months before scheduling tests, which are neither simple nor inexpensive, but a stress-free existence is necessary, and they are now doing kind to her. Everyone is having a difficult time throughout these six months. "Suhasini Guha listened to Ishita's story, then in a businesslike fashion, drew a number of diagrams: maybe the fallopian tubes were blocked, maybe the sperm count was low, as was increasingly common nowadays, maybe she had an infantile uterus, or quite simply, maybe there was nothing wrong with any of these,"<sup>34</sup> she says and asks her a few questions about her past—"Suffered she ever had a miscarriage? A miscarriage, perhaps? Have you ever used birth control pills? Or do you want to utilise your own devices? Have you ever had a serious illness? Have you ever got tuberculosis?"<sup>35</sup> When Ishita told her mother about the visits, she insisted that the doctor be informed about her TB. And then there are the questions: "What does this imply for their daughter, though? Would she be made fun of? Would her status be jeopardised? Is the spouse under any pressure to divorce her? It didn't take much world experience to tell them that the answer to all of these questions was yes."<sup>36</sup> By that point, he couldn't see doing such a large exam with just the two of them any more than he could imagine flying.

Ishita is terrified of the side effects situation: the pain, nausea, and cramps. She was irritated with her spouse for the first time. He is twenty-seven

years old and has never done anything without the approval of his parents. When an HSG test is performed on her, it is clearly conveyed. “Ishita sat in a cramped hospital bed, staring glumly at the blazing lights above her. A searing scorching sensation seized her when the dye was administered, followed by the most excruciating cramp she had ever experienced. Despite the air conditioning, her face was drenched with sweat. The doctor showed her the screen after a few minutes and pointed out her defective tubes, which were irreversibly locked against both egg and sperm. Ishita's cheeks were flushed with helpless tears.”<sup>37</sup> Ishita is put through a battery of tests, all of which come out negative. Nobody warned them about how painful and humiliating the surgery would be. Fertility medicines are injected into her follicles as her menstrual cycle begins to stimulate them. Only Ishita is shown in this scene, however there is another protagonist who defies the principles and ideals of the family system.

Here, Kapur discusses about her last published novel, ‘*Brothers*’. Although the title of the novel is *Brothers*, it is about a woman and the lives of women, particularly the anonymous ones who act as quiet, veiled foils to their husbands and sons. *Brothers* is Manju Kapur's sixth novel, and it, like the others, explores the lives of women in a variety of settings: rural, urban, domestic, and public, exposing the occurring in the house with the same immediacy as those in the world. Kapur deftly constructs a story that stretches from World War II to the first decade of the twenty-first century. Dhanpal Gaina of Lalbanga village, east of Ajmer, has two sons, Himmat Singh Gaina and his younger brother Mangal Singh Gaina. Dhanpal is Lal Singh's youngest son; his older brother, Virpal, flees the area to avoid the aboriginal caste conflict. The Gainas are Jats who compete with other castes including the Rajputs, Gujjars, Yadavs, Bhils, and Malis. “Virpal

(caste: Jat, subcaste: Gaina) belonged to the hamlet of Lalbanga, east of Ajmer, and hence avoided taking part in the battle. Both the land and the produce belonged to the ruler of Kishangarh. Three bags of grain were returned to the farmer out of ten, and he had to survive on that.”<sup>38</sup>

Many competent Indian individuals joined the colonial army during the English monarchy. Dhanpal joins the army and goes on to serve in World War II. Virpal supports the battle for independence as he grows up in the city, ultimately co-founding the Indian Progressive People's Party (IPPP). When he learns about Dhanpal's military service, he returns to his hometown and becomes a wealthy man, no longer a farmer but an entrepreneur with political aspirations.

Tapti Gaina's narrative is intimately related to the lives of two men: her husband and his brother. *Brothers* chronicles the Gaina family's history from their village roots through the burgeoning metropolis of Ajmer to the pinnacle of political power in Jaipur, covering caste, student politics, the liberation movement, and the Emergency. The story is set in a backwards Rajasthan village, where the story building or lineage of a (Gaina) Jat family is shown, including how brothers in earlier times behaved and respected their elder and younger brothers, as well as their sister-in-laws, how relationships are respected, and how, in modern times, the brother tries to capture what the younger brother has. The explanation for this strange behaviour is because value has been lost in the current environment, and people's brains have been corrupted as a result of their power.

They got to where they are by unfair or fair ways, and I'm not sure how they misuse their authority. A money-minded husband, an opportunistic politician, and a jealous, prejudiced wife all lose out when a wife wants to

see her husband succeed. A few small people affect the course of events, but there are definitely big players that dominate the entire situation, as well as a sense of doom due to the characters' disrespectful and aggressive behaviour against the old, which is intolerable. Finally, while death is unavoidable, how you die is crucial. It is entirely up to you whether you have a happy or dreadful death.

*Brothers* is a book about Himmat Singh Gaina, the chief minister of Rajasthan's province, being assassinated by his younger brother, Mangal. The novel portrays the story of earlier generations well, notably the story of two brothers who are Himmat and Mangal's father and uncle, and the circumstances that led to the predicted finale. The tale is eerily similar to the Pramod Mahajan murder case, which rocked the country in 2006 when he was slain by his own brother, Praveen Mahajan, over family feuds. The story in this book has the same themes. At a people's meet, Himmat Singh Gaina, the state's chief minister, is shot by his own brother, the lesser-known Mangal. Mangal's wife, Tapti, condones the crime and dwells on her own history and the events that lead up to it. The preceding thirteen years' events have been retold. Mangal, Tapti's younger brother, marries Tapti, a young guy. She comes from a middle-class family, and they are persuaded by money and power, which will alter the relationship's bounds.

Persuasion and resolve pay off, and the marriage is legally recognised. Virpal, Himmat's uncle, flees his ancestral hamlet of Lalbanga in the past to live the illusive life of a city inhabitant and participate in the independence movement. He gets picked up as an orphan by the kind Gaur Sahib. Virpal invites his nephew Himmat to the city after rising and attaining great success in the metropolis.

