CHAPTER III
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Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will critique two novels of Manju Kapur—Difficult Daughters (1988) and A Married Woman (2002) with regard to the views of feminism. The protagonist of Difficult Daughters is called Virmati. She is the one who crosses the border of social norms and marries an intellectual man as his second wife. A Married Woman portrays the life of Astha, who married a man educated in the US. Though she had a convenient life, she was not happy in her married life.

Patriarchy

The first sentence in A Married Woman shows how Astha was brought up. She was brought up “as befits a woman”. This term reminds me of Simone de Beauvoir’s (1974) statement that “one is not born a woman: one becomes one”. Anglophone feminists thought this statement means that being a woman, or being feminine is not a natural thing. The biological body of a woman does not make a woman. Becoming a woman happens through the process of entering into society and acquiring a social identity. A woman is not born a woman; her culture and society make her a woman, and that is why they are alone, vulnerable, and unprotected.

Asta was an only child and the most important thing in her parents’ lives. They always thought of her education, her character, her health, and her marriage. Her mother did consider marriage to be the final step of a woman’s life. Astha’s mother thought with her marriage their responsibility would be over. To support this notion, she
mentioned the words of the shastras that “...if parents die without getting their daughter married, they will be condemned to perpetual rebirth” (1).

The discontinuity and diversity of patriarchy throughout history is portrayed by Kapur successfully. Kapur shows in A Married Woman how Astha’s father insisted Astha to do her academic work diligently to get good marks and consequently a good job, a job that could help her to become independent. Her father was wise enough to know that economic power could lead her towards an independent life. This incident shows that women have not been exploited all the time.

How patriarchy forced itself upon women both implicitly and explicitly through words is portrayed in A Married Woman. Expressions like “As my wife” (188) imply that a woman’s identity is derived from man’s. Words such as “A man has to do well,” (28) “little one” (28) and “make it nice for me to be with you” (67) imposed a sense of inferiority, passiveness and dependency on Astha.

**Marginality**
Marginalization is not a stable phenomenon. People normally move in or out of marginal space through their life. Those who enjoy a high social status at one time may lose their position because of a change in social status towards the margin. Dressing-room is a place of marginality; a place where Virmati spent her life for quite some time after her marriage while Ganga has authority over the whole house. In comparison with Virmati’s situation, Ganga was in the centre in terms of her situation at home. During the partition the situation changed. Ganga left the house for a safer place and Virmati occupied the entire house.
Peter Leonard in his books *Personality and Ideology* (1984) divides marginality into two categories: people who are voluntarily marginalized and those who are involuntarily marginalized. Observing Virmati and Ganga, we understand that Virmati’s marginality was somehow voluntary because she chose to be the second wife of Harish knowingly. She knew that Harish had already married and she would be considered as the second wife. But the condition of Ganga was different, she was involuntarily marginalized. Harish thought of her as a *housewife*, not as his companion or his wife.

Feminists are disappointed *women*, because they all live in such conditions that cause disappointment, as Friedan (1963:80) says. Lucy Stone (Friedan-1982:80) says that she always faces this statement “It isn’t fit for you; it doesn’t belong to women.” All such statements dealt with education, marriage and everything else concerning in women’s lives. She says it should be the aim of every woman to deepen this disappointment in their hearts until they stopped succumbing to it. Manju Kapur shows such a disappointment in her protagonists Virmati and Astha. Both were experienced disappointment, because things were imposed on them.

**Gendered Subaltern**

In *A Married Woman*, Manju Kapur discusses the conditions of subalterns. Sita, Astha’s mother, made the suggestion to her husband that he buys a place in Defense Colony, but she was not heard. Her not being heard is part of a pattern that Spivak identifies as an incomplete speech act. Spivak (P.G. Joshi-2003:105) shows concern
that these kinds of incidents normally happen to subalterns, especially to the “gendered subaltern”.

Asthā had no control over her inheritance property. Ḥemant invested it as he wished and Astha received no answer whenever she asked about it. Spivak (1993) in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” says the inability of women to make themselves heard makes them participants in incomplete speech acts.

The failure of Subaltern Studies Group to consider the subjectivity of females is an important matter. Spivak (P.G. Joshi-2003:95) talks about. This failure happens while this group has tried to raise the consciousness of the subordinator. There are times when women become the effaced identity. She states that male subalterns and the historians are united in the assumption that the procreative sex is a species apart and does not deserve to be taken as a part of civil society.

The sections that perceive no positive change in their life even after political independence are called the subalterns. The women in this category who have faced double suppression are called gendered subalterns. As explained in Chapter Two, the subaltern lives in a condition where she cannot break the silence and show her objections because she has no control over the means of communication.

**Subjectivity**

If the basic factors of being the subject is to imagine, to think and to make decisions then Virmati was not exactly a subject. She could imagine getting married to Harish and she could think of him, but could not decide how and when they could get married. It
was not in her hands. Harish was the one who could make decisions pertaining to Virmati’s life and her future.

Virmati received her education and worked outside of home and had the opportunity to become independent. She could not use this chance because mentally she was not prepared to be independent. She was not liberated. She crossed cultural lines and broke the taboo of arranged marriage but her condition after her marriage could not be called a condition of liberty. New obligations and restrictions surrounded her and became new forms of subordination.

Spivak (Passerini-2000) states that subjectivity is a historical process and it happens through a series of changes that are not static. The subject is always in the process of instruction, which is not necessarily “a linear evolution”. Accordingly Virmati, through her study, her love and living in Lahore, attempted suicide, abortion and marriage to a married man, had been always in the process of subject-construction; a subject that was different completely from other female subjects in her family and society.

Hegel says that the subject is the one who participates in the society. The social participation of Astha started after she became familiar with Aijaz. She participated in the function of his funeral and also the rally set up to protest anti-communal actions. Later she started painting to support Manch financially. With these kinds of social participation she no longer considered herself to be passive. With the sale of her second painting in the exhibition Astha felt powerful economically. But that power could not change her life because she did not have any control over her money. Hemant was in
charge of her money and would not ask for Astha’s opinion about how her money
should be spent.

**Body and Woman**

Philosophers like Plato (Spelman-1998:39) believe that the body is the lower part of the
soul. To show how the lower part of the soul can cover up the upper part, Plato gives an
example of the life of women. He says that it is “women who become hysterical at the
thought of death and their emotions overpower their reason and they can’t control
themselves.” The worst possible model for a young man is that of a woman, because
most women are busy fighting with their husband and lamenting, and the remainder are
sick, in love, or in labour.

Plato (Spelman-1998:39) believes that considering body more than soul is woman act.
He suggests that becoming a woman is the best punishment for a soldier who surrenders
to save his life. A man should ask for death to release his soul; if a man doesn’t live
righteously now, he in his next incarnation will be born as a woman. On many
occasions Plato elaborates his point of view by addressing women in an improper way.
For example to show the importance of knowledge he says that women are close to
animals, and as a result they do not have knowledge. They do not recognize the
difference between “the material and changing world of appearance and the invisible,
eternal world of reality”.

In his proposal for the constitution of an ideal state, he suggests:

> There is no pursuit of the administrators of a state that belongs to
> woman because she is a woman or to a man because he is a man. But
> the natural capacities are distributed like among both creatures, and
Irigaray is a continental feminist. Continental feminism finds its roots in the various philosophical movements and schools that emerged from France and Germany in the decades and centuries following the work of Immanuel Kant from the dialectic materialism of Hegel to the deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida. Continental feminism discusses “the reevaluation of the role of body with regard to subjectivity” (Cahill-2005). Continental philosophy with regard to the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty tries to show that the body is not “peripheral (or worse, opposed) to subjectivity”, and that it is very important to the lived experience of the human subject.

