

**FEMININE SENSIBILITY****Sonal Patil****Abstract**

Manju Kapur is one of the outstanding Indian English female novelists. She is famous for her novel, Difficult Daughters and she got Common Wealth Award for it. Her next novel is A Married Woman which is about love at a moment of political as well as spiritual disturbance. It also deals with understanding as well as astuteness. A Married Woman is tale about a one of the performer whose image confronts the limitations about the middle rank living-life.

Keywords: Feminist, society, divorce, aggression, domestic.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction:

The term '*sensibility*' evokes a feeling or an affect or something felt as much as thought. Feminine Sensibility gives rise to an intensive exploration of consciousness and sensibility as a way of understanding women's experiences and expression of that thought. A study of feminine sensibility focuses on probing into the consciousness of one's situation as a woman becoming an object of oppression. It also involves a process of understanding the mechanisms of oppression perpetrated by the male dominated society. In fact feminine sensibility expresses one's own perspective as a woman.

Feminism is a diverse collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies, largely motivated by or concerning the experiences of women, especially socially, politically and economically. As a social movement, feminism largely focuses on limiting or eradicating gender inequality, promoting women's rights, interests, and other related issues of women in society. In India we have a dualistic situation. For nearly five thousand years there has been a celebration of the feminine force.

Against this backdrop of worshipping the feminine force, we had a sage named Manu who composed an exhaustive thesis on society and how best to run it. His views on women are chauvinistic in today's world. Manu dictated that a woman should be in the care and protection of her father in childhood, of her husband in adulthood and of her son in old age. The dualism of the status of Indian women was clearly established. It is a powerful legacy which holds us captive even today.

Since 1969 there has been explosion of feminist writings unparalleled in the previous history of critical innovation as it displays urgency and excitement of a religious awakening. However, there is no unitary theory of procedures in US, England and France and other countries. There is a lot of variety like psychoanalytic, Marxist and diverse post-structuralist with intense debate within them. Various feminism share assumptions and concepts that constitute common ground for the diverse ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual differences and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception and critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature. The number of published women authors was greater in the nineteenth century than in any preceding century. Women's access to higher education increased exponentially during the century, providing them with skills that they could use to develop their art. The growth of market economies, cities and life expectancies changed many women in our country and they were expected to conform to new societal pressures and made many women more conscious of their imposed social, legal and political inequality. Finally, the many social reform movements led by nineteenth-century women, such as religious revivalism, abolitionism, temperance and suffrage gave women writers a context, an audience and a forum in which they could express their views. While most scholars agree that many women writers expressly or tacitly accepted the separate sphere of domesticity that the age assumed of them, they also argue that as the century progressed, an increasing number of women began to express, in their writing, their dissatisfaction with gender relations and the plight of women in general.

The word *Feminism* seems to refer to an intense awareness of identity as a woman and interest in feminine problems. The subjugation of woman is a central fact of history and it is the main cause of all psychological disorders in society.

Recent form of feminism that came to existence after 1960s has become an evolving socio-political movement. It is a theoretical project, which aims at understanding the power structures in the society, male domination, social practices and social institutions which are instrumental in assigning a marginalized position to women. Feminist theory also devises the strategies to transform the social structures which can help in the emancipation. In 1980s, Feminism concentrated on transforming the individual fields and in 1990s began a major role in directing academic focus on the concern of the so-called otherness, differences and questions of marginality. Margaret Homans has rightly pointed out that the concept of feminism raises fundamental queries about reading, writing and the teaching of literature. It operates as an interdisciplinary tool for social and cultural analysis and as a political practice also. Feminism has transformed the precision of life and literature.

The agonistic definition, feminism is seen as the struggle against all forms of patriarchal and sexist aggression, such oppositional definition projects feminism as the necessary resistance to the patriarchal power, logically then the aim of feminism as a theory of imagination becomes abolition of itself along with its opponents. Women were not recognized as individuals or autonomous beings. Women had to face many obstacles in the academic circuit, which symbolizes the effects of an educational culture that radically restricts the scope of women's intellectual exposure.