Himmat, who was raised in the city, is cherished by his younger brother Mangal, who longs to be near to him and experience the exciting life that his politically astute sibling leads. Mangal wants to follow in Himmat's footsteps in politics, but he is discouraged at every turn. Despite Himmat's assistance on many fronts, he becomes so consumed by avarice that he begins to expect more and more. When this desire is not met, he becomes increasingly enraged and has a strong dislike for his own blood. He shoots him because he feels betrayed by love and kinship. Tapti is a dedicated wife who is subject to her unpredictable husband's whims and fancies. In the tale, she is a powerful heroine who stands up and defies the rules and traditions of her day to follow her own heart.

This work may be named *Brothers*, but it is mostly the narrative of Tapti Gaina, Mangal's wife, as stated at the outset. "What time of day is finest for Tapti Gaina, wife of the newest prisoner in the Jaipur Central Jail?"<sup>39</sup> asks the novel's first words, enraged by her husband's behaviour. We witness Himmat meet Tapti and arrange his brother's marriage to her as the narrative develops; we also meet Virpal and Dhanpal, and we see Himmat and Mangal's friendship evolve against the backdrop of political volatility.

Tapti, on the other hand, makes decisions that other female characters are not permitted to make: she chooses not to have more children, she chooses to express her desire, and she works and provides for herself and her kids. Her spouse does not agree with her choices. Tapti's character subtly criticises the Gaina family's attitude regarding women as property, as perpetually subordinated child-producing machines. The novel, on the other hand, goes into the ways in which her contemporary, city-bred idea of equality causes conflict in her marriage.



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## **LIMITATION**

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It is universally true that my research work will have some limitations, and it is normal. However, it is critically important for me to strive to minimise the range of my scope limitations throughout the research process. Also, I need to provide an acknowledgement of my research limitations in the conclusions chapter honestly. Every study has limitations. Study limitations can exist due to constraints on research design or methodology, and these factors may impact the findings of my study. However, researchers are often reluctant to discuss the limitations of their studies in their papers, feeling that bringing up limitations may undermine their research value in the eyes of readers.

My research may have multiple limitations, but I need to discuss only those limitations that directly relate to my research problems:

1. I might have formulated research aims and objectives too broadly. I can specify the ways in which the formulation of research aims and objectives could be narrowed so that the level of focus of the study could be increased.
2. I do not have extensive experience in this area, so there is a great chance that I have got this opportunity.
3. Restricted books and literature depend on the nature of the research limitation.

## **CHAPTER 6**

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## CONCLUSION

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Manju Kapur, born in 1948 in Amritsar, is an Indian writer and professor of literature at Delhi University. She is married to Gun Nidhi Dalmia. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters* (1998), won her the Commonwealth Prize. Her other five novels, *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011), and *Brothers* (2016), were highly acclaimed and very successful among readers and critics. Manju Kapur lives in New Delhi with her husband. She has three daughters and three grandchildren.

Manju Kapur is a well-known author, like her predecessors Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan. She's a well-known author whose work has had a significant social influence. Only three of her five novels, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, and *Home*, deal with female bonding in some way. These books provide an intriguing look into the minds of women. Her female protagonists form ties or strive to form them as part of a master plan for survival and empowerment in today's society, which is characterised by unanticipated societal transformation. Women's lives within the family, their relationships with male and female family members, their ambition for education and autonomy, their dispute with other women and men on their search for self, their desire to have and acquire children, and finally their bond formation with other women as a means of comfort and support, survival, and empowerment are all explored in her novels.

*Difficult Daughters* is a book by Kapur about a young woman named Virmati who is born into an Arya Samaji family in Amritsar. The narrative

is told by Virmati's daughter, Ida, who is trying to piece together her mother's past. She contacts persons who were linked to Virmati and those who knew her well as part of her mission. Ida visits the locations where her mother formerly resided. We see how Virmati was divided between family-duty, the desire for study, and illicit love as Ida relates Virmati's life narrative. This is a story of loss, love, compromise, and pain. *Difficult Daughters* is set during the tumultuous years of World War II and India's partition. Kasturi, her daughter Virmati, and Virmati's daughter Ida are the three generations of women shown. Kasturi, a pre-independence lady, is the novel's key character. Kasturi and Suraj Prakash were the eldest of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash's eleven children. Because of her mother's repeated pregnancies, she is saddled with the tasks and responsibilities of the eldest child. She takes up all of her tasks at a young age. While mothering her younger siblings, she lost her childhood, and her mother, Kasturi, never provided her with emotional stability via affection and connection.

As a result, Virmati was psychologically starved throughout her childhood, and she was humiliated anytime she attempted to form a rapport with her mother. Kasturi used to tell Virmati that marriage is a girl's ultimate objective and destiny. Kasturi, despite her own moderate education, did not believe that girls should have access to higher education. Virmati, her daughter, is convinced that only advanced education will provide her with a unique personality and a place in society. As a result, she earns a B.A. from A.S. College in Amritsar and a B.T. from Lahore, achieving her goal. Harish, an Oxford-returned professor, joined her life when she was pursuing her B.A. In Virmati's house, he was a renter. The professor wooed Virmati under the guise that his illiterate wife was not a suitable companion

and that he desired for a fascinating intellectual companion. When her family arranges her marriage to an engineer, Inderjeet, their hidden relationship continues. Virmati tries suicide. Virmati refuses to marry after this incident because she wants to continue her education. Indumati, Virmati's younger sister, is married to Inderjeet at the appointed time and day to prevent any controversy or embarrassment. She is sent to Lahore to pursue her B.T. degree at Virmati's request and with the blessings of her father, Suraj Prakash, and grandpa, Lala Diwan Chand. The professor is ruthless in his pursuit of Virmati, holding secret meetings with her at the home of a Muslim acquaintance. Virmati becomes pregnant as a result of their clandestine relationship without the professor's knowledge. She couldn't tell him since he was out of the country. Instead, she confided in her roommate, Swarnalata, who was able to have the unwelcome pregnancy aborted.