Irigaray (Donovan-2005) agrees with Lacan that our understanding of biology is heavily influenced by culture. Taking the idea of the imaginary body from Lacan, she tries to show how Western culture is biased against women. She says that the imaginary body that dominates the society is a male body. Because identity and unity are related to male autonomy, Western culture privileges identity, and unity. To support this point she brings Freud’s view of women. He considers a girl or a woman to be a defective man because he believes men exist and women derive their existence from men as variations. Irigaray says Freud can not understand women because he affirms the existence of only one sex. He explains female subjectivity and sexuality according to a male model. From this perspective, female subjectivity is viewed as a deformed and “insufficiently developed form of male subjectivity”. Irigaray argues that if Freud has analyzed his discourse properly then he would have known that female subjectivity cannot be understood through “the lenses of a one-sex model”. In other words negative views towards women emerge as the result of theoretical bias, not because of nature.
In the recent years feminists are made light of, because some see those who struggle for women's rights to higher education, careers, and voting as being neurotic victims of penis envy whose real wish is to be men says Friedan (1963:71).

Feminists are told that women's place is in the home while men's place is in the world, the place for widening his personality as it is changing, while women are left behind. It is women's anatomy that decides her destiny. It is only men who have full access to the distinguishing feature of human beings, the mind. Because women's work is largely confined to home as opposed to the public, there's little scope for the development of their minds as they receive no training in the context of home. Women deals with home and children and leads a passive life where no aspects of her existence are under her control. As Friedan (1963:72) says, “They could only exist by pleasing man.” Woman is dependent on a man to protect her in the man's world. She is completely defined as an object. She never sees herself as the subject, I.

Feminists have only one free model of human being: man. Friedan (1963:73) states, until recently women had no right to vote. It was only men who determined the major decisions of society. The destiny of a woman was to get married and in this way the body of woman played an important role. In order to find a good husband, a girl had to look beautiful and her body had to be “natured”. Her future depended largely on the condition of her body.
Difference

Using the term *difference* as a tool of criticism is important for a number of reasons. First it allows us to analyze the conditions of discrimination that women have to bear; second it confirms positive points of difference; and third through these interpretations women become familiar with different strategies that can be used in different situations. The different reaction of Bunty and Astha towards the breaking up their relationship shows the different natures of men and women. Bunty broke up easily while Astha was traumatised. In *A Married Women* the difference between women's wishes and men's wishes is exemplified. While the ultimate wish of Astha was marriage, Rohan's wish was to get a scholarship and go abroad. Astha was as educated as Rohan, but her wish went no further than getting married. She did not think about getting a good job and earning money or being independent. She accepted that her destiny is to marry according to the values of patriarchy. In the system of patriarchy man is supposed to be active and the subject while woman is passive and the object. Even after marriage a woman cannot make decisions independently. Women shift from one form of patriarchy to the other.

Silence

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan describes silence in the following words:

> Since speech is identified as self-expression, and silence as self-extinction, they are closely tied into the project of subject-constitution. In a further move, since speech is regarded as a right, and the suppression of speech as a denial of that right in a democratic polity, the access to speech has defined social hegemony, just as its lack has defined subalternity in unequal social structures and situations. (1995:84)
Speech is not always transparent and it is not always imposed. Sometimes silence shows the operation of power. It shifts from an involuntary imposed silence to the freedom to be silent as Sunder Rajan (1995-86) says.

Sunder Rajan (1993:83) portrays women being silent to uphold the reputation of their husbands. It is the kind of oppression that is preserved in the customs of male-dominated Indian society. Once Astha blamed herself for not remaining silent in the presence of her colleagues where she supported women’s right to divorce. She thought others might guess that she was not satisfied in her married life and that, as a result, her husband’s reputation might be spoiled.

Indira J. Parikh and Pulin K. Garg (1989:12) in their book *Indian Women: An Inner Dialogue* discuss the issue of bringing up children in a family, with its special idealism and belief in “spiritualism and uniqueness of existence” on the one hand, and the newer forms of education and aspirations which refer to the adventure and the discovery of a new world beyond tradition, on the other hand. While growing up, the self asks many questions and acquires new meanings in the experience of being and becoming in society. Similarly, the struggle of women is to move out of given roles in order to find new roles. This struggle defies the roles and the prescriptive “absolutism of tradition” but at the same time carries forward the spirit and wisdom contained in the social structure and in the cultural role of women and, eventually, defines and crystallizes personal identity around meanings which integrate the old and the new and give it a different shape. Parikh and Garg believe that across the centuries, women in India have preserved the stability of society’s cultural institutions and the continuation of its ethos. In this regard, women have been the “virtue-holders” of society. They are living roles,
following their duty as daughters, wives and mothers. Many women have kept their dignified roles alive instead of transcending them. They have sacrificed their personal social aspirations for the fulfilment of society and surrendered their beings to their culture. The land that women are growing and living in has changed now. The land that women are living in today did not exist in the past. It is the land that needs the creation of the new landmarks for women to move from the past and enter another world with new meanings. This will not happen till the time women can “banish the bogies of their inner, hidden world.”

For a long period of history, women put up with their social afflictions in limited roles as daughters, wives and mothers. Their roles did not change even when a large number of them worked as a part of the labour force outside the home. They could not define themselves as workers who were independent of the affiliate system. But today they are educated and armed with different skills and knowledge and they enter formal work and start disengaging themselves from their social structures and its network of relationships. Women like men enter the world of occupation, career and competition. In that world they begin to create a space in order to be accepted as “autonomous beings” in a situation dominated by men. They feel they have to discover and identify their personal resources and also discover a vision of life beyond whatever is defined by social structures and the network of relationships. They have reached the point where there is the possibility of creating a world beyond whatever is supposed to be their world. But such a view brings with it the fear of not performing their given roles perfectly, the fear of being inadequate as well as a sense of guilt over ending their traditional roles.
Indira J. Parikh and Pulin K. Garg (1989) talk about the relation between speech and identity. Women speak of their inner world to make their life meaningful and to create an identity. Doing so helps them share their feelings without shame or fear. Such an approach is based on the knowledge that no one has the right or the power to accuse or condemn others in their struggle to come to terms with his/her life. These women have come to understand that one has to share inner experiences to be a person and to live as a person and to have the freedom to make choices. Sharing these experiences is necessary for the struggle of those individuals who attempt to transcend old roles and crystallize their identities based on new definitions, roles and life-space. Sharing experiences allows women to participate in the process of creating a new ethos and of adding new elements to the cultural heritage.

It is only by realizing this truth that the women could recognize that no action, choice or experience is powerful enough to be held in shame, or guilt, or condemnations, within the self. (Parikh and Garg-1989:18)

Women realize that to discover new horizons of becoming and a new unfolding of being one has to pass through several thresholds and negotiate many crossroads. At each threshold one has to revisit previous paths and relive the past memories of significant people. At each crossroad one has to face the excitement of the awakening of aspirations and the struggle with multiple invitations and evocations in order to reach the depth of one’s being and achieve the freedom to go towards the new horizons of being and becoming.

Sharing the struggle at each threshold and at each crossroad can create a new relatedness for the self with other individuals. This relatedness is characterized by a profound sense of dignity and sanctity for the identity of the self and others. The ability
to sense and experience this dignity and sanctity mobilizes human being—of both sexes—to join forces in creating a new ethos. The existential awakening of the self remains vulnerable and the inner space again becomes polluted and the concepts of “shoulds” and “musts” once again surround women’s existential being without considerations of dignity or sanctity.

