Chapter IV

Individual, Familial and Communal Support

It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

-Swami Vivekananda (Qtd: *Women’s and Sports Status in India*, 2013)

Like a coin, encouragement of others and self-motivation provide women to empower. Reform of the law affords equal rights to women: opportunity for economic independence, revolution in traditional customs and practices. In Kapur’s novel the protagonists receive overall support from their family members and their society. In her first novel *Difficult Daughter*, the protagonist Virmati gets educational support from her family. Though her mother first refused to send her higher studies, later she permits her. Virmati gets individual support from her husband Harish (before marriage), Shakuntala, (her cousin) and Swarnalatha (her friend) after marriage.

In family women receive help from parents, husband, children and mother-in-law etc. In this chapter, the researcher traces the importance of individual, familial and communal support for the protagonists of Kapur to liberate and develop their position higher. Protagonists of Kapur trustingly receive the socio-cultural, political and legal, economical independence and educational support from their family and their community. Women presume to receive support from her family and society with their self-confidence. The financial independence of women is a vital footstep to women’s emancipation. Unless they get independence, they emerge to combat for that with an individual or society. In this chapter the researcher focuses on the receiving support by which the female characters attempt fulfledged empowerment.

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Virmati watches her cousin Shakuntala with outbreaths. Virmati expects to live like her and inspires her activities. Though Shakuntala is not so pretty, she looks vibrant and intelligent. Shakuntala never bothers about surrounding while she speaks and acts. Virmati now and then gets envious on her. Women are expected to behave as shy, humble and homely like Virmati. Kasturi condemns Lajwanti about Shakuntala that all the time she is in the lab, doing experiments, helping the girls, studying or going to conferences and she should have been a man.

Shakuntala suggests Virmati to follow her boldness but unknowingly Virmati is tempted by her. She starts learning much behaviour from her. Virmati wonders Shakuntala about education, innovative ideas, free life style and fights for restriction. Virmati longs for freedom and liberty. Not only Shakuntala but also her roommate Swarnalata struggles for Independence.

Women in Kapur’s novels receive hidden help from others. After her marriage, Virmati receives educational support from Harish Chandra. Virmati’s appetite for education makes her to love the romantic, handsome professor who returns from Oxford University. Though he gets married already, live with his wife, (Ganga) and a son Virmati loves him. As she really loves him, Virmati breaks her engagement with Inderjit, an engineer.

Ganga, The first wife of Harish Chandra gets familial support from her husband
by understanding her husband’s by understanding her husband’s likes and dislikes and behaves based on it. Virmati needs the support of an intelligent mind which Harish has. Her confusion grows. She has dilemma amidst her early marriage her education and her love with the professor. Her conscience fights against all kinds of decision but finally education and love of Harish wins her.

Virmati admires while Shakuntala shares her innovative thought of freedom and enhancement. Virmati surprises while seeing Shakuntala engages herself in working reading and attending seminars. Two different kinds of characters are there in Difficult Daughters: Kasturi and Virmati. Kapur reveals the ignorance of Kasturi bears eleven children without asking questions to her husband but Virmati raises questions while the professor stealthily. She enquires without fear: ‘Why not? She is your wife; Isn’t she?’ (Difficult Daughters 55)

In Virmati’s house her grandfather believes her and supports her in every activity. At home her mother says: “Your grandfather and father both have confidence in you; otherwise would they have given you so much freedom?” (Difficult Daughters 59) Kasturi often wonders about the boldness of modern girls: “How had girls changed so much in just a generation?” (Difficult Daughters 60) Virmati is bold enough to say before her family members “I don’t want to marry” (Difficult Daughters 87). While the elders of the family asked her future plan. She replies without fear. Finally her parents allowed her to higher study to educate Virmati, Harish Chandra encourage her writes in his letter: “One of the benefits of education is that it teaches us to think for ourselves”. (Difficult Daughters 102) Harish shows more important to education which offers sustenance to empower.

Most of the parents in Kapur’s novels are anxious to display their daughters married. Mothers in Kapur novels like their daughters to marry at the earliest. Parents
are expecting to grow their girls as cultured, obedient, docile, efficient in household work that she would be well-accepted and got adjusted at her in law’s family and enhanced the prestige of the parents and parental family. In some Indian family does not show interest in daughters’ education because it will create in the field of matrimony

In marriage life, Virmati is treated as a second wife. A Woman can be generous in Ganga’s mother-in-law supports Ganga. So she silently revolt against Virmati without knowing others. Without committing mistake Ganga suffers but of her house but she stays there stubbornly and faces the further consequences with the support from her mother-in-law. Virmati has confidence while she gets love and education from Harish. First Virmati asks Harish Chandra to marry him, later she throws away his partnership while he postpones to marry. To marry Harish, Virmati has sacrificed many things even she is ready to loss her family. While Virmati shows interest to do household duties with her mother-in-law, she requests Harish: “Should I help Ammaji in the kitchen?” But Harish neglects it: “Why bothers yourself with these things? You are a thinking girl. Let those others handle the household”. (Difficult Daughters 214-215) Harish’s support allows Virmati to stay at her in law’s home.

The death of Virmati’s father disturbs her and it leads abortion. She lost her father’s support and her miscarriage makes her frail. As she has continues problem at home, Harish decides to send her to Lahore for higher studies and also he chooses the philosophy as a subject because it will give relief from her mental depression. Though Ganga and her mother- in-law dodge her and her guilty feeling slays her but with the support of her husband, she is comforted. In Difficult Daughters, Kapur focuses on the traditional Arya Samaj family. Arya Samaj follows the ancient rules with modern thoughts. Arya Samaj opposes Sati and supports women’s education. The main aim of
Arya Samaj is to provide good education to a woman which helps to practice them as great women. As Virmati has eagerness to learn, she admires Haish Chandra’s education and tries to follow like him. Virmati confuses between the two kinds of life styles. Harish’s educational support gives her courage to face the barriers of traditional norms.