When Virmati was with the professor, who continually talked about romantic love and made love to her, Virmati's practical sense faded. Virmati, seeing the professor's illegal and guilty character, requested that he marry her, but he was unclear, claiming that he couldn't leave his wife and family because he was already married to Ganga. Virmati waited for the professor to marry her after she returned from Lahore with her B.T. degree. Meanwhile, the Diwan of Sirmaur, a Himachal Pradesh hill state, travelled to Amritsar to find a suitable woman candidate for the principalship of the girls' school founded by his state's Maharani. He knew Lala Diwan Chand and had negotiated Virmati's appointment with him.

Virmati, who had been disillusioned and devastated, saw a good chance and consented right away. Her time as Principal of a girls' school in

Sirmaur was the happiest and most productive of her life- "Virmati did find work, but it was not as a voluntary position. A primary school was located just across the street from A S College, on the ground level of an ancient structure. Virmati's abilities made her an ideal option for principal, as they had been previously, and her marriage contributed to her appeal. Nobody cared about her youth or attractiveness at this point."<sup>1</sup> But, like her adversary, the professor followed her there as well, and his second covert visit resulted in Virmati's dismissal from her position. Virmati departed Sirmaur for Shantiniketan, where she had intended to spend the remainder of her life, after receiving a somewhat dry farewell from her school's personnel. Virmati's life began again, but marriage was a nightmare, as the professor's first wife, Ganga, and her mother-in-law conducted a secret but never-ending struggle with Virmati, who felt like an outsider in the family. Ganga poisoned her children's and sister-in-minds laws against Virmati. When Virmati became pregnant, her mother-in-law changed colours and began to take her cause in the hopes of Virmati bearing a boy. Unfortunately, Virmati's pregnancy ended in a miscarriage, leaving her frail and distraught. Even her employment as a primary school teacher in a primary school failed to calm her down. Virmati suffered the sorrow of being shunned by her parents in addition to her misery and suffering in the professor's family. Virmati's entire existence was shaken by two simultaneous disasters in her paternal home.

On the event of the Hindu Mahasabha protest, which was outlawed by the British government, her father, Suraj Prakash, was assaulted by an unknown criminal. When Virmati went to mourn Suraj Prakash's death, her mother, Kasturi, became enraged and furious. Virmati's grandpa, Lala Diwan Chand, died a few days later, deeply crushed by his son's death.

Virmati became bewildered after being uprooted. She was disliked by both her parents and her husband, who agreed to send her to Lahore to get a master's degree in philosophy. In other words, Virmati realised that her schooling and love life had failed to provide her with a stable identity and a sense of self. She had, in reality, paid an exorbitant price for her freedom. She yearned for her mother's affection her entire life, despite the fact that she never allowed herself to be emotionally present with her daughter. When she was with her husband, the professor, her emotional needs were only partially met. Virmati's efforts to form ties with women had produced an oasis in the otherwise desolate desert of her emotional existence, despite the challenges and disappointments. Virmati was so emotionally dry in her later years, when she became the mother of a girl named Ida, that she remained a sad and mute person, unable to form an emotional relationship with her own daughter. Virmati isn't entirely to blame for her lack of female connection. She was full of feelings like love, affection, compassion, and a sense of belonging to other women.

Her daughter Ida says in the first line of the novel *Difficult Daughters* “The one thing I had desired was not to be like my mother. Now she was gone, and I stood there, dry-eyed, leaden, and half-dead, staring at the flames that rose from her shrivelled body, as my family wailed around the pyre.”<sup>2</sup> Ida intended to send the message that she would not suffer in quiet like Virmati, who had to bear the brunt of her unhappiness. Ida is a divorced woman with no children. She declares her independence as a single woman who has prepared herself to face life's challenges alone. Furthermore, Ida's eventual determination to unravel and reconstruct Virmati's life history explains her connecting with the mother, with whom she could never be personal when she was alive. Ida tells the story of Virmati, assembling the



many threads from her mother's relatives and acquaintances. Kailash Nath, Virmati's brother, lends his unwavering support and cooperation in the project of uncovering the elements of Virmati's history and linking them in a logical pattern.

The story opens with Virmati, who is seventeen years old, helping her mother, Kasturi, who has given birth to eleven children. Kasturi, on the other hand, embodied the stereotype of a traditional Hindu married mother who felt that a daughter should be married off as soon as she enters puberty. Virmati's desire for emotional intimacy with Kasturi is a model for a traditional Indian woman who is subjected to patriarchy's oppressive authority. As a result, patriarchal standards stifle the possibility of female bonding. Ida is acutely aware of the loss she experienced as a child. She was unable to build an underlying understanding with her mother during her lifetime, and this realisation left Ida feeling bereft and guilty following Virmati's death.

As a result, she embarks on a trip into her mother's past in search of a lady she might know, understand, and reach out to in the future. Ida sets out to uncover Virmati's background in order to reconnect with her and make amends for the loss that has devastated her life. Ida found it difficult to piece together her mother's background. She attempted to inquire about Virmati in the manner in which she had known her before. Virmati's parents had eleven children, she discovered. Virmati, Indumati, Gunwati, Hemavati, Vidyavati, and Parvati are the girls. Kailashnath, Gopinath, Krishnanath, Prakashnath, and Hiranath were the boys. Ida noted that her family were respectful and kind to the deceased.

Her books are firmly rooted in the feminist tradition. The main subject is

the desire to have control over one's future. Manju Kapur represents the middle class, and her sharp-eyed, beautifully drawn characters entangled in tough situations have earned her parallels to Jane Austen. The Independent praised Kapur's second novel, *A Married Woman*, as "fluent and witty." *A Married Lady* tells the story of Astha, a well-educated, middle-class woman in Delhi who has everything she could want: children, a devoted, loving husband, and a lovely home. But she finds up having a sexual connection with Pipee, the widow of a political activist, who is considerably younger. Astha ultimately overcomes the dread that her parents and spouse instilled in her.

