Chapter VI

Summation

Yartra naryastu pujiyante remantitara devataha Where
women are worshiped there the Gods reside.

-(Qtd, Maya Majumdar, 2005)

It is a fact that worshiping women leads to the societal flourishing. A close study of Manju Kapur’s novels reveals her compassion for women revolt against their struggles confirms her as a feminist and assures her reputation in the West. Kapur finds the condition of the present-day women, who is clever and eloquent, mindful of her competencies, though they frustrated under the immensity of varied struggles. Jha quotes: “A steadfast consciousness of the present is an important prerequisite of concrete characterisation because characters in a novel unlike in myth or romance or epic, exist within a specific time” (Indian Women Today Tradition, Modernity and Challenges 211)

Women in Kapur’s novels attain notable achievement. Her protagonists and other women characters searched for identity, faced hurdles and finally won. Kapur’s central women characters endure a difficult expedition to determine themselves and this clues them through a confusion of dreads. Kapur points our unnumbered roles of women in her novels as a daughter, sister, cousin, wife, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. The societal enhancement and its civilization could be finalized by the empowerment of the women in the society. The mentality of women changed to get independent life. It is recommended a vivid portrayal of the Indian society in her novels the socio-cultural, political, legal, and educational, economic, psychological and sexual empowerment of women.

Kapur briefly depicts in her novels the discriminations women, their inferior
status and the unfair treatment of women in the society. While the story moves, the protagonists Virmati, Astha, Nisha, and Shagun promote gradual changes from suppression to liberty in all the fields. The other women characters like Shakuntala, Swarnalata, Asha, Ishita portrayed as courageous women in Kapur’s novels. The women characters fight for their goals. The weak and sensitive women protagonists get suffer and defame like Kasturi and Ganga in Difficult Daughters, in A Married Woman, Astha gets severe head pain with psychological trauma, in Home, Sona compares her pains with an epic character Savitri, and her daughter Nisha grieves with eczema, Nina suffers in isolation as an immigrant in The Immigrant, and Ishita suffers with alienation. Not only the protagonists but also every woman in Kapur’s novel struggles for her rights. Their sufferings trained them to empower in various fields like social, cultural, educational, psychological, economic and political.

In Difficult Daughters, Manju Kapur portrays three generations of women Kasturi, Virmati, and Ida. In Difficult Daughters, Kasturi’s position is different from Virmati and Virmati’s condition is contrast to Ida. Kapur clearly presents the relationship of men - women promotes from oppression to empowerment. The generation by generation the gradual development shows the empowerment of women has been flourished in all the arenas. In socio-cultural upgradation, Virmati’s mother Kasturi says about the generation gap between her daughter Virmati and herself. Kasturi astonished on seeing her daughter’s boldness: “In her time, going to school had been a privilege, not to be abused by going against one’s parents. How bad girls changed so much in just a generation?” (Difficult Daughter 60)

Kasturi surprised on seeing her daughter’s boldness. Virmatri astonished Ida’s confidence. Kasturi, Kishori Devi and Ganga also show special interest in marriage and household responsibilities. According to them, marriage is an important
commitment in which love considers as secondary. Kasturi spends her most of the
time in childbearing. Ganga gets the only satisfaction while her husband appreciates
her in her households. So the first generation women satisfied nothing but except their
home.

Virmati’s fearfulness is gradually changed after Harish’s love affair and
Swarnalata’s friendship. Virmati exclaimed about her boldness while she goes to
deliver a speech and asks her: “Aren’t you nervous?” She admired about her.
Swarna’s smiles: “I am - a little. But I and consider the message more important than
the person, you know” (Difficult Daughters 140)

Virmati gets nervousness to talk with others. Harish Chandra’s reluctance
creates agitation in her. Virmati recollects her roommate Swarnalata’s words:
“Swarna is right. Men do take advantage of women”. (Difficult Daughters 149)
Swarnalata’s advice makes Virmati slowly to understand the real character Harish and
she knows the barriers of women to reach success. As a wrong choice of Virmati’s
marriage life becomes failure but she grows her daughter without the help of her
husband. Virmati is imprisoned between responsibility of wife and a modern woman
like Swarnalata. She tries to convert her as modern but it is not probable to come out
of that circle due to her cultural bondage.

Virmati practices her to adjustment, compromise and adaptation. As a wife she
has to adjust her family members, compromise without creating a big issue and adapt
the situation whether critical or emotional. It is partially acceptable that women are
curve and flexible but men are conservative and straight. Male chauvinistic character
of Prabakar made Ida to get divorce while she stops to bear a child. When compared
with her mother and grandmother, Ida is completely different.

