Chapter 6
Angst of Modern Marriage and Divorce in *Custody*

Manju Kapur is one of renowned the Indian women writer from India and the representation of the suffering but stoic female characters ultimately flouting conventional boundaries has had a noteworthy consequence in her novels. She is mainly talked regarding and esteemed contemporary Indian English woman novelist. Like Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan, Anita Nair, Shobha De, Manju Kapur is one of the emergent Indian woman writers in English who live and write in India itself. Inspite of some interruptions, protagonists of Manju Kapur's novels represents as women of middle class families who bear on deportment towards empowerment and lead them to a world of their own individual, devoid of any prejudices and utilization where they won’t be forced any precincts. One peculiarity of the pictures of women all over history is that social stereotypes have been armored by archetypes. Where they won’t have combat rules for them. That time would be ahead of social prejudice and then we can say that the women are empowered. In every era woman has been described either as a mother, a wife, a mistress or an objective of allure and their roles have been discrete in relationship to male equivalent.

Manju Kapur has joined the growing number of women writers from India like Shashi Deshpande Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan, Shobha De, on whom the image of suffering but stoic woman eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had significant impact. They invigorated the English language to suit representations and narration
of what they felt about their women and their lives in post modern India. 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, these modern day women authors are now expressing themselves freely and boldly and on a variety of themes (Archana and Sweta 101).

As it is very clear that Kapur's novels are archives of the Indian middle class society which detain everything that comes in the course of time in a middle class family such as sexual abuse, the politics of arranged marriages, infidelity, infertility, adoption, divorce, sexual dysfunction, family battles and many more issues along with. Her protagonists are today's women who are not ready to acquiesce to the age-old traditions and customs of patriarchy. Kapur is a novelist who takes her protagonist's one step ahead of the others facing the predicament of lesbianism, disloyalty, sterility, annulment, implementation etc. She showcases that women have been victims not only of patriarchy but also of the inhibition which comes from many quarters. In doing so, she challenges the monolithic structures and perceptions regarding relationship of men and women as upheld by feminist literature. The desire of Indian women can be best summed up in the following lines:

I have only one request.
I do not ask for money.
Although I have need of it,
I do not ask for meat.....
I have only one request,
And all I ask is
That you remove
The road block

From my path. (P'Bitek 120)

Kapur has stunned the world with her new theme, as it was never depicted in the Indian novels before in her fifth novel *Custody*. She has brought out two aspects of feminist outlooks. In this novel, infidelity and infertility and its result comes out as marital discord and ruin of children. Kapur has successfully portrayed this in the cast of Shagun and Ishita. It is also a tale of children's custody and the Indian legal system. Kapur captures the lives of wealthy, urban middle-class Indians with their disconcerting secrets, dysfunctional relationships, and their thirst for wealth, freedom and peace. Unquestionably Kapur's Custody truly captures the collision of globalization and patriarchy on the Contemporary Indian Social life. With the initial rush of foreign investment which stormed in India, it was a period of economic and financial boom. The cascade was welcomed by investment bankers, bureaucrats, industrialists whether big or small, along with Government officials. The protagonists quite naturally have materialistic pursuits. The novel of Kapur is like fresh pages depicting the winds of change and her protagonists depict the strong images of transform.

Portrayals of women as achievers or leaders have been relatively only some. But even these outstanding representations of power or potency also noticeable the extraordinariness of women which inclined to overlook the lives of the ordinary and adequate ones. The search for control over one’s fortune represents the key theme of the novel and refers to the liberty desire to and achieved by a individual as well as by a woman dwelling in between family and self is primary consider in Kapur's novel *Custody*. The humanisms
substance is feasible in Manju Kapur’s *Custody* as feminist discussion not because she is a woman writing about women’s issues, but because she tries to understand a woman both as a woman and as a human being hassled by visible and invisible contexts. She illustrates a peep of feminism remaining in mind the Indian background. Manju Kapur’s *Custody* deals with to be all together both Indian and Universal. The post colonial writers of Indo-English novels settle with a new education and sociability have diverse perceptions of the descriptions of woman in their works. In the post colonial era freedom and liberty thought was carried in to our country and it was also disseminated by western education. The woman novelists were liable for the new picture of woman besieged against the repressive social customs of the male governed society. The image of the woman in the postcolonial novel is a crystallized figure of the two diverse cultures. The representation of woman as a curator of extraordinary moral qualities integrated with dedication and sacrifice has turned into an archetype. The picture of woman in quest of her identity has come out from the archetype image of woman in history. The research evaluates portrayal of women as described by Manju Kapur in the novel *Custody* in this chapter. Manju Kapur’s *Custody* (2011) is her latest novel which deals with the problems occurring after divorce. Adultery has become and order of the day in the metropolitan cities of India and abroad in her previous novel *The Immigrant* (2008) took Kapur has taken up this theme of adultery. This novel deals with consequences after the discovery. Two problems namely divorce and Custody of children has become the twin themes of *Custody* (2011). Complications legal and social make divorce a
hard nut of crack Ambition, greed and incompatibility between the couple are the chief among many other social rectors which lead to divorce.

Recently a collection of stories by Farrukh Dhondy entitled *Adultery And Other Stories* (2011) has appeared with the theme of adultery. Writers like Nabokov, Conrad and Solzhenitsyn etc. have also taken up this theme. At one place Dhondy writes "Adultery is what adults do" (qtd. in Kumar Ashok 188). Upala Sen in reviewing the book in Hindustan Times writes,

And what he (Dhondy does in this book is not to restrict the telling to a simplistic tale of pati, patni aur woh. If adultery is like a shadow to an individual, shifty and unshakable, that socio moral theme finds its reflection in the literacy from. Every story has an overt, regular narrative and a shadowy adulterous subnarrative. Some very adult tales told with child like ease." (qtd. Kumar Ashok 189)

Reference of Farrukh Dondy's short stories collection has been made to show the parameters of this socio-psycho imbroglio, Kapur narrates from the very first page the extra martial relations in the following words - "The couple lay among stained sheets and rumpled quilts, eyes closed, leg twisted together like the knotted branches of a low heavier on his shoulder, his hand across her stomach became limp. They dozed, perhaps for fifteen minutes, but behind their heavy eyelids lay uneasy thoughts. They had things to do, place to go, lies to tell, the woman particularly" (1). The plot of Custody is set in the backdrop of urban upper middle class family of Delhi. Kapur explores the hollowness of modern life. The story revolves around the couple Raman and Shagun, along with charismatic Ashok Khanna, Raman's boss and Ishita; a childless divorcee.
Kapur uses the institution of marriage in this novel to present the story of four adults and two children. A sequence of dispute follows along with arguments, heated discussions, exposing the evil side of divorce. In some ways, the plot here is almost Victorian, as the beautiful Shagun tired of her trustworthy, monotonous husband Raman and has her head turned by the modern Indian equivalent of the local mill-owner: an executive in a global corporation. Raman is a product of IIM. Ahmedabad and has been employed in an internationally acclaimed beverage company 'The Brand'. His wife Shagun is a beautiful woman having uncommon green colored eyes. She has two children. To be brief the couple has a son and a daughter which make family complete. Ashok Khanna the wonder man of the company the Brand comes to India as the chief executive officer of South-east Asia. he is to revive the Brand which was banned during the Janta Party regime after 1977. Raman has been given the responsibility by the company to popularize the new drink-Mang-Oh. In the old fashion of other four novels Kapur unlocks the curtain of the novel in these words: January 1st, 1998. 'The couple lay among stained sheets and rumpled quits, eyes closed, leg twisted together like the knotted branches of a law growing tree. Slowly their breathing became less noisy. Her head grew heavier on his shoulder, his shoulder; his hand across her stomach became their heavy eyelids lay uneasy thoughts. They had things to do, place to do, lie to tell, the woman particularly" (1). The novel begins with love scene of a couple but the satirical side of the story is that it is not the love affair of husband and wife as it looks, but the love-making scene of a wife with her husband's boss. Shagun, the beautiful green-eyed wife of Raman had fallen in love with her husband's boss, Ashok Khanna. In a
very short time Shagun finds herself pugnacious to define herself in the role of a wife, mother and a lover altogether. Finally, she asks Raman for divorce at which he is distraught. He reacts violently with his male-ego hurt and offended like a dishonored hero. He refuses to solve the matter affably and the matter turns into a bitter battle in the court. The book starts with the problems that married couples bump into and experience when there is no love left between them. Kapur reveals without taking anybody's side the power of the extramarital affair which can disintegrate even a solid marriage. Morals and ethics don't work or to say have no place when it comes to love. Ashok Khanna is a real marketer who has never failed. When he realizes he is in love with Shagun, he becomes callous to achieve his target, Shagun, at any cost. He feels this kind of love as he had never veteran before with anybody else. He proceeds to capture the mind, body and soul of Shagun and feels happy like a proud subjugator even if it means to destroy one's seems-to-be happy married life. With the taste of love Shagun rebels for freedom which was long denied to her. She fought for the freedom she had long wanted but it was at the cost of her children and a happy married life. She dares to come out of the defending environment of the peaceful family setup.

