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## CONFRONTATION AGAINST MARGINALIZATION IN THE NOVELS OF MANJU KAPUR

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### Abstract

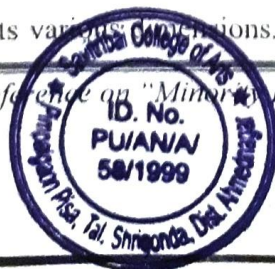
Today, Indian English writing has gained a worldwide reputation in the international domain. Indian writers in English are recognized all over the world for their realistic and artistic presentation of social milieu. Particularly, Indian English women novelists have obtained popularity for their novelty in artistic projection of issues related to the condition of women in Indian socio-cultural milieu. Their efforts are the way of self-actualization in the form of fiction. Manju Kapur is one of them acts on the same line to depict situation of women in the age of globalization in her *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008) and *Custody* (2011). Her novels deal with the perspectives of projection of marginalization of weaker sections of society.

**Keywords:** Subaltern, Marginalization, confrontation, Gender discrimination, etc.

Most of Manju Kapur's novels deal with the theme of marginalization, revolt and protest in Indian socio-cultural situations and their psychological aspects. Kapur challenges Indian socio-cultural interaction that acts on maintaining dominant and subordinate sections in Indian society. The novels project this pattern of marginalization in the structures of class, caste, gender and culture. Most of the novels portray cultural pattern and gender interaction that leads to show the pathetic situation of women in Indian social pattern. Women in Indian society are marginalized culturally, socially and psychologically from different perspectives.

Some of Kapur's novels deal with the interaction of the western culture and the eastern and its connotations from subaltern point of view. The western culture is believed to be greater to the eastern culture. The Asian culture is marked as barbaric and backward by the western people. In Manju Kapur's novels, this interface is projected as a resource of marginalization to bag out this inclination even in the postcolonial era. The novelist shows the peculiarity between two cultures in some of the novels to reveal the double standards of the western people even in the age of post modern period. Class becomes one of the major sources of marginalization in Indian social structure. Manju Kapur's novels show class discrimination in Indian socio-cultural life and its various dimensions. Socially and economically dominant classes

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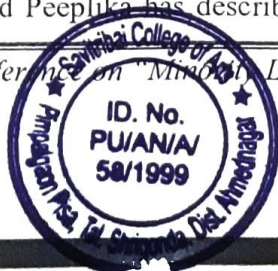
look down the weaker sections of society. Her novels project the difference in terms of clothing, eating habits, location and customs among the various classes of Indian society. Lower classes are treated substandard in social life, so separation is maintained in various customs and conventions. Manju Kapur also reveals middle class mentality of Indian society in some of the novels to point of a source of subaltern and marginal condition of various classes.

In Indian social structure caste plays a crucial role in bringing marginalizes position of various sections of society. It is imposed by birth so financial situation does not affect the pattern of superiority and inferiority. Even economically sound section of society is considered subaltern and marginal in Indian social structure. Caste as a source of marginalization becomes obstacle in arranging marriages, celebrating different conventions and customs and leading the life of equality. Caste subverts essence of equality, fraternity and justices. Manju Kapur's selected novels projects the evil of caste from different perspectives.

Gender is another major source of marginalization in social life. Manju Kapur's novels deal with the issue of gender in Indian context and its different effects on social life. Her novels describe different issues of marginalization from gender point of view. All the novels show the journey of female protagonist from either traditional system to the modern system or traditional mind set to again traditional one. Most of the subaltern issues related to women are projected in Manju Kapur's novels.

In her first novel *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati represents a new emerging woman who attempts to go beyond the cultural conventions and customs to give a new dimension to education and prefers to marry with a married man. She did not chain herself in conventional ways by accepting the marriage proposal with the approval of her family on the other hand she gave preference to her choice. She does not hesitate to engage herself in physical relationship with man before her marriage. An educated modern woman, she enjoys the way of free and vital life rather than only being a traditional woman. Her struggle becomes more important against the background of gender marginalization.

In her second novel *A Married Woman*, Manju Kapur proves completely modern in portraying one of the controversial issues of the modern time. The relationship between Astha and Peeplika has described in order to show the subsistence of new





alternative in man-woman relationship. Both of them try to find fulfillment, enjoyment, comfort, happiness and achievement in different way. They are not hesitant to share their bodily impulses by involving in sexual contentment. Both Astha and Peeplika prove that their bodies are not commodities in male dominated society. Their relation with each other shows their independent status and separate concept of identity.

In *Home*, Nisha develops her relationship with various men. Her mother, Sona wants to make her daughter educated but she could not envisage her daughter's interest in love affair which disobeys the family convention. Education plays significant role in molding the thoughts of Nisha. Her life is a struggle in which she faces a lot of hurdles to prove her own existence. Nisha took bold steps like higher education, love affair with a boy of other caste, service of a teacher and a businesswoman but at the end she has to surrender by accepting arranged marriage with Avinash.

*The Immigrant* depicts imperfect relationship between Nina and Ananda because it does not have any sense of attachment, shared understanding and self respect. Without having any link between them, they stand on two different poles. Their life in Canada is based on irritation, anguish, dissatisfaction, doubt, uncertainty and nervousness. They give new modes to their married life by developing extra-marital relations with their friends for sexual satisfaction.

In *Custody*, Kapur depicts many twists in man-woman relationship. Shagun and Raman the parents of two children separated from each other to accomplish the issue of self-identity and self-respect. Shagun proves that only monetary security is not enough to enjoy the life. She is in favor of economic freedom, free attitude, liberty and choice of lifestyle. She falls in love with Ashok and goes beyond the customary idea of marriage by sacrificing everything to satisfy her own longing.

Thus, Manju Kapur's protagonists seem to be aggressive against male dominated society to prove that they are not depending on their men for their sexual want, emotional satisfaction and psychological support. In this struggle they have to endure a lot of pain that reveal the nature of andocentric society and their subaltern situation. They show their courage, psychological guts, defiant nature, initiating rapture and think about their own pleasure by building required surroundings around them but at



last they all are unsuccessful to create an independent world to come out from their subaltern position.

Manju Kapur depicts aspirations of women characters in her novels that appeal to a socio-cultural change for the empowerment of women in Indian society. Her novels highlight need of social reformation and the challenges and predicaments of women. In the modern age women do not become ready to be persecuted in the male subjugated world. The characters presented in the novel have their own troubles as new duties, availability of equal chance, social limitations and a sense of liberty. All female protagonists seem self-reliant with bold nature having daring and wants. They are well known about how to complete their desires and live life freely with self-assurance but while doing this they face trials and tribulations.

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