Chapter II

Oppression of Women: Social, Educational, Economic, Political and Legal

To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man’s injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not greater institution, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater power endurance, has she not courage? Without her, man could not be. If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?

(Mahatma Gandhi, *To the Women of India*, 1930)

The conception of Gandhiji about women it is widely acceptable. According to Gandhiji women endure greater power than men. He does not mean the physical strength of women but the moral power of them to empower. Gandhiji expects the non-violence of the society to emancipate women freely. The second chapter portrays the familial and societal oppression of women in the novels of Manju Kapur. Kapur points out the sufferings of women in her all the five novels like dowry death discrimination, alienation, loneliness etc. Kapur’s characters fight for their rights with their family and society.

The major idea in recent Indian women novelist’s writing expresses the position of women in the patriarchal society. Manju Kapur’s novels also present the struggle of women to establish an identity. Her five novels focus on the oppression of women. Kapur portrays woman’s encounters and challenges like social, cultural, educational, economic, political and legal repression at various stages of her life. The protagonists face oppressions like a coin which has two sides, one is created by their family and another one is the society.
Kapur’s novels focus the factual position of women in Indian society. Women in her novels quest for identity and they do not have real freedom in their spheres of life. Indian culture attaches much importance to woman. The qualities of women namely endurance, love, sympathy, care and patience are exemplary. The society represents a kind of bonding which provides among many other things a sense of psychological security. A woman should be socially acceptable one otherwise she is bound to flounder in the world of relationships. Society is largely responsible for the rigid standards of morally imposed upon the Indian woman. Women in Kapur’s novels face socio-economic and political challenges. They have a will to participate in politics.

The suppression of women never changes in all the communities. Though many reformers have started many reformations movements for women’s welfare, it is still an unanswerable question. In the first novel *Difficult Daughters*, Kapur expresses exploitation of all her women characters. The family of Virmati follows the Arya Samaj doctrines. They never celebrate any festivals or observe rituals. But they give importance in educating girl child. In this novel, *Difficult Daughters* Shakuntala and Virmati have studied in Arya Kanya Mahavidalaya. Their college was also named Arya Sabha College. They followed the rules of Arya Samaj. Kasturi neither raises any question against her husband about bearing children nor allows her daughter Virmati to opine her views on higher education. The women of the Arya Samaj always think about their family. The thought of Arya Samaj women always revolve around the needs and wants of their family.

Lajwanti forces her husband to compel his father for the family partition and so Chandra Prakash meets his father every week ends. Finally, Lala Divan Chand unwillingly agrees and says:
If separation was inevitable, better to do it while he was alive than to have his sons bicker over his property after he was dead’. Bitterly he said to his son, ‘You realize your house will only be built after the first one has been completed.’ And Lajwanti, who had been listening as usual, knew she had won. (*Difficult Daughters* 29)

Lajwanti is shifted to the new house with her husband and eleven children. Though Lajwanti often visits Kasturi, she constantly plans about the partition of her family. It forecasts the national policies in which the demand for a separate state for the Muslims called Pakistan has been already initiated by the Muslim leaders. Manju Kapur compares the partition of two families with two states. The problems of Indian women are not underestimated in the novels. Here female infanticide is common and eve teasing happens in public transport and public places. It is said clearly that women face crisis in all walks of life. The situation and the problem might be varied but the difficulties are the same. Pam Rajput observes:

> Women’s lives in India and the world over are circumscribed by what can be termed the “five Ps” patriarchy; productive resources access inadequacy; poverty; promotion advancement insufficiency; and powerlessness. (99 *Women and Globalisation*)

In *Difficult Daughters* Kapur depicts women of three generations Kasturi, Virmati and Ida who attempt to explore the socio-cultural dimensions of Indian society. At the same time they also realize the degradation of traditional values. Kasturi gives more importance to the conventional rules and says: “It is the duty of every girl to get married… what is the need to do a job? A woman’s shaan is in her home”. (*Difficult Daughters* 15 -16) As Kasturi grows under the conservative societal background, she does not try to come out of her circle. After her marriage, she came
Virmati watches her cousin Shakuntala and she wants to live like her. Though Shakuntala not as fair as Virmati, she looks vibrant and intelligent. Shakuntala never considers about the surrounding while she speaks and acts. Kasturi asks Lajwant that all the time she spends her time in lab doing experiments, helping others with fear, studying or going to conference. Her mother says that she should have been a man. It is the destiny of bold woman, to be commented by others. Virmati listens thrillingly while Shakuntala says:

> These people don’t really understand Viru, how much satisfaction there can be in leading your own life, in being independent. Here we are, fighting for the freedom of the nation, but women are still supposed to marry, and nothing else. (Difficult Daughters 17)

According to Shakuntala marriage is not only the duty of woman. Shakuntala motivates Virmati and suggests her not to bury her talents within the four walls of the home. Virmati longs for freedom and liberty. Not only Virmati, Shakuntala and her room-mate Swarnalata also struggle for her independence in her lives. Virmati loves the romantic and handsome professor who returned from Oxford. Though he is already married with Ganga and had a child, she loved him. Virmati gives preference to her hopeless love and stops her engagement with Indrajit and Virmati understands the real love of Ganga for her husband when she finds Ganga abiding to the likes and dislikes of her husband:

> “He doesn’t like blue”
Ganga knows very well about her husband needs. Virmati has a battle between her love at one side and traditional restriction at the other. She can understand that he also likes her. Even though Virmati is conscious about her culture she is unable to avoid thinking about when the professor comes to meet her. She is scared about the taunting expression of the people around her. Virmati has dilemma on her marriage, her education and her love with the professor. The professor seduces her mind and tries to fulfil his lust:

“Someone will see. She may come in”

“No one will see. She’s gone out”

“Still, I don’t like it. They are others. They will tell her them.”

“Don’t worry about her,”

“Why not? She is your wife, isn’t she?” (Difficult Daughters 55)

Harish had been married off at the age of three. Harish and Ganga are never responsible for their child marriage as they were immature. When they attain maturity of thought, they do not feel they are made for each other and this thought makes Harish consider Virmati as his right partner. He feels that she is made for him.

As Virmati does not want to get married with Indrajith and want to get married to live with Harish, though he is already married. Her parents oppose her. So she tries to commit suicide. But she is saved from death and her marriage with Indrajith is cancelled. Virmati expresses her parents’ view of the society to Harish and says: “A man who is already married and a traitor to his wife can never give happiness to any woman. He is a worldly person caught in his own desires. Nothing solid” (Difficult Daughters 93)

In her novels, Kapur focuses on the problems faced by Indian women who
blindly follow the traditional norms. Though Harish Chandra has a wife, he likes Virmati. Virmati writes in her letter to Harish, thus:

Just as you must do your duty to your family, and your wife, so too I must do my duty to mine. My people have always been straightforward people, Pitaji and Bade Baoji have always been known for their honesty and high standards. People blindly trust my father in business, our community respects us. I am proud that I belong to such a family, and I must keep up its tradition.