The Feminist thought and the feminist movements in the west had some influence on the woman's movement in developing countries like India. Yet, feminism as it exists today in India has gone beyond its western counterparts. As Uma Narayan Rightly puts it,

*"Third world feminism is not a mindless mimicking of Western Agenda in one clear and simple sense. Indian Feminist is clearly a response to the issues related to Indian women."*¹

1. Nayantara Uma, *Indian Women writer's at the Cross Roads*, Pen crafts, New Delhi, 1996, P-123.

Feminists have recognized that politics is not something which has to do with ideologies of some political parties but that feminist politics aims at bringing women's experiences into the political arena. It is such small but collective ventures, as consciousness-raising groups, protest against beauty contest; against dowry deaths and institutions like Women's Aid, which inform and shape the feminist politics and feminist writing

*"A woman should be aware, self-control, strong will, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense."*¹

1. Kapur, Manju. *A Married Woman*. Penguin Publications, New Delhi, 2002, P-217.

In her writings, ManjuKapur has emphasized on the issues of patriarchy, inter-religious marriage, and family bond, and male-female bond, co-existence of past and present. She has narrated her women protagonist as a victim of biology, gender, domestic violence, and circumstances. Kapur says

*"There is a man within every woman and a woman in every man, when manhood is Questioned and womanhood is fragile."*¹

1. Kapur, Manju. *A Married Woman*. Penguin Publications, New Delhi, 2002, P-213.

A major pre-occupation in recent Indian women's writings has been a delineation of inner life and subtle relationships. In a culture where, individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women's role at home is a central focus. It is interesting

to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural diversion.

Celebration of femininity by the practical culture is actually a subjugation of female autonomy. In order to destroy the supremacy of patriarchal culture, human beings should be identified as male and female based on their sex and not as men and women. The term woman connotes the quality of woman, which the society attributes to a female. She should be obedient, patient and servile in her behavior towards others. The moment a woman does something different than the society would call her either a bad woman or lunatic. Human beings are not products, which come out of a factory to be alike. It is high time that the patriarchal culture ceased to exist for the all-round development of women. Arundhati Roy says,

“We truly do live in the Age of Irony, in an age when satire has become meaningless because real life is more satirical than satire can ever.”¹

1. Roy, Anuradha. *Patterns of Feminist Consciousness*. Prestige Books, New Delhi, 1999, P-214.

Now, women in India have started questioning the age-old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in hands of man. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it to them today without any hurdle.

Today, the works of Kamla Markandaya, Nayan Tara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Shobha De and many more have left an indelible imprint on the readers of Indian fiction in English. A major development in modern Indian fiction has been the growth of a feminist or women centered approach, an approach that seeks to project and interpret experience from the viewpoint of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. Feminism assumes that women experience the world differently from men and write out of their different perspectives. Feminism in Indian fiction has not developed suddenly but it has developed slowly and steadily.

Markandaya, Sahgal, Desai and Deshpande are among the urban intelligentsia, and they write fiction rather than feminist analysis as such. Their perspectives, however, can offer valuable insights into the dynamics and complexities of human relationships, and their feminist concerns can be placed within historical and theoretical frameworks. Indeed, the problem of violence against women was the initial focus of feminist campaigns in India during the 1970s. Campaigns against rape, domestic violence and dowry deaths escalated during the 1980s, attracting considerable support from men as well as women.

Among the incidents that played catalytic roles were the Mathura rape case of 1978 and the Maya Tyagi rape case of 1980. Both were cases of custodial rape by the police which led to nationwide protests and the formation of the Forum Against Rape, which eventually grew into the Forum Against Oppression of Women. Rape, a major theme in Deshpande's novels, is also featured in Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* (1977). Markandaya's *Two Virgins* (1973) draws attention to the sense of sexual threat that pervades the lives of young girls in India, and this widespread problem of sexual harassment (or eve-teasing, as it is called in India) is identified by a number of academics (Chacko 2001; Nabar 1995; Puri 1999) who argue that it impedes women's freedom, mobility and sense of security. Domestic violence is fictionalized by all four novelists: Markandaya in *A Handful of Rice* (1966), Sahgal in *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), Deshpande in *That Long Silence* (1988) and Desai in *Fasting, Feasting* (1999). Shashi Deshpande in one of her Interviews expressed her inner thinking about feminist movement as,