Kapur very artistically weaves the plots and the sub-plots and throws light on the fate of the children in such marriages. Kapur says, "And here I have been thinking that although none of the characters come out wholly shinning, you do sympathize with them all! Misery, anxiety, tension does bring out the worst in us -that would apply to any conflict situation. Where children are concerned, one's deepest feelings are at stake, and this provokes all kinds of extreme behavior"(Kapur Random Review). The novel does not
start at the point where both Raman and Shagun have nothing in common, nor do they seem to possess any hope of promising future which can guarantee a happy life ahead. Though their “marriage had been arranged along standard lines, she the beauty, he the one with the brilliant prospects” (2) but these prospects make Raman rather practical, and put the marriage on stake. He spends long hours working for a successful company that manufactures soft drinks. It is the beginning of globalization, and rising Indian enterprises are projecting their business round the country and abroad. Raman is the stereotypical depiction of the hard-working man and a kind of trophy in this family-arranged alliance for his perseverance and dexterity. At the beginning of the story we see him in his traditional role of father and husband; of the head of the family who goes out to the world to fight and make money of one who has to be looked after when he comes back home, but also who does not care much for his own wife or children. His professional career seems to have screened his familial life in the clouds of uncertainty. It made Shagun realize within no time that there was nothing promising in this married life. As a result of it the marriage fell into unanswerable questions. "The dissatisfaction that occurs in most marriages was not allowed dissipation; instead, she clung to reasons to justify her unfaithfulness" (3).

Daily both of them started their life disinterestedly having some complains that did not mean to be heard, and sensing the seeds of dissolution of their nuptial tie. In the very starting of the novel the marriage has been revealed to be devoid of any zeal. Only an inconspicuous tinge of guilt was there in their minds."The woman left first; she believed that the spirits of the universe at the service of betrayed partners were tracking her movements,
keeping of note of incriminating times and places” (4). It looked as if Raman had already considered this impending separation as their destiny, a kind of fate that he did not even wish to evade. Perhaps the kind of work that Raman did demanded his attention more than in anything, and as such drained him of his interest in his wife. The lack of enthusiasm Shagun suggested in him was also because of this only. Both of them expected each other to initiate and understand their plight but both failed. As a result of which the breach kept on widening. "Raman thought of his wife and the distance he had begun to feel between them. May be it was the baby she hadn’t really wanted, maybe it was all the travelling he had to do, had always had to do” (5). With the passage of time this ingrained a sense of aloofness in her, and with the same pace it became a matter of feminine assertions which Shagun did not fail to discern. She starts considering her life in her own terms which should not acknowledge the male chauvinism. A sense of liberty in the terms of decision of her life began to manifest itself more forcefully. Even child bearing and child rearing seemed to have put shackles in her feet confining her life to mere the boundary of a typical household.

A desire to cherish the prime time of her life dawned on her, and took the shape of clash with Raman when the latter asserted that she should devote herself to their son. “It’s not that. I’ll be thirty, Arjun is just becoming independent, I don’t want to start all over again. Always tied to a child.” (6). Her feminism expects her to lead her life in her own direction without any other consideration. She even asserts this to Raman making him realize how lonely and monotonous life she has to endure. “I want something else in my life, can’t you understand that? We always meet the same people, talk about
the same things over and over. It's boring” (7). She urges that he does not wish her to have a life of her own. "When she turned inwards where her life was waiting to be examined, she blamed Raman for her predicament, thinking of the years she had been satisfied with his lovemaking, tender, attentive, as so much wasted time” (8). Ashok’s (Raman’s boss) looming large before her and her falling in his love clearly suggests that even fate also wills her life in this way only. A curtain is drawn between her normal life and another secret one, more charged than anything she knew previously. She stops using Raman’s name. It seems too intrusive. By now she has understood that he is a man of narrow and intense passions; one who lives, sleeps and eats only business.

The complication aggravates when Shagun does not show any deep regard for Raman’s parents. This irritates him, and kills all the feeling, she could spare for her for the sake of his parental family. The common link between them seems to be snapped. Raman’s rage and bewilderment are both understandable, but it is equally clear why any woman might not wish to stay married to him. Raman’s tedious self-righteousness grates, and is only occasionally relieved by a flash of personality. He fails to understand what his wife wants, and how she feels. His traditional mind like his parents’ would never question this. They would automatically assume that a woman’s selfhood, status, respectability and realization lie in wifehood and motherhood. He knew, “His mother expected respect, deference and love from her daughter-in-law plus an undisputed supremacy in her little grandson’s heart, all she was never going to get” (9).
Actually the kind of atmosphere she received from her mother ingrained in her a revolting instinct from the very beginning. She was deprived of what she wanted to be in her life. Her spirit, like that of so many other women, was different. She could never be able to guide her life in her own way; everything was decided by parents, family, cultural customs. She wanted to be a model, but her mother strongly opposed to a career that would allow all kinds of lechery near her lovely daughter. Her mother suggested that whatever she wanted to be she could be after marriage but then there had been a child quite early. Then the claims of husband, family and friends made a career hard to justify, especially since money was not an issue. Shagun’s mother found the tinge of the evil consequences of her violating the family norms in leading her life on her own. Even she warned her when she revealed her feminine assertions, “You think all wives love their husbands? But they stay married. You are idealistic, you don’t think about the long term. What about the society, what about the children?”(10).

Raman could not realize this simple thing that he did not own the whole of Shagun; her desires, her longings and her expectations from her life had to be realized and respected. He did not try to come to the terms with the fact that in this world where each sex requires space to co-exist and flourish, he had to break out of the age-old shell, and accept, and recognize the importance of woman, not only in his life and house but also in the society. The main trouble with Raman was that he swallowed her up, leaving no space to breathe. He began to suspect her, and even got her tracked. “Raman didn’t trust the world when it came to his wife” (11). He discovers the faithlessness of his wife with the help of a detective, and is so enraged that he is
determines to take his revenge at whatever cost. In this situation of the house one can hardly conceive the idea of ease in the household when its head has been offended; his honor has been insulted, and his powerful male chauvinist instincts cannot allow this public affront. But the result suggests something else as at the detective’s “it sounded so horribly intimate. He sat in shamed gloominess as he felt the sanctity of his family violated” (12). The horrifying aftermaths of his getting his wife tracked vanquished him even more than anything else ever in his entire life. He could not help ruminating that—

“No protest, however strong, could get back the security he had lost. He remained bent over his desk simulating work, as the office slowly emptied” (13).

The breach between Raman and Shagun even gulfed rather widely when Shagun became aware of her being chased by her husband. The disclosure that he had had her followed all of a sudden made her hate him. She felt like challenging the male dominated and patriarchal mechanisms of surveillance and control. When her mother advised her to be faithful to her husband, she pondered over this matter expecting to make amends. In the absence of Raman she—”Made a thousand resolutions; be wife-like, be good, docile, compliant, but the mere sight of him sent these decisions out of the window” (14).