(Difficult Daughters 107)

Harish tries to convince Virmati that his love for her seamless and says: "Why? Aren’t you mine? And I yours? Body and soul, heart and mind? I worship you, “Viru, I want to express it, that’s all’. Virmati cries and questions herself, thus: “… he was right, she was meant to be his, what was the point in foolishly denying it on the basis of an outmoded morality?” (Difficult Daughters 125)

Virmati’s blindly love for Harish overcomes the attributes of the conventional society and allows her to accept him and decides that When Virmati comes to know that Harish is postponing his engagement with her, she bursts into anger and says that she cannot wait for long, as her parents would compel her to get her married; to anyone they find as a good match they think, for her and she cries:

I break my engagement because of you, blacken my family’s name, am locked up inside my house, get sent to Lahore because no one knows what to do with me. Here I am in the position of being your secret wife, full of shame, wondering what people will say if they find out, not being able to live in peace, study in peace… and why? Because I am an idiot. (Difficult Daughters 149)
Kapur says the truth behind of every marriage: ‘Most families look upon the marriage of a daughter as a sacred duty- or sacred burden.’ *(Difficult Daughters)* 152 Kapur opines that women are labelled as domestic helpers and do not have any role in the male dominating society. Though men and women are equal by birth, their functions differ. It is only a woman’s duty to run the home according to a man’s attribute. Woman is only a dancing doll in the hands of man. Unless there is familial support and individual awareness, the problem of women cannot be solved, just by educating them.

Due to familial restriction and child marriage thousands of girls married at the early age of the twelve. Women in Kapur’s novels also change into house-wives without awareness of marriage and its goodness. Unless the wicked custom of child marriage vanished, the husband should have to teach to his wife’s. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* remarks:

> A husband regards none of his wife’s good qualities as particularly meritorious; they are guaranteed by society, they are implied by the institution of marriage itself; he fails to realize that his wife is no character from some pious and conventional treatise, but a real individual of flesh and blood; he takes for granted her fidelity to the strict regimen she assumes, not taking into account that she has temptations to vanquish, that she may yield to them, that in any case her patience, her chastity, her propriety, are difficult conquests; he is still more profoundly ignorant of her dreams, her fancies, her nostalgic yearnings, of the emotional climate in which she spends her days.

(492)

In *Difficult Daughters*, Harish teaches his wife Ganga. Child marriage restricts
women to get basic education. Nevertheless Virmthi gets proper education; she
blocked herself in the trap of Harish’s love. Education of Virmati provides
satisfaction to Harish to choose her as a wife. In Harish’s letter he says, thus: “One of
the benefits of education is that it teaches us to think for ourselves” (Difficult
Daughters 102)

Besides Virmati, another important character in the novel is Ganga; the legal
wife of Harish Chandra who is so innocent and ignorant that she blindly follows the
conventional rules of Indian society. Ganga thinks her husband as her god. Thavaseelan quotes in an article: “Men may try to imagine and capture women’s
feelings and emotions but they cannot fathom and communicate the way women do.
This is why women’s voices have to be heard and listened to. But their voices of
voiceless women”.(29-30)

Though she is aware of her husband’s second marriage with Virmati, Ganga
still loves him. While Harish and Virmati come home as couple, Ganga feels sad but
she understands her husband’s affair and adjust herself. Not only for Ganga, Virmati
also imagines her husband as God. For both women their husband is everything. Ganga
sacrifices her life for her husband.

Virmati desperately struggles for self-assertion after her marriage with the
professor Harish. Virmati likes to be a housemaker so that she likes to satisfy the
needs of her husband but it is restricted by her mother-in-law. Ganga becomes a
servant at home who keeps his house neat and tidy, her husband’s clothes are washed,
rears up his children and concentrates on her husband’s routine fulfilments. Harish
simultaneously fulfils his desire both physical and intellectual companionship from
his two wives. Though Virmati is educated, she wants to do household duties like
Ganga. Virmati suffers throughout her life and her loss of virginity makes her guilty.
She is wounded by her useless love affair, unconfirmed marital relationship with Harish and unwed pregnancy. She is isolated without shelter. As a daughter, before, Virmati expected freedom from Kasturi but while Virmati becomes a mother, Virmati never allows her daughter Ida freely.

Kapur brings before the suppressed position of Ganga. Ganga never becomes generous in her character but hostile. Virmati learns the situation nostalgic and at last she comes out of the boundary. Women in Kapur’s novels think that their happiness in their husbands’ happiness. Ganga is satisfied while she has been recognised as a wife of Harish. Both Ganga and Virmati ready to sacrifice their life to their husband, Harish. They expect the support of husband is alone a mighty power to them. So Kapur records Ganga’s ideas in the following words: “Her bindi and her bangles, her toe rings and her mangalsutra, all managed to suggest that he was still her god” (Difficult Daughters 278). On marriage life, many women are subjected domestic violence. Women’s inform complex makes them degraded they comparing themselves with other woman (like Virmati and Ganga)

In Difficult Daughter, Kapur states the growth and development of women characters from childhood to adolescence. Individualism of her characters caught up in a changing social scene. The novel Difficult Daughters shows how the generation gap makes the changes in the life of women of the society. Life style of three women Kasturi, Virmati and Ida is exposed in a multidimensional way clearly. The social structure dislocated due to the political partition.

Kapur utters the marriage is the symbol which is essential for a woman to survive with identity freely in the society. So Virmati compels Harish to marry her but Harish postpones it. When Virmati raised the questions about her marriage Harish argues about his familial image in the society and reveals his family position. He
never considers about Virmati’s family and its social status. As Harish becomes a selfish man, later she is treated as Harish’s second wife. She feels that her position is the secondary one or ‘other’ woman at home. Virmati understands the disparity of the society and its high ideals like virginity and chastity are essential for unmarried girl but it is not expected from men. The formal marriage rules, the consideration of people and public statement is essential for a woman. Most of the women characters are locked by the wedlock. They have not come out of the cage to enjoy freedom.

Among the three women Kasturi, Virmati and Ida, Virmati is a loser because she is completely alienated from her family. Virmati cannot create a respectable place for her specifically. Virmati fights with love and responsibility. Her marriage never gives happiness rather it is like a battle field with full of sadness and disapproval. Women in Kapur novels are always longing for love. It is an expectation for a woman from her childhood with parents, husband and children.

Virmati has no freedom to take decision of her own while selecting the name even for her baby. Virmati suggests ‘Bharati’: for her daughter but it is rejected by her husband. The short conversation between the couple runs, thus:

“Bharati”, Virmati suggests,

“No” said Harish

“No? But why? I thought with the birth of our country…”

“I don’t wish our daughter to be tainted with the birth of our country”.