*"If others see something feminist in my writing, I must say that it is not consciously done, it is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world."*¹

1. Deshpande, Shashi. *Roots and Shadows-A Feminist Study*. Swroop Books, New Delhi, 2009, P-45.

A major preoccupation in recent Indian Woman's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus. It is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Women of the present are more assertive, more liberated in their view and more articulate in their expression than the women of the past. Some Indian Women Novelists like Geetha Hariharan, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur and Shashi Deshpande tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women. Recent studies have shown that works that often appear to conform to the established assumptions contain under the surface contrary current suggesting simmering notes of discontent expressed obliquely. This has been demonstrated to be the case with Jane Austen and Bronte sisters whose female characters are portrayed as more self-possessed and capable than most of the man-dominating scene. The subtle have now started speaking and the margin has occupied the center. Their writing have to some extent changed the mentality of males; the result is that many seminars and symposia are being organized on woman literature.

Towards the end of the century, nineteenth-century women writers expanded their subject matter, moving beyond highlighting the lives and hardships suffered by women locked in domestic prisons. Instead, they increasingly expressed their individualism and demanded more equal partnerships-in marriage, public life, law, and politics-with men. The challenges that the feminist movement now faces stem from the vast diversities within India. Feminism within India is divided along class, caste, sexuality and disability, and as parts of India develop at a faster rate, increased social and economic inequality is giving rise to new problems like sexual harassment at the workplace and in public transport.

It is sad to note that some of the distinguished woman personalities who were in supreme power in politics and courts are paying a deaf-ear and responding nil during the incidents of acid-attacks on women, kidnap of school-going girls, cases of molesty, cool-planned murders of house-wives, house-arrest of women, suppression of their rights, female-abusing in public, thrashing and threatening of girls in schools and hostels, physical and mental torture by any of her family members etc., As Gandhiji wished- Indian woman can go safe, be safe and live safe only when all the Women in the country irrespective of economical class, caste, creed, religion and state be United always in a supportive-way to one another.

Finally, the study shows feminism is a struggle for equality of women, an effort to make women become like men. The agonistic definition of feminism sees it as the struggle against all forms of patriarchal and sexist aggression. This study reveals the growth of Indian Feminism and its development. Indian women writers have placed the problems of Indian women in general and they have proved their place in the international literature. The most difficult tasks for feminists can't be accomplished in a courtroom or in a mass protest: that is, changing men's underlying attitudes toward women, which many advocates say is necessary for a permanent end to the violence, abuse and persecution that women in India experience. In a holy country like India, women are to be safeguarded and respected at every rook and corner.

All protagonists know they can not depend on others to sort out the domestic situation and proceed to tackle it on their own. In spite of getting education and freedom the women protagonists of ManjuKapur's novels does not blossom into new woman in the real sense.

References

A. Primary Sources:

Kapur, Manju. *Difficult Daughters*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 1998; London: Faber and Faber, 1998.

_____. '_____. *A Married Woman*. New Delhi: India Ink, 2002; London: Faber and Faber, 2003.

_____. '_____. *Home*. New Delhi: Random House India, 2006; London: Faber and Faber, 2006.

_____. '_____. *The Immigrant*. New Delhi: Random House India, 2008. London: Faber and Faber, 2009.

_____. '_____. *Custody*. New Delhi: Random House, India, 2011. London: Faber and Faber, 2011.

B. Secondary Sources:

Abhrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Bangalore: Prism Books Pvt. Ltd. 1993. 132-133.

Akbar, Arifa. *Review of Custody*. *The Independent*, 11 March 2011. Web 25 August 2014.

Nagendra Kumar. *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee : A Cultural Perspective*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. 2001.

Naik, M. K. *A History Indian English Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2009.

Shirwadkar, Meena. *Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglian Novel*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2008. Print.

Tandon, R.K. *Status of Woman in Contemporary World*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1998. Print