Manju Kapur in *A Married Woman* divides silence into two categories, oral silence and the silence of written words. Normally silence is discussed with regard to oral words while in this novel Kapur shows how written words can be suppressed into silence. For example, Astha stopped writing her own experiences and feelings in her dairy because her mother read her notes. Her mother’s attitude forced her to be silent even in her diary.

Virmati’s suicide attempt happened as the result of her being forced into silence. Had Virmati been given any opportunity to speak, she would not have attempted suicide. The role her mother played was very important in this case. If her mother, instead of shouting at her, hitting and locking her in the store, had just listened to her, then Virmati might not have experienced the emotional trauma. A good relationship between mother and daughter can solve many problems.

Suicide is against the norms of society. In attempting it, it is as if she were showing her objections towards the social norm. Society considers this type of objection to be an eternal disgrace. In order to escape from the judgment of people and the shame of suicide, Virmati’s family kept silent, and her grandfather did not come to Amritsar.
anymore. Kapur shows how family honour strongly depends on the behaviour of its women.

Simone de Beauvoir (1974:678) says that women’s suicide is the last solution in all her methods of resistance. She explains the difference between men’s suicide and women’s. It seems suicide is committed less by women than by men. Men are more successful in committing suicide than women. Women often intend a show of self-destruction more than really wanting to commit suicide. They rarely use cold steel or firearms. They normally drown themselves in the darkness of water, and passively think life may find a solution for them.

Kapur shows that if any woman attempts to be different from others or the cultural norm, she has to pay for it. Behaving differently, Virmati brought a lot of grief to her family and herself. She knew if she wanted to be different she would lose her family’s protection and that her family would face grief. The condition of women without the support of their family is shown through the words that “A woman without her own home and family is a woman without moorings” (Kapur-1988:102).

Spivak (1993) in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” makes a point about the silencing of women’s own narratives. She speaks about Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri who was unable to carry out the political assassination assigned to her by a pro-independence group she was secretly part of. She attempts to prove her political loyalty by committing suicide. She was unable to reveal her political motives and did not want society to interpret her death as proof of illicit love. She waited till her menstruation and then hung herself. Her death remained insignificant as Spivak mentions:
Because of this decision, her death could fit neither into popular narratives about women's love tragedies, nor into independence activists' hegemonic narratives about women as Durga. Therefore, Spivak believes that subaltern woman is forced to follow this kind of silence. (Thapa, Manjushree-2006)

Asth was silenced twice in her writing. Once by her mother who read her diary and secondly by Hemant who accused Astha of writing a poem using bleak language. He felt that Astha showed her miserable married life to the others through her poem. That is why Hemant asked her to write about nature, as she had done before. Later on Astha decided to paint because she thought:

Nobody could put two and two together about a painting, say it was negative rather than positive, say she should paint lakes in Kashmir instead of mice, birds and cages. (Kapur-2002: 82)

According to Sheila Rowbotham (2002:166) the oppressed are mysteriously quiet when they have no hope. When change is far from them and looks impossible and they find no words to express their discontent, it seems as if they are not discontented. The other point she notes is that silence is recognized at the moment of its breaking. She believes that if we cannot hear anything, it does not mean there is no pain or objection. The revolutionaries have to listen to the language of silence because women come from a very long tradition of silence.

Breaking the silence and opening up are useful when they happen at the right time. After Virmati’s attempted suicide, her relatives gave her an opportunity to speak.
Reconstruction and Deconstruction

Kapur in Difficult Daughters shows something of a radical feminist through implications of deconstruction, while in A Married Woman she uses the idea of reconstruction in the manner that liberal thinkers do. In A Married Woman, Astha did not destroy her married life in order to make life better. She tried to correct the existing situation. There, Kapur emphasizes the gradual process of restructuring of the gender perceptions, while in Difficult Daughters Kapur as a radical feminist emphasizes the socio-cultural aspects of a patriarchal system in societies that have led to negative attitudes towards women. In this novel she shows how women’s social lives are restricted to the domestic sphere; and how they are marginalized from the mainstream in their society. Hence, the achievement of gender equality in a society is only possible through the deconstruction of the social structure. In this regard Sharabi (1988:34) says, “Change will come only by changing the relation between the male and female in society in social practice…”

The relationship of Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell (Friedan-1982:76) exemplifies deconstruction. Against the norms of their culture, they did not see their marriage in terms of the voluntary obedience of the wife towards her husband. Neither saw the role of wife as a dependent and irrational being nor the role of husband as a natural superior. Harish and Virmati both went against their socio-cultural norms to some extent. For example, Virmati’s attempting suicide, Virmati’s further education and her love marriage with Harish.
Man-Man Relationship

Kapur compares man-man relations with woman-woman relations with regard to the extra marital affair. In a patriarchal system men have no boundaries that prevent them from having relationships with other women before and after marriage. Men openly talk about their relations with women. Syed asked Harish about his relationship before marriage. He says: “Remember the women we went out with in Oxford? You had no problem with them” (110).

Later Kapur shows that such an extra marital relationship is acceptable for men while it is a disgrace for women. When Harish, who was a married man, told his friends about Virmati, everybody started to give him advice and helped him in any way they could to be with Virmati more, while Virmati preferred not to talk about her relationship with Harish to anyone, even to Swarna who was her closest friend. What underlies such a difference between the attitudes of men and women? Why do men talk openly to each other about such affairs but women, even those really in need of help, do not? The cause of such a silence may be due to the experience of being exploited by other women. Some women torture each other and support the male-dominated system unconsciously.

Irigaray (Cahill-2005) points out the sex difference theory. She talks about the inherent sexual indifference of Western philosophy. How it fails to recognize that the human species is always internally differentiated in terms of sex and other relevant issues. When these theories used the term “male” to refer generically to “human beings” then women’s position became less than human. The human species is treated as being
essentially of one sex, male, able to stand for the other. Such a view sees women and their desire and needs in a lower position in relation to men.

When the ontological independence of women is denied and women are considered as those who differ only quantitatively from men, then such beings are taken as less than men and restricted by their roles which are useful only to men. Women are defined as wives or mothers, and as culture. Women conceptually can be understood only on the basis of male interest. Irigaray (1996:45) says that the relationship between men and women is male-centered. These relationships are not true dialogues, interactions, or exchanges.

Men are conversing only with projections of their own beings, what looks like dialogue is actually monologue...Isn’t it time for us to become capable not only of speech but also of speaking to one another?(Irigaray-1996:45)

How Women Define Their Marriage

Marriage for Kasturi means initiation into womanhood, intimacy and procreation (Kapur-1988: 60). After marriage Kasturi was a body, a body which worked for procreation. She gave birth to eleven kids and as a result her sister-in-law described her as “breeding like cats and dogs” (7). Kasturi did not have any control over her body and her reproduction capacity. Her reproduction was put to a stop when the doctor said her health was at risk.

Virmati’s marriage shows the conflict between social norms and individual rights. Her marriage was considered a cause of disgrace resulting in her isolation from her own
family. She was not invited to any functions that were performed in her family such as funeral functions and wedding parties.

Swarna’s marital life is an example that shows how women’s political activities can be a part of their marital lives. The meaning of marriage for her was different from that of Virmati’s. She married and had a baby boy while she followed her political activities for social improvement. She tried to persuade women to come into the public, demand their rights and participate in demonstrations. Her attitude was proof that “sex” does not determine women’s roles in society. Butler in her book Gender Trouble (2006) presents her theory of gender as “being essentially performative”. Gender roles themselves appear at the time they are performed by the subject. In her view gender identity arises after performance. We are wrong to assume that women are women before they are taught to behave as women. Gender is performative, it needs to be repeated and without the repetition of performance, there can be no gender. This theory describes the emergence of the persistence of gender and the possibility of resistance. The idea of persistence is that gender appears natural and given because our identity is related to gender, but when we come to know of the scripts underlying our roles, resistance arises to what appears natural and we become capable of speaking.