The doubts in her mind about her being faithless to her husband, society, children and her mother’s fears, and her being schizophrenic were repelled by Ashok (her lover) when he suggested that, "Traditional versus modern values, individual versus society – this narrow social set-up is all you know – “that’s why you are afraid. But it will be all fine, fine. Trust me,
darling (15). Here at this point the dilemma of an educated and professional woman who encounters competing ideologies of traditional femininity and empowered femininity has also been depicted. Shagun’s act of sexual violation celebrates female sexual self-assertion embodied in a new feministic assumption that woman is a desiring subject with an intense longing for sexual expression, satisfaction and fulfillment. Shagun follows her heart, and seeks a divorce from Raman, and embarks on a new life with Ashok. So, the institution of marriage which in our country is much more than sex and children is thwarted of its sacredness through divorce.

The battle lines are drawn, and both parties are ready to fight to its end. Battle for custody is initiated from Shagun’s side, “you know I hated all this hole-in-corner stuff. If you have to get a divorce, fight for the custody, let’s start now” (16). Deciding to be separated she roused herself to bid farewell to her intense secret world, with its perilous edge of desire and its hours devoted to subterfuge. The cycle of rage between them not only fuels itself but is complicated by the new stepmothers and fathers acquired through second marriages. Perhaps this lack of social judgment stems from the period of an India of the 1990s which is entering in the world economy on a more ambitious footing, and in which the idea of family duty has been overridden by individualism. As Shagun says in her critique of the old world, “It was part of the Indian disease. Ashok was always going on about stultifying tradition. The great Indian family, which rested on the sacrifices of its women.” (17). Bitterness filled him, and he could not help chiding himself as to how stupid he was to be betrayed by the two most important people at work and at home.
Result was Raman’s undergoing a severe heart attack. But this also failed to bring Shagun close to him. It did not matter to her even an ounce. In order to reveal his anguish he decides instantaneously to reject Shagun’s request of divorce and any amiable negotiation or dialogue to solve matters. Owing to his childish attitude and his wounded-male ego he lacks goodwill to solve things rationally, and avoid the suffering of the children, even if he insists that he loves them a lot. One wonders what kind of love this is, but selfish and self-seeking. Rather he treats his children as his instrumental weapons to battle Shagun, restore his good name, and subtly let it be called ‘love’. After all she is the one who has abandoned ‘her home’ for another man. On the other hand Shagun herself does not want to sacrifice her own life and happiness. She wishes to be a satisfied career woman, and to build her own space in the world. She also determines not to repent and come back to him.

Manju Kapur has well portrayed in *Custody* the irritation, anguish and travails of Indian upper middle class woman who are at a loss to revile social convention and society. Manju Kapur represents two contradictory features of female image, betrayal and barrenness in her most recent novel *The Custody*. Kapur in her novel observes how woman has commence to cultivate as an individual and the primary centre of collide for her befalls the organization of marriage which has, so far away, forms the restrictions of her freedom. The woman now has stirred to the centre and has develops into a vital creature in the social situate. Kapur represents extramarital love of Shagun in her novel and utilizes this sexual autonomy as a device of confrontation to thwart patriarchal traditions and principles. She depicts a womanly character, Shagun
who rejoicing her sexuality and re-appropriates its generative attitude throughout a conscious inversion of patriarchal ethics. Manju Kapur represents two opposing feature of female personification, disloyalty and childlessness in her novel ‘Custody’. Betrayal authorizes a woman but barrenness eviscerates her. Infidelity replicates and preserves women’s right to longing, and the quest of the accomplishment of female sexual longing is a symbol for women’s egalitarianism politics.

Deceitfulness has always been element of multifaceted human relationships- not now in the 21st century but stretched earlier than that. Its expressions have apparent in art, literature, dramas and music; their inventor construing rebellious affairs in different ways: occasionally explicitly reproving its occasion, others affronting to decipher human experience, whose cohesion it has been not possible to refuted. According to patriarchal conception adultery is a ‘renegade’ relationship because it infringes ‘tradition’- an issue which has also stimulating pondering of gay and lesbian politics. If the idea of betrayal persists to inducing ethical indignation and anxiety it is equally an act of exercising personal autonomy. The ethical and poignant anxieties innate in infidelity are the chief apprehension of the women writers. In latest time, the subject of female sexuality has provoked excited disagreements and urging in academic spheres. The contemporary writers understand that if the woman craves to be empowered and liberated they have to conquer conventional sexuality customs and engaged themselves in quarrel and divergence betwixt principles of superiority (patriarchy) and female sexuality.
Kapur in her novel *Custody* examines how woman has started to cultivate as an individual and the main core of conflict for her turns into the association of marriage which has, so far, forms the restrictions of her liberty. Kapur exposes with the character of Shagun that woman now has inspired to the hub and has become a crucial component in the social organization. Kapur demonstrates illegitimate relationship between Shagun and her husband's boss Ashok Khanna in her novel and uses this sexual freedom as an instrument of resistance to thwart patriarchal myths and values. She depicts a female character Shagun who rejoicing her sexuality and re-appropriates its generative belief through a consciousness of patriarchal principles. Her sexuality is a dome of happiness and outfit in which she is empowered to employ her body for herself. She defies the male subjugated and patriarchal system of observation and control. Shagun and Raman’s marriage has been approved beside ordinary appearance; she is the beauty, he is the one with glowing projection. She convenes Ashok Khanna, a business man who is attracted by her beauty. Kapur mentions fine expression of her beauty in the novel. Shagun is also enticed by his loving words and sterling elegance and leaves behind the essential constraints of marriage and flouts its sacredness through sexual transgression. But as a married woman she also worried from her love affair, her reservations about being trapped. As Kapur mentions in the novel, "In the beginning she had so brave and matter-of-fact, now she was more fearful" (80). She encounters with contradiction as she neither sustains the sturdy stoic and self-sacrificing figure of her precursors nor restrains her perilous feminine wishes. She is confused in betwixt of whether to surrender herself to social conventional or come out as dissenter is a problem for her.
Her mother who having patriarchy visions, her mother requests her daughter that not to convey disgrace to the family and be a purpose to scorn with her extra marital relationship. Her annotations show social outlook and treatment towards a female in extramarital relationships also signify that the support association for the female is inadequate in material world as society emits a malicious outline on the female who is infidel.

Bereaved from Shagun and in sheer dismay he remained sobbing in the night cursing his marriage that turned out to be more than a dismal nightmare. Now he felt the only respite in his life in the form of separation. Divorce was certain but the custody of the children was to be decided, and one evening adding the fuel to fire Shagun took the children stealthily. The children became just plaything. Whosoever willed, took them. They became the most unfortunate ones. The legal fight began but neither of them knew that, “the law was a cut-and-dried business, once you got swamped in outrage, indignation, grief and anger, you are nowhere” (18).

Though she took the children with her but with Ashok it was not certain that they could find conducive living conditions as Ashok came off worst of all the possessors. A business school degree rendered him incapable of thinking in non-business terms, and his marketing job filled his head with cliché. The children become the family’s material stakes. Within no time the sign of this estrangement, and its consequence erupted in the form of Roohi, the daughter, becoming victim of slight nerves disorder, and as such she seemed to be quite withdrawn. Similar was the condition of Arjun, the son. His performance in studies suffered quite evidently. As he remained with his mother, he also underwent brainwash on the part of his mother. Consequently
he became almost indifferent to Raman. The worse happened in the form of his admission in a boarding school which left Raman at the back seat. The court also did not do much favour to Raman other than the right of visitation every weekend. Finally both of them divorced, and for Raman his obsession about his life with Shagun ended. For him- “It would be prudent to forget her existence as quickly as possible. From now he would devote himself to his children” (19).