“What birth is this? With so much hatred? We haven’t been born. We have moved back into the dark ages. Fighting, killing over religion. Religion of all things. Even the educated. This is madness, not freedom. And I never ever wish to be reminded of
it.” (Difficult Daughters 276)

Finally Harish names his daughter as, Ida, Difficult Daughters, Harish teaches basic education to his wife, Ganga shows less interest in learning and her pleasure is to cook and serve to the family members. While Virmati stays in the hostel to earn money, she allows the professor Harish Chandra to visit her in the hill station. Their illegal meeting creates her loss of her job and freedom. Manju Kapur identifies her women characters’ lack of sexual understanding of her women characters. Like Simone De Beauvoir in her work;

The feminine sex organ is mysterious even to the woman herself, concealed, mucous, and humid, as it is, it bleeds each month, it is often sullied with body fluids, it has a secret and perilous life of its own. Woman does not recognize herself in it, and this explains in large part why she does not recognize its desires as hers. (148)

In the second novel A Married Woman also Kapur highlights the sociological pressures of protagonist Astha. Hemant, Astha’s husband expects his wife to be innocent and a virgin. Hemant proves to show his patriarchal power. It is clearly shown when Hemant forces Astha to bear a child until they bear a son. Kapur shows the cultural repression of women, Astha’s mother advises her that the virtues of the Indian tradition: “Our Shashtras teach us how to live. You will learn from the Gita, the Vedas, the Upanishads”. (A Married Woman 27- 28)

Kapur points out the parents who forced their children to do their unfulfilled desire. Astha’s parents also give much importance to discipline and reading but Astha doesn’t show much interest in reading books. The main interest of Astha on painting is given less interest by her family members. Her parents control her relationship with Bunty. The second love of Astha is with Rohan who accompanies with him in the car.
Her parents restrict her while they know her secret relationship with Rohan. Astha dislikes her mother’s extreme strictness.

After marrying Astha, Hemant gets fulfilment physically and mentally because he has married a woman with all the good qualities. Ashta has guilty feelings while he calls her as “A Virgin” because she has loved Rohan before her marriage. Later she comes to know about Hemant’s love affair with somebody, she has no guilty conscious about her past love and considers the memories are useless.

As a wife Astha has to adjust her husband’s needs. Hemant compels her to wear western types of clothes but she dislikes it and says: ‘What do you think I am? A whore?’ (A Married Woman 44) Though she dislikes that dress, finally she fulfils her husband’s expectations. Asha Saharan opines the sexual abuse of woman in her journal:

The nature of family relationship forces women to struggle alone against violence where society supports the husband to assert his right to dominate and control the wife. Women are socialized to accept physical and mental abuses as part of a husband’s marital right. (43-45)

Astha is fully satisfied with her work of serving her husband like kneeling and taking of his shoes, pulling off his socks and feeling about the smell of his sweating feet. She satisfies the needs of Harish and his parents. But it is not possible for her to keep her mother with her. Astha’s mother hesitates to stay with her daughter’s house and Hemant also is not willing to take care of his mother-in-law. Her husband’s parents live with their son and grandchildren but her mother has no rights to live with her. Kapur clearly portrays the Indian society and its life style through her character:
She envied Hemant his relatively straightforward relationship with his parents. They demanded from him material care which he gave, grandchildren which he gave, emotional concern and physical presence - which he gave. Duties, responsibilities, obligations, all seemed clear.

(*A Married Woman* 86)

Kapur declares that men are unable to understand women. Even if Hemant follows modern trends, he cannot understand his wife’s longing. So Astha pays much attention on Aijaz who is an activist on Street Theatre Group. Slowly she is admired by him. At the same time Hemant dislikes Aijaz Khan and his revolutionary group and he calls them as “Culture-vultures” (*A Married Woman* 103). It is quite natural in the society a woman is not allowed to have a friendship without husband’s confession.

Kapur articulates the Indian cultural norms and women’s affair. Though Astha is a wife of Harish and a mother of two children but she develops contact with Aijaz. Kapur exposes the cultural changes in these following lines: “Asta loved looking at Aijaz on stage allowing herself frequent covert glances” (*A Married Woman* 112) Aijaz is a good activist and so he appreciates Astha’s drawing much but her husband does not care her interest on painting. Astha forgets her position as a respectful wife and a lovable mother, on reading the news of Aijaz and his troupe are burned alive in their van, she laments over it. Hemant questions her: “Why are you crying?” “What was he to you?” (*A Married Woman* 139) Astha cries, thus:

I can’t weep for the whole world, only when it means something to me. Maybe I am deficient, but I knew him, he was always working for everybody’s good, even the children loved him. And he has been burnt to death. Isn’t that reason enough? (*A Married Woman* 139)
Astha questions herself whether she has no rights to cry for a loveable one. As a husband Harish neither consoles her nor leaves her to cry but he irritates her without understanding the feelings of his wife. Astha’s love towards Aijaz makes her to wear white sari move an extent. Astha is upset while she finds condom in his suitcase. Astha feels suspicious about her husband. She feels the loss of her encouragement and appreciation after the death of Aijaz. It is unbearable to woman that Astha disgusts to share her husband with other women. As she is hurt by her husband’s illegal relation, she creates the affair with Pipeelika.

In *A Married Woman*, Pipeelika Trivedi loves Aijaz, a Muslim. She boldly expresses her love to her mother and she never thinks about the cultural background of her lover. Trivedi is perplexed when she knows of her daughter’s engagement with a Muslim. While Pipeelika supports Aijaz, her mother keeps silent and does not like her daughter marrying Muslim. Aijaz does not inform about his love and marriage to his family members. Pipeelika questions him whether he has informed about their love. Pipeelika is irritated as he keeps it secret. While she comes to know the matter, she becomes agitates: “You hide things from them, from me, and you accuse me of going on”. Aijaz replies,

I am sorry Pip, I really am, don’t be angry. My family is not like yours. There are so many, and they all want to be part of things, they would never have tolerated a Tees Hazari wedding, we would have had to go there and get married amid five thousand people at least, God it’s enough to put anyone off. And then there might have been fuss about the conversion thing—I didn’t wish to put you through all that. (*A Married Woman* 134)

Kapur expresses the problems of inter-caste marriage and its effects through her
characters. According to Pipeelika, opposing love is unreasonable. Mrs. Trivedi fears about her daughter’s life because she suffered a lot without her husband in her young age. Mrs. Trivedi’s husband was about twenty years senior to her. After his death, she became a young widow and she left uncared with two small children. Her mother frightened about her daughter’s life and so she refuses her love marriage. In olden days, women were not allowed to live after her husband’s death. P.V. Kane quotes a first century law giver Brihaspati’s definition of the devoted wife, the Pativrata: “She is someone whose state of mind reflects that of her husband. She shares his distress, her delight grows sickly and dresses unattractively in his absence, and dies when he does.” (qtd, in Nabar 567)

Kapur articulates all the restrictions follow by the society for women characters and not for men. The protagonists’ life cycle revolves around their husbands’ life. So after their marriage Pipeelika obliges her husband not to go Rajpur to put up a play as it is sensitive area. As a wife her life is completely connected with Aijaz. While Aijaz doesn’t accept her request, Pipeelika begs him: ‘Well stay here, and go to schools and colleges, instead of dashing out on weekends to some town or mohalla, or factory, god knows where all. Now you are married you have a responsibility to me, to us’ (A Married Woman 137) Pipeelika’s request is like Calpurnia’s in William Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar. While Caesar goes to Senate, she never allows her husband to go out because of her horrible dream: Calpurnia: “What is your intention, Caesar? Are you planning to go out of the house? I shall not let you move out of the house today”. (139)

Like Calpurnia, Pipeelika does not get dream but her mother’s fear comes true. After the death of Aijaz, like Trivedi, one more widow is added in her family. Pipeelika needs love and affection. The same situation happens there in Astha’s life
too. Therefore she creates a new relationship with Pipeelika Trivedi. On seeing a condom, Astha identifies her husband’s illegal affair with someone and needs new relationship like Pipeelika who also longs for love.