In selecting a husband Astha’s role was to pray. Her mother insisted that she pray in order to marry a good boy. She followed her mother’s advice while she thought of “a shadowy young man holding her in his strong manly embrace” (1), because she had no idea whom she had to select, just having a “strong manly embrace” it seemed was enough. Her mother had no criteria for a good husband as a matter of fact Astha also
was ignorant of such an issue. She did not consider marriage as Cheris Kramarae and Paula S. Treichler describe it:

sex, love, companionship, shared experience, being comfortable with someone, being important with someone, trust, approval, moral support, help, emotional security, cooperation in attaining a common goal, closeness, affection, touching, feedback, understanding, feeling like a part of something, the need to do for others, the need for personal growth. (1985)

Being a *wife* has its own definition. Astha was addressed as a “wife” after her first intercourse; the spot of marriage blood turned Astha into a “wife”. Simone de Beauvoir (1974:416) shares her perceptions towards the term *women* and *wife*. She notes that woman is recognized by way of the vagina, the way which is an erotic center only through the intervention of male. She believes it is a kind of violation; it is by the real or simulated rape that a girl is separated from her childhood and enters into wifehood.

Frederick Engels points out to another angel of virginity in his book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1972). He says that the virginity of a girl is very important because a man wants to transfer his property to his own kid, that’s why his wife should be untouched to make sure that the child belongs to him.

In marriage a woman doesn’t have the chance to choose her husband because it is normally the man who selects his wife. As a result her personal preferences are ignored by him and the sexual act is taken as a service assigned to woman, as de Beauvoir says.

Marriage is intended to deny her man’s liberty; but as there is neither love nor individuality without liberty; she must renounce loving a
specific individual in order to assure herself the lifelong protection of some male. (De Beavour-1974:486)

In some countries the wife can not escape from the condition she is caught in because the heaviness of the marriage chain forces her to accommodate herself to the situation. That's why some women become “tyrannical and shrewish matrons”, some turn complaisant, and some become masochistic victims and slaves of their own families (De Beavoir-1974:532).

In the early years of marriage the wife normally soothes herself with illusions; she admires her husband completely and becomes excessively dependent on her husband and children. After a while she realizes that her husband can get along without her and the children are ready to leave her. At these times she finds herself alone and notices that on her own she has nothing to do (De Beavoir-1974:534). Kapur’s example of this issue is Astha’s mother, whose sole concern in her life was her daughter and husband. After Astha’s marriage and her husband’s death, she became listless as if she had reached the end of her life’s journey.

In marrying his wife, a husband obliges the woman to give herself entirely to him, while he does not accept any corresponding obligations and consequences. The husband wants his wife to be wholly his and at the same time wants no burden on himself. He wishes her to make a secure place for him and also to leave him free. He wants her totally, yet he does not want to belong to her; he attempts to live as a couple but at the same time he wants to be alone (De Beauvoir-1974:535).
D.H. Lawrence (De Beauvoir-1974:535) defines marriage as being a combination of two whole, independent existences, not a retreat. De Beauvoir says that the traditional form of marriage is undergoing modification but still oppression can be seen in it. By using the term modification she means couples are freer to choose one another and separate more easily, and in America differences in age and culture between the couple are considered causes of concern less now than before.

Many young households give the impression that they live in perfect equality (De Beauvoir-1974:536). But de Beauvoir says that this is an illusion because as long as the husband carries the economic responsibility for the couple, he will decide where to live according to the demands of his work; their standard of living is set according to his income, and friendships depend on his profession.

Kapur shows that when a girl is addressed as a wife, she will face a change in her responsibilities. When Astha was in her parents’ house, she had just one role—being their daughter, but after marriage she had to play two roles—being Hemant’s wife and being the daughter-in-law. On becoming a wife and a woman, a girl has to pass through different stages. Astha had already become a wife and the next step according to Hemant was to become a woman. He called Astha a woman from the time he learned that she was pregnant, “My wife is becoming a woman before my very eyes” (2002: 57).

The term family is founded on the sacrifices of women according to Astha’s colleagues. By this view, considerations of self are seen as a crime. Astha’s colleagues thought women had to sacrifice for their family and never think of themselves even if their
husbands cheated on them. But Astha had a different view. She was sick of sacrifice; she did not want to be under the pressure of the family. She equated the ideal of Indian womanhood with the trap of jail. From her point of view getting a divorce was a good remedy for a woman faced with humiliation and oppression in her married life. Kapur compares the condition of a divorced woman in India and in the West and shows that in contrast to Indian women, women in the West do not face social and economic death after divorce.

Mother-Daughter Relationship

The relationship between mother and daughter should be such that a mother does not subordinate her daughter. Such a behavior needs the mutual communication between these two; such a relationship cannot be established between mother and daughter so long as the duty of the daughter is simply to hear and obey her mother’s words without question. Virmati was subordinated by her mother as her mother had herself been subordinated by her own mother. It often happens that a mother who suffers at the hands of her mother will do the same with her daughter; the older women subordinate the younger. As we see, Virmati was subordinated by Kasturi and Ida by Virmati.

Kapur shows the different kinds of subordination that daughters go through. Subordination can be divided into different forms in Kapur’s novel—mental and physical. The most private area of the individual is her mind, the place where Astha’s mother stepped by reading her diary without her permission. The moment Astha saw her diary in her mother’s hand, she felt “Her skin ripped off, exposed in all her abandoned thoughts and deeds” (2002: 26). This shows how women do not have any privacy.
Betty Friedan (1982: 322) distinguishes between those women who conform to their social role and marry men and those who become involved in serious issues. She says that those girls who marry made fewer mistakes than those college girls committed to a more serious and larger range of interests than marriage. The latter had mothers with private images of women who had a more serious sense of purpose.

One of the components of *empowerment* as Siwal (2002) explains is to have the ability of defining and creating a women’s perspective. The thing that makes the woman’s movement weak is having a large number of perspectives that differ from one to the other. In other words there is no specific perspective that can unite all women. An obvious example which Kapur notes is the difference of opinion between Astha and her mother regarding marriage. One believed in arranged marriage and the other preferred love marriage.

Different mothers bring up different daughters. Pipeelika’s mother was a strong woman and brought up Pipeelika to be strong as well. Pipeelika was strong enough to make her own decisions and follow them. They could talk together and discuss various issues and reach some agreement to some extent. She had learnt from her mother to think and live independently as a subject. However Astha and her mother did not have such a relationship. Astha was independent at no point in the entire course of her life. She was always dependent on a man, at first on her father and later on her husband.
Internalizing Patriarchy Values

Internalizing patriarchy values is the factor which indirectly helps and sustains patriarchy. It is a way of oppressing women through their own beliefs and deeds. Internalizing these values allows the system to control women with a minimum of intervention. The following incidents are examples that Manju Kapur brings up in her novels:

- Kasturi, Virmati’s mother believed that she was a guest in her parents’ home as her mother told her: “At the same time she accepts her grief stoically, for she knows she has been but a guest in her parent’s house; this separation is ordained from birth” (Kapur-1988:187).

Girls are treated as objects in their own family and are trained for their new roles as objects in their husbands home among their in-laws, as Kasturi thought that “She now belongs to them” (Kapur-1988:187).

