

“VIRMATI, A REBEL CHARACTER IN MANJU KAPUR'S DIFFICULT DAUGHTER”

* Shalini Dubey and Yajushi Gautam

*Govt. T.R. S. College, Rewa (M.P.)

Received: 05/01/2017	Revised: 15/01/2017	Accepted: 18/01/2017
-----------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

ABSTRACT:-

Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughter is the story of a freedom struggle in this novel Virmati fights for the freedom to live life on her terms. She wants to decide what to study and where, whom to marry and when. My paper aims to analyze Virmati's conflict between her duty to her family, her desire for education and independence and her illicit love for a married man. It is Virmati's fight against her family traditions; against the age old orthodox syndromes fixated with sub- continent women and against the society.

Keywords: Identity, Traditional Freedom, Rebel

INTRODUCTION:-

Difficult Daughters is set against the historical background of India's partition. It is the story of a young woman Virmati who falls in love with a married man, hitherto a condemned passion in her narrow social circle. She is torn between family duties, the desire for education and illicit love. It is a story of sorrow, love and compromise.

Manju Kapur's heroines negotiate for their independence and a respectable place in society. The heroine is mentally advanced in the real sense of the word. Manju Kapur clearly shows the dilemma of women who carry the burden of being female as well as the added responsibility of being mothers to members of their own sex.

“A free and autonomous creature like all others, a woman finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the ‘other’ and reduce her to the status of the ‘second sex’.”

Difficult Daughter is set against historical back-ground of India's partition. It highlights the problem of marginalization suffered by Indian women whose major concern is maintaining their individuality and dignity. It is the story of Virmati seen through the eyes of her daughter Ida, the narrator and a divorcee, from whom her mother's past has always been kept a secret.

Electronic Journal of Advanced Research

An International Peer review E-Journal of Advanced Research

Virmati, the heroine of the novel is the eldest daughter of an Arya Samaj family, which follows the old tradition of marrying off their daughters at a certain age after they have received the basic qualification of housekeeping. But Virmati's life takes different twists and turns because of her inclination to education in true sense of term. Virmati's urge for education had traces of her having an independent wish. She wanted to have her won space, her own identity.

Her marriage is final with Inderjeet but it is postponed because of the death of his father. After that she has to go to Lahore for further studies and there, she falls in love with oxford returned Professor Harish Chandra who lives next door and is already married. This illegitimate affair leads to many a trouble. Virmati has to bear the brunt alone. She fails to demand her status from the professor whose baby she conceived before marriage. She is forced to abort the child to Harish as the professor is reluctant-rather afraid to marry her. Finally at the insistence of a friend, he is forced to marrying her. But Virmati's hardships do not end here, they simply change colors. Though she succeeds to marry the professor yet she does not secure any space for herself in family. Ganga, his first wife and his mother compel Virmati to lead a suffocating life in the tight walls of the house.

One cannot deny the role of fate in Virmati's tragedy because all blood relations seem cold and barren. Nobody wants her, nobody likes her. The incongruities of time and fate also play truant with her and give her melancholy. Her melancholy cross all limits when she reaches her home to attend the funeral ceremony of her father. Her mother happens to see her standing there, she hurls all possible harsh words and blamed on her for her father's death and asks her to get out of the house when she says: You've destroyed our family you badmash!

..... You have blackened our face everywhere! For this I gave you birth? Because of you there is shame on me, shame on Bade Pitaji! But what do you care, brazen that you are!
(221)

Virmati is able to exercise her choices at the cost of family ties, dignity and self-respect. It is of great importance that Virmati's existence as an individual, a teacher and then as a wife is threatened. Nature also punishes her. Ultimately, she loses Harish, his family members and her carrier too. Her motherly status also evokes a valley of questions in Ida's mind and she does not want to be 'like her mother'. Badly confined in her self-centered desires in this physical world, she perhaps longs for a spiritual fulfillment after her death when she tells Ida:

When I die she said to me I want my body donated My eyes, my heart, my Kidneys, any organ that can be of use. That way someone will value me after that I have gone. (98)

Virmati's dreams were influenced by her cousin sister Shakuntala who was a rebel and a

Electronic Journal of Advanced Research

An International Peer review E-Journal of Advanced Research

liberated woman in her own regard. Virmati's mother Kasturi was brought up upon the conventional principles of patriarchal society where marriage was the ultimate destiny of a girl's life and marriage implied that a girl had to work tirelessly to please her in-laws.

Virmati's daughter Ida is strong and clearheaded. She breaks up her marriage as she is denied maternity by her husband. The forced abortion is also the termination of her marriage. Ida by severing the marriage bond frees herself from male domination and from conventional social structures. She has that strength which Virmati lacks. Swarna Lata, Virmati's friend, is also a clearheaded, strong woman. She too experiences tension with her parents over the issue of marriage but unlike Virmati she channelizes her energy into a new direction.

As Dora Sales Salvador writes in the preface to her Spanish translation of the novel, "in Difficult Daughters we do not listen to Virmati's voice. She could not speak out, being certainly situated at the junction of two oppressions: colonialism and patriarchy. What we have is her daughter's reconstruction and representation."²

In the novel, 'Difficult Daughters, Virmati, in her quest for identity, rebels against her family tradition. She is impelled by the inner need to feel loved as an individual rather than as a responsible daughter. The very title of the novel Difficult Daughters subtly alludes to the patriarchal convention that a woman, who undertakes a quest for an individual identity, is branded as a difficult daughter by the family and the society as well. Although Virmati succeeds in breaking all man-made boundaries, there are certain priorities so deeply embedded within her that she struggles to shake through the shackles.

CONCLUSION:-

Difficult Daughter tackles the problems faced by educated Indian women with authenticity and insight. It symbolizes a fight against taboos, social restrictions and manmade code of conduct in a traditional society. They frees themselves from old shackles, they becomes a prisoner of new ones. Manju Kapur is one of the women writers from India whose Protagonists are woman trying to maintain a balance all the time. Their suffering has made them strong and they are struggling to set themselves free from the shackles of tradition and various prejudices. Her preoccupation with the female revolt against deep rooted family values and the institution of marriage is the focal point of interest in both the novels.

REFERENCE:-

- Beauvoir de, Simon. The Second Sex. Trans. and Ed. H.M. Parsley, Harmonds worth: Penguin, 1983.p.391.
- Bruschi, Isabella. Partition in Fiction: Gendered perspective. New Delhi: Atlantic Pubs. 2010.p.235.
- Kapur, Manju. Difficult Daughters. London: Faber and Faber. 1999.