Kapur boldly introduces an intimacy and deep love of two women in her second novel. In *A Married Woman*, first Pipeelika and Astha start their relationship as friends. They meet often and share their ideas in their meeting. Astha and Pipeelika express their thoughts and feelings and comfort themselves. Their friendship becomes an illicit relationship. Kapur states their love as: “… an element of secrecy entered the relationship and gave it an illicit character.” (*A Married Woman* 218)

Kapur familiarizes the Westernisation through lesbianism and cultural degradation in her novel. V. Lizy criticizes lesbian concept of Kapur in her journal:

> Manju Kapur aims at *A Married Woman*’s passion for another woman and makes lesbianism a powerful component for the satisfaction of woman’s emotional urge and sexual pleasure. Lesbianism provides as much pleasure to women as heterosexual intercourse. Having realized women’s oppression and emotional starvation like Astha and Pipeelika the novelist has turned them into lesbians for their self fulfillment and posing challenge to male chauvinism.(18-22)

Westernisation makes the people blind. Lesbian relationship is also one of them. Though it is illegal, Astha feels comfortable in her relation with Pipeelika and no one can suspect them. Astha shares about her past lovers with her and her present anxieties, exploitation and frustration also. Astha and Pipeelika have demonstrated that they can have satisfying physical needs without opposite gender. For this relationship, there is no fear of pregnancy and childbirth in lesbian relationship. These two female characters do not consider their culture but concentrate on their own
needs. Kuhu Chana quotes the words of Diane Richardson in “Constructing Sexualities” asserts: “There is a tendency to see lesbian relationships as primarily emotional rather than sexual” (193)

Asta needs the relationship of Pipeelika after seeing the condom as the evidence in her husband’s suitcase, Astha confirms about her husband’s affair. Pipeelika says: ‘There is no escape from jealousy, is there? We are all embryonic Othellos’ (A Married Woman 221) Astha’s meeting with Pipeelika and phone contacts strengthen their relationship. Astha gets love, affection from Pip what she does not get from her husband. She feels free from obsession and experiences individuality. Besides the Western culture, in India, the lesbian love is completely against the cultural morality. Astha realises the truth in her married life that power of her husband rules than the true love of him. Though Hemant notices Astha’s distraction he asks her: “You seem distracted” she replies, “Nothing”. (A Married Woman 233)

Hemant identifies the contact of Astha and Pipeelika and their affair. In the society, the mistake of men is not as serious as the mistake of woman. For a woman it is treated as a sin. Both Astha and Pipeelika get the psychological freedom in their relationship. Their lesbianism is unacceptable one in Indian norms but in their freedom, they prove their liberating identity. They choose the route of love which is against the norms of culture and so they lose their identity.

Lesbianism is unusual attraction of one another but it is not acceptable and it defying the dignity of man-woman relationship. Their relationship is against heterosexuality. Astha is unable to find peace in her mind and so she longs Pipeelika’s love. Astha gets relaxation herself after getting love with Pipeelika. Pipeelika has no responsibility she is a widow but Astha has a family and two children. So her accountability gives depression to her. Astha tries to protest against the
submissiveness and wants to live independently.

As Astha engages herself, she wants to be away from her home. Like a small girl she enjoys while going out with Pipeelika to Yatra. She says like a child: “... I will be rolling along in a bus staring out of the window, sitting next to her, our bodies touching” (A Married Woman 250) Pipeelika plans to go somewhere with Astha but she engages with some other household duties and she has to take care for her husband because of his blood pressure. Pipeelika becomes upset while Astha tries to go away from her relationship and regrets:

“Look it’s not working out”

“What is not working out?” says Astha.

“One should never have affairs with married people, they are the worst” (A Married Woman 268)

Pipeelika has no responsibilities at home but Astha’s case is completely different. Astha has the guilty feeling and realize her mistake while she is away from her family, husband and children. Hemant occasionally shows his love towards Astha while he helps her in restroom, she uneasily feels and says: “I am not able to switch on and off like you.”(A Married Woman 276)

Pipeelika shows her possessiveness while Astha’s journey with her husband to Disney. Pipeelika feels desperate and lonely. Astha has the familial responsibility to concentrate on her husband’s health. Astha changes her food habit for her husband. Astha’s special interest on her husband and children make Pipeelika irritated. Astha deeply analyses her belief about traditional wife. She is unable to bear her husband’s tiredness, suffering and depression. Astha often wonders at their mismatching characters and the nature of the bond between them and Hemant is touched by her efforts. Very rarely he enquires about her health: “Well wife, how are you?”(A
As an Indian, Kapur is able to understand the mentality of Indian women. In an Indian culture; a wife expects love and affection from her husband. Astha is not also exempted from this tendency. Her lack of love leads her to seek other relationship like Aijaz and Pipeelika. Lesbianism is partly due to the strong patriarchal ruling the male supremacy and the homophobia that have shaped women’s life style in India. Marriage plays a vital role in India. Mismatching of couple creates familial problems where the pressure increases and pleasure decreases in homosexual relation.

In India, lesbianism is a criminal offence. The reason for this lesbianism is the patriarchy system of society in which considers male as the superior authority to female as subordinate. So women start thinking to disconnect their husband’s relationship and have some other female or male affairs. Either a mental illness or moral ill-treatment makes men or women to get homosexual relationship. It troubles not only the family but also the society.

Lesbian relationship may give enjoyment and ecstasy for the people of the same sex. Pipeelika points out that it ensures union of souls. Their relationship makes Astha stronger mentally. Before Astha, Pipeelika has had two lesbian relationships with Neeraj and Sameera. Kapur tells in an interview to Ira Pandey about the introduction of this plot clears all confusion:

Lesbian relationship suggested itself to as an interesting means of making Astha mature and change. An affair with man could have been the classic clinche and so I ruled it out and tried out a same sex affair, I don’t know how successful. I have been not is this based on any real life relationship. It is as I said a writer experiment with a lot. (Interview by Ira Pandey, The Hindu, January 3, 2003)
Asthą’s political interest is evoked by Aijaz and his speech. When he explains his view: “… the way man lived in society was politics and this affected everybody, literate, illiterate, powerful, powerless, poor, rich.” *(A Married Woman 104)* She says, “Oh! I hadn’t realized. This whole thing is very complicated. Power seekers on both sides- use religion quite blatantly.” *(A Married Woman 108)*

Kapur states the political oppression of Astha. Astha involves her in political politics but her hatreds on the people who fight in the name of religion. They showed their power by destroying temples and mosques. Astha showed her interest in Street Theatre Group. They spread awareness among conspirators. While she hears the news about the assassination of Aijaz, she cries and laments. It is unbearable to her losing a good friend and well-wisher and so she deeply expressed her sorrow. But Hemant casually says: “Why are you crying? This kind of thing happens all the time. I don’t see you wasting your tears”. *(A Married Woman 139)* Hemant does not comprehend his wife’s desperation instead, he mocks at her subsequent plans for attending the communal meeting. Hemant ridicules her politics interest and efforts.