- Harish’s second marriage made Ganga very upset, but her mother-in-law started soothing her with these words:

  In this life we can do nothing but our duty. Serve our elders, look after our children, walk along the path that has been marked for us, and not pine and yearn for those things we cannot have. Since our destiny is predetermined, that is the only way we can know any peace. Duty is our guide, and our strength. (Kapur-1988:194)

In other words Ganga’s mother in-law asked her to accept such a fate without any objection and to internalize the fact that her duty was to accept whatever was given to her and to reject all her desires.
Virmati accepted that she had to sacrifice her life for the happiness of Harish. She thinks: "A woman’s happiness lies in giving her husband happiness" (Kapur-1988:210).

Betty Friedan (1963:16) talks about the condition of women fifteen years after the Second World War. She says that for women life meant their husband and their children. That’s why they chatted together about only these two issues—how to keep their husbands happy or cook chicken while their husbands were busy with politics and other serious issues. The inferiority of women or superiority of men were of concern to none.

To bring about a change in women’s perspectives, Friedan (1963:73) talks about the symbolic play written by Henrik Ibsen in 1879, called A Doll’s House. European and American middle-class women during these Victorian times saw themselves in Nora. In response to her husband who said she was a wife and mother and these were her sacred duties, Nora said that she could no longer content herself with the things other people said and did. She needed to think for herself and analyze things by herself. She expressed these words at a time when few women dared to leave their home and the security provided by their husband.

In the 1960s it was said that feminism was a dirty joke, while some said: "The feminist revolution had to be fought because women quite simply
were stopped at a stage of evolution far short for their human capacity” (Friedan-1963:76).

- Astha’s in-laws thought that it was not a woman’s job to talk about “protest” and “politics”. Her in-laws said: “It is not a women’s place to think of these things” (Kapur-2002:187).

- Women like Gayatri internalized the idea that women are bodies. She described Astha in these words: “You are not bad looking. You have no figure, but your features are sharp, you have clear skin and high cheekbones” (Kapur-2002:10).

To highlight the relation between women’s bodies and women themselves, Moira Gatens (1988) notes Lynda Birke’s words that: “Our bodies are ourselves: But we are also more than our bodies.”

Body is one of the aspects that continental philosophers (Cahill-2005) are concerned with but the body which is “dynamic, fluid, contentious entity, constantly affected by and affecting its own environment”. Moreover this body is a social and political organism. But as Kapur shows through Gayatri women are supposed to be a body, which refers to the inferior part of the human being lacking the factor of subjectivity.

- Kapur in Difficult Daughters shows how women internalize the behavior of the beginner. A gentle woman is supposed to mask her interest when
talking to a man and in sexual exploration she is supposed to wait for the man to initiate. By internalizing the standard of beginner, the woman makes herself second fiddle to men in all situations. Hemant is the one who started talking to Astha in their first encounter and Astha’s reaction was normative; she felt shy. In their first sexual encounter it was Hemant who initiated the exploration.

- Women have internalized the behavior of searching for someone to help them to “accept things” (Kapur-2002:55). Swami, by persuading women to accept their condition supports the system of male-domination in India. “Accepting things” means bowing to the system enforcing these things and failing to challenge to the conditions of oppression. Accepting things means following the values of patriarchy without question.

- Hemant’s first child was a daughter but he needed a son of his own to pass on his property to. Some women like Astha’s mother supported such gender inequality in their society through these words: “...why is Hemant working so hard? For whom, if not his son?”(Kapur-2002: 67)

**Self-Realization**

The first phase in the self-discovery is the recognition of a general situation of domination by the oppressed. Because one can not begin to find one’s power until one understands that one is a non-power (Rowbotham-2002:167). To clarify why some are non-powers Karen Horney (Rowbotham -2002:172) says that one has to recognize all
the elements of domination in all existing male-defined ideologies. At any given time the more powerful position will make an ideology maintain its position and make its dominance more acceptable to the weaker position. Hence, in such an ideology the various behaviors of the weaker position are interpreted as being inferior, with an attempt to demonstrate that all the difference in their position is unchangeable and basic.

Simone de Beauvoir (1974) hints at other angles of the current condition of woman by pointing at women’s sense of inferiority. She says men represent the positive and neutral, the male and human, while woman is negative, the female. Whenever she acts as human being she is declared to be identifying herself with the man. De Beauvoir argues that the sense of inferiority in a woman is not a product of her imagination but it is the result of her actual social predicament. Woman feels inferior because the requirements of femininity belittle her. She says to be a woman, a girl has to explore: “...the learned passivity, the squatting urinating, the discouraged aggression and self-assertion, the energy turned in on itself. Little girls learn to hold themselves in and become ‘feminine'” (Rowbotham-2002:167).

Self-actualizing people do not consider females as passive and males as active, whether in sex or love or anything else. They are creators of their maleness or femaleness; consequently they are willing to incorporate qualities or behavior that is part of the role of the opposite sex as determined by cultural norms, such as men taking care of children. It means that they can be both active and passive lovers. A.H. Maslow (Friedan-1963:281) argues that even the love of self-actualizing people is different from
the conventional definition of love. Love for self-actualizing people is not motivated by need, to fix a deficiency in the self; it is more a kind of spontaneous admiration.

Friedan (1963:272) says that according to the new thinking, the fundamental human need is not pleasure or satisfaction of biological needs, but the need to grow and to realize one's full potential. Women in the name of femininity do not consider the choices that would give them a personal purpose, in the sense of their own being. Preventing a woman from realizing her true nature makes her sick. Her anxiety might have been soothed through therapy, tranquillized by pills or removed temporarily through being busy at work. But her unease and her desperation warn that her human existence is in danger.

The suburban doctors, gynecologists, child-guidance clinicians, marriage counselors etc had all identified women's problems but none of them put a name to it. What they had seen proved that the need for self-fulfillment, autonomy, self-realization, independence, individuality and self actualization for women were as important as sexual needs. In other words, women like men also have other needs that they need to fulfill.

Though freedom is women's need they are afraid of it. For a long time they have tried hard to adjust themselves to their feminine role as wives and mothers. But they feel that there is a voice inside them that tells them "that's not it." Friedan (1963:294) says that facing a problem does not mean solving it. But once woman asks herself, "What do I want to do?" she, without the help of experts can find her answers. Then she realizes that things like her husband, her children, sex, and even being like other women can not give her a sense of self. This can be the first step in achieving a desirable identity.
Pipeelika had encouraged Astha to begin the process of self-discovery. She showed Astha the source of her dissatisfaction. She was not content with her married life and that's why she tried not to stare at the fathers and mothers in her children's school who looked united and content.

Asthा understood that a large part of her belonged to her children but not much of her was required for being a wife. She criticized her condition as a wife through these words: “A willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet in the day and an obedient mouth were the necessary prerequisites of Hemant’s wife” (Kapur-2002:231).

The relation of Astha with Hemant and Pipeelika differed in the sense one was about power while the other was about love. But later on she was subordinated in both relationships as both required her sacrifice. In the end she could not go outside the norms of society because she believed that “She had that rock of stability women had, her husband and her children”(Kapur-2002:285). As a result of this she did not leave Hemant.

Though she could not leave her husband, she was able to move towards being a new woman. She began searching for her own self, a search which introduced instability, because in order to find herself her self would also have to change. Through Aijaz’s arguments, she came to know how ignorant she was about politics and as a result the core of mainstream thought. In the end she found out that her marginalization was to some extent her own fault.
To combine marriage and motherhood with a career one has to see housework not as a career but as something that has to be done as quickly and efficiently as possible. Friedan (1963:300) says women have to remove the veil of over-glorification laid on them by the feminine mystique. Many women are not satisfied with marriage and motherhood as the ultimate fulfillment of their lives. But once they start to use their different abilities in society with their own aims, they recognize the new feeling of *aliveness* or *completeness* in themselves. Such feelings give women the opportunity to feel differently towards their husbands and their children. Friedan (1963:300) gives an example of a woman who enjoyed taking care of her children more when she started to be by herself.