In a normal middle-class household, Astha is raised in a conventional, warm setting. She is the only child of her parents, who are highly protective of her and want her to follow traditional values. She was raised as a girl in a patriarchal system in which a female is expected to be scared and vulnerable. Her education, character, health, and marriage were all key considerations for her parents. Her mother, a conservative woman, sees her daughter as a problem rather than an advantage. The mother encourages daughter to read the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Gita, which teaches how to live, in order to understand the qualities of tradition. Her mother, who believes in Shashtra visions, claimed, "Our duties will be fulfilled once you get married. Do you know that according to the Shastras, if parents die without marrying their daughter, they will be sentenced to reincarnation indefinitely?"<sup>3</sup> Astha's father, on the other hand, is a modernist who wants to provide her daughter with a decent education. He wants to prepare her for a future as a self-sufficient member of society, which he believes she may achieve by reading a variety of books with moral and intellectual content.

At the same time, he believes that understanding a nation's culture will enable a person to be similarly great, given that reasonable efforts are made. He tells her that she has to know her cultural background: "The second issue was Astha's parents' vested interest in her reading material. Her father began bringing her books with moral and intellectual content. The bureaucrat explained that you need a knowledge of your cultural heritage. A reminder of why our country is so awesome knowing your artistic background is important since it is where your passion rests."<sup>4</sup> Astha, like every adolescent girl, fantasises of meeting a suitable mate. Her dreams, like those of any adolescent girl, are filled with love aspirations. She falls in love with a boy her age during her adolescence. She couldn't stop thinking about him, which made her stomach churn. Her beautiful fairy tale, however, came to an end as soon as her mother learned of it. Her mother took great care of her after that. Regardless of caste, community, creed, or nationality, most teenage girls and boys fall in love at first sight. Astha isn't an exception either. Adolescence is notorious for its haphazard romantic relationships. Because she doesn't comprehend the meaning of the term "love," Astha demonstrates that she is a stupid lady. Her virgin heart has been fluttering with romantic sentiments of love since she was a teenager.

From adolescence through middle age, she experiences many sorts of love with various persons of her choosing. She meets Bunty, a gorgeous lad who pays her pleasant visits at this point. Bunty's adoration for her may be described as an infatuation. She is a big fan of his. "She couldn't eat, sleep, or study because the thought of him kept her insides churning day and night. Her eyes felt dry and hollow when she was away from him. His voice was the only sound that reached her ears. Anything that wasn't his face,

body, feet, hands, or clothes didn't have any weight in her thinking. She found momentary solace in sketching him, but the paintings were always too horrible to think about.”<sup>5</sup> Bunty stops visiting to her house after a while, therefore their love lasts just a short period. It is only afterwards that she learns that her mother is the one who sows the seeds of strife in her daughter's connection with Bunty.

When Astha was in her second year of English literature, her mother began to go through the matrimonial pages with a keen eye in the hopes of finding a suitable spouse for her daughter. “There is a time for everything, went on the mother,” Astha says in a talk with her father. “The girl is now in full bloom. The fruit must be plucked when it is fully ripe. We'll be left wringing our hands if she later joins the wrong firm. She will have no trouble adjusting if she marries at this age. We aren't young enough to afford to wait.”<sup>6</sup> As a result, a suitor approaches Astha. Astha is not at all prepared to receive the official lovely man when he arrives. She is dissatisfied with her parents' decision. A month later, a young man named Rohan enters her life. She learns about him through her pals. She has a crush on Rohan. However, when she approached her adolescence in college, she became emotionally and physically involved with Rohan.

He was the actual embodiment of her fantasies for her. However, Astha was only a pleasure-seeking commodity for Rohan, and their relationship ended when Rohan relocated to Oxford to continue his studies. Despite her undivided care, her mother is completely unaware of any of these events in her daughter's life. Her mother, on the other hand, is preoccupied with daughter most important parental responsibility: getting her married. However, Rohan's love is short-lived since, after passing his exams, he

travels for Oxford to pursue higher education, as his father had requested. When Astha compares her existence to Rohan's, she feels extremely tiny. Her father, she believes, is a low official. He'd never studied abroad and- "... whose only possession was square yards in the Jamuna's desert"<sup>7</sup> Astha is despondent. She starts to dislike Rohan. She is well aware that he lacks the courage to declare his love. She understands that her love for Rohan has come to an end. She has succumbed to the lust of a man. Rohan is oblivious to the fact that he is experiencing emotional distress. Astha is bored as he cheerfully travels overseas. She does, however, decide to pursue a master's degree. If parents of marriageable girls do not get formal offers from suitable guys, they feel frustrated. Astha receives a proposition from a US-returned businessman with an MBA before she becomes scared. When Astha's parents inform her of the news, she initially opposes. She accepts later when her father informs her of the good aspects of the kid, such as the fact that he is the only son and both of his sisters are married.

Her mother also claims that he is a wonderful, family-oriented young man who does not believe in dowry. It might be a result of outside influences. When Astha learns more about Hemant, the foreign-returned MBA, her intrigue grows. The engagement comes to an end, and the two begin dating. The wedding goes occur on a fortunate day. She is enthralled by the romance of their sexual life in the early years of their marriage. She compares Rohan to Hemant whilst on her honeymoon. Hemant has married her, and she believes Rohan has abandoned her. Hemant expresses his love for her and tells her that he is overjoyed since he had hoped to marry a simple girl. And it is realised because he believes Astha is a virgin: "Had she been a virgin? She, unlike Hemant, was unsure. She made the decision to put the whole thing behind her. After all, she was no longer one, so what

was the purpose in dwelling on the past?"<sup>8</sup> As a happily married lady in her early years of marriage, she looks forward to and appreciates sexual connection with her spouse. She is content both physically and artistically. She fulfils her responsibilities as a nice wife and daughter-in-law to their satisfaction.

Her deeply ingrained roots of subordination, meekness, and familial love govern her at all times. Her mother has always made sacrifices for her family and spouse, and she does the same. Following her marriage to Hemant, Astha had the assumption that Hemant would support her writing. As her soul-mate, she may become a poet. Astha finds fulfilment in her roles as a perfect wife and daughter-in-law. Everything goes according to plan. She is proud to be an important member of the family, to share all of its concerns with them, and to promise them of practical answers. Hemant's demeanour toward Astha's parents is likewise kind, making her feel even more proud of her prized possession—her husband. Astha never expresses her joy to others since doing so will jeopardise their relationship. As a result, Astha's marriage life improves unexpectedly. Her spouse, she believes, is the most wonderful person on the planet. She keeps her desire disguised; "She remained quiet about her want to dissolve herself in him, to be the sips of water he drank, the bits of food he devoured. When he was away, she was only thinking about one thing: their wedding day."<sup>9</sup> Her mental condition illustrates the psychology of a typical Indian girl for whom a happy marriage is the pinnacle of success. It was at this point that she began to feel disillusioned, as if her life lacked meaning.