While Virmati passed her FA examination with distinction; she decides to go Lahore and gets admission in school or college. She is appreciated by all the elders of her family specifically her grandfather. Women’s personality can be examined by the familial and professional roles. Familial significance makes woman to promote professional fulfilment. It can make her feelings and identify her actions with its cause. Not only Viramati but her mother Kasturi receives support from her family members. In joint family, the family members help one another in the traditional family. Though Kasturi follows orthodox rules, she has passed up to eighth class in Arya Samoj School and also Virmati belongs to an Arya Samaj family. She received education in Arya Samaj School and to Arya Samaj College.

Virmati’s desire is to be an educated woman. Education is an important requirement even in the area of matrimony. The role of education either aimed at the development of individual or to get freedom to women. Virmati’s cousin Shakuntala encourages her for higher studies. “times are changing and women are moving out of the house, so why not you?” (Difficult Daughters 18) Virmati’s love for the professor makes her ambitious for her further education and makes her to disobey her family traditional rules.

Virmati’s roommate Swarnalatha continues her political activity after her marriage. So she motivates Virmati to be bold and says: “We have plenty of married women working with us. I’m married aren’t I.” (Difficult Daughters 252)
Swarnalata's encouragement changes her mentality. Virmati comes out of her daughter-in-law and convinces Ganga. While her son spends money to see his wife, Kishori Devi utters her as his wife and gives respect and support: “Every pice counts. Then it is not only the train ticket. Once a man steps out of his house, he begins to spend, no matter what. Besides, you should spend. She is your wife. It is not only a pity she feels the need to run away all the times” *(Difficult Daughters 260)*

Kishori Devi advised both his son and daughter-in-law to avoid spending money lavishly. While Virmati has conceived, she does not consider about her health. Though Virmati feels she is strong to help mankind who stays in the camps but her husband and mother-in-law do not allow her and restricts her:

She must think of the baby, especially in the light of what had happened before. Shocks, exertion, witnessing of horrors, all this was not good for a pregnant woman. Let the country, till yesterday a colony, go to rack and ruin. Let those thousands march footsore, weary, raped, mutilated, bewildered and lost. Let the march into Amrister in all hordes and be herded towards various shelters she must stay at home. *(Difficult Daughters 274)*

Kishori Devi considers both her son and Virmati’s position and supports them. After sending Virmati to higher studies he feels desperation: “Viru you have to come home, darling. I pine and long for you. I need you. I cannot bear this separation any longer. Is this why we married?” *(Difficult Daughters 260-261)*. Harish understands his mentality at home so he sends her for study: “I spent all summer with you at home. I didn’t ask you to send me here” *(Difficult Daughters 261)* While Virmati is not available at home, Ganga raises her influence. She also needs support and affection from her husband. She proves herself as a wife of Professor Harish Chandra.
As a legal wife of Ganga, she seeks support from him in the absence of Virmati.

In Kapur’s novels women are known to be a fairer sex. They have chosen her mate as a partner. Love, respect and caring are prominent duties for husband and wife each other. If they create problems, they find solution. They household requirements are inevitable for both men and woman. The works are expected to be shared each other equally. Sharing the duties is lessening the heavy burden of every single. Women of Kapur expect affection and caring which symbolises security, protection and comfort. It supports their relationship very strong. This shows in A Married Woman clearly.

In A Married Woman, Astha receives all kinds of provision like social, cultural, political, educational and economic support from her family. Aijaz, her friend motivates Ashta to write a play on the Bari Masjid issue. Even she is appreciated for writing and sketching. As she motivated by Aijaz, her desire makes her dutiful. She increased her self-confidence by selling her sketches. While Astha disappointed with the lack of appreciation from her husband, she has encouraged by her friend Aijaz. Astha’s trip to Ayodhya makes her to experience to start her independent moving with other members of the Manch. Astha speaks about the essentiality of female participation against violence which is appreciated by the audience in the meeting. Astha’s mother Sita’s letter from Rishkesh encourages her. Sita writes in her letter, thus:

Success and failure have to be faces by everyone. By being thoughtful, reflective and prayerful, we can overcome the spirit of ‘I’ ness that dominates all our actions. This approach keeps families intact and we don’t become insecure. We have a set up to relax in this paves the way to security, and to self-understanding. (A Married Woman 88)
Astha understands merits and demerits of life and learns how to adjust herself. Her mother preaches her all the goodness from Bhagavatgita. Though her mother is not staying with her, she acquires experiences from her. Her mother Sita, moulds her to know the reality of life. She always says life is an adjustment which should be given and taken by every man and woman. Then only the life becomes a pleasant experience. Astha’s mother’s letter provides her moral support throughout her life. Sita’s letter enlightens her strength. She adds, thus:

The meaning of life is struggle. There are challenges in all walks of life, how to tackle them is the question, not to run away from home, work, society and obligations. Perform your duties with detachment. Learn to give and take. When you develop the spirit of giving intelligently; there is peace in the mind. Most of our problems are due to discontent with what we have (A Married Woman 88)

Women in Kpaur novels give importance to emotional feelings. They are adjustable. The two different genders have been influenced by different kinds of characters. In their points they are differed each other. It is quite different. They have shared their ideas; interpretation, happiness, sadness and all other ultimate feelings are shared by them. They have some personal privacy in their life.