Opposing the death of ten activists, a massive protest rally is organised from the Red Fort. Astha informs her husband to attend the meeting and says: “I shall be late coming home from school today. To a rally to protest the circumstances of ten men’s death” *(A Married Woman 142)*. Though Astha clarifies regarding the meeting, Hemant frights her:

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Whenever did rallies do any good? Goondas hire people from neighbouring villages at ten rupees a day to come and make trouble, block traffic and show their muscle. No matter how big – who cares – who remembers what they are about? (A Married Woman 142)
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Hemant dislikes sending her to rally. He talks in an irritating way. Hemant
dislikes sending her wife to the job. It creates troubles to the family. He says: “You can’t do everything. Leave your job if you insist on painting. It never brought enough money to justify your going out of the house. But now you need not, dearest, I am making enough money”. (A Married Woman 148) Not only Astha’s interest in politics is controlled but also economic independence is restricted.

Kapur brings the real life situation in Astha’s family. Astha cannot tolerate the murder of Theatre activists if she talks about it, Hemant gets irritation. Hemant expects that his wife should be a home maker and not to join in the social life. Astha’s presence is important at home while her mother-in-law is not feeling well and no need to cry for somebody’s death or consolation. Kapur expresses women’s impediment to join politic. Hemant dislikes sending Astha to Rastrapathi Bhavan. Hemant says that woman is in the home and not on the streets. Hemant is annoyed. According to Hemant, whatever Astha does, this is considered as unimportant. She struggles how he decides her activities are unimportant. For one’s important thing is useless for others. The personal point of view is different from one another. Normally her mother-in-law has not blamed about her activities. While she decides to go Ayodhye, she starts saying:

You know I never interfere in whatever you decide to do. Today young people feel they must live their own lives. But there are times when it is necessary to listen to the advice of elders. What is the need to leave your family, and roam about like a homeless woman on the streets of same strange city? (A Married Woman 186)

Though Astha’s mother-in-law is a good-natured old woman, she does not understand Astha in all the aspects. She dislikes her daughter-in-law to show Astha’s involvement in politics. She suggests her continuously, “But why go to Ayodhya she
returned after a pause. You want to say something you write a letter to the newspaper. That is much better. People get to hear. You used to write.” *(A Married Woman 186)*

So Astha lost her support of her mother-in-law to participate in politics.

A斯塔 is unable to agree her mother-in-law’s idea. According to Astha women have to show their contribution in politics but her mother-in-law warns her: ‘It is not a woman’s place to think of these things.’ *(A Married Woman 186)* She concludes that woman should not think about politics but about home and family. While Astha plans to go Ramjanambhoomi Nyas, Hemant also tries to engage himself to visit Bombay to meet a dealer. While she seeks permission from him to go Ayodhya but Hemant replies: ‘As my wife, you think it proper to run around, abandoning home, leaving the children to the servants?’ She questions herself how she can leave the children. She asks him: ‘What about the children?’ Hemant replies: ‘That’s your responsibility. I have work to do, a factory to run, I can’t be both mother and father.’ *(A Married Woman 189)*

A斯塔 suffers in self-pity. As a woman she has some the responsibilities. Her mind always revolves around about in children, husband, painting, Sampradayakte Mukti Manch. Though she thanked god for getting all the aspects like loveable husband, nice children, good mother-in-law, her life is still chained without peace of mind. Without the presence of woman, the family surely would feel. Hemant leaves one day before to Bombay. As Astha also plans to go to Ayodhya, her son Himanshu asks his mother:

“You are also leaving?”

“Yes darling, only for two days”

“But why?”

“I have some work”. *(A Married Woman 190)*
After she convinced him he little bit unconvinced. In Ayodhya Astha speaks very firm and clean. In her speech she speaks:

Brothers and sisters,’ she started, ‘In essence women all over the world are the same, we belong to families. We are affected by what affects our husbands, fathers, brothers and children. In history many things are not clear the same thing that is right for one person is wrong for another; it is difficult to decide our path of action. We judge not by what people tell us, but by what we experience in our homes. And what experience tells us that where there is violence, there is suffering, unnecessary and continuous suffering... (A Married Woman 197)

Her effective speech makes the people nod their head with misery whatever they have faced during the violence.

Pipeelika and Astha plan to go on an Ekta Yatra. Astha likes to spend time with Pipeelika. While Hemant knows the matter of his wife’s roaming with Pipeelika, he starts shouting. Hemant’s agitation makes him to shout at her. He himself says for business and his mother has all the responsibilities on her head but Astha always engages her time with Pipeelika. Hemant wants to stop her to Yatra and shouts at her: “Who will protect you? Suppose you get raped?” Astha replies: “Why would I get raped?” (A Married Woman 249)

Asta is maddened by these words. Hemant wants his wife to stay at home and do her home made duties. She should avoid her political interest. He blackmails her that he would complain about her to her mother Trivedi through phone. Astha calls her mother and asks her to accompany the children in her absence while she goes to Yatra but her mother also dislikes sending her to Yatra. She starts asking many question related to Yatra. Astha is trapped by all the sides and not easily getting
permission to go Yatra. Astha says to Hemant to attend the march today. Hemant knows very well that his wife expects to go to the tremendous march. He says in an angry way: “Out in the streets, jostling with goondas, neglecting your family, all for some fool masjid you did not even know existed before your great friend Aijaz chose to educate you”. Astha replies:

“It has nothing to do with Aijaz”. Hemant cunningly asks:

“Then his widow.” (A Married Woman 294)

For Hemant his wife should never be interested in politics not only politics but also relationship of Pipeelika makes her to go march.

Kapur represents the pathetic economic oppression of Astha in her second novel A Married Woman. Astha also earns money but she has no freedom to utilize her economic influence. In their Goa tour Astha is controlled by her husband to buy a silver box. Without her husband’s permission, she does not use her economic power. Kapur expresses Astha’s feelings in these lines: “Because one of the things the town offered was an antique silver box, priced at five thousand rupees. It was so beautiful. Astha fell in love with it immediately—old, blackened, intricately carved, and totally useless’. Astha asks, ‘Please, can I have that box?” Instead of buying, Hemant says:

“You must be out of your mind. It’s too expensive, these people are all cheats” A Married Woman 164-165)

Kapur expresses the anxiety of Astha who like a young girl bargains a desired object. As a working woman, the box is not so costly to her. Astha is spellbound to do anything, though she is a wealthy woman. Astha really feels shamed about this matter and she expresses her feelings without patience and asks him: “…I also earn. Can’t I buy a box if I want, even if it is a little over priced?” He replies her: “You earn! What you earn, now that is really something, yet, that will pay for this holiday” (A Married
Woman 165)

Asthा hurts by her husband’s way of talking and neglecting her wish. Kapur reveals the modern life of men and woman without understanding each other. She also spends money for her family needs without counting it. Hemant’s sarcastic answer makes her irritated. She never opposes anything for her husband’s wish like airline tickets and other expenses. Kapur displays Astha’s disappointment. In many places women become deaf and dumb. They know to talk and hear to listen but it is not possible for them:

I have earned for my ticket she thought, but this was not the place to bring it up. The children pottering about in the shop had fallen silent. Anuradha went and stood at the doorway staring at the traffic. Himanshu was staring with the cashew nuts they had bought to take back to Delhi. (A Married Woman 165)

Kapur observes the oppressed position of woman. Ashta does not argue with her husband. She knows very well that how much she spends him as expenditure for the trip. Nothing is hidden but her husband does not know the value of her wish. Astha controls her agony, without expressing. Astha can understand her husband’s male chauvinistic mind and his patriarchal power. As a woman, she has to obey without asking any questions. Astha imagines that even though she is an educated woman, she is not able to satisfy her needs boldly and questions herself how it is possible for others those who are illiterate. She can talk but she is not able to do so.

