Manju Kapur's Fiction: A Feministic Study

Feminism is an intellectual and social movement that advocates for seeking equal political, economic and social rights for women. It focuses on women's woes and suffering all over the world, and struggle for eradicating gender inequality prevailing in the society. The major component of feminist theory is to challenge the patriarchal ideology for attaining individuality and identity. The first feminist movement started from Britain and gradually, it took the shape of a global movement.

The strong wave of feminism impacted India as an organized movement in 1970s. Due to the difference in the historical and social culture of India from the western countries, Indian feminism is different from that of the West. The history of feminism in India can be divided into three phases: the first phase from 1850s to 1915, second phase from 1915 to 1947, and the third phase, post 1947. Feminism becomes a literary movement for the women writers like Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur and others who intuitively observe the gender issues which marginalise and victimise women in the patriarchal society. These writers protest the oppression and suppression of women.

Manju Kapur is a writer of international repute. With five critically acclaimed novels to her credit, Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, Home, the Immigrant and Custody, she has emerged as a significant and eminent writer in the Indian writing in English. Besides novels, she also has written a number of short stories. "Chocolate" is widely read story.

Through her fiction Kapur artistically projects the feminist concerns. She raises the feminist issues in a feminist narrative technique. Both the texture and the structure of the works are suffused with feminine sensibility. In the novels, Difficult Daughters, Home and A Married Woman Kapur explores the discriminatory mode
of upbringing of the girl child during which she is made aware of her secondary position in the society. A deep analysis of the novels, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *The Immigrant* and *Custody*, and the story, "Chocolate" unfolds the psychological, financial and other existential problems which a woman has to face in the institution of traditional marriage.

Kapur envisions a society which is free from gender discrimination. She creates the female characters in a manner in which they rebel against the oppressive mechanisms of the male-dominated society. All her protagonists – Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Nisha in *Home*, Astha in *A Married Woman*, Nina in *The Immigrant*, Ishita and Shagun in *Custody* and Tara in "Chocolate" challenge male chauvinism for the fulfillment of their aspirations and dreams.