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## EXAMINING PATRIARCHAL HEGEMONY IN MANJU KAPUR'S DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS

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### ABSTRACT

Manju Kapur speaks with great narrative eloquence of the idea of independence. The novels of Manju Kapur unveil those deviations in modernity that have led to the worthlessness in the worthlessness in our society and the modern life. As one of the strongest Feminist Indian authors she has insisted on the up-lift of women empowerment and potency. She has written six great novels, namely *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), *Custody* (2011), *Brothers: A Novel* (2016). Besides these novels, Kapur has also written wonderful short stories- *The Necklace*, *Chocolate*. In all her novels, the readers get the opportunity to understand the woman of modern era, her inconvenience and her aspiration to become independent. The husband-wife relationship has been engaged up as a major theme in all her novels. She exposes the unequal trends of the patriarchal society in which male plays the dominating role and portrays the women who want changes in the norms of traditions. She has also contributed more than 50 articles. Women have been striving for equality with men for hundreds of years. Because they were women, they were kept back and their opportunities were taken away from them. Feminism is the belief in gender equality in social, political, and economic matters. And it has been the feminist movement that has attempted to grant these rights to women who have been denied equality and benefits that men have never granted them. Patriarchal rule has harmed women all throughout the world. A woman is bombarded with societal images, rewards, and penalties from the moment she is born, all of which are meticulously engineered to prevent her from developing the qualities associated with the other half of humankind. Despite the fact that *Difficult Daughters* is not explicitly a feminist novel, it raises concerns of gender discrimination, patriarchal hegemony created in the society and the struggle of suffering of Indian women under the oppressive mechanisms of a closed society. They fight to keep their dignity and, in the end, reclaim their individuality as individuals. The story of a woman whose struggle for independence engulfs her, leaving a contour of partition and sorrow on her ostensibly tranquil face, is the narrative fabric of *Difficult Daughters*, set around the period of division. The purpose of this article is to examine the novel in which the female protagonist, Virmati is bound by tradition and patriarchal ideals tries to satisfy her suppressed needs but is eventually consumed by pain and isolation.

**KEYWORDS :** patriarchy, Hegemony, Gender, Feminism and Violence, relationship,

### INTRODUCTION

*Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapoor is the story of a young girl trying to piece together her dead mother's past in order to understand why their relationship was so strained. The story begins with Ida's declaration that "the only thing I needed was not to look like my mother (1)" and ends with "Don't bother me anymore" (259). Even though she is aware of her mother's sorrow, torment, and misery, the little girl does not approve of her mother's lifestyle, and she has now expounded on it. Ida, who is penning the mother's narrative, is analysing it. Virmati's story is bleak, as she grows up unable to transcend her sexuality.

The content begins with a negative model, a picture of female consideration that the content will attempt to overcome. Although *Difficult Daughters* is primarily Virmati's story set in the 1930s, the scene of the passionate and sexual existence of three women living at different times in history disrupts the linear chronological span. To put it another way, the account transfers from Virmati to Kasturi to Ida over a period of time. Virmati, like a large number of other subcontinental ladies, is approached to agree to a standard masterminded marriage.

She rejects that fate, much to the chagrin of her family, particularly her mother. She figures out how to get out of the house and focus in Lahore, claiming her right to be educated. Regardless, she begins to gaze longingly at an Amritsar instructor known as 'the professor', a married man who first appears in her life as a resident of her parents' home. After a series of changes, including a stint as a school principal in a small Himalayan state, she finally marries the guy she loves and returns to Amritsar to live with him.

Whatever the case may be, he will not leave his first wife, and the consequences for Virmati are severe. She is marginalised by her own family and despised by her husband. Ida, Virmati's only small child, tells her story from today's perspective, as she tries to recreate her late mother's biography against the backdrop of the independence movement of the 1940s and the resulting segment injury. Kasturi, Virmati's mother, an eighth-grader from an Arya Samaj school who spent her days in the kitchen cooking, could see no future for Virmati other than being a wife and mother like herself.

It is no surprise that Virmati is already preparing at the age of ten. She is forced to act as a second mother to her siblings because she is the oldest of eleven children. Virmati is

groomed to be a wife and mother, with the idea of an Indian woman's job imprinted in her mind. When she is confined to a specialist of her parents' choosing, she accepts it passively as a typical occurrence in the life of a young lady's significant partner. Tired with the day's work and child care, the educator's attentiveness makes her feel needed and adored, and this transports her into a world of sentiment.

Another experience for Virmati is conversing about Keat's verse, Wordsworth's representations of Nature, and the Professor's seriously active letters. It is an escape from the mundane. Love transforms her totally, infusing her with creativity, freshness, and passion. The married Professor, on the other hand, is a conceited figure. When Virmati arrives in Lahore, he first appeals to her with passionate and energetic letters, eventually persuading her not to see him. Virmati reaches a critical juncture as a result of his attachment, paying visits to his companion's home, and finally, her pregnancy.

Virmati cherishes the organic culmination of her attachment despite the fact that she is never free of the soul's hesitations. While expounding on Hindu fantasies and how they play on the female psyche, Sudhir Kakar writes in his paper "Ladylike Identity in India" that legends of ladies like Damyanti, Savitiri, but most importantly Sita leave permanent marks in the character development of each Hindu lady" (P 44-68). However, she is not thinking along the lines of 'Sita' at the moment and is sufficiently enraged and insubordinate when the Professor continues to reject her desires in relation to their marriage.