Ashok Khanna in a party meets Shagun and his longing for Shagun begins, As far as Khanna was concerned a halo was created around him. For example such talks were in the air as he comes from Harvard School of Business or he is the first Indian to be made C.E.O of the Brand. Shagun falls for his glamorous life and Ashok Khanna for Shagun's green eyes and for her fine body curves. From here Shagun chooses a diverse way. In the novel there is another sub-plot in which a couple Ishita and Suryakant also undergo the pangs of separation. Their marriage is an arranged marriage. But the discovery after the marriage that Ishita would not be able to divorce. When we come to analyze factors responsible for the divorce of Shagun with her highly qualified and promising husband Raman we discover that freedom, ambition and the glamour of high "Don't make the harder, I have left you the best part of the marriage. Surely my freedom is not too much to ask in exchange."(114), Ashok Khanna sends Arjun the son Shagun and Raman, to Boarding School at Dehradun, Roohi the daughter to be sent to boarding. Her fate is undecided.

Whenever wife and husband go for separation and divorce, it is children who suffer the most. Arjun takes the side of his mother and he thinks
and decides in her favor. However, initially he also does not like going to a Boarding school. The following words indicate the working of a child's mind: "Boarding schools for children whose parents did not love them...... The child was reflecting his mother's guilt. She had to recognize that" (171). "She understands that he could never feel for the boy, it was her fault for leaving the child's father she would pay for her sins for the rest of her life" (171).

Shagun's defiant outlook infuriated as a result of the oppression and suppression of the patriarchy since her childhood. She doesn't want to be a silent sufferer and submit herself to her fate and compromise any more instead she rebels to get what she wants now. Kapur being a post-colonial writer gave her protagonists the same post-colonial touch which they deserved after the breaking down of the age-old traditions and trying to be liberal, progressive or radical. It is a novel stinking of authenticity. Kapur refrains from being partial and judgmental to any of the characters. Manju Kapur's capability to present all the proceedings details with an excellence gives the novel a genuine touch. She is a keen spectator of women psychology and thus has presented both Shagun and Ishita with equal magnitude.

The cruel and rude domestic dispute impacts the innocent mind of the children and finally ruins their lives. The two gorgeous children--young teenager Arjun who looks just like Shagun and three year old Roohi who looks just like Raman are "torn between two mothers, two homes, and two countries". The dirt and hatred that lies hidden under the expensive carpet of the upper-middle-class drawing rooms comes out with just one brushing. The concept of family shame and social propriety is kept at the background and Shagun's infidelity is not outraged. The egotistical and ignoring sides of the
parents are exposed. How the insensitive parents fail to understand, acknowledge, and respect the views of the children is brought out by Kapur in a pragmatic manner. Shagun's selfishness shocks Raman who is a sincere, devoted husband. He is a hard working man trying to reap the benefits of economic boom of the financial market but his hard work costs him his wife. Both the children of Raman and Shagun are separated from each other. Kapur states, "The family where I see the impact of what is happening in Indian society. In my earlier novels, it was women who negotiated this relationship. Here is everybody -the children, the father, and the wives. If you live free, you pay the emotional price" (Akbar Rev. of Custody).

Kapur illustrates in Custody Shagun who has vanished her individual person self in her earlier marriage life with Raman now looking for the missing self in her love affair with Ashok. This relationship provides her an amusing experience and makes her to be independent, convinced, potent, self-governing and ingenious as her chasing sexuality egalitarianism and self-reliant. She replicates her individual personality with boldly and then forms appropriate retort incisively. Shagun delineates her wish, preference and sexuality as she examines, distinguishes and acknowledges herself. She considers in Ashok. As he states: "Traditional versus modern values, individual versus society"(81). Shagun has not capitulated to the notions of the patriarchal society but deploys with her ability and potential to defeat troubles so to obtain pleasure in her new relationship. The supremacy ensuing from investigation, elucidation and empowerment of the female sexuality occurrence steers to self-realization and self-affirmation as an individual in Shagun. Shagun chases her heart and asks for a divorce from Raman and gets
on a new life with Ashok. So, the association of marriage which in our country is much more than sex and children is disenchanted of its purity through divorce. Shagun tells Raman which clearly shows her longing for freedom in her life, "Don't make this harder. I have left you the best part of the marriage. Surely my freedom is not too much to ask in exchange?" (109). Shagun emerges as a ‘new woman’ in the novel who recognizes the prospective of her ‘being’ throughout a procedure of fetching by induction herself on personal struggle with society on the basis of the precedence of expected preferences over social proprieties. She, as a woman, in this new correlation of her selection is an important and new literary create, conscious of the preferences release to her and rouse to the compound and modified prototypes of existing and adoring against the hostile and disheartenment governing outlook.

Kapur presents the tensions and problems that follow as the outcome of divorce. Family structure crumbles and falls apart into pieces with divorce. The novelist shows what Shagun has to bear as a cost of her sovereignty. It is a break up of modern marriage with its burden of individualism. The funny thing is, when it comes to the downsides of individualism and the freedom of will, people suddenly tend to turn a blind eye and look for excuses and justifications. Kapur confines how barrenness is veteran as the incapability of a woman to realize position prospect in a culture where much significance is accorded to motherliness and virility. "Like many other contemporary writers, Manju Kapur also has proved herself as one of the most representative authors with her own brand of feminism and earning a rich acclaim at national and international level for her works. The woman has been exploited by man as
though it was its natural birth right. Her innate attributes of compassion and sacrifice have enchained her with the manacles of servitude" (Satendra Kumar 47).

Shagun and Ishita are the central women characters in *Custody*. Both are revealing contradictory personality. Shagun adores for position and prosperous life style. For her, materialistic life is more important than family's love and care. Shagun's mother desires for her daughter's love. Manju Kapur represented the issues of infidelity, infertility and the reasons behind divorce in modern Indian society. Kapur shows the reality of conventional Indian society's woman who is less empowered due to her childless issues. Ishita at her in-law's house experiences disembodied like she is penalized due to her infertility reason. Divorce packs her life with anguish, desolation, despair, misery, murk and sagacity of collapse. Thus Manju Kapur has revealed a dilemma of women's childless and divorce in her novel through Ishita's character. But Shagun's character is depicted as modern woman by Kapur as she discards the convention of so called society. Shagun and Ishita have tilled the mode towards freedom; self contentment and set for re-emerge in the same patriarchal society. In *Custody*, everybody has to pay a price for what they want. The fact that Husband and wife become strangers to each other is wretched and brings to the surface the insincerity which the modern families experience in this materialistic world.

As a parallel story, the plot swerves to capture the troubles of Ishita, who is the daughter of Raman's mother's dear friend and neighbor. Reflecting the miserable marriage scenario that prevails in most middle class Indian families, Ishita's problems begin when she is unable to envision. Her mother-
in-law and sisters-in-law who doted on her and acted as though they were all dear friends changed overnight when they realize that Ishita is medically pronounced as unable to have children. Ishita had an arranged marriage but as soon as her husband and in-laws discovered that she could not conceive, despite the many painful and tedious medical treatments she had undergone, she felt small and psychologically distorted and- “Smaller than the ants on the ground, smaller than the motes of the dust in the sunlit air, smaller than drops of dew caught between blades of grass in the morning” (21). Ishita thought as she sat in the gynecologist’s office that she could not conceive, whereupon SK had decided he could not love her. So “asymmetrical” are the negotiations and terms of marriage in her family based on material acquisitions (or possessions) that even her mother said- “For us money is not as important as family. But beta, it is essential that Suryakant have a child. As the only son, he has to make sure that the bloodline of his forefathers continues” (22). The questions resulting from Marital discord is running throughout the novel in every plot and subplot along with Indian culture. Mostly women have to bear the burden of loneliness. Kapur explored successfully in exposing the fact of how a daughter-in-law is discarded from the household and the family for only one reason. Ishita had an arranged marriage but as soon as her husband and in-laws discovered that she could not conceive, despite the many painful and tedious medical treatments she had undergone, she felt small and psychologically distorted and- “Smaller than the ants on the ground, smaller than the motes of the dust in the sunlit air, smaller than drops of dew caught between blades of grass in the morning.” (21)
Ishita has to bear the cost of her infertility. Some feminists do not think that the coercion of women is based only on the economic system and they recommend that patriarchy and capitalism are combined into one system. Kapur's Ishita is only body neither mind nor soul for her relatives. Female body is just a body and nothing else. It was quite natural for her to focus on the most important aspects of a nation-its values, morals, and ethics. In *Custody*, parallel to Shagun's story runs Ishita's story who has been underprivileged of her rights. Kapur through Ishita's life exposes the shallowness of marital life where a woman is stigmatized because of her infertility and the fact that she can't carry forward the family name. She is subjugated to severe mental torture with no one to take her side. Even her husband who had declared his undaunted love for her supported his parents.