Astha's mother-in-law hopes that her daughter-in-law would be a sweet and selfless woman. She is continuously under pressure at work as a result of

this. Her responsibility to satisfy everyone's needs overwhelm her. She believes that a married woman's family status is always determined by her spouse. She is divided between her responsibilities and socio-religious beliefs. She doesn't have any emotional distance from her family. She is fed up with doing housework and feels that exhausted women do not make good wives. She has to satisfy her husband, and in order to do so, she needs to be- "She was a wife as well, but she wasn't needed there too much. Hemant's wife had to have a willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet during the day, and an obedient mouth."<sup>10</sup> The cruel social climate iticised her in her own family. As a result, she yearns for a life free of stress and sadness. She considers a decent profession since, in her opinion, all career women are self-sufficient. They are at ease. Astha, too, aspires to be a professional woman.

The novel *Home* is an engrossing tale of family life set against the backdrop of the Banwari Lal Cloth Shop's conflict. Manju Kapur's third novel, *Home*, tells the story of a typical middle-class household. The novel tells the story of a typical middle-class Delhi joint family. It highlights the still common ideas regarding children's rearing in India. Banwari Lal, a Sari Seller from Delhi's Karol Bagh, is the focus of the story. "He managed one of the largest fabric businesses in Anarkalli, Lahore's prominent commercial quarter, before to partition"<sup>11</sup> is a Pakistani immigrant who is proud of the Sari company he was able to start with his little resources in Delhi. He is a staunch believer in the ethos of a joint family and, as a real patriarch, is willing to go to any length to protect the honour of the family. His values, on the other hand, are tested by his eldest son, Yashpal, who falls in love with Sona and marries her. As fate would have it, Sona was unable to have a child for 10 years, making her an easy target for the

family's typical jeers. Despite pushback from other family members and underlying prejudice, Banwari Lal welcomes Vicky into his home. Vicky becomes the family's outcast—"his parents' only child"<sup>12</sup> who is resented by everyone, partly because of his misfortune—"Vicky hovered uneasily between shop and home, upstairs and downstairs, between his grandparents and his aunts"<sup>13</sup>, and partly because of his bad behaviour toward Nisha, Yashpal and Sona's loving daughter, who was born after ten years of rigorous prayers by her mother and is the apple of everyone's eyes.

The story moves quickly and quickly becomes intertwined with the house's great children, among whom Nisha is the major protagonist. The writer has written a heartbreaking account of Nisha's turbulent childhood. Vicky, Nisha's cousin, abuses her, and the family elders, despite their displeasure with Vicky's behaviour, do nothing because of family honour. When she is older, she enrolls in college and develops a love relationship with a male. However, she fails in this relationship, her heart aches, and she becomes infected with an illness that robs her of all her beauty. Nisha becomes a self-sufficient businesswoman as a result of her personal strength and confidence. She eventually marries a widower and settles into a home after a series of ups and downs.

Kapur has attempted to address concerns that are typical in Indian mixed households in this work. *Home* is a worldwide family drama, not just a simple story of a sari-seller in Karol Bagh. The writer depicts the peculiarities and challenges that women experience, detailing the issues that women encounter in their families and in society at every turn. Her portrayal of women, notably Sona and her desire to become a mother, appears to be quite authentic. Also noteworthy is her portrayal of Nisha,



who evolves from an innocent beauty to a strong-willed lady.

*Home* is a masterfully constructed story about two sisters, Sona and Rupa, who are obsessed with their daughter, Nisha's, views. The narrative opens by contrasting the situations of two sisters, both of whom are childless. Rupa made the following observation: "While spending the day with her sister, Rupa repeatedly stated to her sister, We're cursed, Didi. What should I do? It is our destiny. Perhaps it's for the best that we don't have children; that guy will torment us for the rest of our lives."<sup>14</sup> Rupa is married to a government worker, whereas Sona is the daughter-in-law of Banwari Lal's combined family.

Rupa is the independent woman in a nuclear family, emerging with her pickle marketing without being taunted about her childless state. Sona enjoys all the material comforts and support structure of the extended business family, and Rupa is the independent woman in a nuclear family, emerging with her pickle marketing, without being taunted about her childless state. After years of being unproductive, Sona is eventually blessed with her daughter Nisha and son Raju. Nisha grows up under the care of her aunt Rupa at her residence during her early years as she displays indications of mental anguish as a result of the trauma of covert sexual abuse. Nisha matures into a defiant young woman. The narrative then shifts its attention to her failed college relationship, the onset of a skin problem, altered attractiveness, postponed marriage, and the intense loneliness that drives her to start her own business, as well as the constraints of marriage and parenthood later in life.

In all aspects, a tendency of movement from negation to acceptance is more visible among the youth at home. The name *Home* alludes to its function

as a protective barrier for all members of the household. Despite the flaws of a combined family, "home" represents the family members' honesty and willingness to aid in a moment of need. It establishes how members of a joint family come together in times of distress to provide moral support and to protect the suffering entity as a shielding element. Manju Kapur explores a common pattern in her work *Home*, shedding light on its relevance and flaws.

Kapur weaves a thread of realism into her tale with a genuine care for her Indian soil, striking the appropriate balance. She uses a reasonable method to distinguish the importance of the existential generation gap between the older and younger generations. Throughout the work, there is an undercurrent texture of resistance and counter-resistance, which is characterised by a balanced distribution of people and events set in a typical Indian familial setting. Manju Kapur claims that fate plays a role in each person's life as a rolling mystery in which everyone plays their parts, rises to the occasion when called upon, resists and counter-resists, and eventually discovers the solution to their puzzle-ridden lives. She depicts how women are vulnerable to pain and how threats and lies put their lives in jeopardy.