Any kind of job cannot be the answer to *the problem of women which has no name*. A good job is one that considers the capacities of women and needs special education and training; such a job can help women to find a way out of the trap, otherwise their conditions are the same as those women who are housewives. A woman needs a serious job which she can take seriously as a part of a life plan, a job which allows her to grow as part of society. Friedan (1963:300) says a woman does not need to work in order to eat but she can find her identity in work that is of real value to society.

Sheila Rowbotham (2002:166) in her essay, “Through the Looking-Glass,” tries to make it clear to some extent why the condition of women has not changed through the ages. She says among women there is a continual temptation to avoid danger. They are more comfortable doing the washing-up. They prefer to remain silent and criticize men for their theories because it increases their distance from men. Women judge men but they never take any risks by taking the responsibility of engagement. Such an
explanation can highlight the reason behind Astha’s behavior when she refused to manage her inheritance money. She didn’t think she could ever double it, as Hemant promised to her mother. “Could Astha ever have made such a promise? Never, not even if the gates of hell opened and the stock market collapsed in her lap. She had better stick to her job…” (Kapur-2002:98).

Independence

*Independence* is portrayed through the characters of Shakuntala and Swarna in *Difficult Daughters*, and Pipeelika in *A Married Woman*. Shakuntala had a life of her own. She looked vibrant and intelligent.

In *Difficult Daughters* we encounter two different groups of women—those who believe their destiny was to fight for the freedom of the nation and those who thought their destinies were simply to get married and have children. Shakuntala was not married; her responsibilities went beyond the married life and motherhood to the public sphere. Addressing Shakuntala’s life, Kapur discusses the close relation between satisfaction and independence.

Independence contrasts with the gender stereotypes in the community. Those women who do not marry and behave differently are considered to be *men*. Working in the lab on experiments, going to conferences are the roles of men; Shakuntala’s mother thought Shakuntala had become a man. On the basis of gender there can be only two roles. Either one behaves as a female or one is considered to be a male. In other words Kapur
focuses here on the binary opposition of man/woman and shows that there are just two roles in society, male and female, and that each gender is categorized accordingly.

Swarna, Virmati’s roommate, was serious, active in politics and independent. She was a strong character who knew what she wanted in her life and lived accordingly. Virmati admired women who were independent. Though she herself had enough education and financial backing, she could not live an independent life because she could not remove the internalized values of patriarchy from her mind. Education and opportunity alone are not enough for a woman to live independently so long as she has internalized that the notion that a woman cannot live alone and needs a man’s support.

Mothers can play a crucial role in bring up their daughters to be independent. Mothers of Kasturi, Virmati, and Ganga who believe that the destiny of their daughters is just marriage train them to be good wives; and those who are strong train their daughters to be independent.

The change that comes after self-discovery should not be superficial because in that case their lives remain essentially the same. The varieties of behavior attributed women, such as being prudent and petty, having no sense of accuracy, and being false are not created by hormones nor determined by the structure of the female brain. These attributes arise from their situation.

De Beauvoir (1974:665) says that women have never been part of an independent society. They have always been an integral part of a group of males where the males dominate and the females play a subordinate role. Women learn that the world is
masculine on the whole. Those who ruled it from the beginning are men. This is the reason women see themselves as inferior and dependent. They have never learnt the lesson of violence and never stood up as subject before other members of the group. A woman sees herself as passive compared to those who set goals and establish values. Accordingly she doesn’t seek technical training in mastery over matter.

One feminist who tries to analyze different gender roles in society is Simone de Beauvoir (1974:757). She analyzes this concept by considering the condition of privileged women with economic and social autonomy. De Beauvoir believes these economically emancipated women are not identical with men in their moral, social, and psychological situation. The way the emancipated woman behaves in her profession and her passion towards it depends on a context linked to the total pattern of her life. Because in her adult life, she has not had the same past that a boy had and because she is not seen by the society in the same way, the universe appears to her in a different perspective. Being a woman today creates peculiar problems in terms of becoming an independent individual. The advantage that a man enjoys is that since childhood he never feels his profession can interfere with his destiny as a male. The root of his social and spiritual success is identification of the phallus with transcendence, but a woman in order to realize her femininity has to make herself object and prey, which means she has to renounce her claim as sovereign subject. On the other hand the situation of the emancipated woman is that she does not confine herself to the female role because she refuses mutilation. But not acknowledging her sexuality can also be a mutilation for a woman to refuse her sex. “Man is a human being with sexuality; woman is a complete individual, equal to the male, only if she too is a human being with sexuality” (Beauvoir-1974:758).
Education

Though education cannot emancipate women, it has an immense effect in the lives of women. Because education does have an effect, feminists have paid attention to this issue. In the feminists’ view education has to generate awareness and make women ask questions about their condition in order to head towards the process of empowerment. There are two different kinds of education. First, it is the kind of education supported by patriarchy, and second, the education that trains women to ask questions about their conditions and rights. Kasturi was sent to school for five years. Through this education she was taught how to be a good housewife. The things that she had learned in school were to read, to write, to balance household accounts and to sew. And after completing five years of study she stayed home and waited for a groom.

But the education that Virmati took was different from Kasturi’s. It made her start asking questions. The benefits of the second type of education were noted in Harish’s letter (Kapur-1988:94):

- It teaches us to think for ourselves, and examine our beliefs.
- It leads us to question the value of the system in which we live.
- Uneducated people are like earthworms which live all their lives in the darkness of the soil.

A reading of Difficult Daughters raises one question in the mind of the reader. Why does society ask boys to become educated but keeps girls illiterate and in ignorance? Such discrimination later on affects the family and couples face serious problems in their married lives, as happens between Harish and Ganga. Harish was educated in Oxford in England while his wife could not even read. Consequently Ganga could not
be a companion for him. She could not understand what he talked about. Reading letters that Harish sent to Viramati shows that Harish in most of them talked about serious issues such as politics. Once he wrote to Viramati about political news such as the war, Churchill, freedom and democracy; at another time about the Indian perception of elections and independence; in yet another, he wrote about the demonstration held at Jallianwala Bagh.

Friedan believes that the problems and satisfaction of women's lives simply did not fit the image of the modern American women as it was written in magazines since the end of the Second World War. Because there is a strange difference between the reality of women's lives and the image of women—the image women were trying to conform to, the image called the feminine mystique.

Friedan (1963) says the problem that has no name cannot be solved by medicine, or even by psychotherapy. She believes that a drastic change in the cultural image of femininity is necessary to permit women to achieve maturity, identity, completeness of self without conflict with sexual fulfillment. She asks educators, parents, magazine editors, and guidance counselors to make an effort to stop the early-marriage movement, to stop girls from wanting to become just a housewife and to pay the same attention to them from childhood as they pay to boys, to help girls develop the resources of self and goals that will permit them to find their own identity.

Educators (Friedan-1963:321) have to say no to the feminine mystique and consider that the only important issue regarding women's education is to educate them to the limit of their abilities. Friedan says that women do not need courses in marriage and the
family to get married; they do not need courses in homemaking to make a home. But they need to study science, study the thought of the past to bring about new thought, and to study society in order to be a pioneer in society.