Women have emotional talent. Women do not understand themselves properly. They always think about their family members and their needs. Their responsibilities are heavier than men. If they are working women, it can be multiplied. Both men and women have possessed unequal physical features, varied emotional characters, and different responsibilities. Though they have no equality physically and psychologically, they hold high mental powers equally. Pandita Rambai Saraswati in her book, The High Caste Hindu Women, she describes arranged marriage and says,
thus:

When the conjugal relation is brightened by mutual love, the happy life has nothing to complain except the absence of freedom of thought and action, but since wives have never known from the beginning what freedom is, they are well content to remain in bandage (247)

Even in media, it largely reflects the life style. Societal rules, cultural boundaries, political influence, regional existence, educational improvement and social images. Kapur insists the support of woman gives them forte. For their love marriage of Aijaz and Pipeelika, their friends and colleagues are invited as their parents are not accepting it. Their marriage life initiated with their friends without relatives. Even Mrs. Trivedi avoids their marriage after Aijaz’s visit to her house. She watches her son-in-law’s soft and lovable nature and she becomes happy. She satisfies about the life partner of Pipeelika. Her mother gives a good suggestion about him: ‘He is a good boy, beta. I am sure his family likes you equally.’ (A Married Woman 132)

Astha in A Married Woman is encouraged by her mother-in-law who insists Astha to go for the job. Her teaching profession helps her to improve her economical position. Kapur states that it is very rare in a joint family to motivate daughter-in-law to go for job. Astha’s mother-in-law even takes care of her household duties. Astha expects to have money in her pocket. It helps her to lead a confident life. Though they are professional or house maker, they do not spend their savings according to their wish. Astha’s mother advised her that love, patience and talents with which women are created. It is boon to woman by possessing all these benefits. After Sita returns from Rishikesh, her mother motivates her: “In the olden days I was ignorant. Now I know better. If I made mistakes with you, I do not want you to make them with your
children. All too soon this time will go. Let them enjoy their childhood” (*A Married Woman* 84)

Kapur’s protagonists are employed. They improved themselves in profession or self-employment or both. First Hemant dislikes her sending to school but she adores to work as a school teacher. As she continues her as a mother, a wife and a working woman, she gets extreme rinsing, anxiety and pressure. Though she faces heavy depression, she is unwilling to resign her job at any cost instead; she continues her career as a teacher, a painter, a writer, a poet and an activist.

In *A Married Woman*, Kapur is applied the theory of Lesbian Feminism. Lesbian Feminism is a partition of feminism. Lesbian feminists consider same sex relationship unaffected and use their uniqueness as a basis for unrestricted building and supportive action. It contests the perception of heterosexuality and male domination as customary and existing unconventional ways of thinking about gender and control. Astha and Pipeelika maintenance one another and ofthen forget their lonliness. Kapur familiarizes the concept of lesbian love which is discussed the rights of women. Apart from their lesbian love, they have strong affection between them. Astha prefers lesbianism to share her depression as a ‘therapy’. Pipeelika’s conversation gives pleasure to Astha. So she feels much better after a talk with her. Even their meaningless or ineffective talk gives them pleasure. Astha’s husband lack of caring seeks her to get this kind of relationship for comfort her mind. The support of the family could empower women in a great altitude. Marriage, husband’s love and care and loveable children provide a big support for women.

Kapur mentions woman fights against the social restriction and conventions which control them from going out of the house marrying the person whom they like. It happens in Pipeelika’s life. Aijaz believes his family members surely they would
agree their love one day or other. He convinces Astha:

“They’ll adore you. You don’t know my family. Once they know they can’t change things, they just accept them”.

“Do you think they will? I told you they wouldn’t like me”. (A Married Woman 135)

Pipeelika is being slowly convinced by Aijaz. They are so glad I’m married, they would have liked anyone. “Come on Pip, be reasonable. After all your mother would have preferred a Hindu. Anyway who has the time to worry about such things?” (A Married Woman 136) The familial encouragement motivates her to achieve and celebrates her empowerment. Her role in the family is not only fulfilling her duty of wife, daughter-in-law and mother but an activist to lead up to the Babri Masjed demolition. Being duty-driven women start over adapting.

The same thing is described in Kapur’s third novel Home. In Home, women characters receive support from all the relations. Sona’s father-in-law cares her while her mother-in-law gives torture to her. While comparing with his wife he is kind-hearted man and till his death he provides special care to Sona. His support gives her mental strength among her familial depression. Not only her father-in-law supports her but also her sister Rupa, takes care of her daughter Nisha as her own. Rupa can find the exact problem of Nisha easily and solves it. Rupa understands Nisha’s needs as well than her sister. Nisha is concerned while she suffers in sexual abuse and horoscope problem. Even Rupa’s husband spends his time to Nisha’s education.

In Hindu religion, some family members get help from Guru. In Home, Babaji is also essential part in the life of Nisha. The guidance of Babaji makes the family fertile and gives confidence about Nisha’s marriage. After getting the permission of Babaji, Nisha’s family searches alliance for her. N. M. Khandelwal says, thus: “Guru,
a spiritual master who removes darkness of ignorance of disciple and leads the people to emancipate and self-realisation through spreading light of knowledge” (Management Concept from Mahabharata 2) In Hindu religion, people believe the support of a religion head is essential to the family.

Sona’s sister Rupa starts pickle business with the help of her husband and her husband and her in-law’s family. Sometimes she feels jealous while comparing her degraded economic position with her sister Sona. Rupa’s husband is very good natured, loveable and understandable character. Childlessness does not create problem in her family like Sona’s family. Rupa and her husband voluntarily adopt Nisha and provide special care to her education. As a father, he educates Nisha to get knowledge. While Sona compels them to handover Nisha, he does not oppose but he feels for her education and the child’s welfare. Every step of his wife’s empowerment is supported by him.