Virmati likes to lead her life with Harish as a house wife but also she inspires
Virmati tries to change herself like her cousin but it is not possible for her to come out of that circle. Virmati revolts against arranged marriage. Her pre-marital affair made her to live alone. As Harish stealthily visits to her private cottage, she is terminated and sent away from her profession. As he has uneducated wife, Ganga, Harish likes Virmati and convinces her to agree his affair positively: “Co-wives are part of our social traditions. If you refuse me, you will be changing nothing. I don’t live with her in any meaningful way” (Difficult Daughters 122)

Kapur explains women’s emancipation started in the pre-independence era. They fight for autonomy and liberty though they failed. But the women protagonists try again and never stop their attempt until they reach their goals. In A Married Woman, Astha and Pipeelika acknowledged socio-cultural empowerment. Astha serves in teaching field and Pipeelika pursues Ph.D. in abroad. As an antique cultured woman, Astha eats what her husband left over. She satisfies the needs of her children with her profession.

Asta expects from her husband that she wants to be treated an individual. She protests while Hemant compels her to wear erotic clothe. Being a house wife and working woman she faces strain. In Home, Nisha avoids Suresh Kumar while he compels her to stay with him. She obeys her parents’ words without eloping with him but married with a widower and bears twin children. Mahatma Gandhi praised women in annual gathering of the Bhagini Samaj in Bombay at Morarjee Gokuldas Hall:

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She had the right to participate in the minutes details in the activities of man, and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in
his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over woman which they do not deserve and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop halfway because of the condition of our women. (Mahatma Gandhi, Feb 20, 1918)

Giving rights to women will make them to challenges in their life. It emphasizes women to get courage and get freedom to break their bondage in the society.

In *The Immigrant*, Nina is away from her mother; her country, her people, and culture, and goes to abroad to prove Indian culture. Though she has depressed by her husband’s infertility and his illegal relations, she lives with him Indianness character. Nina could understand the truth of life. Nothing is permanent. From the sayings in Bhagavath Gita, she could know the empty pettiness of life while she has lain on her mother’s lap. In *Custody*, despite of her childlessness, Ishita serves in Jeevan enthusiastically and even after her divorce she assists as a good housewife in Raman’s family. All the protagonists are endowed with individual and social-cultural empowerment.

In Vedic periods, women were praised and compared as goddess. Again women have reached and empowered through their hard work to reach their early position like resurrection. Women have regained what they loss. All the novels of Manju Kapur base on the problem of marriage and its consequences. In *Custody*, the couple decides to live alone or to get divorce instead of fighting one another. In *Difficult Daughters*, Sunitha attempts suicide as her husband is drug abuser. The problems of husband and wife is not only affects their life but also their children’s future. Their children are traumatized while seeing the strife atmosphere in the family. Separation
of the children and quarrels between the couple create total chaos in the family as well as affect the societal harmony. The wrong decision of parents made the situation turmoil and it leads divorce.

Shagun’s love affair with Ashok Kanna follows their separation. They have started fight for their children and complaining each other before them. Their marital life is meaningless. Shagun starts her life with her own without consider her husband and children. Her feminism chooses a wrong decision and urges her to follow it. Shagun does not give respect for his parents and it makes him irritated. Raman feels that her fails to understand his wife’s needs correctly. Divorce produces the societal degradation and spoils cultural morality. If adult does not perform like adults the children would become confuse in their decision.

Family is meant for cooperation and coordination. If a family does not follow these two, the society would lose its peacefulness and the children would be treated as toys in their parents’ hands. The divorced couple’s subsequent predicaments create probe to the society and its synchronization. Kapur expresses all these problems in her novels vividly. While marriage is not considered as divine by the couple or it will lose its holiness. Even though Ishita’s marriage is an arranged marriage, her marital life fails.

Kapur’s brings forth the marital problems of arranged marriage and divorce. Without knowing each other, they obliged to live remaining of their life. Misinterpretation of couple creates troubles between husband and wife whereas they are from different familial, social, and cultural background. Controversial decision leads divorce. Husband’s likeness differed from his wife’s. The couple sacrifices their individuality for peacefulness and welfare of their children. Kapur indicates the question of education of women is controversy over the ages. The missionaries
introduced formal school education for women. The Arya Samaj, reformers provided proper education to women or they might illiterate. Women were trained in their internal and external practice to lead their household responsibilities religious rituals flawlessly.

