

## DOMICILIARY SUBJUGATION AND CLEMENT INSURGENCE OF BOURGEOIS WOMEN IN MANJU KAPUR'S NOVELS

*T. Gandhadaran<sup>1</sup> & K. Niranjana<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Government Arts College Salem, India

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Government Arts College Salem, India

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper deals with the theme of subjugation of women in the domestic arena. They are not subjugated by lashes or clashes but by love and care. These bonds are sweet and sticky that they are trapped and can never move on in their life. We see the prominent protagonists like Virmati, Nisha, Astha, and Sagun are trapped. They try to educate themselves learn to be independent and want to prove their mettle to the world. All the women want to empower themselves and breathe the fresh air of freedom. Sometimes they achieve but sometimes they fall. All well captured by Manju Kapur in a casual yet brilliant style.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Domestication, Women Subjugation, Women Empowerment, Liberation and Women Education*

### INTRODUCTION

It is a common Tamil saying that a good family is a university. Manju Kapur the renowned Indian English novelist stresses on this central idea in every novel. The family is the main pivot in determining a person's life. Women are overly cared, nurtured and watched over by their own family members, who in turn expect subordination and absolute obedience from them. Virmati, Nisha, Sagun, and Nina represent the stereotyped Indian women of subjugation by Manju Kapur are a well-structured joined family system. It is a governance of its own. The leader in a family is generally an elderly male member who is sitting on a platform of the family's wealth, worldly knowledge, principles of justice and Decorum, and love for their family members. They are concerned about the fact that they are well dressed, well cared and nutritiously fed.

In Manju Kapur's classic 'Difficult Daughters' the protagonist Virmati's mild uprising is remarkable. The whole family discussed over the issues of education for women in the family. During the time of Virmati, women education was new in India. Very few women were educated. Sakuntala the eldest daughter of two brothers was the first to be well educated. She moved out of her home to Lahore to pursue her degree. She learnt the ways of the world and took the reins of the world in her hand. She decided not to marry on her own. Though her mother pined to marry her, she refused politely. Virmati on the other hand yearned to learn but was tied down by huge burden of raising her siblings, extending help to cook, clean and discipline the siblings, whenever she expressed her wish to study, she was discouraged by saying that she was not as good as Sakunthala. She was given her ultimatum to get good marks, in which she succeeded. This uprising of Virmathi earned the displeasure of her family. Dora Sales Salvador, in her note to her Spanish translation of Difficult Daughters appropriately points out.

“ Kapur emphasizes the efforts made at the time by numerous women who, while demanding equal opportunities, equal access to education and life opportunities going beyond convention, were a visible force in the non-violent resistance to the British”(pg 365).

Kapur presents a longing for self –dependency and individual identity in her women protagonists in her postmodern yet traditional novel. The protagonist is caught in a dilemma between the yearning of the flesh and quest for knowledge. This pushing and pulling power determines the depth of destruction of old order and giving birth to new ideals.

In another novel, *immigrant* Manju Kapur captures the sporadic uprising of the tropical Indian bourgeois women, Nina. In Nina’s family her education was provided by her forward-thinking father. He raised her in different places and instilled faith that education is important to her. She well treated and the best of education was provided to her. When her father passed away, she had to settle down with her mother in her home at New Delhi. She acquired a job and felt happy but her mother was pestered with questions as to why she was able to marry her daughter. The society in which she was born down played her position. She is seen only as a woman, who should have been married at a right age. As each day went on they were tormented, so much that found her birthday unbearable, as one more year added up. Her chance to marry became more faint. She was silenced here. Her mother was made to face the brunt of not having married but educated her daughter. They were not able to celebrate the sweet success of education and its due merits. They were ripped off the clothes of civilization in a most uncivilized manner. Protective hands are extended from the government to educate women but after attaining the dreamed status they are not able to carry the laurels back home. They are average women who should fall in line with the norms set down by the family. Within the family they should be servile. They are pricked by words and pinned down by social ostracism, through nauseating looks and negligence until they subjugate, all in the name of goodness meant to them.

In another novel, ‘the Home’ novelist delineates the plight of Nisha who showcases the sheer negligence in a joint family System. Nisha’s mother Sona is portrayed as a common woman who has churned the understanding the joint family system. She enjoys the butter of the joint family which has yielded to Nisha’s trauma. Sona does not even bother to know what happens around Nisha. The physical abuse on Nisha as a toddler stifles the reader’s, yet Sona is totally unaware of what happens to her. Like other Manju Kapur’s heroines, we see that she is also fed well cared, trained in family affairs and beauty is considered as a trophy for her family. With all this enthusiasm her family members gave, she befriends Paswan. Her relationship comes to light. Here her uprising to decide on her life partner becomes a cause for furore at home. Finally, she was asked to talk to Suresh Paswan to marry. The men went along to the place where she was permitted to talk. Suresh Paswan refused to marry. The reason is not brought out, it could be the threatening set up of enquiry or the flimsiness of love. But the family never tried to convince him. While Sona love was accepted as they belonged to the same community, Nisha’s love was simply thrown away. Never after did Nisha enjoy the same attention. Her beauty was not talked after. Her heart-break was not a matter of talk. Her Kundli or Horoscope was shared for the groom to be married. As her Kundli was a pretty bad one, she could not get married. The wills, wishes, dreams and feelings of Nisha were most uncared, unattended and rejected in the most unfathomably insensitive manner. The furore that was created towards her decision now victoriously silenced her. She was no more than the well-kept inanimate things in the house. We see the mother’s damn insensitiveness towards her Daughter. The dreams of education were given to her by her aunt Sona and uncle. The wings of freedom too grew in their home who were kind considerate and more sensitive. Nisha’s mother Sona was so oppressive to her. When Nisha was abused she showed a change in behaviour to which her mother acted in an irritable way. When her son got married and he moved with his wife she could not bear the separation "I have a mother's heart"(Kapur259) she exclaims. The same heart did

not palpitate for Nisha's untold trauma. Nisha tried to establish herself in this most difficult situation by setting her own boutique shop and even succeeded in it, but it was short lived. Shortly afterwards she was married to a divorcee and her claim to take over the shop was sidelined and was usurped by her sister in laws. She finally felt accepted only after giving birth to twins. Here too, we see the little bit of effort to establish is overtaken by insignificance.

The importance given to the physical plane of women like beauty, marriage and child bearing is not given to the emotional and intellectual plane of women. These planes are subjugated and cowed down in the good name of welfare of the family and tied down to the rich lineage of culture. Kapur sketches the details as minutely as possible as it comes naturally to her as a keen observer of the society. She draws out neatly and intrinsically the "Politics of Gender" that is being played in man- woman relationship by the joint families. The stress is on the power struggle within the family members which suppresses the individuality especially the aspect of selective thinking that makes women feel threatened. The choice of adoration is the male child and the female child is considered as a burden, in the event they forget what a great burden the family members are to the their women folks. Both the subjugator and the subjugated undergo painful feelings; lose joy and peace of mind. The family members of Virmati, Nisha, Astha, Sagun all undergo remorse and guilt. No room is provided for fresh attitude, wisdom, sensible sensitivity and good nature. The protagonist lacks socializing. Their world is narrow within the walls of the house. The intentions of the family are clearly male-centric and lack sensitivity towards women psyche. They merely exist and do not live life according to their whims and fancies, yet they wriggle out to breathe the whiff of fresh air of freedom.

#### **REFERENCES**

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