Kapur states that woman’s empowerment is possible by the help of their family and society. In Home, Nisha’s father encourages her garment business ‘Nisha’s Creations’ with the capital amount. Parents are showing their interest in the education of their daughter and encourage her to do her business on her own. After getting education, she no needs to depend upon her husband or anybody else for her economic needs even after marriage.

Kapur focuses on Nisha’s feeling of insecurities. Her husband’s concern on his mother creates timidly in her mind. Without his mother’s permission nothing he does but he loves Nisha and supports her. Kapur states that it is quite natural a mother or a wife tries to hold her son or husband with them, the contradictory ideas would exist there in the family. After Nisha’s marriage and her pregnancy her family members do not allow her to continue her business and asks her to take rest. Thus the childbearing
and nurturing duty of woman controls their commercial development. With the help of her family, she bears twins and lives peacefully.

In *The Immigrant*, Kapur pictures Ananda as a congenial husband to Nina. Ananda understands his wife’s uncomfortable life in unknown country. Ananda convinces Nina while her nostalgic feeling. He persuades her by doing domestic duties. After she comes to Canada, he changes her clothing manly like. With the assistance of Ananda, she leads her life in Canada. Ananda satisfies his wife, thus: “When in Rome do what Roman’s do.” (*The Immigrant* 133)

In life there must be adjustment but it is not quite easy to bare lifelong adjustment. Nina’s expectations are fulfilled and strengthen her mind, while she meets Beth, her friend. It is a kind of co-counselling. Beth has given the book, Simone De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* to Nina for reading. Beth’s viewpoints of life are accepted by Nina. Even though she does not do love marriage, she gets clear idea about love marriage:

> Many people prefer it actually. It has the advantage of social and family sanction, you are not alone to deal with your problems, it is more convenient to fall in love after you marry than before. And certainly it frees you of some of the sexual burden Beauvoir mentions. (*The Immigrant* 219)

Beth’s advice practises her to live in a new country. The training of Ananda and Beth and Lore’s counselling makes Nina to endorse her and recovers from chaos, thus:

> Feeling lost is inevitable in a new place—and if you are a woman without a job, far away from your own friends and family, it must be doubly hard. I thought of you when I read this’. Lore opens Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex*, page 101 and she says: ‘Every person
in his trip to a foreign country, where he knows neither the people nor the language, experiences childhood (*The Immigrant* 229).

According to Nina, Lore’s words are true. Kapur focuses the immigrants’ feelings clearly. The immigrants are considered as a child while they are practising to accept the new-fangled culture. The self-motivation needs for an immigrant to discuss their common problems and find the solution. Beth also shares something as her part to Nina:

We all have problems, and we all need help, right? Now are we going to get it? So far, the only way has been through professional counsellors, therapists, psychoanalysts that are considered normal. As a result, male-female power equations are further replicated, with the difference that the woman is now paying for this shit. (*The Immigrant* 214)

In the counselling session Nina expresses her feeling of fears to stay in Canada. Gayatri gives advices to her, thus: “This group is to enable you, not to encourage helplessness. Listen, you’ve been here less than a year, eventually you’ll find your way. But Indians do succeed abroad; you find them flourishing everywhere”. (*The Immigrant* 230)

With the help of her husband and her friends, Nina decides to join Library Science. She has an interview with the head of the Library Science Department, Dr. Claude Cuinninghan. As he satisfied with her qualification and her experience in libraries, he appreciates her. Nina has a hope that she would be selected. Ananda says with confidence: “There is no doubt you will get it. You read so much, you have work experience, you have been a teacher of literature, you are serious and steady. In fact I am hoping for both admission and financial assistance” (*The Immigrant* 242)
Ananda trusts on his wife’s talent while Nina likes to work. If she works, she would forget her childlessness its distress. But her mother is not satisfied with her job because she fears whether it creates any problem to the couple. Nina’s mother hesitates to agree her daughter’s higher education because she fears about her life without caring of her husband and without child-bearing. Nina is strong in her decision to work: “As for a child, both of them thought they could still wait a bit, she wasn’t that old after all. Besides, if it didn’t happen, it wasn’t the end of the world” (The Immigrant 243) The same questions are raised from his mother but Ananda gets approval from her also. The same questions are raised from his mother but Ananda answer: “Don’t worry, Ma, this is wonderful news. With a fee waiver it’ll hardly cost anything, and she’ll have a Canadian qualification”. (The Immigrant 243)

Ananda convincing talk changes the mind of Nina’s mother to agree her daughter’s higher education. After a long period Nina starts her student life again. Ananda is constantly reminding her that she is lucky by getting the enormous facilities. Though Nina thanks him wholeheartedly she feels sad that if she goes to Library School, she has to be away from her husband. But Ananda never takes it as serious and he could understand his wife’s position and says: “I know how hard a student has to work, Ananda assured her. Since we don’t have children, it’s not such a sacrifice”. (The Immigrant 245) Nina can’t take it as serious because for her studies childbirth” never gives comfort.

Kapur reveals the support of husband is essential to a woman to live in her in–law’s house. Ananda spends three hundred and fifty dollars for his wife’s Ottawa tour to the National Library, the National Science Library and the National Archives. Ananda supports his wife while Mandy talks ill of her character:

“Who knows, maybe she’ll take a lover there”.
Kapur encounters the life of women and their recovery in her novels. The protagonist Nina satisfies her bodily affair with Anton which pleasure she doesn’t get from her husband. Nina questions herself why she has to feel for her sex with Anton. She consoles that no one would feel guilt for getting happiness. Her sexual satisfaction gives her strength and support instead of guiltiness. Nina questions herself: “Who can feel guilty about living? Judging from the evidence and the sexual therapy centres, every citizen in North America regarded good sex as their inalienable right. It was her right too”. (The Immigrant 260) Nina’s lust is satisfied by Anton. Kapur’s fifth novel is different from other four. Two distinguished characters are portrayed in Custody.