Asthा worries about her position. She has not got a freedom to buy a small thing. Hemant enjoys his wife’s money and rule her. She earns but nothing she gets with that. As an only daughter, she should have the rights to keep her father’s property but her mother innocently handed over her legal property to Hemant without
consulting her daughter. Kapur asserts the assumption of man is that woman has no capacity to possess the property and also unfit to handle the wealth securely. Woman lost her equal rights not only by the society but also by herself. Astha has distrustful about herself to keep the huge amount with her. The problem starts from home itself. It creates the familial misunderstanding between the couple. When adjustment is lag all the things will lag.

Kapur illustrates that the societal view distinguishes man from woman. The expectation of the society is that man is to rule and a woman is to obey. The domination of man distracts her to empower. As the result of this contradictory situation, Astha needs the relationship with Pipeelika lesbianism. Astha is strongly in love with Pipeelika which is surely opposite to the traditional rules of the society. Their affair survives until Pipeelika goes away to abroad. As she is not like Pipeelika she has a family, husband and children.

Asthा’s familial responsibilities restrict her to get free. As she protests against her subordination, she has chosen the strange relationship lesbianism. Asha’s first love affair with Rohan gets defeated and her second love with her husband gives the agony. Her third lesbian love also gets failure after Pipeelika’s departure to abroad. Astha does not share even her oppressive experience with others. She hides and avoids exposing her painful thoughts.

Laws alone cannot bring about socio-political revolution. The adequate changes should be introduced and sufficient infrastructure also should be provided like family courts, special boards for dowry complaints, rape cases etc., are necessary. Romile Thapar argues:

The rules of marriage were rigidly enforced and marriage was primarily a social institution the patriarchal system tended to keep the
stations of women at a low level, and the emergence of the joint family with special property rights for the male members rein oral male dominance. (32)

Kapur reveals the father – daughter relationship in *A Married Woman* while Hemant comes to know Anuradha has her period, he feels pain a lot. Hemant says: “She’s still a little thing. Why should she have to suffer so much?” (*A Married Woman* 170) Hemant’s love of his daughter (Anuradha) seems to be a great surprise for Astha. The relationship of father-daughter is very strong than a marital relationship of husband-wife. The husband shows less attention to wife than his daughter.

Kapur proves the proverb as true: ‘Blood is thicker than water’ because Hemath’s father concern is superior to a husband’s. He pours himself a drink and making for Anuradha’s bedside. Astha says: “She is not so little and it’s part of nature” (*A Married Woman* 170) For Astha, it is unbelievable her husband never showed this much care her while she was in sick but for his daughter he shows special care. Astha feels mild jealous of their relationship.

In Kapur’s third novel *Home*, she points out the different kinds of oppression of women especially gender issues, childlessness, child abuse, dowry system etc. It is a traditional thought in patriarchal societies that the responsibilities of their parents will be reduced after their daughters get married. In *Home*, Kapur advocates the problems of woman continues after her marriage in her husband’s family. A girl’s future is decided by her husband and his family members. Their connection with their parental home is slowly disconnected.

Kapur pictures that dowry system and child abuses are the main problems in *Home*. Socio-cultural degradation raises its head in the middle class society. Kapur
gives a clear sketch of socio-culture and its decaying motion in her novels. In *Home* the protagonist’s sister-in-law Sunita attempt suicide due to physical and mental torture of her husband. Murali, her husband often compels her to get money from her parent’s house. Dowry problem makes her death. But her father Banwari Lal is ready to give whatever his daughter needs even after her marriage. Her parents expect her happiness and prosperous life.

In *Home*, Kapur expresses the hurdles of middle class women. In India dowry occupies an integral part in the wedding and it is useful to the couple for living together. Sunita, Murali’s wife who is a jobless man and he is responsible for his wife’s death at the age of her thirty two. Sunita is oppressed by her husband and she suffers in her husband’s house. Her suicide attempt is merely foolishness. At least for her child Vicky, she must have survived. Without the hope in future, she took erroneous decision. Dowry is a social custom and it is very difficult to change it all of a sudden. It is a practice and a custom which generates and strengthens unity and solid relationship among people. The bride and bridegroom’s family is willing to contribute and receive dowry.

Kapur speaks another problem in this novel is Sona’s childlessness. It is a curse of society. Society blames a woman though she is soft and kind. Sona decides her beauty is waste without a child. While she dislikes adopting a child her family members forced her to adopt Vicky. Another problem in *Home* is the psychological oppression of a child who is misused by her cousin, Vicky. After his mother’s death he stayed with his uncle’s family and gave her sexual torture. When he was ten he came to his grandparents’ house. As his father Murali is a drug addict, the shelter to Vicky is given by Banwari Lal’s family. Out of generosity, Sona shows special care for him but it produces troubles to them at last.
Kapur’s revolutionary idea is expressed through the character Vicky. Nisha is grieved in sexual abuse by her cousin. Without his parental concern his behaviour has changed. Home is a safety place for everybody but for Nisha it looks like a hell. Her psychological oppression and its sufferings make her to send her aunt Rupa’s house. Though she shifted to her aunt’s house, Nisha is highly disturbed by nightmares. Rupa searches and finds out the reason of her problem after the discussion with her husband Prem Nath. Nisha’s psychological depression happens due to her cousin’s ill-treatment. The culprit is described as “a black crow” and “a vulture”.

Kapur reveals the problems of girl children in her novel. Young children like Nisha are not only affected by physically but mentally and emotionally intricate into the sexual abuse. Nisha’s reactions are not being identified by her family members. In a joint family, a child’s individual problem is not be given importance. While the less care of child occurs hopelessness and finally it creates mental trauma. Nisha’s depression is hidden to save the name and fame of the family. Nisha generally lacks a terminology to express her abuse so she suffers herself. Nisha is disturbed with physical pain and mental distress. Nisha develops disgust self-hatred for her physical self. Her internal feelings of confusion (fear and anger) conflict with physical. Every individual has equal rights in keeping them harmless and safe.

Individualistic feminists challenge to alterate legal systems to get rid of class freedoms and gender rights and to make sure that individuals have equal rights, including an equal claim under the law to their own persons and property. Individualist feminism boosts women to express for their own lives. It also opposes any intervention into the choices adults make with their own bodies since, it contends, such intervention creates a forced order. No one has rights to interference of individual’s choice.
With the societal concern Kapur brings forth the sexual issue in *Home*. Nisha experiences anxiety and fear of being hurt during her abuse. She faces both severe physical and mental pain. While Vicky is blackmailing her, she gets fear and anxiety. Without the parental love and lack of proper guidance, Vicky changed as a vulnerable character and tortures a child. To escape from the situation, Nisha is departed from her mother and kith and kin. After the birth of second son Raju less significance is given to her. Nisha feels as a neighbour, while comeback to her home.