Women’s education creates the countries improvement because educated women confronts with the problems of overcoming the conventional restriction of the population limited franchise. In *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati comes to Lahore; she gains the confidence to develop her education. Her illegal love with Harish and her pregnancy without marriage provides mental strength. Virmati really wonders on seeing the large area of women in the Women’s Student Conference. She admires about the individuals who live in the world without restriction and expose their distinctiveness.

Women in Manju Kapur novels are well-educated and highly talented. In *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati asserts her uniqueness through her education. She is not silent, but bold and outspoken. Virmati is conceptually strong so that she bears her physical and mental pain silently without knowing others. Virmati uses education as a way to escape from arranged marriage. Though Virmati is in oscillation with waver mind, she takes individual decision with the help of education. Another woman character Shakuntala is different; she is fully devoted to her life for education. She has the vivid idea of her future with independence mode of life. Virmati just shakes her head passively to agree her arranged marriage with Inderjith due to her traditional upbringing. But her orthodox families rules restrict her to live with Harish without marry him legally. She possesses high idea of morality. Her illegal physical relationship with Harish makes her think guilty. Ida’s position is observed in an article by Nirmala, thus:
The novel is a pointer to how a mother’s influence could be unsettling to the daughter under different circumstances; how filial love and affection could be replaced by hate and bitterness, how a mother, traditionally an epitome of sacrifice and goodness, could become a symbol of selfishness and resentment to her children. (58-65)

Women in Kapur novels fight with conventional morality to get success. Even though they are educated woman, they need to fight against man made suffering in the society. The first generation woman Kasturi dislikes love and she lives with conservative guidelines. The second generation woman Virmati is torn between the concepts of two generations. The third generation Ida never considers about others. Like Ida, Shagun in Custody the third generation woman is free from all restrictions. Finally Ida suffers the alienation without caring. Education has given her boldness and courage to transcend the constructed tradition. Education moulds Kapur’s protagonists to be a self-oriental by which they analyse their aptitude and prove their triumph with empowerment.

Through her five novels Kapur analyses her thoughts and feelings and explicate it. From family to society essentially need the common values of life. First generation people like Kasturi and her sister-in-law Lajwanti obey the traditional norms. The society expects morality from women more important than men. Women’s behaviour spoils family’s influence. It is only suitable for women not for men. Virmati is emotionally disturbed while her mother scolds her with vulnerable words and Harish Chandra’s hopeless answer about their marriage. She goes for an abortion without fear. Virmati cannot express her thoughts and ideas frankly like Harish.

In Difficult Daughter, Manju Kapur points out the chaotic environment, decreasing human responsibilities and self-centeredness of male characters. While
Virmati feels about her virginity and chastity, the quote of J.R. Kokandakar remembers:

“What cage can guard a woman’s chastity

Except itself” (14)

In order to maintain the happiness of life, woman wants to submissive and subordinate to man. Kapur’s novel shows such kinds of confusion in her life finally men and women take the decision as divorce or live separately. In Immigrant, after marriage Nina’s husband Ananda concentrates on her further studies. He knows very well that his wife trusts him. So it is easy to him to make her believe. His motivations help her: “Any time you want my help just let me know. You know how much I want you to settle down. Then you’ll be happier” (The Immigrant 238) Though he is selfish, he loves his wife and encourage to get education and helps her in culinary activities to keep her with happy.

In Custody, both women protagonists Shagun and Ishita are educated. Shagun develops her import business in abroad with the help of her education. Another protagonist Ishita has working experience in Jeevan where she cares people for her personal contentment. Altogether they earn money with the help of their education. If they lost their husband’s support in future or any other isolated circumstances, they would live with their personal money and they can stand on their own legs. Education provides moral support in the isolated circumstance of life.

Indian women are starting to break out of their chains. Increasing liberation of women empower the whole human race with the support of family and community. The cooperation of both genders launched women’s empowerment. They tackled the multitudinous problems of life to create a new world. Kapur insists the freedom of women in politics. The constitution of India has guaranteed equality, liberty and
dignity to the women but injustice occurs to women. Kapur observes women actively participate in political process but only a few women hold elected positions. Fewer still try to be so placed their influence in politics like Astha in *A Married Women*. Without the support of family members or society, they fight for their rights. Women were given specific place in religious rituals. In *The Essence of Hinduism*: “The Hindu scriptures regard men and woman as created by God as equal halves”. (50)

Women’s improvement in politics is less than that of men. As they always engage them in familial duties, they have no time participate in politics. Women pay less attention to the worldly news but at the same time with the support of well-wishers, they come forward or they make others to come forward. Very rarely few women participate in politics. In Kapur’s novels, women actively join in politics in the midst of other responsibilities in household duties and childcare. So it is a big task for women balancing the family commitment and political status. To balance the familial and political involvement women’s responsibility has to be shared with their life partner. Sharing the work activities among men and women can liberate woman to take part in politics without disruption.

