



SUPREMACY AND POLITICS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

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Abstract

In recent times, the Indian English literature has spread its dynamic ideas and the thoughts of the people as its reputation has spread in the international circle. The works of women novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian literature. It has created a drastic change in the minds of the people in the society as well as in the family. Novelists especially the women always describe about the whole world of women with their stunning frankness and boldness. Their writings give the glimpses of the unexplored female psyche which has lots of restrictions before in earlier days. Kapur's women characters are both traditional and modern whose lives are being struck between emotional responsibilities attached towards the family and their desire. Her women protagonists are fighting hard for their rights in a patriarchal society. The research paper entitled "Supremacy and Politics in the Select Novels of Manju Kapur" attempts to make an in-depth analysis of women characters of Kapur. It focuses on women's power in the society as well in their family which can be clearly understood by the protagonist's behavior and action towards the society. They fight for their desire to be understood in means of using their power as a tool to make people understand their thirst for freedom and identity. The change in their characters decides their life as they boldly face the dominated society. Her five novels have been taken namely *Difficult Daughter*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant* and *Custody* for study. The study mainly focuses on women's power which makes them a powerful character who were earlier inferior to the men in the society. The life and the experience of the Kapur's woman protagonists are being analyzed with reference to her five novels.

Keywords: AMITAV GHOSH, women, oppression, equality of rights, democracy, society and changes

The acceptance of faults and the attitude towards woman is the major issue which creates the distance in the relationship between them in the society. Ananda, in the novel *The Immigrant*, expresses the power of man in the society as his character brings out the glimpses of the male dominated society. He makes use of his power of domination in controlling his wife Nina where in hiding his drawback. He does not think of her life instead he enjoys his life in a way that there is no restriction for him in the society.

He clearly focuses on the shift in his relationship goals and the values in his life. As a man of male-dominating society he chooses his own priority in his life by not understanding the pain of Nina. The life of Nina portrays the reality of an Indian middle-class woman who learns to sacrifice her problem in order to ignore the arguments between them. The frustration and the depression in her life make her transform into a new woman who thinks practically in her life than thinking emotionally. Nina, in the beginning, shows the typical unmarried woman who faces all the issues and the comments upon her status of being unmarried. Nina, for her sake of identity, chooses to marry Ananda with lots of hopes in her life which are just a dream. She faces lots of problem in her married life as she feels isolated and alienated because of being at home without doing any useful things. She is being isolated because of Ananda who keeps himself busy with his work all the time. The life of Ananda and Nina moves towards different ends as they meet their own satisfaction in life by having an illegal affair. At the end, Nina, losing her mother, could not think of anyone else than Ananda to be her supportive husband for the rest of her life. But the life of Nina changes as she finds out her husband's affair and decides to leave the marital life which gave her frustrations and depression in choosing her life to be an independent woman in an alienated society.

The power of Ananda and Nina is being analyzed as through their characters as well their situation in their life which made them choose a decision of their own needs. The power of man in a male dominated society is differentiated when he comes to an alienated land where he finds out the values of his own home town and the alienated culture a different one. The character of Nina is analyzed through her behavior and actions towards the society and the family. The typical woman who ignores all the responsibility of her life boldly chooses a life of her own identity with a great hope in herself.

The novel *Custody* is also analyzed as the novel focuses on the life of man and woman in the society. The story revolves around the man and the woman who strives hard to satisfy their needs by breaking up the marital relationship they have secured it for a longer period of time. Marital relationship keeps the man and the woman to be connected in reminding their values and responsibilities. The life of a woman is mainly focused as it may be any relationship the woman is the victim of the male dominated society. The life of a married woman who leaves her marital life for the sake of her freedom pleads for the custody of her children when even her husband files a case on custody of the children.

The plot *Custody* revolves around the life of married women who breaks their relationship for the sake of their identity and freedom in case of many consequences in their life. Shagun is portrayed as the woman who boldly takes up a decision in her life in living a life of her own priorities. She fights for her children's custody as she divorces her husband Raman in order to marry her love Ashok Khanna. The pain and the sacrifices of Shagun in her marital life are clearly shown in the novel. At the same time, the power of woman in the society is controlled by keeping the traditional value as the first preferences which do not make a woman move ahead in her life. The differences in Shagun and Raman and the issues around their life are focused for revealing the power of the man and woman in the society.

In the same novel, Isitha and Suryakantha are also discussed to show the pathetic condition of woman in the male dominated society. Ishitha is a typical Indian woman who is being appreciated for her a perfect daughter-in-law. Later all the happiness in her life vanishes as she is considered to be an infertility woman who cannot fulfill her role of womanhood in the society. The sacrifices, pain and the longing for love and support are portrayed through her character in the novel. The reality of woman sufferings both physically and mentally is being analyzed as the life of Ishitha is the actual life of many Indian woman who suffer of being childless. Suryakantha is the accurate male dominated character who in the beginning loves his wife to the core but after knowing her drawback of being a childless, he changes totally to a man of being selfish. He starts ignoring her and even stops talking to her as he decides to put an end to the relationship. The life of Ishitha and Suryakantha clearly shows the patriarchal society where the relationship of a Man and a Woman is being presented. The power of man and woman with different opinions is being revealed through the character of Ishitha and uryakantha. It even depicts the family which is in the hands of patriarchal society where the woman of same gender ignores and blames the woman instead of searching for a solution in

life.