*The Immigrant*, Kapur's fourth novel, is about a topic that has been moved from India to Canada. The main subject is a man-woman relationship built around the immigration experience. It is brought to light, in particular, the woman's conflict with society and family in regards to her independent living. Kapur's fourth novel is *The Immigrant*. It is only partially set in India, unlike its predecessors. Nina and Ananda, the major protagonists, are both non-resident Indians enticed to new lives in Canada in the 1970s.

After his parents are murdered in a rickshaw accident, Ananda flees New Delhi. He is young, ambitious, and determined to follow in the footsteps of his uncle, a rich doctor in Halifax, and become a Canadian dentist and citizen. The profound chasm in familial expectations that divides the widowed Ananda from his Canadian kin is well captured by Kapur. He misses the intimacy of Indian life, the community feasts, rich spices, and vegetarian diet he is accustomed to at their house. It finally dawns on him. Ananda's sensation of rejection decreases as he gains a better grasp of Western etiquette, but his sense of humiliation persists.

Nina leaves her home in order to marry Ananda. Ananda's sister and Nina's mother are promoting their marriage, which is somewhat planned. Since Nina's father, a well-traveled ambassador, died unexpectedly, leaving his daughter and widow to live in cramped quarters, the pair has shared grief. Nina has worked as an English teacher at Miranda House College, where she has had her heart shattered and her sexual experience enlarged by a professor who is ten years her senior.

Ananda and Nina are linked by their shared sense of loneliness. For Nina, Ananda is basically her only possession in Canada. She sleeps, reads, or shops for sugary junk food while he is at work. Ananda is a successful businessman who has developed a small group of trusted friends outside of his family, but he brings to his marriage a deeper sense of loneliness centred on his sexual inadequacies. He has attempted and failed to form connections with ladies from the West. Immigration necessitates compromise, and Kapur often highlights the obvious – almost clichéd – ethnic distinctions in cuisine and apparel. Kapur delves into the unique obstacles that immigrant spouse's face, such as how a young woman's life,

already precarious in terms of work and reproduction, becomes a much more difficult balancing act in a new society. Nina breaks down and screams uncontrollably when she learns over the phone that her mother in New Delhi has died suddenly. That sorrow contrasts sharply with the hushed resignation with which she has approached her marriage in Canada. When she became pregnant, her mother had always vowed to accompany her overseas. Nina had imagined an idyllic future in which her mother, daughter, and grandson would finally be together in a Canadian house. Instead, she is alone and adrift, trying to make sense of the sacrifices that have uprooted her.

It's the story of a Delhi-based company. Nina Batra is a thirty-year-old unmarried professor who says, "Nina's skin knew it was thirty."<sup>15</sup> Nina and her mother are trying to make ends meet after her father died. Nina's thirty-first birthday is marked with dismal thoughts of postponed marriage. On the eve of her thirtieth birthday, her chances of marrying and starting a family look bleak, until the unexpected opportunity of a new beginning in Canada appears. An NRI dentist, Ananda, the potential groom, is soon introduced to her family. "Ananda worked with Dr. Chandra for two years as a dentist."<sup>16</sup> The wedding goes place, and Nina is ready to leave her life of monotony behind and fly to a little Canadian town. Nina, who is left alone to lament her sorry position, enrolls in a library science course, which leads to an extramarital affair. She quickly realises, however, that she is unable to adjust to such a drastic cultural shift and begins to resent the new barren relationship. She feels rootedless in the strange place, not just because of the change of location, but also because of the shift in her socio-cultural identity. She eventually overcomes them by enhancing her self worth with a good academic record, encouraging attitudes, and a positive

outlook.

Despite the hardships and loneliness she faces without a partner, she decides to be self-sufficient and go on. Nina, a 30-year-old Indian college instructor, and Ananda, who has travelled to Canada to pursue his degree and practise dentistry, are the couples. He finds it simpler to have his Indian relatives furnish him with a wife than to search one on his own in Canada. He returns Nina to Halifax and settles her there, where he, too, had to deal with the terrible loneliness of recent immigrants for years. He, on the other hand, is unconcerned about Nina being bored or lonely. She does, after all, have him. Its daily lives are laid out for us in all of their mundane pleasures and annoyances. We only meet Ananda once he is married, in terms of his connection with Nina and his attempts to overcome his sexual worries; a small inversion of the typical male writer's perspective of women as sexual creatures in relation to men.

Manju Kapur's most recent work, *The Custody*, was published in 2011. It's a lovely social story that takes place in contemporary society. The book skillfully depicts life as a delicate process in which you must maintain balance via the storylines of Raman-Shagun and Ashok-Ishita. Custody illustrates life in metro cities on both sides, where individuals are victims of modernization and urbanisation. Human ties have become less significant as a result of greater urbanisation and man's thirst for money and wealth. Shagun is a goddess of beauty to Raman. "She now looked like those ideal women described in the Kama Sutra, their hair like a cloud of bees, their breasts like mountains of honey, their eyes like those of a deer, a waist that could be spanned by his two hands (well almost), a belly that folded over in three flat folds, and a walk that was like an elephant's,"<sup>17</sup>

Raman says after having two children and twelve years of marriage. Shagun also desired to spend time with her hubby. Raman, on the other hand, tortures her by keeping her at arm's length due to his company's visits.

The other significant characters, Ashok Khanna and Ishita, are introduced to us at the opening of the narrative. Ishita is from a low-income Punjabi household. She was diagnosed as infertile after her marriage. Her marital life comes to an end when she divorces her spouse. She then goes into social work. Despite the fact that she was a dentist, she began educating youngsters in Delhi's slums. The unimagined uncertainties of nuptials are revealed in Kapur's novel. With scrupulous authenticity, the wife's sensation of suffocation, the husband's fear of loneliness, and the frequent transfer of the children from one house to the next, like commodities, are recalled. Raman has an excellent job at a global firm and two adorable children, whereas Shagun has a perfect existence. Despite this, her overconfidence leads her to choose someone else as her life companion. Ishita is a typical Indian woman with strong opinions. Her infertility has wreaked havoc on her life. She didn't receive her love, but there is a twist, just like in the movie. Ishita falls in love with both a guy and a child. However, there is still a fear of losing everything. Both are dealing with a wide variety of unknowns. The researcher wanted to look at Manju Kapur's works to see how she dealt with the shifting image of women in the modern and post-modern eras. The lady in Kapur's books moves through three stages: tradition, transition, and modernism. The lady in her novels appears to be a personification of a new woman who has been attempting to shed the weight of her inhibitions for a long time. We notice a significant improvement in her walking, talking, functioning, and practically

everything else.