Both the protagonists Ishita and Shagun are getting help by their parents. Even though Shagun’s mother dislikes her daughter’s illegal relation with Ashok character, she forgives her and cares her. Shagun receives the individual support from Ashok Kanna. Shagun’s mother warns her daughter about her husband’s distrustfulness on her. But Shagun suddenly shows face and shouts angrily:

“All nonsense, he is too stupid”. Her mother replies,

“Don’t talk like that”. She asks,

“Why not? Just because you love him doesn’t mean I have to”.

Her mother says,

“He is the father of your children”.

“So?” Shagun says continuously.

“Give him some respect. Till now you never thought he was stupid”

(Custody 76)
As Shagun likes to live with Ashok Kanna, her mother’s advice makes her annoyed. While Raman admits in the hospital, his mother advises Shagun but she becomes angry she starts shouting:

“What do you mean?”
“Don’t you care about him?”
“Has he complained?”
“He? He never says anything. Such a man you would not find in seven lifetimes” (Custody 97).

As Shagun decides to live with Ashok, her mother’s and mother-in-law’s advises are avoided by her. Kapur describes her thoughts;

If only she could wake and find herself with Ashok, why was that not possible? She could just leave with a note—people in books were always doing that. I have gone, don’t bother looking for me, good-bye.... Marriage over, furnished, done with. (Custody 105)

The support of Ashok Kanna changes Shagun’s life upside down. Shagun’s life with Raman comes to an end. She is peacefully going to abroad and starts her new life with Ashok without any hesitation or guilty feeling. Shagun expects divorce from her husband but he is not ready to give. While he disagreeing for divorce, she stealthily comes home and takes away the children, Arjun and Roohi.

Raman requests his children to stay with him but they are prepared by their mother to oppose their father. As Shagun threatens them, they are getting panicked to come with his father. Arjun says the truth what his mother speaks: “She says I will never see her if I stay with you” (Custody 144) Arjun’s words hurt him. Even his children also unknowingly support her to live with Ashok. The children do not know the problems of their parents.
Shagun doesn’t realize her mistakes and replies: “And hasn’t you lawyer told you that custody can go to either parent?” (Custody 199) Shagun without thinking about the children’s future she takes decision. The one thing she often repeats “I want a divorce” While Ashok get posting in the US, he wants to move with her. Ashok knows very well that it is not easy to marry her in India without any further problem. So he decides to go US with Shagun.

Shagun tries to convince Roohi to stay with her father. She cries continuously and as a small baby, she likes to stay with her mother but Shagun persuades her: “Beta you can’t your father has made the court stop it. I will be put in jail if I take you.” (Custody 244) As a mother, Shagun is unable to away from her child. Shagun feels guilty about Raman. While Shagun wants to leave her husband, Ishita likes to live with her husband. Both contradictory characters are portrayed in Custody. From US, Shagun writes the letters to her mother Mrs. Sabharwal. Shagun knows very well her mother never feels comfortable to stay with her daughter. Normally mother-in-laws dislike staying with their son-in-law’s house. She helps her daughter but she hesitates to be with her daughter.

Raman’s mother likes Ishita and her character. As Raman lives lonely like Ishita, his mother desires to arrange marriage to her with her son. After receiving divorce from Suriya Kantha’s, Raman’s mother slowly inquires his son:

“What do you think of Ishita?”

“What should I think?” Raman replies,

“Roohi liked her”

“Roohi likes everybody. She is an affectionate child”.

“I thought she was very good with her she works with children.

You know” (Custody 257)
Mrs. Kaushik’s likes Ishita’s simplicity, humble and homeliness. Ishita surely would heal her son’s wound which was created by her daughter-in-law but Raman disappointed with his first marriage. So he could not bear another one. Ishita shows affection towards Roohi. She gets mental support and Roohi treats her as her mother. The baby slowly recovers from the isolation of her mother. Roohi cradles her in her arms with happiness. As childless mother Ishita only could understand the pain of childlessness. Ishita says while Raman asks his baby is heavy for her; “Poor thing, she can never be heavy for me. You know how much I miss her” (Custody 275). Roohi provides her a healthy support Ishita to live with confident.

As Ishita wishes for child is fulfilled by Roohi. She fulfils her desire through Raman’s children and enjoys her motherly happiness. Not only had she satisfied with the baby but by her father Raman and his caring. Raman also loves her very much and he blames her husband Suryakanta as an unlucky fellow. He loses a good and lovable wife, Ishita. Without marrying Ishita, Raman stays with her. The depression of Raman and Ishita has been solved due to their love.

Mrs. Rajora, Ishita’s mother watches her daughter and something she identifies in her activities. She starts advising her daughter: “Beta, never mind that I only want to be sure that you are not doing anything to harm yourself. Once we friends, smile when have we become enemies?” (Custody 282) Ishita’s mother also expects her daughter should have a peaceful life with Raman. Both Raman and Ishita get married like their parents expectation.

The couple gained the pleasure what they lost in their first conjugal life. This marriage life makes Raman too move the worlds with confidence. Ishita gets pleased while her husband honoured her in all her activities. She shows her full attention on children and Raman. But often she becomes cautious about her present life and no one
should interfere in their happy life. It should be permanent in future and she would never allow anybody to create problem.