Ishita's mother-in-law is the typical mother-in-law of the Indian society where a daughter is treated as a daughter, a wife and a daughter-in-law. Being a woman she failed to empathize with Ishita's condition. When Ishita's mother-in-law takes a detailed discussion with the doctor to go to the depth of the matter to see the medical cause of failure, her curiosity is satisfied as it is not her son who is impotent but her daughter-in-law who is infertile. The novelist brings out the callous nature of the mother-in-law who fails to understand and respect the same gender kind. In one type of feminism we can find that the root cause of all problems is the patriarchal system and men's domination over women. The system also exposes the set up where a woman dominates another. Many writers and feminists have poured their expression about women and their various problems. This woman's question has been the source of question and controversy all over the world. It can be
seen in Indian Culture. Ishita after mutually agreed divorce comes in contact with Mrs. Hingarani Khauns an NGO which works for the schooling of the boys and girls of the lowest strata of the society Hingarani has all appreciation for her work.

The norms which construct the femininity, also govern the norms which govern the arenas of family and work, marginalizing women economically. Women are groomed for accepting their natural roles as homemaker, childcare etc. that manufactures an economically and socially secondary status for them. Kapur depicts the importance of economic independence in imparting self-confidence and potential to take decisions to women. As shown in the novel, “At the brightness in her face, Mr. Rajora wondered whether independence could go so far in making his daughter happy” (189). Like other gender theorists and women writers, Kapur believes that educational opportunities should be equally open and available to women also.

If only she could tear out her whole reproductive system and throw it on the road. She hated her body, hated it. "Everybody in the building must know why she had come back. Return to sender" (23). She was a victim of “spineless husband, pressurized into divorcing a wife just because she had a womb that did not function.” (24) As Reber comments: "Child bearing has been viewed as a valuable gender-specific role to married women. Therefore, women who are unable to bear children, experience a pervasive sense of personal failure" (25).Custody explores the changing pattern and milieu in upper middle class Indian society. Ishita is second leading heroine of this
novel who wants freedom from her bareness and represents with depraved stepmother condition.

Kapur shows the realism of modern marriages in which the characters like, Raman, Shagun and Ishita feel at some accent emptiness and aloofness in their life. Ishita is simple looking Indian girl who believes in traditional marriage and who wants to surpass a peaceful life with her husband Suryakant. Ishita is victim of Indian patriarchy notions as her in-laws wants grand children for their family. After the eighteen months of her marriage life with her husband Suryakant, Ishita did not convince. She is criticized by her in-laws and society for that reason. In Indian culture, after freedom society has not changed their views yet. In Indian culture, infertility seems as woman’s liability and not the dilemma of the couple. Ishita went to hospital for diagnose her problem of infertility. She went for medical checkup, her mother-in-law is conscious about her childless problems. Ishita budge from healer to seer, herbalist to hospital worriedly looking for some decision, obsessed with optimism, doubt and desolation. So, the greatest component of her infancy is shattered in the chase to accomplish motherhood. A gynecologist examines her and ‘severe blockage of her fallopian tubes’ is declared and she inveterate ‘a childless woman’. She collects very minute empathy, particularly from her in-laws, who deem themselves the distressed party. Her infertile issue makes in her marriage with snowed under anxiety, social disgrace, emotional abuse and psychological stress.

Ishita recognition her matrimonial life with Suryakant is stressed and infertility interrupts the adoring relationship. Kapur describes the reality that in a conventional society woman faces disgrace due to her infertile body.
Ishita's husband ready to give her divorce who was once did not live without her for a second, meanwhile Ishita thrown out from her in-law house. She undergoes with ethereal as she is penalized for her imperfect body. Divorce makes her life depressed and lonely and she began to feel sense of failure in her life. Ishita's parent supports her lot to re-emerge in her life after stressful and negative experience of marriage life. Now, she tries to forget her unsuccessful marriage life and re-arranged in her life which she has left before five years due to her marriage. She takes her father's name and gets on a new expedition. She also tries for further a study which feels her unemployment issue of her life. Ishita after mutually agreed divorce comes in contact with one Mrs. Hingarani Khauns an NGO which works for the schooling of the boys and girls of the lowest starts of the society Hingarani has all appreciation for her work.

Kapur has shown how a divorce can lead a different life by working for poor and destitute through an N.G.O Ishita devotes her time for social service a good and a positive escape Novelists in this context shows how a life disastrous and tragic may take a positive turn and can make a life meaningful. The novel presents on the one hand adultery and debauchery and on the other hand feminist movement. To be fair this feminist movement appears subdued before the limitless liberty of women. Unfortunately, the women writers have equated feminist movement with limitless freedom. Other social economic and legal aspects connected with succession and inheritance remains untouched. Perhaps these aspects appear to female writers listless and they want to make their work spicy for commercial success.
A new chapter in Raman’s life began with the advent of an unfortunate divorcee who was thrown into Raman’s path by his parents. Raman’s marriage is not the only one that failed. Dissolution of Ishita’s marriage also gives new implications which became her misfortune. Her marriage collapsed because she could not have children of her own. In this connection it is said that,

Marriage continues to have material, social and symbolic meanings and consequences which are asymmetrical in terms of their implications for females and males in at least three significant ways. Firstly, selfhood, respectability and status are tied to wifehood and motherhood in more exacting ways than they are to being a husband and/or father. A single man or a man without children is seen as unfortunate, but a woman in a similar situation is inauspicious, possibly dangerous. (20)

In her fiction Kapur treats the gendered body as both empowered and disempowered, subject and object, a source of rejection and celebration in socio-political culture. In her new life she tried to find some satisfaction and a sense of identity in social work but she abandoned it when she met the divorced Raman. Since she was drawn to him she believed she could be happy as a stepmother to Roohi. Perhaps this was an only option to render some meaning to her fragmented life. In Ishita, Roohi got a new caring mother but this could not be tolerable to Shagun who still kept her fight for the custody of the children which Raman determined not to make quite easy for her to claim. He himself was victimized by the separation from his children. In fact both of them were troubled owing to the custody of both the children which they were denied. The divorce failed to render them the tranquility they
sought to cherish. Raman had Roohi which Shagun missed, and Shagun had her dominance over Arjun who still was not in complete fascination of Raman. In this awkward fight it was Ishita who even after getting married with Raman had neither Raman as a whole nor could create a place in the heart of Arjun because of whom Raman did not devote himself to her completely. Though Ishita left no stone unturned in order to be a replica mother to Roohi but the nagging doubt of her being snatched away tormented her immensely. She revealed her desperation when she said, "I think my heart will break. I cannot bear this half-here-half-there. I have given her everything – not because of you, but because of her – I feel this constant tension in my head with the fear of losing her" (26).

Both Raman and Shagun could not realize the simple fact that solving family problems in court was not a justified and approved commonly. “Adult should behave like adults, not like the children they were fighting over. Really, why did people have babies if they were going to the messes of their own desires?” (27). In the novel Raman’s family turned out to be a site for constraint, oppression, violence, possessiveness and disintegration which was conceived as a unit for emotional and economic security, sense of community, identity and social status. Ishita subdues her incapability and gives her motherly love on Roohi, a motherless and deserted girl. When Ishita meets Raman and knows about the reason of his divorce, bondage of relationship established among both broken hearts. Ishita has faced in her body with only of self- expel, self- suppression, and beholding only indigenous patriarchy and now with relationship with Raman she acquires liberty with her body. Raman pleases the physical requirements of her female body. Her maternal
impulses are satisfied as she celebrates a warm affecting attachment with Roohi. Ishita’s and Raman’s bodies and feelings harmonized, they get married in a court to begin a life anew departure after the pungent wounds of their earlier broken marriages. Ishita prefers her life partner and takes pleasure in the matrimonial and motherly happiness in her new-fangled house. Her motherly feelings fill with love, care and fondness for Roohi and her happiness is Ishita’s main concern. She with assurance converses before the Judge in the court. The judge cross-examines the little child Roohi declares Ishita by talking in her support and alleging her to be Roohi’s mother. Even if Roohi is a minor but her custody is specified not to her genetic, but to her stepmother, Ishita who loves her more than biological mother Shagun.