*Custody* is more than just a social critique. It's a tale about modern relationships as seen through the eyes of a woman's yearning for freedom and individualism. In the mid-1990s, the story is set in Delhi's upper-middle class colonies. The story delves into the lives of two women, Shagun and Ishita, one of whom struggles to separate herself from her spouse and the other to join him. *Custody*, When Shagun leaves her husband Raman for another guy, a heated court struggle ensues. The custody of their two children is on the line, and Shagun must determine how much she is willing to pay in exchange for her freedom. Raman's new wife is unable to conceive, therefore she finds joy being a stepmother. When the security of her new family is threatened by the courts, she vows to fight for it. Her works are set in the present day and deal with contemporary women's difficulties. It's a straightforward and fascinating story of love, passion, and attachment set in India during a period of political and religious instability. The main character of the tale, driven by an intense sexual relationship with a much younger lady, risks losing the assets she has accumulated from her traditional marriage and secure family.

The novels present a tough portrayal of the contentious topic of gay partnerships. After all, lesbian and homosexual relationships aren't only fantasy. Though we may or may not embrace it, this is becoming increasingly obvious in modern communities. Manju Kapur was a novelist who focused on the issues faced by the rapidly developing urban middle class. Her female heroines in her works speak out against male dominance and women's marginalisation. Manju Kapur agreed that a woman is never

considered an independent creature since she has always had a subservient and relative status in our culture. Women's position in Indian English fiction as quiet victims and upholders of family and societal customs and traditional values has changed dramatically, and they are no longer portrayed as a passive figure.

Raman, a bright and industrious middle-class aspirant with IIT and IIM degrees, marries Shagun, a beautiful blue-eyed woman. She has nothing to be sad about because she is the mother of two lovely children, Arjun and Roohi. But life was never the same following her meeting with Ashok Khanna, her husband's boss. Shagun and Ashok become increasingly drawn to each other, and their love becomes stronger by the day, to the point that Shagun files for divorce from her husband, Raman. On the other side, Ashok is willing to step into the role of father to Shagun and Raman's two biological children.

The boy, Arjun, is returned to his mother's custody, while the daughter, Roohi, is assigned to Raman's care, according to the court's decision. Suryakanta's wife, Ishita, is a beautiful woman. She is a kind wife and dedicated daughter-in-law who has earned the respect of her family. But as the months passed without any word of a pregnancy, everything changed. Female infertility is recognised as a genuine reason for divorce, and the female bears the bulk of the blame. Ishita and Raman are brought together by fate. An impoverished lady and a lonely guy join forces to form a new family. Ishita loves and cares for Roohi, her sole kid now and in the future. Shagun and Ashok, on the other hand, establish a new family, with Ashok serving as Arjun's perfect guide and companion. Finally, the divorced spouses re-establish a happier family life, putting their previous sad one



behind.

Women's roles have changed dramatically in the post-colonial age, with women now having far greater control over their bodies and decision-making independence. Manju Kapur believes in this development in women, and her works have had a tremendous influence by presenting the changing face of Indian femininity, in which the suffering but stoic lady finally breaks through traditional limitations to establish a space for herself. The maturation of the teenage mind is vividly shown in the lives of her heroines. The researcher believes that the study is necessary because no full-length investigation of Kapur's heroines' transformation has yet been performed. This in-depth thematic approach to Kapur's heroines is anticipated to broaden the possibilities for literary students while also providing fresh research opportunities for future researchers. The study's goal is to encourage readers to recognise their personal and societal responsibilities. It also emphasises the value and need of her education, as well as her purpose, tenacity, and sense of self.

Mrs. Kapur, on the other hand, appears to recognise that while Indian women have made significant progress in the sixty years since independence, there is still more work to be done if full female emancipation is to be reached. In Manju Kapur's heroines, we see the rise of new women who do not desire to be rubber dolls for others to move around as they like. They arouse in them a desire to be self-sufficient and live their own lives. They are brave, loud, determined, and action-oriented, not silent rebels. The characters recognise that she cannot rely on others to handle her household circumstances, duties, or difficulties; she must handle things on her own. Despite receiving knowledge and independence,

Manju Kapur's female protagonist does not mature into a new woman in the traditional sense. Even while she defies one patriarchal barrier, they are trapped in another, where their free spirits are stifled and all they can do is conform, compromise, and adapt. Women make up more than half of the world's population, yet despite several progressions and uprisings, they are not treated equally to males.

Despite the fact that she possesses the same mental and moral strength that he does, she is not considered an equal. In these circumstances, the hunt for her identification is legitimate. She is a wife, mother, sister, and housewife in this male-dominated culture. She must serve, sacrifice, submit, and gently bear all afflictions directed at her. In the patriarchal culture in which she lives, her individual individuality is rarely acknowledged, therefore she lives a life of self-effacement. In the case of Sita, she is constantly expected to follow Savitri and Gandhari. But it's worth noting that these perfect women only lived in epics; they were princesses and queens, far apart from the current world's aches and sufferings, in which a modern woman lacks her own identity. She eats, sleeps, and breathes for the sake of others. When we consider the scenario in India, where women are expected to submit to their husbands and make the marital home comfortable for them, the situation becomes even more dangerous. In this setting, Indian women authors are gaining traction throughout the world, garnering critical acclaim and international acclaim.