According to earlier texts, politics was completely men’s game because of its drastic consequences. In the past the politics was the struggle for existence, not the struggle for power of the modern age. The soft nature of women left them peacefully preoccupied with their domestic affairs. Women in Kapur novels naturally have confidence and strength to face the social problems. While Swarnalata calls Virmati to attend the Punjab Women’s Student Conference, she learns more about value of society and its freedom importance of language, religion and human rights. While Virmati heard the song of *The Inquileb Zindabad*, she shed tears in her eyes and got the feeling of freedom, peace and progress. The freedom was being enjoyed by all as
it is necessary for the development of human race, not only men but especially for women. After independence, the new constitution of India offered several rights to women. The social status of women enriched.

Swarnalata makes Virmati to involve in the political activities and it paves shiny path for her future. But Virmati’s daughter Ida is strong and stubborn. She breaks up her marriage bond while her maternity is ridiculed by her husband Prabakar. He forces her to do abortion which tends her to do divorce. Ida opposes the commotional social physique of the society. Ida’s life style is quite different from her mother and grandmother. She revolts against the traditional rules. She is free from conventional restriction as well as male domination. She says; “I was nothing, husbandless, childless. I felt myself hovering like a pencil notation on the margins of society.” *(Difficult Daughters 279)* She relieved her from conventional social structures and threw away the superstitions ideas. Ida’s maturity thinking changes her method of life.

Kapur reveals the truth that women could tempt men and also being tempted by others easily. Satan tempts the mind of Eve to eat the forbidden fruit but he does not approach Adam. Satan knows women are desirous and sensitive. Like that, Harish’s letter spoils Virmati’s heart and mind. Harish’s husky voice, pleasing mannerism, and description of famous poet (Keats and Wordsworth) make her mind melted. Though she tries to get away from him physically, she is longing for his love and support.

Virmati understands her morally condemned acts and she is aware of her existential conflicts. Kapur’s three generation women differ from one another and they show their individuality. Their suffering is in silence. They do not share her sorrows even with her mother. The lack of her mother’s sympathy at home makes her longing for love outside. Harish creates sympathy to make her to feel love. She does
not enjoy her to feel love. She never enjoys her teen age entertainment due to her mother’s restriction and after marriage she loss her happiness due to her existential crisis.

Virmati, being eldest in the family of eleven children, she has possessed the vital role in her family. So, she is not able to concentrate on her studies. Education is important in the matrimonial point of view. Social requirement can fulfill the growth of individual upliftment of women. For freedom Virmati escapes from one prison and has caught into other. Women in Kapur novels are the symbols of the development and a source of pride not only to their families but also to the society. Women’s personality could be examined by their familial and professional roles. Familial significance makes women to promote social fulfillment. Physical and biological distinction differed from men and women. They could not be compared. Men and women perform dissimilar role in all their accountabilities. So it not possible to say man is superior and woman is inferior.

Kapur highlights women’s participation in the freedom struggle as well as in their family they are struggling with themselves. Anita Singh observes: “Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement was feminist in nature, not only because they mobilized enormous numbers of women, but also because they adopted attributes (such as passivity) and (such as spinning) that are traditionally considered female” (10) Indian women create their own place. Like men, Shakuntala and Swarnalata encountered innumerable hurdles, challenges and struggles. It is public expectation that woman should be submissive, caring, liberal and generous. In A Married Woman, Pipeelika joins her with Ajiz in politics. She is highly interested in Ajiaz’s ideas for the welfare of the society. Their effects are bearing fruit and many changes occur there at Salempuri. More children received education and literacy level increased. It is
far-fetched task to Aijaz and Pipeelika. They both planned to start more centres to
develop the uneducated peoples’ self-confidence. After getting the friendship of
Pipeelika, Astha joins in politics with her voluntarily. Astha gets confused while
Hemant avoids taking care of children. Women contemplate generally that they are in
a less favourable position than men in the profit of income, promotions and job
security.