Kapur's *Custody* is a tale of female woes, sufferings as well as their happiness, their way to fulfill their desires and aspirations. The novel takes us through a series of events and incidents with separation, divorce; remarriages of the four adults and with it follows a series of ugliness with the legal procedure or the custody battle with the emotions of the children at stake. The pain and loneliness of the two children of Shagun is well portrayed by Manju Kapur. The story can be termed as a legal drama of the Indian society. Kapur's women are bold enough to face the cruel and slow turns of the Indian judiciary and the way it functions. There has always been an unending and insolvable debate as to which life situation-love marriage or arranged marriage- is better and more befitting. If we talk about the former, in many cases love remains love, so called romantic love, before the couple gets spliced in conjugal knot. Unfortunately it seems to be almost dormant, and if not that, rests on the principle of 'why should I alone step down or
compromise'. Both husband and wife seem to wage an endless strife of male chauvinism versus feminine assertions resulting in the question of their individual identity and their acknowledged say in each other’s life. The vagaries of love marriage do not end here; the outside society comprising the families of both sides and taboo proclaiming external elements loom large before the couple frightening them of their easy going existence.

The other side of the coin i.e. arranged marriage also reveals its horrifying manifestations before the couple in no time. In the country like India, traditionally, arranged marriages have been preferred, and are considered the fortunate destiny of a person following or celebrating the maxim, marriages are destined in heaven. The feminist Simmon de Beauvoir also opines almost similarly in the following statement, “Marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to women by society” (1). The relationship of a man and woman gets recognition in society through arranged marriage. Two different persons, brought-up in different environment, customs and temperaments, are thrown together, and are expected to live in peace and harmony. In the older times, no doubt it was possible as the woman had to compromise greatly not only with her desires and temperament, but also with her belongings and emotions. That was all because the woman was mostly illiterate and dependent on the man. In contrast, in today’s modern era of globalization and liberalization with the spread of education, and with an easy access to cherished opportunities, there has developed a sense of realization of the individual identity in both the genders, particularly the fair sex.
The lady seems to acknowledge herself on the equal footing with man. She is equally qualified and performing at par or better than a man. And if both the people have financial freedom owing to the lucrative situations in their professional arenas, the hope of compromising, enduring and adjusting living and sharing seems to be hazy. Consequently the two people tend to have clashes of ideologies and of the standards of their own lives. The situation even aggravates when the inconspicuous tinge of male dominance starts showing its presence. The bits and pieces of familial clash and unwittingly erupted differences take the final shape of dissolution of the so called established social institution of marriage. As a matter of fact the marriage is an idea of uniting the two people, and is very personal, and should flourish between a husband and a wife. The moment it becomes public, its success is jeopardized and the end, inevitable.

Coming to Manju Kapur a marriage preceded or fragmented by a socially unacceptable romance has emerged again and again in her novels. It is also discernible in her latest novel, *Custody* (2011). The novel deals with marriages that collapse, social hypocrisies and battles for children that intertwine with anguish and conflict depicting a worldwide reality of the politics of possessiveness and unequal power relations in patriarchal families. Here the common myth that conceives the family as a unit for emotional and economic security, sense of community, identity and social status, is belied and exposes the family as a site for constraint, oppression, violence, possessiveness and disintegration.

The novel unfolds the subject of matrimony is at its most intolerable followed by the emotional fall-out of the break-up of one wealthy extended
Delhi family. The protagonist couple is introduced just as their troubles come to fore. Their relationship comes to a juddering end when Shagun, the beautiful wife of Raman, falls in love of his far more charismatic boss and hot-shot sales executive, Ashok Khanna. The affair ignites the book's ferocious momentum as it follows them through separation, divorce, remarriage and a crescendo of a custody battle in all its legal chicanery and psychological ugliness. The two children, Arjun and Roohi, become the pawns through which their parents unleash their fury on each other. It is a relationship where the husband is egoist and stoic; who wishes to treat her like a doormat, and the wife, a woman less than docile and subservient, aspires for a life that soars to the zenith of romanticism. She does not want to accept the treatment as her fate which seems to be lifeless in totality. She has almost created or finds herself in a situation which fails to be benefitting any member of the family. The worst hit, are the children, whose childhood is stunted in a stifling atmosphere of the house. Such a relationship is nothing but a chaos, and leads to either a disaster or a miserable and pathetic end. The collapse of this marriage is explored from multiple angles making for a nuanced rendition of the situation. From the beginning of the story one perceives that a marriage like this is bound to fail.

Kapur's women are no longer restricted within the four walls of the family and traditional ethics. They dare to break down the conventional perceptions and dogmas of the patriarchal society or the bonds of incompatible marriage. In their quest for identity the bold women characters of Kapur are presented by her as real women of flesh and blood who have their own emotions and sentiments. They also hanker to be a part of the
intellectual movements of the day, trying to ascertain their individuality. Shagun tried to be honest with her love and life which means to insurrection. She revolted against her married life and enjoyed her freedom. Feeling of guilt anguished her but she goes ahead to enjoy her new love life. Ishita on the other hand, stigmatized of infertility hopes to find a new life in Raman's broken family. With nothing but meaninglessness in her life, she revives her life by marrying Raman and seeks fulfillment in life. She without any vacillation accepts Raman's daughter Roohi as her own child and showers love on the small child. Kapur doesn't hesitate to tell that women like Ishita also exist in today's world who believes in showering love to family and remain happy being the guardian of other's children. On the other hand Shagun's character is projected as an independent woman who dared to drift for her lost identity. Kapur tries to bring both her protagonists from the marginal position assigned to her. They do not achieve liberation through wider occupations or feministic revolts, but through deviational behaviour pattern depicting a process of psychological and spiritual aspect. When once asked if this examination of women's histories was a persistent theme, Kapur replied:

One of the main occupations in all my books it how women manage to negotiate both the private and public spaces in their lives what sacrifices do they have to make in order to keep the home fires burning and at what cost to their personal lives do they find some kind of fulfillment outside the home. They have to do so many things, they have to play so many roles and there is a lot of stuff to say about women and it is also what I know. (qtd. in Kumar Satendra 47)
In *Custody* Kapur depicts the gendered nature of custody which is battled in India. Generally men refuse to grant divorce while women usually have greater claim to the children but she refuses to do so. Both the parties counsel the legal advice. The battle lines are drawn early and both parties fifth to its end. The cycle of rage between Shagun and Raman not only fuels itself but is complicated by the new stepmothers and fathers acquired through second marriages. Kapur is adept at dealing with this complicated family configuration, and the insecurity it brings to the step-parents as well as children. In Ishita’s plight, as see the second wife’s desperate struggle to replace the biological mother, while Ashok presents a more ambiguous kind of care. Neither does she spend too long on whether Shagun’s infidelity scandalizes society, but focuses on how it affects her characters. The concept of family shame and social propriety is firmly in the background, the women characters in Manju Kapur’s novels are not traditional women who think that marriage is their destiny and they are to obey their husbands. The women in the novels of Manju Kapur differs from this category of woman and breaks all social taboos, and conventions and emerge as a new woman who is aware of herself. The women in the novels of Manju Kapur are the personification of the new women.