Kapur exposes the dowry problem in Sona’s life also. Mrs. Banwari Lal lost her daughter Susila due to dowry but as a mother-in-law, she expects dowry from her daughter-in-law Sona. As Yashpal Banwari Lal loved Sona, Yaspal’s father accepts his son’s love without restriction but his mother oppositions the bride. Without bringing dowry, prestige of their family would fall down. His mother scolds her:

> The girl must have done black magic to ensnare him. Otherwise would he go against his own family after seeing her face for a second? Tell him not to bother leaving the house. I myself will disappear to make way for the wretch he prefers before us all. (*Home* 3)

Kapur states how the family members disapprove love affair in her novel. For parents love of their children is a nuisance. Yaspal’s mother considers much about bride’s economic position alone, not her son’s love or future life. She ponders over her daughter-in-law’s economic position gives respect to her family. Though Sona is a good-looking woman, her mother-in-law never accepts her. As Sona introduced as a customer, her mother-in-law offers less priority to her. Even after getting the permission from Babaji, (a person who is treated as sage to a family) his mother blackmails him to eat poison. Mrs. Banwari Lal misunderstood that her favourite son is entrapped by a clever, manipulative and dowry less creature. She challenges that
she would find a dozen women like her for her son with suitable dowries.

Sona faces double sided problems. On the one hand her mother in law’s torture and on the other hand the people of her community spreads filthy news about her family. They spread scandals that Sona’s mother sends her daughter with a crooked plan to a wealthy family. As Sona is lucky, she settled in a well-to-do family. They blow-out about her younger sister Rupa. Rupa’s is darker, whether she has luck or not. In Indian society, women suffer due to their neighbouring people and their own community.

Kapur insists the main problem of women in Indian society is giving first preference to other’s opinions. Wealthy life and good fortune of others make them gossiping and back biting. As a mother-in-law she feels suspicious about her son. After getting married, her son would leave with his wife. As a mother she has Oedipus complex on her son. Sona loves her husband and his family members. Sona loves her in-law’s family but the position is different. She says with feeling: “I want to be a daughter to her but sometimes I feel Maji doesn’t like me” (Home 10). Sona worries about the detachment of her husband’s family.

Sona is blamed without reason for any accidental activities in her family. While Nisha is highly disturbed by the nightmare, Sona decides to send her to Rupa’s house. But her grandmother misinterprets this, as Sona is envious of Nisha’s attachment to her and so Sona plans to take Nisha away from her. The same problem of Sona reflects in her daughter’s life. She was poor while she got married. Now Nisha is rich but she is not permitted to marry a poor guy Suresh Kumar. Kapur compares Nisha with a chess coin:

Now a prisoner in her home, she played the part of the king in chess. She needed to be protected, as without her there could be no game. The moves
concerning her were carefully planned, but she herself was powerless, quiescent mute, and waiting. *Home* 217)

It is true that women have been needed for some extent. They shouldn’t beyond it. In *The Dark room* R.K.Narayan has said the character of woman. They have nothing to fight. The struggle of Rumi makes her to say: “I don’t possess anything in this world. What possession can a woman call her own except her body? Everything else that she has is her father’s, her husband’s or son’s”. *The Dark Room* 72

In *Home*, Kapur states other victims also like Sona are Asha and her mother. The destiny of woman like Asha, after marrying Vicky, leaves her family and going to husband’s family without her parents concern. In the marriage function of Vicky and Asha, her sister begins crying, others consoles her: “.... Don’t think your sister is gone; think you have another family to call your own” *Home* 85. This is the social set up women should go to her husband’s house but not men. Asha leaves her family members and live with another family. Asha’s mother is a widow after her husband’s death she lives lonely with tears. As a bride’s mother she cannot stay with her daughter like bridegroom’s parents. The bride, Asha cries continuously. So she cannot control her weeping. Nearly twenty years, a woman lives with her parents. Suddenly a man comes in her life and she has to engage with him at the end of her life. In the conservative society, women are expected to be submissive and subservient.

Asha’s physical features are vividly described by the novelist in the novel. She is too short while she hears the comments of others. She becomes aggressive. It is natural in the marriage function the bride and bridegroom are criticised. It is inevitable of criticizing the couple in their marriage. But any how unlike Nisha, Asha is married earlier but Nisha takes a long time to marry due to her bad horoscope. So she is compelled to fast by her mother for her best life partner. She dislikes doing it.
According to Nisha, this is a superstitious belief to get a good husband; a woman has to spend the day without food or water. Finally she comes to conclusion that she doesn’t want to marry anyone for that her mother: “Who will look after you if you don’t marry?” *(Home 92)*

It is difficult for woman to live without security in the society. The compulsion of Astha’s mother for fasting makes Nisha irritation. Nisha is treated as a rubber ball. Even in her home, she is not able to live peacefully. Sona fetches her daughter to her home but Astha feels like an alien in her own house. Sona gives less importance to her studies. Sona frankly says: “We are old-fashioned people. Tradition is strong with. So is duty”. *(Home 123)* Sona indicates Nisha that she belongs to an old fashioned and conservative family and so marriage is necessary for their family.

Nisha has been influenced by her aunt’s thinking of life but Sona doesn’t know or understand her daughter much like Rupa. Without understanding her daughter’s thoughts and feelings, Sona decides to discontinue her education to do household duties. According to Sona, the duty of women is to marry and produce children. She scolds her sister Rupa if Nisha doesn’t know cooking: “You take half an hour to peel ten potatoes. How will you manage in your future home?” *(Home 125)*

Nisha is irritated by her mother’s words. According to Sona the only responsibility of woman is cooking but Rupa understands the needs of Nisha. Nisha expects to move from her mother’s house. She feels comfortable in her aunt’s house. Without caring her daughter’s interest, her mother trains her in culinary skills and includes her attention in all her pujas. Sona endlessly complains Nisha with Asha. Sona was making up for negligent upbringing so she makes her daughter also unfit.

Kapur practises mythical comparison in her novel *Home*. Sona teaches her daughter morality through the cultural stories: ‘The Vat Savitri Katha’ legends. Sona
quotes that as Savithri was a pious woman, god offered her husband again. Sona instructs her daughter to live a dutiful wife in future but Nisha doesn’t get chance to live with her mother. While she acquires opportunity to stay with her mother, Nisha is irritated by her. Sona compares her struggles with Savitri’s. Even epic characters are living among the people. “In mythical terms, the dominant feminine prototype is the chaste, patient, self-denying wife, Sita…” (Bakshi, 9)

Kapur introduces Asha as the next victim of this novel Home. She is Vicky’s wife. She dislikes staying in the barsati. She feels guilty while her husband working under Banwari Lal’s family to run his family. It is uncomfortable to Asha depending on others after their marriage. As a married woman, Asha adores living expensive life like others with freedom in the family but without separate income, it is impossible to her. Sometimes she worries to share her desire with Vicky. If she shares her desire, he becomes annoyed: “I am fine here, I was not born in a palace like you” (Home 105)

While Asha brings issues to him regarding the basic facilities at home, Vicky does not listen. The couple has no source to live if they go out of the house, as Asha is coming from poor family background. Often she feels jealous on Nisha and Nisha’s costly ornaments and luxurious things. Asha knows her husband’s less respect at home and so she is unable to ask her rights. After marriage Asha is displeased without money but Nisha frustrated without marriage. Nisha gets no freedom in a trivial thing at home. While she cuts her hair, without getting permission from her mother, she starts shouting:

Who gave you permission to cut your hair, suddenly you have become so independent, you decide things on your own, where did you find the money, the time, the beauty parlour. Where did you find these things?