Kapur insists mother’s role in a family is vital which should be a passion not to be merely a duty. As Ishita does it whole heartedly, Raman respected her in order to show her motherly love towards Roohi. Ishita stands in the highest position of her husband’s heart. Ishita does not think her as a step mother but hers. Raman says: “But you do not have to prove you are doing your best. Let things take their natural course. The child loves you, I love you” (Custody 303) Raman loves her because Ishita loves his children. Her fertility makes her to love Raman’s children. Kapur explicates an infertile woman’s remark, thus:

Her first marriage came to haunt her in distrusted dreams. Despite the six years that had passed, her inadequacies now appeared more vivid, her innocence more pathetic. Maybe it had something to do with being a wife again. She told herself repeatedly, wipe the past from your memory, focus on the present. You are lucky enough to have the chance of a new beginning. (Custody 303)

Ishita forgets her past dreadful memory and she involves her into the renewed life with the support of Raman’s family. Shagun would come any time to take away her children and change their mind. Again Ishita would be a childless woman. But she believes that Raman would never send Roohi with her unloved mother. Roohi loves Ishita and Ishita worries about Roohi. She doubts whether Arjun would accept her as a mother or not. Ishita prays to god keeping everyone peaceful. She says with confident: “I hope he doesn’t hate me, and think I have taken his mother’s place”. (Custody 307) Ishita eagerly waits for the arrival of Arjun. In the age of adolescent, the parental care is needed to advice Arjun to lead his life in a right path with
morality. Ishita would adjust the situation of life with Raman and his children. Ishita voluntarily asks her to fetch Arjun. Raman has high regards about Ishita:

He looked at his wife. Earnestness, sincerity, hope, tension, anxiety, a willingness to feel excluded, a readiness to fight for her rights, all this shone from her large intense eyes. Sometimes he thought that for her marriage was a series of tests she had to pass. Usually the times he did feel she was at ease were those in bed, when for hours nothing mattered but the pleasure they gave each other. Her ardour encouraged his own sexual passion. That gratitude gave him the patience to deal with everything else. (Custody 308)

Ishita understands her responsibility as a mother. Ishita prepares Arjun’s favourite foods Ishita is understandable and adjustable character she observes: “You might have to say something to him...It must be hard on him to see in his mother’s place, but he has to understand this situation was not of your making. He must see we are together in this” (Custody 316) Ishita faces existential crisis whether Arjun accepts her as a mother or not. Ishita understands the feelings of others she waits to get her rights in the family. Ishita can understand the real worth of child’s love. Shagun phoned Raman to send the child to her.

While Raman asks his demand, Shagun becomes irritated: “Don’t moralize, Raman. You are so fucking righteous I can’t stand it. I sent her back only because of our agreement” (Custody 339) Shagun does not consider other’s wish. She needs her child and she wants to start her import business in abroad. She writes in her letter to her mother:

‘I can’t wait to see you and the children. I have timed my visit to India to coincide with their holidays, so I can take them back with me. You
Shagun aims to start her business with Ashok. As a mother legally she gets rights to keep her child with her. Ishita grieves for the small child: “I think my heart will break. I can’t bear this half- here- half -there. I have given her everything -not because of you, but because of her” (Custody 343) Kapur represents the motherly love of Ishita. Roohi’s love provides maternal satisfaction to her at the same time she fears about Arjun. As he grown up, he understands Shagun is his mother, not Ishita. Arjun would build a problem between her mother-daughter relationships. Ishita’s mother also warns her: “Things take time. You knew this was a complicated situation before you married. There is no need to give up so easily. In your life you have faced much worse. You don’t want to ruin your second chance”. (Custody 362)

Ishita cries for all her problem. Kapur writes “This time she didn’t have parent-in-law issues, instead it was children-in-law” (Custody 363) Roohi also is torn between two mothers, two homes and two countries. She considers Ishita is her mother. Ishita takes much care of the child. Raman’s appreciation and Roohi’s love make her happy and healthy. Raman warns Shagun not to involve in the life of baby and leave him. Shagun blackmauls him very impudently with the support of Ashok:

‘Oh’ stop being such a cry baby. Tell me. Are you going to let me meet Roo? If not, no Arjun ever’. She pleads finally and says: ‘Raman, please. She is my daughter. I have rights. You can be there the whole time. What are you so afraid of? A child cannot forget her mother- Raman, what nonsense are you talking? (Custody 377)

Shagun often changes her voice modulation to keep her child with her. Raman argues
Ishita is a good mother, though she does not bear the child. She takes care very keenly as her own daughter. So he dislikes sending the child to Shagun and says: “And this is Roohi’s choice-she wants to stay in the only home she has known, she wants to be with the mother who has looked after her devotedly every day for the last four years—even longer-before we were married”, (Custody 378)

Shagun never does her motherly duty but she wants to keep the child with her. Ishita gets fear about Shagun whether she would take away Roohi. So often Ishita asks Roohi: “Suppose, beta, she – or somebody- tried to come and take you away from me” she is silence. “Then what would you I do?” No answer from the child. Ishita asks again:

“You have to say- darling- you will have to say that your real parents are Mama and Papa. And if anybody asks you your mama’s name, or who is your mama, you have to say…?” Here she tightened the grip, to emphasize the gravity of the question.

“What will you say?”