Kapur tries to depict the susceptibility of woman: how a woman seems at herself and her troubles. *Custody* is not only about infertility and infidelity issues, but the novel undergoes beyond that the issue of divorce, dichotomy of modern society, and relationship between parents and child are various themes woven by Kapur. Kapur tries to show that woman should endeavor to comprehend and apprehend herself as a human being and not just as an
attachment to some male life. In all her novels women stands for diverse sorts of qualities. They do not suffer but preserve their place. Kapur characterizes new principles, according to which woman is not to be taken as a meager puppet, a creature of lust and temporary enjoyment, but man’s equivalent and honored partner. Her female character Shagun has extra-marital relationship with one person Ashok Khanna. Her both women Shagun and Ishita are victims of a patriarchy Indian society which does not allow women to avow their privileges pertaining to their individual autonomy and believe the very issue of identity-crisis as absurd concerning women. Kapur illustrates women's anguish in married-life and then choosing to come out of the suffocating bondage by choosing for divorce. She portrays in her women protagonist deciding to favor for divorce rather than live a domineering life of prejudice and anguish. Her women Shagun and Ishita leave their husband or shatter the marriage which does not permit them to be liberated and living their life in their own way. Kapur shows that through divorce they will be liberated from the torment and torture of a dejected or undeserved relationship it does not decipher the troubles and women have to persist to struggle and endure on different levels — economical, emotional and psychological.

Custody is novel of Manju Kapur which discovers the relationship in an upper-class Indian family. Shagun is the main character and their marriage is too gorgeous. Raman a creation of a prominent IIT and IIM prefers her as his wife. Everything goes away well for twelve year after but she falls in love with Raman’s good-looking and enigmatic boss. Ashok Khanna, the boss had never ever been in love in his life but when just after convention Shagun, he
at once chooses to be with her. She has extra matrimonial affair for which she doesn’t uncertain to lie to her mother and husband. She even firms on her child daughter to be divulges in a play school so that she can get time to meet with her lover. She leaves her children at her mother’s residence to meet her lover yet she maintains enticing herself that she is an excellent and dedicated mother. On the other hand, Raman who is dedicated, diligent husband doesn’t understand why his wife is departing away from him. In conclusion he divorces her and battles a judicial fight with Shagun over their children. Their daughter Roohi stays with him and son Arjun with Shagun who at the present living with her lover Ashok Khanna.

The story of Ishita, the other character similar goes along in this novel. Ishita is throwing off by her husband and in-laws immediately because she is not capable to conceive. She is divorced and given Rs. five lakhs for her further life. She begins working with an NGO and afterward she marries Raman and loves his daughter Roohi as her own daughter. Manju Kapur’s novel Custody is not just a social annotation, but a novel that is realistic to the general anxiety of modern matrimony, with its encumbering of individualism. It is set in the prosperous, upper middle class colonies of Delhi in the mid-nineties, against the milieu of the preliminary rush of foreign deal in India. Shagun is a modern female character who accomplishes her individual dreams as an alternative of familial accomplishment. Shagun is a dogged woman who is supersede by individualism and her own happiness. The novel employs the life of a changing woman in due to course of time in enlarged globalization. It archives the diverse details in the region of the closure of marriage and a family in modern India society. The novel
illustrates that a childless issue in marriage is detested. The responsibility is endorsed to the female. Female infertility is recognized as view of divorce in case of Ishita's life.

Women from half of the world's population and as such their dilemmas must be carrying in frontage of the people so that consciousness can be created in the psyches of the people concerning their circumstances and the predicaments that they countenance. But hardly few have the daring to do so and the Indian women novelists writing in English have done this work enormously Kamala Das, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Shobha De, Manju Kapur all have cataloged the multifaceted plight of women consequently they are generally identified by their feminist dogma and as such the debate on their novels is principally foundation on how Indian women as a intact are dominated, subjugated and besieged in their lives-which covey of all phases of their life like family, social area, proficient life etc. But an important concern which conceivably residues unexposed is why they are distinguished on the grounds of being substandard to men. Who inform them that they are inferior? How does this notion of distinctiveness arrive? Conceivably they are ready to experience that they are subsequent to men in everything which is moderately relevant theory. Manju Kapur investigates into the consciousness of Indian women living in joint middle class and upper middle class families in male authority and writes about the multi coated Indian knowledge in colonial and post colonial times, dazzling upon the problems of modern marriage and relationship of man- woman under patriarchy Indian society and the plight of women in particular sense.
A woman should be conscious, self prohibited, sturdy determination, self contingent and coherent, having reliance in the internal potency of womanhood. A significant revolutionizing can be conveyed only from contained by being open in the deeper psychic sagacity. Although self-determining to several scope, Manju Kapur's women characters are firmly leaped by the manacles of convention and search for completion only within the range of family and custom. *Custody* represents a female world in which women come mutually in a sensitivity of companionship. In *Custody* Manju Kapur represented women's liberation and determined for some freedom in such comportment that we read not just with our eyes but also with our empathy. Kapur highlights those concerns of feminism that are widespread to the conditions in India organizes to help us comprehend how thorny it is for women here to enter at an progressive situation of psyche being ensnared within the environment of creed and custom. Her novel marked women’s fight for liberation from economical, political and social bondages. She has attempted to develop her own stream of emergence of new women ashore in realism. Kapur’s novel radically put in to the increasing convention of Indian women’s literature in English in present modern milieu.

The lengthy and excruciating anguish of women, the strong battle for the exemption of the thought of equivalent pay for equivalent work, the long-lasting fight on behalf of woman’s right to abortion and to carry out of birth control are some of the noticeable symbols of the gender discrimination that has persisted and that woman had to fight for in spite of the commitments they were made under conditions. It was only towards the last part of the century the women attached the battle. The catalog of those who did a lot for
women–Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidya Sagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, Matahari, Phule, Agarkar, Ranade, Karve to reveal only some. The evidence of the reform they embarked on to accomplish is remarkable. It exposes that their efforts extent achievement to eliminate performance of Sati, the tradition of child marriage, convention of distinctive widows, prohibition on remarriage of the upper caste Hindu widows and many other civil notions that affected women in patriarchal Indian society. The feminist idea and feminist movement in the west have some collision on the woman’s progress in the mounting country like India also. In the Indian background numbers of feminist have comprehended that the issue of women’s assault in India should not be determined to inconsistency between men and women. The woman in array to literate herself and proceed desires to empower herself to admit diverse institutional organizations and cultural constitutions that issue herself to patriarchal supremacy and console. Indian writing in English is now achieving an echo view quickly. In the sphere of fiction, it has indication a new epoch and receives many successes both in the country as well as in abroad. Indian woman writers have started questioning upon the well-known old patriarchal supremacy. Kapur through her woman protagonists has achieved successes over patriarchal dominance in her novels. "The novels of Manju Kapur show that the women of India have achieved success after sixty years of independence, yet there is still a lot to be done. She has to pull herself out of her existential stupor and bring out her essential self by breaking the age old silence of suffering. She should raise her voice against the mental torture that she has suffered through the ages by creating a separated identity and space for herself"(Gupta 16).
At present, works of Kamala Markandaya, Githa Hariharan, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Das, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Anita Nair, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Manju Kapur and many other have left a permanent mark on the readers of Indian Writings in English. Many other Indian women writers have also discovered female prejudice to classify to ascertain an identity, which is forced as a patriarchal society in their particular writings. The theme is from childhood to womanhood shaped society regarding women in broad. The fictional women produced by these writers have appeared as strapping individuals profoundly entrenched in their culture, therefore they have entirely erasing the image of a fragile, submissive shadow of woman in male dominated Indian society. These women have crushed the myth of inferior image of women that disturbed the postcolonial women’s writer's mind for an extensive period. Matrimonial indulgent is no longer in use for submissive and family bondage have come to be esteemed for adore that they indicate and not for any requirement or reliance. The chrysalis is wrecked and women are seen prompt rising towards self-realization in literature as they are in life. Womanhood has arrived to an extensive mode since 1920 when it won the fight for suffrage. From a cattle like survival women have arrive to seize an almost vital statues in the society even if the society is still to a great area patriarchal. From being the other, woman has appeared to embrace herself at equivalence with the supreme in literature as well. Indian woman polishes shoulders with her professedly more succeeding Western complement as well as with the male of the class. The extent has now twisted in support of women and they have really turns out to be companions. The ‘subaltern’ has appeared to seize a podium wherefrom she can speak and she does speak out her
psyche. Woman has crossed the ground of silence and has arrived at the
ground of speech.