Education can give girls the new image and can help them to create their own image. A Swarthmore graduate told Friedan (1963:323) that she felt herself getting more and more independent but she worried a lot about having dates and getting married and tried to force herself to be feminine. But later on she stopped worrying and was interested in being independent and not thinking about dating. She said:

It’s as if you’ve made some kind of shift. You begin to feel your competence in doing things. Like a baby learning to walk. Your mind begins to expand. You find your own field. And that’s a wonderful thing…They say a man has to suffer to grow, maybe something like that has to happen to women too. You begin not to be afraid to be yourself. (Friedan-1963:323)

Changes

Part III of A Married Woman is all about changes. It describes a complete change of Hemant from being an all-American father to an all-Indian one, the changes in Astha’s personality, and also the change in her mother’s life.

Hemant had studied in the US and American culture affected him. He tried to behave like an American guy. He did not want a dowry. Even when Astha got pregnant, Hemant wanted a girl and gave his reason through these words: “In America there is no difference between boys and girls. How can this country get anywhere if we go on treating our women this way?” (Kapur-2002: 57) But then Hemant slowly and gradually turns into an Indian male. Sometime after the birth of their daughter, Hemant
said, “I want to have my son soon” (Kapur-2002:61). His desire to have a son in her next pregnancy scared Astha. She thought if it would not be a boy, what would she do?

Hemant insisted on bathing his daughter every Sunday morning. It was as a part of his Sunday morning ritual. And he said, “Ideas about fatherhood are so antiquated in India” (Kapur-2002: 60).

After the birth of his daughter, Hemant gradually became more and more Indian. He wanted to start a business that needed a person who could take risks, somebody like Hemant and not Astha. From Astha’s point of view: “Business is full of bribes and corruption, headache and uncertainty” (Kapur-2002:64). In other words Kapur shows that bribes and corruption are issues unfamiliar to women, and if they involve themselves in these issues they will have headache and uncertainty in the end.

Kapur shows that gender is sex-based in the sense that women are created to do certain work according to their nature, such as bearing kids and taking care of them, doing housework and taking care of their husbands. Because of this Astha remained outside the decision-making process and kept herself busy with family affairs.

The concept of work division appears in the novel when Hemant says, “It’s woman’s work” (Kapur-2002:70). A husband is considered to be the productive worker. He is the only one who goes outside the family interest into society, shapes his future through co-operation with powers outside the home. The woman is supposed to follow her species—taking care of the home bearing and rearing children. De Beauvoir says that every human being has aspects of transcendence and immanence at the same time.
Each aspect has to be attended to in order to improve and to march ahead towards the future. One has to integrate the past and through intercommunication with others achieve self-confirmation. Maintenance and progression are available for a man; that is why for man marriage is a happy combination of the two. In his occupation he experiences progress and change, and whenever he is tired of roaming, he returns to his fixed location of home.

De Beauvoir (1974:480) believes that marriage in its traditional form is more tyrannical towards girls than boys. A young girl prefers marriage to a career even when she is more emancipated because of the economic advantage held by men. She wants to find a husband who has a higher status than her own and who can achieve greater success than she.

De Beauvoir says, “It is still agreed that the act of love is, as we have seen, a service rendered to the man” (1974:481). The husband takes his pleasure and in response owes her some payment. It is as if he has purchased her body in spite of her doing domestic work or the dowry she has brought. However, she has accepted this situation as easier for her because the occupations open to women is often disagreeable and poorly paid.

Domestic work, as mentioned above is linked to women. Even working outside the house does not reduce the burden of domestic work in the home. Astha thought that her work as a teacher was simpler than domestic work, because domestic work was harder, unpaid, and boring with long hours. She thought: “At school she had grown to be her principal’s right-hand woman, appreciated and valued for one tenth the work she did at home, and paid for it too” (Kapur-2002:72).
Mary Wollstonecraft (Diwakar, Vaishali-1996:16) believes that a woman in order to become free from her oppressed condition has to: "... obey the command of reason and discharge her wifely and motherly duties faithfully." She says that a woman becomes a faithful wife and mother when she is armed with reason, rationality and logical thought.

Betty Freidan writes:

The American suburban housewife is the dream of young women and envy of all women all over the world. Their dream is to be perfect wives and mothers and their only fight is to get and keep their husbands. They glorify the role of women and trap themselves in the feminine mystique. (1963)

Betty Freidan's solution (1963) to this dissatisfaction is to work outside. She asks women to be superwomen who can manage both their career and marriage efficiently at the same time. She does not appreciate the difficulties of doing both. The situation of Astha who could not reconcile the two, shows weakness. Working outside the house does not eliminate the problem that has no name. It is interesting to note that Friedan like other liberal feminists have never asked why domestic work concerns only women.

Kate Millett, the radical feminist, in her books Sexual Politics (1970) talks about sex as a political category and a power in which all men dominate. She doesn't consider domestic labour to be one of the reasons for the powerlessness of women. Normally radical feminists have taken biology as unchanging and focus on the violence inside and outside home. As a result, they did not pay enough attention to the issue of housework and the sexual division of labor within the family. It is through Christian Delphy that radicals begin to focus on the family and the division of labor within the family.
Margaret Benston (1969), in her essay “The Political Economy of women’s Liberation” says that the unpaid nature of women’s work in the house makes them subordinate to men. According to her there are three values in Capitalism, use value, exchange value and surplus value. Use value describes the value of a product, where the product’s value is restricted to its use or consumption. When use value is applied to what women produce in the home, it means the services and goods produced within the household by the women are used by the family members and no additional benefit comes out of it. Benston says that the family is an economic unit and its function is not just the consumption of goods but also the production of things that have use value. She says that “the material base provided by domestic labour enables the capitalist economy to treat them [women] as a ‘reserve army’ of labor.” As she says, so long as women are not free from domestic labour, the liberation of women by taking up jobs outside the home is impossible. We saw that Astha was not liberated when she was working outside the home.

Dalla Costa, in her article “Women and the Subversion of the Community” (1927) explains that domestic labor is productive and it produces surplus value. In other words domestic labour serves capitalism through making things ready for workers. She says that capitalism will not destroy the position of the housewife because of the benefit this position brings. Knowing this, women have to move out of homes or demand wages for housework.

Kapur portrays Astha’s change in the following words:

...between her marriage and the birth of her children, she too had changed from being a woman who only wanted love, to a woman who
valued independence. Besides there was the pleasure of interacting
with minds instead of needs. (2002: 71)

Asthana worked at a job and tried to be a superwoman, yet she was not happy. Her
satisfaction depended not on material things but on the interaction of minds. It was
Asthana who took the first step towards self-realization. In the Concise Routledge
Encyclopedia of Philosophy self-realization is defined as the development of a
character’s potential and attitude in a way that leads to the appearance of the subject’s
real nature. Asthana began to see how she had been subordinated. This was the time that
many questions and desires arose in her mind.

To understand the nature of change in human beings, it is useful to consider Carl
Rogers views on the types of conflicts a person faces. Carl Rogers (1995:147) is a
psychotherapist whose approach is to help people to be themselves. Freud’s expose of
human development includes his vision of how people experience severe conflict and
confusion because they lack harmony within themselves (conflicting instincts in
Freud’s view), which becomes heavier through further conflicts between the outside
world and inner desires. According to him these new conflicts become internalized; he
uses the terms identification, incorporation, and internalization to describe the process
of internalizing the conflict between internal and external pressures.