“You”

“Ishita. You have to know my name, and say Ishita” (Custody 384)

Ishita’s position is pitiable. First she longed for a baby. Her infertility makes her to get Roohi. After Roohi enters her life she becomes happy. Again Shagun creates dispute with her for her baby. While Shaun expects empowerment crisis, Ishita faces existence crisis. With the support of law, Shagun legally fights for her rights. Betty Friedan denotes the provocative plight of women in her The Feminine Mystique;

For women, as for men, the need for self-fulfilment, autonomy, self-realization, independence, individuality, self-actualization is as important as the sexual need, with as serious consequences, when it is
thwarted. Woman’s sexual problems are, in this sense, by product of the suppression of her basic need to grow and to fulfil her potentialities as a human being potentialities which the Mystique of Feminine fulfilment ignores. (282)

Women protagonists of Kapur, grow their supports and needs to success for their successful life. Kapur proves that women have to learn their rights. They want to hold the rights from their own house, community and society. Ishita gets mental and physical support from Raman while Shagun gets from Ashok. Kapur’s protagonists differ from other ordinary women. As they are educated, they can easily able to face the societal issues. They continue their empowerment without stopping their journey.

Kapur portrays women’s contribution in social services and political involvement in her two novels: Swarnalata and Shakuntala in Difficult Daughters, Astha and Pipeelika in A Married Woman. The progress of our nation depends upon women and their participation. Child bearing is a wonderful task which gives women reverence and worship. They ensure the capacity to yield the children with complete care. Even the education of the child starts with the support of woman from his or her mother’s womb.

Kapur’s protagonists get opportunities for employment which are enable them to look after their homes and society also. Because of the increasing economic necessity and growing cost of living, women need to go to job. Most of the women like to continue working, if they get suitable person to look after their children. Women fulfil their duel role at home and at work. To increase the economic condition of the family, the women characters of Kapur find jobs. The parents also consider education of women as an important phenomenon at present.

The main success of modern woman in Kapur’s novels is economic
independence. The modern feminism gives prior importance to economic independence of women which can build the society wealthy. Ashok Mehta Committee Report also insists the economic independence of females. For prompting and ensuring better status for women who are interested in improving their financial, economic and social position in the community education is basic need. Kapur’s protagonists and other women characters empowered with the support of domestic and external sustenance. In *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati works with the support of her family and society, in *A Married Woman*, Astha depicts as a poet and artist. In Kapur’s first four novels women become the tutors and professors and in *Home* and *Custody*, the women shine as business women.

The protagonists of Kapur are either dependent on their parents before and after marriage. They get education and gain little amount of remuneration. They receive low and insufficient income but their confidence is in high level. Even uneducated woman character in *Home*, Rupa earns money from her pickles business with the help of her family members. In *A Married Woman*, Astha gets permission from her mother-in-law and continues her job and also she involves her in social reforms with her friend. Astha works as a teacher for fifteen years among the familial problems. Simultaneously she achieves in her painting work as well as child care. In painting exhibition, she earns a lot of money.

Kapur insists the economic importance of her protagonists and its profits to their family. Kapur proves that without money, nothing can be done. In Kapur’s novels, women are not only depending on their parents, husbands and sons but also education helps them to achieve their goals and execute their expectation. The economic condition of our nation increases due to women’s economic empowerment. Virmati in *Difficult Daughters*, Astha in *A Married Woman* has been trying to improve their
economic position. Even in *Difficult Daughters*, the first generation woman Kasturi earns money to spend her family debt. In *A Married Woman*, Astha’s father shouts at her while she shows less interest in education and encourages her to read more books to develop her knowledge and also he slaps her, unless she gets up earlier and does her works. Her father often scolds her for her welfare. He shouts at her: “You worthless, ungrateful child. Do you know how much I spend on your education? How can you waste the best part of the day? This is Brahmakaal, the hour of the gods” *(A Married Woman 2-3)* Astha understands later the value of her father. Her parents’ strictness and support leads her as a teacher in future. Parental care is essential for every child. Her father wakes her up for walking to realize the value of exercise.

After finishing their early walking, Astha’s father practises her Pranayan. She realizes that without her father’s maintenance, nothing she achieved. He motivates her, thus:

> You have so much potential, you draw, you paint, you read, you have a way with words, you do well academically, the maths is a little weak, but never mind, you must sit for the competitive exams. With a good job comes independence. When I was young, I had no one to guide me, I didn’t know the value of time, did not do well in all my exams, had to take this job, thinking later I can do something else, but once you are struck you are stuck. *(A Married Woman 4)*

Asth a feels guilty for her past childhood mistake. While she links her arms through her father, she repents her wrong deeds and apologies. All the women characters of Kapur tried to project themselves as uniqueness while they dismantle their past and build a new world with the sustenance of their own motivation. They revolt against the concept subjugation of women. In Kapur’s novels, marriage
occupies an important role. They receive support from their husbands and in-laws. Robert Burns observes in his work *The Art of Staying Happily Married*; Marriage is a social institution wherein two individuals have to live together:

There can’t be any inequality in this area. The partners depend upon each other in the same manner as the, bow and the arrow’. If one of the partners dominates the other, it will not serve any purpose. If two persons with their distinct personalities wish to live a united life based on love, each of them must understand the other. Each individual must have the necessary knowledge, courage and determination to face the turbulent waves of the sea of marriage. (34)

In *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati controls her daughter’s liberty. In *A Married Woman*, Sita advised her daughter to live happily with certain conditions which is quoted from Bhagavat Gita. In *Immigrant*, Nina’s mother expects her daughter to bear a child soon. *Custody*, Shagun’s mother suggested her daughter to keep her family happily. While women are treated well in family, the society would be flourished without troubles. According to N.M. Khandelwal in his *Management Concept From The Mahabharata*:

It is desirable that a bachelor girl be offered good clothes, ornaments, etc. as respect from groom’s parents before marriage. This is necessary to bring prosperity, peace and good children in the family. Divines (gods) will happy live in a family where ladies are respected. The families will perish where ladies are treated with disrespect and cruelty. Their curse will destroy fame, prosperity and growth of a family. (306)

Kapur asserts the self-analyses and courageousness of women can change their
lives. They should have much responsibility to fight for their needs and deeds. Kapur says the main reason for the personal success of women by appreciating and rewarding their activities wholeheartedly. It is applicable for both the gender. In *A Married Woman*, Astha expects her husband’s appreciation. According to man his family merely a tool to success but woman receives multiple helps from family, friends and community are more important. All the men characters are expected to be a breadwinner in a family, whereas women assume them as a role model for their children. In *Home*, Sona’s less care of her child creates many problems in Nisha’s life. Woman occupies a big part in her children’s life especially daughters’ life.

