

FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF SUDHA MURTY AND MANJU KAPUR

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ABSTRACT

Several Indian novelists exposed the real picture of Indian Society and the true condition of women. Indian English novels depicted each and every aspect of human life and we know how some of these novels revealed the struggle of Indian women to create their own identity, their emotional crisis and their status in Indian Society. There are several feminist oriented English novels that reveal how a woman is the subject of domestic oppression, suffering and how she struggles to create her own existence. The present paper attempts to examine and analyse Sudha Murty's Mahasweta and Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters from a feminine perspective. Sudha Murty and Manju Kapur's novels are full with the themes of 'Gender bias', 'quest for self' and 'Resistance' and 'Oppression'.

Key words- resistance, crisis, consciousness, patriarchal, oppression etc.

INTRODUCTION

Murty's "Mahashweta" is one of the best novels that tell a story of female protagonist "Anupama" suffering from leucoderma after her marriage. This novel portrays the inner strength of a woman Anupama. When she was alone in her life in her struggles she developed courage and remained tough in her trying times. Sudha Murty successfully pictured the humiliation faced by Anupama due to patriarchal system. "Difficult Daughters" is a story dealing with issue of patriarchy which denies woman's voice and freedom. It is set at the time of partition. The title indicates that a woman who tries to go against traditional norms and search her own identity is branded as a difficult daughter. It is a story of a rebellious daughter who embraces education and career as an alternative to arranged marriage.

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1P a g e

The present study deals with the issue related to women in patriarchal society the present study would help to understand various causes of women's oppression. The present study would also help to create awareness towards gender equality in true sense and justice for women.

Sudha Murty and Manju Kapur these are two major voices who clearly exposed the mantle of patriarchal Indian society and how women's role in this society is submissive. Both of these writers focussed on women's issues and women's lives from different perspectives in their novels. As far as women characters concerned in their works, there are some differences in women's role. Sudha Murty's women are docile, dedicated and strong from within.

Sudha's Murty's central women characters accept the reality of patriarchal system and try to adjust with the circumstances and the self where as Manju Kapur's central women characters are NEW WOMEN who are ready to dismantle patriarchal set up and question for their rights and justice. They do not want to live their life under some false societal norms. They believe in truth, speak for truth and have faith in justice. They want to live their life meaningfully not merely like a dead body. Kapur's women are more independent, self-reliant and do not want to be mere rubber dolls. Her women seek for their own rights, justice. Every character portrayed by these both writers is true to itself.

Sudha Murty's "Mahashweta" this novel is a story of an unfortunate woman, Anupama who realizes her inner strength and courage in her tough times and questions about her justice. The purpose of this paper is to expose that throughout the novel, the character Anupama get enlightened from within. This novel portrays how women become self-esteemed while facing the challenges and adverse conditions of their life.

Anupama living in autocracy of patriarchal society and suffered from male domination, her dilemma about her tragic situation when her husband Anand left her alone in her disease is evident from the following quote:

"Was it my fault that I got this white patch? Is it my fault that I am a poor man's daughter? Now that you are here, answer me."

A great transformation from within happened in the character Anupama, when she was left alone by everyone in her disease of leukoderma. Anupama can be termed as a new woman who is ready to accept the reality of her life and remain firm in her trying times. She following the right path struggles with the adversities of her life.

Anupama can be said as a strong woman who is ready to challenge the difficulties of her life very bravely. She is shown as very courageous not a coward woman embracing the tyranny

of patriarchal society. This novel exposes how a woman like Anupama suffered under the tyranny of patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society, men misuses their power is shown clearly in this novel. Anupama is a woman who wanted to live her life with self-esteem and not a dependent valueless and helpless life.

Difficult Daughters is a story about the issue of patriarchy which disagree with woman's voice and their freedom. The setting of the story is the time of partition in our India. The title of this novel specifies that a woman who attempts to go against traditional customs and pursuit for her own identity is brand-named as a difficult daughter. It is a story of a rebellious daughter who chooses education and career as an alternative to arrange marriage.

The whole story is narrated by Virmati's daughter, Ida who collects the facts of her mother's life from her maternal uncle and aunt, fragments of memories. The story revolves around a central character, Virmati. Kapur has presented the issue of patriarchy and the problems of Indian woman in male dominated society. (Kapur, Manju. Difficult Daughters.) The whole story is narrated by Virmati's daughter, Ida who collects the facts of her mother's life from her maternal uncle and aunt and fragments of memories. The story revolves around a central character, Virmati. Virmati is the difficult daughter of Kasturi. She is the ten years old eldest daughter of a traditional Punjabi family. Virmati's childhood is creased under the burden of domestic duties and mother's restrictions. She yearns for affection from her mother but she never got it.

Virmati was inspired by her cousin, Shakuntala and decided to study seriously. But her family arranges a suitable match of a Canal Engineer for her. She refuses to marry and attempts suicide. Amidst Virmati caught in a scandalous relationship with her married neighbour, the Professor. The family allows her to study further. After the completion of BT at Lahore, Virmati got a job of a principal in one school. The relationship of Virmati with the professor parallels India's battle for freedom.

After a lot of suffering ultimately Virmati becomes the Professor's second wife. In her married home, she was crushed by her mother-in-law, step-wife and her step-son. The step-wife does not allow her into the kitchen or talk to the family members. At whatever time, she visits her mother's home to meet her siblings; she is blamed and beaten by her mother.

In 1947, there was all burning in Amritsar, partition had been decided upon. The novelist had given a clear picture of India in 1947 through the panic experiences of various characters about India's partition. The turning point in Virmati's life comes with the birth of her daughter, Ida meaning a new beginning of life. Ida was also accused by the society as a difficult daughter alike her mother. She marries with a person against her mother's will and led an unhappy and depressed life. Virmati's desire of learning was truly an attempt of her to

search for her own identity. For taking education, she had to fight with the traditional norms. One of the reasons of Virmati's rebellion for education was that she did not want to live a suffering life like her mother rather wanted to live life with self-reliance. 'Difficult Daughters' represented Virmati's tragedy of quest of identity.

CONCLUSION-

Feminist Consciousness can be found in both the above analysed novels. We also see that both the novels written by these both writers portray their feministic point of view. We learn that Sudha Murty and Manju Kapur both these women writers have clearly written about women's plight in this Indian patriarchal society, their emotional dilemma, their urge for carving their self, their fight against suppressive circumstances etc. These authors hopefully may want to bring a sea change in the social set up specifically as far as women are concerned.

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