In Manju Kapur’s novels, women participate in social and political activities.
The idea of politics was man’s affair once upon a time which changed slowly. Rights
have been given to women like men in politics. Women in Manju Kapur novels have
much interest in political attachment as men do. Kapur protests the concept of killing
people in the name of god. In Ramjanmabhoomi controversy, revolutionary ideas are
exposed through the social participation of Astha and Pipeelika. Both women have
joined together to oppose the contradictory ideas of two religious fundamentalists.

Asth is getting irritated while Hemant fails to outlook the Ramjanmabhoomi-
Babri Masjid disagreement with a serious eye. Though women participated in politics,
they are not given higher position like men in politics. Before joining in politics and
social life, women ought to aware of the insecurity situation like violence, mutinies,
insecurities. In the traditional method of family, the man works and woman take care
of the home. Now-a-days it is gradually changed. The younger age groups of women
are interested in politics.

Legal status of women was primary portion of the general movement for the
emancipation of women and was inspired by the equalitarian idea. The social
reformers and in the later phases women themselves realized the obstacles in the way
of full freedom and free development of women and therefore they advanced demands
for improving their legal status also. As woman has legal rights, Shagun fought
against her husband and won at last keeping her children with her. The privileges of women are secured by the legal rights of Indian law.

In Kapur’s novels, the protagonists are economically empowered. The status of women and their contribution to social and economic development is based on the possibility of employment opportunities of women. Without this gradual development, the status of women in economic condition would not change. Household responsibility and child care are the part of women’s life. In Difficult Daughters, Kasturi ensures her weaving work to earn money to satisfy economic scarcity. Virmati like to work in many institutions continuously. Shankuntala and Swarnalata fix their jobs and stance on their legs.

In Home, Woman like Rupa follows the traditional values. Though she is childless, she does not feel like Sona but continues her cottage industry with her family members. Her self-motivation and stimulus increase her social upgradation and raises her economic position. “Nisha’s Creations” has given her name and fame and it proves her economic freedom and empowerment. Familial support also has been given by her father. Finally her fervor and dedication in her business make her mother to help her in Nisha’s garments.

Nisha’s business is being controlled by her pregnancy. Women do not continue their business after marriage like men. Female entrepreneur is not able to reach their goals as easily as possible like a man. Many hindrances they have to face to run their business. Being a woman, Nisha is unable to continue her business successfully because of her pregnancy and childbearing. If they do not have children it is easy to them. Professional women and business women are more adjustable than housewives because they have to pay more attention to their both roles.

Asth in A Married Woman and Nisha in Home face several difficulties to
continue their job and business. Astha’s frequent movement to the political meeting
disturbs her smooth life. Nisha’s pregnancy controls her to continue her garment
business further. Women have been empowered in different designation. Trivedi
walks the role of mother for her son and daughter. Astha empowers economical
position and political participation.

Kapur insists the educational empowerment of women in all her novels. All the
women characters possess the education. Even the first generation woman Kasturi
studied in Arya Samaj School in Difficult Daughters. Virmati fought with her mother
to get higher education. Shakuntala, Swarnalata and Ida treated as empowered
women. In A Married Women, Astha is educated woman. Pipeelika raises her
educational empowerment through her travel to aboard completing her Ph.D. Ira Jha
proves the boldness of Kapur’s women characters, thus:

Manju Kapur’s women, even though tied to the chains of traditional
values, are very bold in their imagination. Astha did not hesitate to
dream of having an affair with a man who appreciated her worth, a
man who boosted her courage to handle something worthy, something
knowledgeable. (73-85)

In the third novel Home, as Nisha completes her education, she deals her
business difficulties efficiently. In the fourth novel The Immigrant, Nina sustained
higher studies in Library School. In the fifth novel also Custody, Ishita works in
Jeevan, an urbanage and Shagun starts her export business in abroad. Education plays
an important role in all the novels of Kapur. Kapur focuses on the roles of husband
and wife. It is the most important to divide household duties equally between husband
and wife. This lighters woman’s daily routine problems. Household duties are also
equally inevitable impart on men’s and women’s social role. So the working women
intend to have two children alone. Without the cooperation of her husband, Astha suffers with migraine headache in *A Married Woman*. To solve her familial depression, Astha goes to school. In *Home*, to dart away from her mental depression, Nisha does her garment business. In *The Immigrant*, Nina has friendship with Anton while her husband has another relationship. In *Custody*, Shagun elopes with Ashok to live in abroad and to get luxurious life.