This paper focuses on the two different novels *Custody* and *The Immigrant*. It depicts the reality of the family where the woman is being the victim of their situation. The frustration and the depression of being a sacrifice makes a woman bend to all the norms of a man in order to satisfy his needs. Later on, the woman bursts out of frustration and takes a decision of living their life on their own even after many facing many obstacles in their life. In the novel *Custody*, the life of a modern woman and the life of a traditional woman whose problem of life is similar but the situation of their life differs as they do not protest for the same problem. Shagun is seen as a modern woman who boldly takes up a decision in life which is considered as a disrespectful behavior in the society where she chooses a life even after being a mother of two kids. But she is clear about her decision that she could live a life of her own by forgetting her past life which was a mere prison. She lives happily with Ashok khanna and her son Arjun with an identity which does not make her lose herself in the society.

On the other side, Ishitha a traditional woman who is accused of being childless is being thrown out of a family where she has experienced lots of love and care. She feels inferior of being childless as it leads her to end up her relationship with Suryakantha whom she lived for past three years. Their marital relationship was very healthy that they loved each other. But the transformation of Suryakantha made Ishitha lose hope in her life as she decides to end her marital relationship. Suryaknatha and his family show the reality of a male dominated society and the family which values the customs more than a woman's feelings and pain. Most of the female protagonists of Kapur are educated, aspiring individuals caged with the confines of a conservative society. It's their inflexibility towards the education which makes them protest against their rights in the patriarchal society. The struggle between tradition and modernity develops the awareness of the power of woman in the society who has a voice of their own. Every society has certain values to be followed, the very same values which have sustained and supported the Indian society is being questioned.

Women until then treated as subjugated or inferior have been treated with respect as they had their own identity in the society. Kapur shows the conflict between the tradition and modernity in all her novels. Through her woman protagonists Virmati, Astha, Nina and Nisha, Kapur wants to convey that with the help of education the life will be changed as it will be a big opportunity in the future life. They do not want their life to be hidden behind the walls at home instead they want to prove themselves in the society where they are seen as inferior among the family. Her women want to assert their own individuality and create a space for

themselves. These characters are conscious of their rights and respects. Though her women are rooted in a traditional setup, she always emerges as a strong personality at the end. Kapur's characters grow up strong both intellectually and most importantly psychologically. In each of her novels, Kapur urges for a way of self-emancipation and self-dignity. She presents a standpoint that a woman who is being an inferior because of the male domination takes up a clear and bold decision in taking up her power as a tool to withstand with her decision as the final. The power of woman is being a question as it is mostly in the hands of the man in the society or in the family. The woman cannot decide as she emotionally and mentally has a safe circle around her life. She could not give up the family as it will lose her relationship in the society with many problems in her life.

A woman always feels that her safe place in her life is the family. Kapur expresses the thoughts of a woman who wants to be on her own in balancing both the values as she does not want any change in their life. The protagonists of all the five novels boldly face the society where they have experienced many failures after failures which taught them a lesson to be an independent woman in achieving their goals. The power was not only meant for the man but also for the woman in the society as it is seen through the protagonist's behavior and actions in their life against their man in the family. A woman in the society is being dominated by both men as well as the same gender as an individual woman who is independent but cannot lead a life of her own. The modern women are no longer the victims in the hands of the family as they have learnt to ignore the issues which brought them lots of discouragement in their life. In Kapur's novel, she points out the strength of woman who can live a life independently in the society with her own identity.

She always focuses on the power of woman which is hidden in them as it is controlled by the men in the family. She creates her woman protagonists to be more powerful in their mental and psychological skills. The scope of this dissertation is to emphasize the power of an individual woman who apart from being a traditional in background moves ahead in proving herself in the society by achieving her identity by using her power in a mind melding way. The woman uses her power in a positive way that it makes sure that she achieves without any issues or in a dominated way. She boldly takes up a decision in a society in bringing up the influence of the western ideas in a traditional woman which might help them in finding their own power in succeeding their goals. The Indian women in the society need not only education but also economic independence and also metamorphosis in old social values and customs which will acknowledge woman's empowerment in all fields. A woman should be independent as well as follow certain customs and traditions which would help them in following a disciplinary life

without any issues around their life.

Kapur's style of writing is one that resonates with Indianness at every point. She portrays her thoughts and experiences of Indian middle-class women in the society with bold and stunning frankness which shows the actual reality of the Indian middle-class family. The focus of women's life and the sufferings of their life which then totally transform through the protagonists of her novels expresses the thoughts and the longing for the freedom in the life of woman in the society. Kapur makes clear statement in all her novels that a woman's mental strength is more powerful than man in the society. Through the readings of the selected novels of Kapur, the study explores that the author clearly reveals the true reality of the Indian Middle-class women in the society. Her novels play a major role in registering the true impact on the society where the women are still being marginalized with the control of man in the society. As the theory focuses on the power, the search of identity and the desire to achieve their goal through their control and behavior is being analyzed. This paper effectively shows the problems of the women in the society such as identity crisis, clash between gender, plight of immigrant, sexuality through the mirror of Kapur's novels. It is an attempt on focusing on the protagonist's role in the patriarchal society who boldly takes a step ahead with their control over power in the novels of Kapur.

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