



SUSCEPTIBILITY OF WOMEN IN MANJU KAPUR'S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world's highlight is women and their harrowing experiences. Times gone by there are a perceptible unwillingness to acknowledge the reality of suffering. After independent India when a woman's life started altering owing to spread in education, the modern attitude woman started emerging. Women aware of their rights and when they started becoming economically independent, there was a striving for the realization of their own ambitions. Now, the new woman is an obsessive appearance out of the Indian existing ethos and not just a blind replication. Even in modern India, women are still caught between cultural values and traditional style of life and fast approaching new life. Caught among the burden of the administrative center, residence, childbearing, mothering, and struggling with principles; women's first step to survive with equality is a far weep. The wide-ranging image of women in literature identifies the real position according to woman in society – as daughter, mother, and wife in a familial setting.

KEYWORDS : Feminism, Consciousness, Susceptibility, Humanity, Self-Realization, Perception

Women, in country like India play multiple tasks. Women's position in India has been matter to many changes over the span of Indian history. Women's situations in society have been depreciated from ancient period, and their subjugation continues well into India's early modern period. Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), an existentialist philosopher and feminist of the west considers about the subjugation and consciousness of women in *The Second Sex* (1949). Woman's foremost negative aspect is that she considers physically weaker than man. Accordingly, man sits in the dominant position, driving women to the fringe. Beauvoir often queries as to why, in spite of so much discrimination, a woman hesitates to protest male dominance. It is necessary for every woman to systematize their life.

Beauvoir declares that today's so called unidentified women are the creation of centuries' old prejudice. In her own times she began to be acquainted with a positive change towards egalitarianism. Beauvoir exactly states that even after the accomplishment of equality, women's ideal world would remain miscellaneous from men. However, Simone considers that the consciousness of women's suppressed life would be in the curiosity not only of woman alone, but of entire humanity.

Linking to Beauvoir's views, Manju Kapur an Indian novelist takes part in delineating the feminine susceptibility and the dilemma of the women characters that eventually steps forward towards awakened principles. Kapur's women characters walk around in self- introspection which finally helps them to recognize their individuality. The novels *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant and Custody* are the multicolour feathers by the novelist to comprehend the intricacy of life, various histories, structures and different set of values in relation to the Indian culture. Further, Kapur traces the female progresses through diverse stages. The chief objectives of her novels portrays that women are not born inferior but wrought by thousand external processes.

Kapur's novels make the readers to capture and think over the factors that direct the women characters to succeed and achieve in life. The novelist as an initiator attains the ultimate objective of feminist consciousness and represents various suppressive forces that truss women. She attempts to break away all obstacles in relation to various women character. The feminine susceptibility reveals that the women have preconceived perception about their responsibility. Women's potentials and dreams go a waste when they become duty conscious. Most of their time is predictably consumed when they engage in the roles as wifehood and motherhood.

Though women have awareness they believe trapped in real life. The peace and tranquility are the shares of women, which bind them down to perception. When the conscious women characters take effort to step beyond impediments, the situation leads to revolution.

Kapur's women characters try to accomplish the intention of generating a consciousness. It is the realization about women's experience and their psyche, which is still under grab hold of patriarchal doctrines and epitome of wifehood and motherhood. A conscious effort to break the psychological barriers and an acceptance of genderless society may fulfil the dream of a 'balanced society' a probable one. The female characters like Virmati, Ida, Nisha, Astha, Nina, Shagun and Ishita become aware of the repressive forces in slow degrees. A conscious appraisal of their predicament brings forth the means of the life, and then they try to authorize themselves. The circumstances in life on society try to explore a ground on which complete consciousness of female suppression can be evoked. A better understanding of the female attitude and an awareness of one's own situation as a second-rate citizen in the society paves way to new life.

In spite of the obstacles inflicted on women by the patriarchal society, Kapur's women attempt to renoun themselves and develop in potency. The novelist focuses on the existential predicament and travails of the subdued women in a male dominated society governed by rigid traditions and restrictions. The writer delves deep into the psyche of the suppressed women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight. She pictures into light the issues, which are the outcome of Indian women's psychosomatic and poignant imbalances. Further, she portrays her female protagonists who, whether succeed or not in the end, suggests a need to struggle to lead a reminiscent life with etiquette to attain self esteem in her life or in death. Everyone admits life is filled with human weaknesses but not without human potentialities to achieve more and more.

Manju Kapur's novels divulge that the women's outcome of consciousness runs as an undercurrent throughout their life. Kapur emphasizes the female protagonists are *prayagya rupa* meaning 'aware woman'. All her erudite women want their individual worth realized and venture to break through the suffering that the traditional society offered them. In *Difficult Daughters*, the protagonist Virmati conscious of her dignified and respectable life in society deals with women's emancipation, and fights to give legitimacy for her love and marriage in spite of family's opposition. Later, her daughter Ida widely awakens of her unsuccessful marriage and

daringly breaks her nuptial bond with Prakash, and proves woman can stay single. Astha in *A Married Woman* cognizant of her lesbian relationship with Pipee returns to her family in order to save the culture and tradition. Nisha in *Home* mindful about life compromises on her business for the sake of family and for her children. Nina in *The Immigrant* conscious of her independence decides to lead a life away from her husband, because she does not want to be a mere object within the constrained home. In *Custody*, the protagonist Shagun aware of her mistake is ready to compromise with her two children but all in vain. The second protagonist Ishita who is conscious of her infertile life decides to be the adopt mother of Raman's daughter Roohi. Such wakefulness nature helps them to lead a life of recognition.

Kapur's women have the 'ambivalent' posture. On the one hand, the probabilities of wider horizons are open and they awaken the nostalgia to satisfy their 'aspirations' and to uphold their identity. On the other hand, the old traditional ethical notions pull them back and tie them down. Thus feminism demands a right to govern one's life without any kind of interference by others. We the women to sustain the achievement and development assertiveness are essential. With the awakening of the intellect there has been a coincident awakening of the senses. All through the centuries the physical faculties of women have either lain quiescent or have been exercised without comprehension. Now, for the first time in her progress towards perfect knowledge, their significance has been revealed to her, and as yet she can think of nothing else except her 'self'.

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