Kapur points out the sexual empowerment of Indian women in her five novels. In *Home*, though Nisha suffers from her childhood, she mends herself by new garment business. The widespread belief is embedded in many cultural traditions that home is a safety place for children, especially female children. Changing of family structures produce the vulnerable children like Vicky. The transmission of social and moral values are misguided the children from their early stage of life.

In *A Married Woman* the lesbian relationship of Pipeelika and Astha is shown. Astha seeks emotional support from Pipeelike while her husband shows less importance on her. With the coordination of her husband, a woman can receive social, financial and political advantages. Ashta dislikes the patriarchal reinforcement of Harish so that she chooses lesbian relationship to fulfil her longings. Lesbianism is generally practiced by women who suffer from mental depression and antipathy towards the opposite sex. Pipeelika and Astha find the true peace of mind while sharing the crisis in the maternal love. It heals the mental pain which has created by a male company. In this relation, woman shares her inner desire and recover her self-identity.

The protagonists of Manju Kapur are bold enough. P.C. Pradhan observers that Nisha, along with other female protagonists of Manju Kapur:

Challenge the existing socio-cultural patriarchal system. In the social
mileau, they are educated, modern, intelligent, bold and assertive. Even though they try to transcend the social hierarchy by demolishing it, they often undergo serious psychological traumas in the absence of an alternative, planned feminist ideology that may give them freedom, security and peace of mind. (108-122)

Nisha unknowingly suffers from painful recollections that was occurred by Vicky, when she was young. After she grew old, Nisha is knowingly embittered by Suresh in her adolescence. Both Vicky and Suresh are same for her. Suresh says: “You will always be the princess of my dreams” (Home 213). Nisha does not want to be the princess in his dream and she knows that he is brain washed by her family members. As her family members threatened him, Suresh feared to talk with her and avoids her. Nisha’s mental depression has increased and she strongly aversed and opposed his love. Psychoanalytic Feministic theory is applied in Kapur’s novels especially in Home. Kapur asserts that the psychological need is connected with body. Nisha’s brother’s restriction and domination make her to mentally sick. Her tedious struggle produces the disease eczema. Her mental depression creates the disease physically. Pooja, her sister-in-law does not allow Nisha to touch her baby because she fears that her baby would be affected by touching. Nisha tolerated all her sufferings and moves forward and shine in her business. She has the mental power to run the business confidently. A. Koedt and E. Levine state in Radical Lesbians;

Until women see in each other the possibility of primal commitment which includes sexual love, they will be denying themselves the love and value they readily according men, thus affirming their second class status. (243)

Kapur paved way for Indian novel in English. Multicultural makes them to
empower and aware of their self-discourtesy. Modern woman gained maturity to understand their victory and defeat, vice and virtue. Other women characters of Kapur are also empowered from their struggles. Shakuntala’s fearlessness, Swarnalata’s self-assurance, Sita’s self-sacrifice, Rupa’s self-motivation, Asha’s impudence are depicted the empowerment of modern women. Suman Bala expresses her view in a review:

> It may be noted here that the two factors which enable the modern woman to assert are education and economic independence. Virmati comes to us as a modern woman, being both educated and having a job before marriage. The very fact that she is able to break the patriarchal mode in the 1940s is in itself a great achievement. (150-154)

Kapur focuses life style of women from oppression to empowerment in her novels. Though women acquire one side with child abuse, love affair, marriage issues, pre-marital and extra-marital affair, gender discrimination, motherly love, communal riots, immigration, cross-culture, frustration and exploitation, another side endowed with their goals, victory, attainment, achievement, and finally they empowered themselves. Their misfortunes mould them with strength and power.

Despite of her illegal love Shagun excelled in her business and relished foreign life. Ishita’s affection on children makes her suffering she relieves from her job because of Roohi’s motherly love then she feels about it. In Custody two different kinds life style of women exposed Shagun and Ishita one is fighting for getting divorce. Ishita fights for granting divorce where Shagun fights for getting divorce. A therapy recovers mental depression leads self alienation. In Radical Lesbians, the therapy involves consciousness- raising ands leads to action it is built on two basic equations.
Oppression + Lies + Isolation = Alienation

Action + Awareness + Contact -> Power (Wyckoff, 1980, 15-16)

Feminist movement introduced women to empowered and experienced freedom. Women occasionally have no faith in them and low esteem about themselves. Though they have educational qualification and capable of doing any kind of work. They deviate from their work in order to avoid misfortune failure. Kapur says in her novels that woman is a fully enhanced personality and they could face difficulties in their life.