The fact that they are natural storytellers and have the talent of diving deep into the workings of the human mind and heart with sympathy, sensitivity, and understanding is the most obvious reason for their success as novelists. However, there is a common aspect of value conflict and conflict between

diverse ways of living. Although the search for one's own identity, particularly in the life of a woman, has become a contentious topic, the term's legitimacy is eroding as it becomes older. It is occasionally misunderstood by the world's literati. No one can dispute that women have been treated as nonentities at some point in their life. Their feelings and emotions are generally neglected, but they must be attentive about their chastity and duties when it comes to being honest with themselves. Manju Kapur's voice is well-known in her works as a wellspring of female feelings and self-analysis. Virmati in "*Difficult Daughters*," Astha in "*A Married Woman*," Nisha in "*Home*," and Nina in "*Custody*" are all searching for their place in the world, although from opposite ends of the spectrum. They all fall in love at first sight, and the hunt for their own identity takes second place. Manju Kapur's facts are worth investigating, and she portrays a perfect image of women via Nisha, Shakuntala, and Rupa, the example figures, who keep their virginity and humanism in the face of adversity and do not abandon anybody.

Manju Kapur's novel *Brothers* begins with a prologue and ends with an epilogue. The narrative appears to be based on a real-life occurrence that occurred in 2006. The plot begins with the assassination of Himmat Singh Gaina, the chief minister of Rajasthan's province, by his younger brother, Mangal. Tapti, Mangal's wife and Himmat's on-again, off-again lover, is left with an uncertain future, having lost both her husband and the only source of happiness and affection she had ever known.

The rest of the novel explains how the brothers ended themselves in such a tragic situation. It all starts in the distant past, in the inherited village of Lalbanga, a few generations ago. In a parallel scenario, the brothers' uncle,

Virpal, quits rural life by making his way to Ajmer, where he plans to join Gandhi in resisting British authority. Both brothers are spared the potentially catastrophic repercussions of such life twists. Virpal is found sleeping on the street by a childless Brahmin, who takes him home. This sets the tone for a sequence of lucky coincidences that lead to Virpal's nephew, Himmat, defying Virpal's political ambitions and ascending to the top.

Success, according to Kapur, is determined by fate rather than personality. Himmat's family feels that his success was based on luck and contacts rather than a belief that hard effort alone would have sufficed. Mangal, Himmat's brother, anticipates and receives similar funding. However, he lacks the motivation and talent to put it to good use. He is furious when his efforts fail, and he places the blame firmly on his brother. Mangal, on his part, stands for tradition. He may be a killer, but he is still closer to the town and family than Himmat, who has sent them away. He may have had a greater position than his contemporaries and a bride who didn't respond if he had stayed in Lalbanga. When his privileges are questioned, he becomes enraged and perplexed, eventually succumbing to his caricature and retaliating violently.

Tapti in the book, like Sarangi and Pravin in real life, goes on to have a successful public life, but Mangal, although making the best of his brother's connections, fails horribly in all he does. Frustration grows, and he eventually purchases a rifle, which causes friction between the husband and wife. Manju Kapur creates a tapestry of India, including its history, society, and political history. As she examines three generations of a Jat family in Lalbanga, near Ajmer, through seven decades, the family tale

shakes back and forth. During that period, the Gainas went from the country to the urban terrain, rising from landowners to political overlords, against the backdrop of World War II, the Freedom Struggle, the Post-Independence years, through the Emergency, and on to 2010. Their emotional attachment to the land is never lost, with members of the family stationed there at all times.

Manju Kapur illustrates the complications of caste politics in both the country and the city, emphasising the struggle of women, the importance of education, and the importance of making the correct connections. The men's enormous aspirations take them out of their hamlet and into towns and major cities. While Himmat's story is one of endurance, tenacity, and strategy, Mangal, his younger brother, is mostly his shadow, an ungrateful cur who is unable to take advantage of any assistance offered to him and who bares his teeth in response to perceived slights. His actual downfall is his sense of entitlement to his brother's success and efforts. The majority of the female characters in *Brothers* are fragile figures dancing on the outside of men's existence, living just to satisfy the men's demands and bear those children. Tapti, on the other hand, stands out as a well-educated lady with unyielding drive and a keen sense of what she wants from life. Though she and her brother-in-law had a strong connection from the start, her reasons for falling to adultery so late in life, as well as her intentionally moving away from it subsequently, are still a mystery.

When we finish the research, we discover that Manju Kapur is one of the brightest stars among Indian women English writers, joining Githa Hariharan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, Kamla Markandaya, and others as a highly significant and long-serving critic of Indian English literature. All

of these writers have attempted and succeeded in depicting today's lady who has moved away from tradition, culture, patriarchy, and social traditions. Manju Kapur's awareness of human personalities and maturity as a novelist are showcased in this book.

The novel by Manju Kapur depicts women's life, their fights for fundamental rights, and their search for identity and survival. They become conscious of their self-reliance as a result of schooling, which has shown to be a problem among new women. As a result, women in a male-dominated society faced economic and sociocultural disadvantages. The patriarchy was the benefactor of the society. The women were deafeningly quiet, resembling rubber dolls that others might move around as they pleased. They had been stripped of their fundamental rights, goals, individuality, and self-sufficiency.

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## **SCOPE OF THE PAPER**

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Research writing is a very serious business, one that requires being approached with precision. This requires a high level of seriousness and uniformity so that things don't fall into chaos. To be good at research work, one has to learn the accepted methods and processes of documentation. One such example is how to write the scope of my research work, which will also be part of my research work. The scope of study section of my research work contains the areas to be covered by my work. It is through the content of my scope of study that one can determine whether the aims of the project have been achieved.

The scope of this paper explains the extent to which the research area will be explored in the work and specifies the parameters within which the study will operate. Basically, this means that you will have to define what the study is going to cover and what it will focus on. Similarly, you also have to define what the study is not going to cover. This will fall under the limitations. Generally, the scope of a research work is followed by its limitations-

1. General purpose of the research,
2. The duration of the research, and
3. The books and literature from other sources that I have already discussed. Finally, I want to state that a literature review is an important part of any research project because it helps to identify the scope of work that has been done so far in a research area. Literature review findings are



used as the foundation for the researcher to build upon to achieve his research objectives.

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