For executing their duties in profession and family the protagonists want to be educated. It is the fact that women have more responsibility in child care than men. Society tries to empower women at different level and they raise their power and growth to uplift the society. Kapur’s protagonists are challenging and implementing to reach high position in the competitive world. Her protagonists of novels travel through the path of self-discovery and development. In her novels, no extraordinary descriptions exist but coldly realistic features. Raja Rao praises that woman has embedded all. Raja Rao praises woman in *The Serpent and the Rope*, thus;

> Woman is the meaning of the word, the breath, touch, and act; woman that reminds man of which he is, and reminds herself through him of that which she is. Woman is Kingdom, solitude, time; woman is growth, the gods, inherence the woman are death, for it is through woman that one is born; woman rules, for it is she, the Universe. (357)

The protagonists of Kapur are very confident about them. They understand their duty and responsibilities while taking decision effectively. Their achievements are oriented on their family and their society. Kapur brings in view of society from the
women’s point of view. Their inner confidence gives more energy and strength. Women of Kapur have the capacity to snatch each and every opportunity and utilize them to improve their ability and skills. Women protagonists in Kapur novels are full-fledged and well-educated. Virmati, Astha, Nina, Ishita are in teaching profession and Nisha and Shagun are influenced business women. They have shown their talents in their specific fields in an enriched way. Even Kasturi has involved her in weaving business with the eleven children.

Woman is as much a human being as man and thus enlisted to the same freedom, rights and responsibility. Women employment only can provide societies improvement. Women in Kapur’s novels break out their chains and launch a new speculation and so they they get equal rights in politics also. The communal support of women characters in Kapur’s novels leads them in their empowered path. For women’s education Arya Samaj mission showed special interest. Dayananda Saraswati was the founder of Arya Samaj who encouraged the equal rights to women. He backed the education of a woman like man. The Arya Samaj abolished the superstitious belief and skepticism beliefs which spoils human’s practical knowledge and reasoning power. Community unknowingly provides legal support to every woman. In Difficult Daughters, Virmati gets higher studies in Arya Samaj School and college. Shakuntala’s speech in public meeting tickles the spectators’ curiousness. With the approval of the society, woman comes out of her shell to enrich. In A Married Woman, though Astha’s participation in politics is not easily agreed first by the family, it is appreciated by the society. In Home, Sona’s pickles business is recognized by the society to continue her business in the competitive world. Necessity tempts to produce new, even though the producer is a woman.

In The Immigrant, Nisha receives support from her friends and neighbours in
the new country. All the friends motivate her to accept the condition and adopt the situation. In *Custody*, even Shagun’s decision also agreed as she dislikes living with her husband. Nobody can compel her to live with Raman while she dislikes living with him. The mismatching marriage creates divorce but the children suffer like the victims without doing mistakes. Shagun receives the legality from the court to keep her children. Her desire becomes fulfilled.

Kapur highlights that women perform better in some situation and foresight than men. Shagun confirms that she cannot live with Raman happily throughout her life. So she decides divorce is a source to avoid getting pain by living with him. The life of women is determined and praised by her role as a daughter, wife and mother. Shagun requires economic support which provides by Ashok. Kapur points out that in India the birth of a daughter is a less auspicious event than the birth of a son throughout India because female child will soon belong to her husband’s family and they never share their good and bad in life. But son has to support in their old age and maintains the family identity in future generation also.

Kapur proves in her novel *Custody* marriage gives legal rights to men and women live together. The bond supports them to live together. Like that, divorce gives a legal right to divide their relationship in mutual consent with that husband and wife broken down their marriage recognition. Women in Kapur’s novels become bold while share their pain and pleasure. As a mother, a woman is capable of joining her husband as a needed ritual partner and her serial and legal position in her husband’s family is strengthened and reinforced. The status of women is honoured by family and society if they get empowered. Kapur’s women characters dislike the strict traditional norms and circumstances create them to oppose the age-old rules. The world today is preceding both the qualitative and quantitative changes. The quality it is measured by
the cultural values and ethics and the quantity is in economic values. For these changes need women’s contribution. Basis of gender inequality the injustice is occurred. Men can be easygoing like women and women can be rough like men. It is possible for the opposite gender to do any work. Men and women raise their multi-level enrichment while the traditional Indian values expect women to be subordinate and self-sacrificing. Even in work place women are expected to be the efficient and quick at home they are liked to be submissive and quiet.

Women of Kapur choose internal success and external success. Within the small family circle they try to get success silently and they avoid risk taking activities before but this condition also changed. Women try to get good and smooth relationship or friendship with both genders. They have their own braveries, friendship with others and encouragements of familial support break the traditional barriers. They are waiting for the equality with a positive attitude. Woman is the most powerful creature of god for man’s love, affection, and desire. Above all she is a centre of family life. It is only by woman as mother who gives birth to the new generation.

Thus chapter four is the empowerment of women also lies on the support of individual, distinct persons, members of the family, and the society in which women live. Co-operation of family members can yield healthy family circumstances and it can only create a vigorous future generation. A single hand never makes noise. Women in Kapur’s novels receive support from all the individual, familial and communal support to overcome their oppression to empower.