The challenging life women motivate them to achieve more. It is also a challenge of society to motivate women to achieve more. Women’s success is based on themselves. The help of Individual, familial support and societal encouragement are the secondary reason of women’s empowerment but their self- motivation is the primary reason to achieve. Educated girls lead better lives and it enables them to gain knowledge and economic settlement.

The family members support help to develop women’s status within the family. Education empowers women to ask and achieve legal rights to achieve political participation also. Education gives awareness on women’s health and hygiene which shows beneficial efforts for woman like Kasturi. She does not know about family planning. Empowerment of women continues from home to society. Woman’s victory finds the solution for future generation with moral values. According to Andrea Dworkin;

All men benefit from rape, because all men benefit from the fact that women are not free in this society; that women cower, that women are afraid, that women cannot assert the rights that we have, limited as those rights are, because of the ubiquitous presence of rape. (142)
Modern women struggle for their identity in Indian English Literature for their emancipation. Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ashwarchand Vidhyasagar, M.K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru etc. are few to make women’s empowerment. The women themselves come forward towards the empowerment. Like the Ardhanarishwara both man and woman are better-half for each other. Women have been charted as special place to empower the modern world. Women are the agent to make the changes in the world. In her journal, Geeta Phogat quotes Vinoda’s sayings from *Dialectic of Sex in Bellow’s Fiction*:

The female characters of Kapur challenge with the societal age -old norms and succeed finally. They break all the rules and have the specific place for themselves. Women are called as in —the providers of the family, besides being child learner, child rearers and home-keepers. (61)

Due to some reasons, overall position of the women restricts by media which depicts women as sex objects. Gender discrimination starts in the society from the birth. Particularly unmarried girls should follow the constraints of family members and of the society to which they belong. There has been a tremendous increase in all kind of violence, organised violence against the state inter group violence, intra-familial violence and an increase in the general climate of violence and finally, as in the case of corruption a licit acceptance of violence and a growing insensitivity of murder, bloodshed, gang wars and rape.

Kapur explains the cultural degradation through the child abuse of Nisha in her third novel *Home*. The problems of Nisha continue from their childhood in *Home*. Children have played the valuable role in the cultural development. They are the agents of change as well as custodians in future cultural values have been taught them
to avoid cultural degradation. The affected children may feel guilt, shame, fear, got anger, helpless and depression. Nisha believes that she is responsible for her abuse and unable to do anything to change her experience. From home itself the sexual teaching is essential to them which fulfils with the educational empowerment of children.

Gender discrimination is deeply rooted in culture but it can be uprooted through the familial support to the female children. Children today do have access to more information about sex but it is also true that they are exposed to more information. The children get into the problem of sexual pressure in their family and from society. Vicky blackmails Nisha to hide sexual exploitation. Vicky enjoys abusing her without stopping. Kapur introduces him as pedophiles, dangerous persons. As an abuser, Vicky likes to use his power to overcome someone younger, smaller or less powerful than they are. Sexual abuse of child spoils the freedom of girl children. Nowhere the children would be safe if they are not getting safety at home.

Every woman in Kapur’s novels fights for their rights. In Difficult Daughters, Virmati fights against adversities for existential crisis and higher studies. Ida contests her husband’s male chauvinism and loneliness. In A Married Woman, Astha battles for her self- identity and inequality. Astha and Pipeelika fight for communal riots to get harmony. In Home, Nisha combats with love, horoscope problem and skin infection but scopes victory in garment business. In The Immigrant, Nina conflicts with norms of strange cultural habits and overcomes it. In Custody, Ishita competes with barrenness, marriage break up, impermanent rapport and Shagun fights for divorce, trusteeship for children and Justice. And to get her permanent existence Ishita suffers. All the women characters empowered with their confidence.

In Difficult Daughters, Kapur portrays the psychological power of women
protagonists. Ganga’s patience is a weapon without fighting and shows her rebellious on her husband and Virmati. Virmati’s mental strength proves her boldness to live alone with her child Ida. In *A Married Woman*, Astha’s will power displays while she attends the political meeting without fear. In *Home*, Nisha has faced three main difficulties like sexual abuse eczema and horoscope. In *The Immigrant*, Nina agonises as an immigrant in an unknown country. In *Custody*, Ishita isolates from her family and battles with existential crisis. To bare additional physical and mental sufferings, the women protagonists possessed myriad powers.