The structure of the woman characters in *Custody* as a person in her
own precise is at formerly analytic of the author’s supplement of women’s
ambition as well as deterrence of conventional customs. It utters of her aims
to consider an idyllic character on one side and on the other it illustrates the
writer’s capability to shatter the convention. However, the transformation in
the fictional work of Kapur shows woman is associated with amends in
women’s position in Indian society. Feminine aesthetics from time to time
grounds numerous change between authorial perceptions and that of the
character itself. While the character’s accent is used to utter her anxiety and
her will to talk, the authorial tone points out her essential incapability to
speak up. Subaltern talk, in other words, does not accomplish the dialogic
level of expression. Kapur has accepted the feminine aesthetics as it is but the
tendency towards a feminist aesthetics is what provides her hope. It is this
that set up the dialogue- the two way communication in her novel. It
completed the literary backdrop enlarge to contain as the centre what was
previously considered periphery. This prototype change may be observing in
the novels of Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and more
recently Manju Kapur along with many existing women writers of Indian
English fiction. Kapur skillfully reveals feminist concern in her novel
*Custody*.

Hence, *Custody* is entirely representation of Indian Modern woman,
who tided new path in the peripheral world. Self boldness and seditious sprit
existing in this novel, which demonstrates the new woman is rising in modern
Indian society. Kapur's novel divulges the unimagined suspicions of modern marriage occurring in present time. The wife’s perception of suffocation, the husband’s trepidation of inferiority and the continuous shifting of children, like possessions, from one home to the other, are inducing with meticulous seriousness. *Custody* develops into somewhat further than just social observations, but a novel that is really reveals to the universal anxiety of modern marriage lives in Indian society, with its dilemma of independence. Manju Kapur herself asserts:

I am interested in the lives of women whether in the political arena or in domestic spaces. One of the main pre-occupations in all my books is how women manage to negotiate both the inner and outer spaces in their lives- what sacrifices do they have to make in order to keep the home fires burning - and at what cost to their personal lives do they find some kind of fulfillment outside the home. (qtd. in Gupta 16)

If we come out of literacy writing particularly in English written in India or about India by women writers we discover that multiple media journalistic presentations are either like documentary films of idealistic transcriptions of the situation of contemporary Indian women. There is no realistic and pragmatic approach which may lead to the betterment in the condition of Indian women. In fact our action defies our words. Indian parliament has been sitting over the Women's Bill for the last so many years. On the other hand in the west women are occupying centre stage everywhere. These year three women from Arab Countries have been nominated for Noble Peace Prize for their contribution in the field of women's uplift. We must not encourage popular literature or literature for entertainment, but a literature
with a purpose. In this light we may say that Manju Kanpur's novel fall short of their target and dampen the spirit of feministic movement.

We can say that Kapur’s *Custody* is highly predisposed with Modernism while the impact of Indian Culture also can be seen through the whole novel. If Shagun is influenced by the impact of globalization then Ishita is influenced by the Indian Culture, both have been portrayed beautifully in the novel. Kapur also explores the chaotic associations once again set in the thriving, upper-middle-class colonies of Delhi in the mid-90s. The story thrives against the backdrop of the initial heave of foreign investment in India. The very first chapter of the book begins to captivate a reader with the couple's love making scene. The only glitch is this: it is a married woman having a romantic adventure with her husband's boss. Cheesy as it may seem, the book sets itself apart by diving straight into the troubled waters yet without taking any sides, revealing once again the mark of a true family writer. Finally one may say that Kapur brilliantly weaves out a story that touches upon the sensitive issue of marital discord and leaves the readers pondering on the fate of children who are not separated siblings but deprived of parenthood. In ‘*Custody*’ Kapur has tried to explore the finer nuances of a divorce –both pre and post. Not only are we taken through the journey of what leads up to one, but also the repercussions of this as well.

The novels of Manju Kapur examine the changing image of women in the modern and postmodern era. Tradition transition and modernity are the stages through which the women in Kapur's novel are passing. Women in her novels seem to be a personification of a 'new' woman who has been trying to throw off the burden of inhibitions she has
carried for ages. We note a remarkable change and more confidence in the every sphere of life. This remarkable changing image of women to support the feminist viewpoint runs as an undercurrent in all the novels of Manju Kapur's female protagonists’ herald the arrival of new woman who want their individual worth realized. (Archana and Sweta 101)

*Custody* is the fifth novel of Manju Kapur, represents the matrimonial relation in totally new perceptions. This novel describes largely set in prosperous upper-middle class colonies of Delhi in the mid 90s against the milieu of the preliminary rush of foreign investment in India. The novel presents the vagueness of marriage, which cannot be predictable. Mainly three characters are depicted very well: Shagun, a gorgeous female protagonist, her husband Raman and Ishita, a young woman who afterward marries Raman. Shagun is a woman who after spending twelve years in her marriage with Raman and after having two children makes a decision to leave her husband. Shagun is a modern woman who becomes self- seeking and self-absorbed who doesn’t think embarrassed to cheat her dedicated loving husband. Shagun’s character divulges that after a procedure for centuries, if woman thinks for herself, the society shouldn’t elevate its brow at her. Raman is incapable to understand why Shagun leaves him. He is a hard working, sincere man who makes possible his wife with an astonishing life. He is such an innocent personality who hasn't expected the slightest thought of his wife’s infidelity and is engaged with his work. He is very determined and loves his family too much. He becomes the victim of situations and has to undergo a lot to survive his life without his wife whom he loves. He is a good father and he takes care of his children when their mother sets off with her lover. On the other furnis
Ishita who is not capable to convince a child is detached by her husband who was not thought to live without her. Ishita’s life drops its magnetism and connotation but she composes herself busy with the service of slum children. Providentially Raman arrives in her life and marries her. Ishita who is liable for not having a child finds an aim to live in the shape of Raman’s daughter Roohi after Shagun misplaces her custody in a judicial battle with Raman.

Manju Kapur has displayed a mature understanding of the female psyche and the inner subtlety of a woman’s mind. She has been highly disturbed by the suffering but stoic woman trying to set herself free from meaningless chains. She thorough her novels takes a deep and satisfying look at the sense of displacement often felt by women in the traditional institution of marriage. Manju Kapur deals with the plethora of marital problems that assail the educated working middle class wives of India. The displacement that they suffer and their suffocation in the traditional limits of marriage, family and society as a whole is clearly brought out by the novelist in her novels. (Gupta 15).

Manju Kapur has five novels to her credit till date and in one novel after the other, she has spotted her finger on the struggle of women in redefining their spaces – emotional and intellectual – and striving for a perpetual quest for their identity. In the process, the novels transcend the level of the plight of the characters to question certain epistemological structures, the so-called secure institutions like family, marriage and the blindfolded acceptance of values and standards like patriarchy. Women characters such as, Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Aastha in *A Married Women*, Nisha in *Home*, Nina in *Immigrant* or Shagun in *Custody*, they all
develop their own diverse ways to avow themselves in a society that is yet not prepared to nudge out of the shelter of certain conventional standards which appear in the way of self-consciousness of these women. How much do they accomplish something in their attempt is comparatively less significant, more important is their attempt and strength to place for themselves, to provoke to flow against the contemporary milieu without disconnected or distressing much of custom, within the family binding. Manju Kapur reveals that amend in the social customs is a dawdling procedure and not a radical and swift one, in spite of the fast-paced transforms being observed in the area of economy and technology. Indian Constitution might have grants women equivalent rights with men, but social approaches are leap by conventional and cultural hegemony and are awfully slow to change. In such a circumstances, Manju Kapur demonstrates an in-betwixt, intermediary segment where something of the old, though familiar and protected, is discard in chase of something new, howsoever anonymous and unsure, as an essential step to question the age-old patriarchal organization of domination and supremacy. Although a whole setback is nearly not possible to achieve but women in her novels have really place in towards deconstructing the age old age patriarchal traditions.
Works Cited