For Virmati, falling in love with a professor who is not her significant partner, is neither a source of pride nor a sign of fulfilment. It's a source of humiliation. It fills her with a sense of dread and rootedness. Virmati spends the most delightful and inventive years of her life in Nahan, the capital of Sirmour, a little Himalayan realm ruled by an enlightened maharaja who grants her shelter as the headmistress of a young lady's school. She achieves the greatest level of control over her life there: there are rules she must follow, but she can teach within a structured environment, and her display earns her deserved respect.

She has her own space to reside for a brief period of time before collapsing. She realises she needs a man and makes an ill-advised move, returning to a relationship that had previously caused her nothing but pain. Virmati is enraged when the Professor postpones her wedding, ostensibly to extend her time of study so he might meet her on occasion without

fear of being spotted by his loved ones. Her displeasure is understandable, given that she is the one who is questioning her own regard. She has taken on the role of the odd one out.

The Professor makes the most of his marital life and social status, but Virmati is left out. She lacks a decent social reputation and is unwilling to sacrifice her activity. Virmati's boss loses faith in her due to the repetitive secret visits of the lethally alluring Professor, and she is forced to leave her school, residence, and work. Female marriage is an obvious obligation for her, as it is a societal and open declaration. It is this that will shape her personality, whether she is the educator's next spouse or not.

Marriage along these lines may provide her with a way out of her fear of being socially rejected, as well as a chance to go into the top and relieve her of her feelings of weakness and vulnerability. Her mother had no desire to resist man-centred structures when she was younger. There was complete acknowledgement in ordinary life. Kasturi is an example of a typical ladylike demeanour to reproduce in order to achieve life and happiness.

Marriage is a rigorous and social setup for Ganga, the Professor's better half, just as it is for Kasturi, where love isn't the premise of marriage. She accepts everything the Professor does as a resigned being and does not perceive it to be in contrast with the awful treatment she has had. "A lady shouldn't speak her experiences and agony out in the open," writes Krishna Rathore in her article "Crawling towards Freedom." She was allowed to write them down in her secret notebooks or bind them in with a couple of personal female pals.

There are strict prohibitions against passing them on to men. It was solely her responsibility to make her marriage work, regardless of whether her spouse strayed" (P 54). There is a subjective gap between the life-accounts of the (described) mother and the (describing) girl at that point. Furthermore, as another of Kapur's analyses, Gur Pyari Jandial, correctly points out, it would be a mistake to dismiss Virmati's battle because she failed, because what mattered was that she tried: "What is essential is to break the male centric shape, and for Virmati to have attempted to do so in the forties was an extraordinary accomplishment."

The data show that Virmati chooses instruction above a planned marriage, which is a difficult task. Virmati takes a professional course but does not have a job lined up. She does not consider instruction or calling as a means of achieving a particular opportunity. Unlike

Virmati, her relative Shakuntala makes use of her advice and staunchly rejects the marriage weight. Currently, she defies male-centric culture. She is clear about what she needs to accomplish and how she needs to do it, and she gains autonomy in this way.

Virmati, who is struggling to find a place for herself in the midst of her family's confusion, which is exacerbated by the political unrest of the time, is enthused by the inspiring character Lahore, and she discovers a possibility of autonomy to have a chance to be delivered by overcoming her inhibitions by participating in the Indian freedom struggle to sample the modernity that allures her. Instead, she chooses

to fight for her own personal battles — with her family, her goodness, and her desire to marry the man she loves.

Though she is capable of living her life on her own terms, she is unable to get a complete comprehension of herself. As the narrative progresses, Virmati discovers another Virmati in her own daughter, Ida, who refuses to follow in her footsteps and subsequently becomes a Difficult Daughter for Virmati, just like her mother Kasturi, where she innates the superiority of being a difficult daughter.

## CONCLUSION

Manju Kapur registers her anxiety for the Indian woman and deals with a variety of feministic issues like female education, their empowerment, financial independence, eradication of child marriages, the abolition of the dowry system, elimination of a woman's sexual abuse, etc. Kapur who herself was an English lecturer at Miranda House Delhi, has engaged up cudgels to struggle for woman's cause. She narrates important issues of class and nationhood and connects them to the promising logic of female individuality in postcolonial India. The novelist is rather down to earth in her feminist approach to the woman's problems. All her protagonists object against the social rules to become self-dependent, but ultimately negotiation for the sake of social agreement. She is conscious of the importance of the Indian woman's quandary and her generation old struggles following it, but she believes that a positive change in her social position can become visible by bringing about a change in her mind-set and making her knowledgeable and educated. Kapur accurately considers her role as Indian feminist as humanist-feminist.

I believe that women have the right to be treated equally to men, and that feminism is helping to achieve this goal. Men, women, and their families benefit from feminism because

it gives moms, daughters, and sisters an equal chance in life to fulfil their full potential without discrimination based on their gender. It is a human right to be on an equal footing with those around you, regardless of gender. They should be given the same possibilities and privileges in life, and feminism aids women in achieving this goal. Feminism is allowing women to pursue jobs and enterprises that they would not have been able to pursue previously. Women currently hold positions of influence in government, including high-ranking positions. They have earned their independence from a male-dominated society and are becoming less financially reliant on their husbands. Many women are now capable of running their own households without the assistance or support of a male. Men are also aided because their wives are now able to assist with financial demands; they are no longer reliant on them as their family's sole source of income. Feminism allows women to have better, higher-paying occupations, allowing them to earn more money.

## Plan

*Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapoor is the story of a young

girl trying to piece together her dead mother's past in order to understand why their relationship was so strained.

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