Women are known to be the fairer gender and also the weaker gender (physically) it is therefore important for the term man to treat women with respect and to love them. The discrimination on women’s vanished by mutual understanding, respect, caring and value of relationship. Harsh economic calculations enter into all traditional marriages, the aim being become rich at the expense of the bride’s family and huge sums of cash, gold and consumer durables being extracted by the groom’s family. The level of the dowry has become an indication of the status of the groom’s family. Every so often woman choose suicide to escape from torture and humiliation from these problems. The following motivation lines of a diary is given, thus:

- Life Unlimited, Adventure Unlimited
- Roams Unlimited, Possibilities Unlimited
- Future Unlimited, Relaxation Unlimited
- Learning Unlimited, Joys Unlimited
- Action Unlimited, Expectations Unlimited
- Peace Unlimited, Opportunities Unlimited
- Ideas Unlimited, Dreams Unlimited
- Life Unlimited
The sea and sky, both are mine
The horizon is mine
The adventure – the bungee jump over the cliff
That’s mine.
My trip around the world, my own business,
My dream car, they’re all mine
Because I live with opportunity.
I live with possibility.
I live with the freedom to live the life I want. (Diary, 2010)

Women in Kapur’s novels are portrayed as caretakers. They experienced high level of difficulties when they have no source to share their thoughts they get traumatic, bewilderment, devastating and pathetic position. Their high level of distress create chronic sorrow till they get a better resilience and able to quickly return to a previous good position.

Women in Kapur, novels predict their problems and recover from that mental illness. To develop family, women’s physical and mental health is very important. Then only they can empower their skills knowledge to develop their efficiently. Mental health of women helps them to increase position thinking. Though Kapur points out the exploitation, frustration and woes of women, she highlights the full-fledged empowerment of modern women in Indian society. Women of Kapur novels boldly declare their desire on education and develop their individual talents.

Women are expected to be obedient, virtual soft, kind sympathy towards others at home. At the same time they wanted to be brave, active, articulate, intelligent, and adventurous outside. Marriage diverts their mind to stop achieving their goals. She is restricted her to the household affairs. Women empowerment could be practised in the
following areas: socio-cultural, political and legal, economic, and educational levels. Self-confidence and self-reliant creates women to fight for rights legally.

Manju Kapur indicates the lively picture of the familial contradiction and its effects in *Custody*. Children’s first teachers are parents. They are the role models to teach them cultural values, societal potentials and the good way of life. Their learning stands in heart strongly and it never forgets. The behaviours and actions are learnt by their parents. Without the mutual understanding of parents, their children would be treated like rubber balls. The children are played between them for their convenience.

Women’s empowerment makes the society high. Societal expectation, cultural and modern trends create dilemma in the mind of women in Kapur’s novels. Indian women’s expectations, feelings and desires are submerged and confused them by their fathers, mothers, brothers, husbands etc. while their expectations failed, they become upset. While women move all the way from oppressiveness to empowerment, they still expect to be a woman of love, submissiveness, obedience, softness, kindness and sympathy towards others at home and society, yet they have to sacrifice a lot, to gain something. Women in Manju Kapur’s novels overcome their shortcomings through tireless efforts and constant courage. .

Though the women characters indicate as silent sufferer, first they empowered them with their self-motivation. Amidst all the constraints, they strike out succumbing to adverse forces and unfriendly attitudes of people around them. These positions of women’s repression could be changed through their educational empowerment. Despite their hardships, they mould themselves like New Women. Not only the protagonists in Kapur novels, but also all the other women characters allow themselves to be bogged down by forces antagonistic and their advancement. Trotsky says in *Woman and the Family*: “To alter the position of women at the root is possible
Thus the summing-up traces the amazing development of women for the past four decades. Women have regained their identity as it was in the Vedic period. Though women are supported by the individual, family and society, their self-confident enriches their livelihood. Kapur highlights women’s empowerment through their self-motivation. Their failures are the stepping stones and pave the way for their self-development. There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises at every attempt to intimidate me. (Jane Austen 79)

These chapters cannot be separated from each other. They inter connected one another. Each chapter elucidates, develops, and sheds light on the explanation of thesis statement. Women in Kapur’s novels, not only empower through the help of other’s support, they motivate, they take decision by themselves to enhance their position. There is scope for future investigation into John Milton’s words: ‘fresh woods and pastures new’ by extending the line of enquiry on the online of analogical or parallel study between Manju Kapur on the one hand and Shashi Despande or any other Indian writer on the other. Manju Kapur’s contribution to Indian fiction in English lies in adding a new dimension to women’s emancipation from oppression through empowerment.