Rogers (1995:113) believes that unity and harmony are present in each of us, in our
feelings and behavior. He uses therapy to help people to find unity. There is wholeness
within us that can only be discovered and liberated; it can not be an arbitrary imposition
on one’s feelings, not a self-imposed convenience.
After Aijaz's death Astha participated in the funeral procession and rally with those who thought like her. She was not just a housewife and a teacher anymore. She no longer thought only about bringing up her kids, taking care of her husband and making him satisfied with her. She turned into a woman who had a voice and demanded the rights of citizenship. Referring to the theater group who were burnt alive in the van, she raised her voice asking whether that was the way to protect citizens. She thought:

To speak and be heard is the freedom that is at the heart of a secular nation, this is the right for which these brave young men gave their lives. Now we must carry on as though they were in our midst...

(Kapur-2002: 141)

With Astha's political awareness the gap between her and her husband widened. Astha thought about morality and the rights of citizens while Hemant, the owner of the TV factory, thought about his parents, his factory, his trip to South Korea, the increasing competition in color TVs and the way he could bribe those workers who had rallied against him for their rights. He believed in market forces and production and its benefits. Astha’s mind started analyzing issues, e.g. the government allowing the expression of religious views on TV; consequently there would be no end to popular shows such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharat. Such shows commanded a huge audience and were big market items. She got to know how everything could serve as a means for capitalism to make money.

De Beauvoir (1974:674) explains the reason that men enslaved women in the first place; the devaluation of the female has been an important step in human evolution. However, this devaluation might help men to collaborate between the two sexes; oppression is explained as the tendency of the existent to flee from himself through an identification with the other whom he oppresses to that end. In each individual male that
tendency still exists. The husband attempts to recognize himself in his wife, the lover in
his mistress, in the form of a stone image; he seeks in her the myth of his virility, his
sovereignty and his immediate reality. In such a case he himself is the slave of this
condition and thinks he is always in danger. Hence, man makes great effort to appear as
a male, important and superior. He feels hostility towards women and he is afraid of
them because of the personage, the image he identifies himself with. Kapur in A
Married Woman shows how Hemant became happy with taking the role of manager in
Asthā’s exhibition instead of the Sampradayakta Mukti Manch, a forum set up in
memory of The Street Theater Group. He wanted Astha to be dependent on him to
prove his superiority over her.

Males discover that a woman has more capacity than the oppressor usually finds in the
oppressed, and in order to protect themselves she is persuade to say that she wanted the
destiny they have imposed on her. We have seen that all the main features of her
training combine to prevent her from revolting. Society supports parent’s lies that praise
the lofty values of love, devotion, the gift of herself, and then hide from her the fact that
neither lover, husband nor yet her children will be willing to accept the burden of the
sacrifices demanded by all these lofty values (De Beauvoir-1974: 681).

Many of the conflicts that set men and women against one another come from the fact
that neither of them is prepared to accept all the consequences of this situation which
the one has offered and the other accepted. The result is that in every association an
endless debate goes on considering the ambiguous meaning of the words give and take:
“She complains of giving her all, he protests that she takes his all” (De Beauvoir-1974:
681).
Women have to learn the issue of exchange—a basic law of political economy that is based on the value the merchandise being set by the seller and not by the buyer. She has been deceived in being persuaded that she is precious. Actually for man she is an amusement, a pleasure and entertaining company. He is for her the meaning and reason for her existence. These two are not equal in value (De Beauvoir-1974: 681).

A change in woman’s economic condition alone is enough to transform her, though this is a basic factor in her evolution; So long as this change does not bring about the moral, social, cultural, and other results that it requires, the new woman cannot appear. Becoming a new woman requires change in the sense of growing mentally, and emotionally. In understanding the term growth two things need to be considered—first the ability of the individuals, and second the effect of the environment. Regarding individual ability A.H. Maslow (Friedan-1982:274) states that growth results not only in pleasure but in pain as well. Every step forward is a step towards an unfamiliar and dangerous situation. It means losing a simpler and easier life and moving towards a more demanding and difficult life. Hence, growth needs courage, strength, permission and encouragement from the environment. Friedan (1982:275) focuses more on the role of environment and says that if the environment does not support the courage and strength of women’s growth then women are reduced to biological entities and they do not even know what is sexual fulfillment and the peak experience of human love till they grow to their full strength as human beings. “The feminine mystique implies a choice between ‘being a woman’ or risking the pains of human growth” (Friedan-1982: 275).
Abortion

Feminists do not have a common idea about abortion. Some support the women’s right to abortion and some feminists have supported the anti-abortion movement. One of the most basic principles of feminism is that women have the right to control their own bodies and to chose, when, how and even whether they want to have children. But at the same time women have to consider that their choices and interests exist in the web of interdependence with others. The question of rights boils down to the question of the “fetus’s right to life” or the women’s right to control their bodies. Some find dissonance between these stances in the sense that it is a contradiction to support nonviolence, ask justice for the oppressed, respect for the life of others and at the same time support rights to abortion (Not an Easy Choice, a feminist reexamines abortion-1986).

Casey Court (Smith-1997) believes that abortion is necessary for women in order to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation, while pro-life feminism defines abortion as the act of desperation. When there is no other choice, women go through abortion because society does not provide them a better situation. Simone de Beauvoir in her book The Second Sex says that men took the case of abortion lightly. They fail to understand the values involved.

The woman who has recourse to abortion is disowning feminine values, her values, and at the same time is in most radical fashion running counter to the ethics established by men. (De Beauvoir-1974: 548)

With abortion her moral universe is destroyed because she was told she was made for childbearing from childhood. Her child bearing is considered as a marvelous privilege but then a man asks her to relinquish her triumph as a female in order to preserve his
liberty. De Beauvoir (1974: 548) says that even when women agree to an abortion, they think of it as a sacrifice of her femininity.

Men, who fulfill their destiny as man, ask women to sacrifice their reproductive possibilities. Men universally prohibit abortion but individually accept it as a convenient solution to a problem. Their attitude conceals a contradiction rooted in her wounded flesh. She sees herself as the victim of injustice that makes her a criminal against her will, and at the same time she feels humiliated.

In *Difficult Daughters* we face with two cases of abortion. The first one refers to Virmati’s case; her illegal relationship with Harish was the result of her pregnancy and later on abortion. Ida’s abortion is the second case. She was forced to have an abortion due to the insistence of her husband. And both Virmati and Ida faced depression after abortion and went through trauma as the result of sacrificing their femininity.
Conclusion

Kapur through Astha’s situation shows how women are considered the Other because they lack power, not because of the loss of an organ, which is the symbol of superiority. Astha’s problem was a problem of identity. She had no identity of her own; she was known as the wife of Hemant and the mother of her children. Nobody considered her needs and no one allowed her to fulfill her desire to become a human being, till the time she started taking the subject position to some extent. Though Astha changed and became a new woman, she could not live independently. Simone de Beauvoir attempts to elaborate how problematic being an independent human individual is for women. In the life of Astha, Kapur shows how the success of man is rooted in his identification with the phallus, while the feminine subjectivity of woman can be recognized only by making herself an object. Not Astha and not even Virmati who are both financially emancipated can escape from this condition.

Virmati’s life was always in a state of flux, but all those changes were not helpful in her emancipation. She was marginalized in her parents’ place and later on this marginalization was replaced by another one in her married life. The second marginalization occurred with her isolation from her parents; she was not allowed to visit any members of her own family.

The subordination of women by other women works as a chain. Kasturi was subordinated by her mother and Virmati by Kasturi and Ida by Virmati. This kind of subordination moves from one generation to the other. Though all of these mothers endured suffering from their mothers, they also imposed suffering on the next generation in turn. Such an issue is portrayed in Kapur’s novels in detail but the writer
offers no remedy. Irigaray’s solution to such subordination is to establish a good relationship between mother and daughter. But how such a relationship might be establish, she provides no answer.