(Home 149-150)
Nisha’s marriage proposal comes to an end because of economic inequality of his lover. While Suresh proposes his love, Nisha happily says, “Mummy Papa also did love marriage” (Home 153). Nisha believes that they would accept her love, as they got love marriage. Kapur says the advantage of the children if their parents married in love; they have no rights to oppose their love. Though Nisha loves him deeply she is strict in her chastity. While Suresh tries to seduce her but she does not allow him.

While her parents receive a complaint letter from her college, her parents know their love affair of their daughter. They oppose Suresh for his low caste and low societal rank. Her younger brother Raju starts shouting and Sona grunts, thus:

This girl will be our death my child, born after ten years, tortures me like this. Thank God your grandfather is not alive. What face will I show upstairs? Vijay gets his wife from Fancy Furnishings while my daughter goes to the street for hers. (Home 197)

Kapur brings out the societal issue of caste discrimination in this novel. Banwari Lal family members blame Suresh’s family that they have a crooked plan to trap a young beautiful well-to-do girl into marriage by spoiling her name. Nisha’s parents forget their love marriage completely and oppose their daughter’s love without conscience. No one understands Nisha’s sufferings and her personal liberty. Caste and economic inequality of Suresh stops her love. Nisha has no rights to choose her life partner. Due to her horoscope, the arranged marriage of Nisha getting delayed and by her family members her love marriage also negated.

The same thing happened in the fourth novel of Kapur, The Immigrant. Kapur depicts the difficulties of women without getting married in their correct age. If women get delayed to marry, undesirable talk about her would increase by her
neighbouring people. Though Nina shows less consideration on her marriage, her friend Zenobia points out it, thus: ‘You are obsessed with wrinkles’ (The Immigrant 49). Nina feels embarrassing.

Nina’s mother fears after her death, no one would pay attention to her daughter. As she scares about her daughter’s marriage, she decides to arrange it as early as possible and says: “Oh, what does it matter? After you marry, I can die happy. Once you are settled, I will come and visit you. And I can help look after your children” (The Immigrant 54). Kapur expresses the similar situation in her second novel A Married Woman. Astha’s mother follows Tuesday fasting for her daughter’s marriage. It is a belief that Indian women can abbess god by their fasting. The expectation of parents is that their children should live happily, though they suffer. Nina’s mother’s prayer bears fruit while her daughter getting chance to marry in abroad.

Kapur exposes her personal experience in her novel The Immigrant. Her protagonist immigrant is revealed by her. In Indian culture; after their marriage women should go to her husbands’ house. Nina feels uncertainty her future lifetime in far-off countries. She hesitates to agree it: ‘I’m not sure, Ma, it is such a big step. And so far away, it means leaving everything, job, friends, you. If anything happens, I’ll be left with nothing’. Rita Garg quotes, thus:

Manju Kapur fully ascribes the novel, the immigrant to diaspora-covering all the aspects- social, cultural, economic, political and religious. The diaspora woman character, Nina endorses self to emotion-lacking moorings and craving in life. The shortcoming of the luxurious implantation makes her life full of pitfalls and consequential manoeuvrings of dismay at self and the associates. (58-70)
Nina’s mother questions her:

“You like him?”

“Well, yes”.

“Then beta, what is the problem?”

“It’s not enough.”

“Marriage is a question of adjustment”

“I feel nervous. So far away with a person I hardly know” (The Immigrant 74)

It is inevitable to a woman to go with her husband where her partner resides. Nina gets psychological fear. Her mother advises her that marriage is an adjustment and there should be a mutual understanding between husband and wife. Finally Nina agrees to marry Ananda. Nina dislikes spending money for her marriage, as she receives loan from her college provident fund. By understanding the financial position of her family, Nina spends little for wedding and subsequent ceremonies.

In a research article, Sushila Chaudhary observes: “The Immigrant focuses on the NRI marriages where women are uprooted and move to live in some alien land. “Women are doubly alienated-one because of their race and the other because of their gender”. (22-24). In Canada, Nina feels lonely. Nina is questioned at the Canadian airport. Her accent, her features, and clothes make others to feel her as an alien and she gets irritated. Nina expresses her frustration and inquisition to her husband: “They were treating me like a criminal. They wouldn’t treat a European or American like that. Why me? Every paper was in order” (The Immigrant 109). In a new country, Nina finds difficulty. Nina is pure vegetarian and so she never tastes non-vegetarian at all. Being a wife of Ananda, she adapts his food habit.

Nina becomes disappointed while she identifies her husband’s impotency.
Though he keeps her happy and remains helpful to her, she is not satisfied with her biological desires. Nina becomes happy after she gets the relationship of her classmate Anton, a white man. Often she engages with him and she feels happy while she spends her time with him. Nina believes friendly activities. Nina thinks it is right while seeing the western culture to drink, smoke and having sex with others. Anton questions her continuously:

“How do you feel about white men?” She replies:

“I know nothing about them” *(The Immigrant 258)*

Western culture is unknown to her. Without her husband she visits Ottawa with her classmate. Having extramarital and sexual relationship is common in abroad. It is quite natural to lead their life with whom they want to. So Anton asks Nina: “I am married too. But it’s stupid to confine yourself to one person for your whole life, what about adventure, what about experiencing differences? Nobody owns anybody, you know”. *(The Immigrant 258)*

Nina likes Anton’s friendly relationship. She does not know that Anton has brought a condom. She could understand he must have been planned and prepared to get sexual contact with her. Nina’s dissatisfaction in her conjugal relationship makes her accept Anton’s contact. First she hesitates to love him but her natal affair bursts out while Anton approaches her. After knowing her husband’s affair with Mandy, Nina’s unsatisfied physical desire is fulfilled by Anton by developing sexual contact with him. First Nina has a guilty feeling emotional despair and then she consoles herself that the requirement of natal is common to everybody.

Kapur’s fifth novel *Custody* also shows the mental trauma of the two protagonists Ishita and Shagun. Kapur brings to notice the legal oppression of women. Ishita’s husband and mother-in-law force her to get divorce, as she has no child. She
likes to live with her husband Sandra Kandha but Shagun throws her family her husband for her affair with Ashok Kanna. Without mutual understanding of couple, their marriage is fixed. After knowing the truth, the couple requisite divorce. Both couples in Custody apply for divorce. The legal oppression of woman is produced not only by the opposite genders like husband with wife, but also by two women comparably daughter-in-law with mother-in-law. Kapur proves that Ishita’s mother-in-law persuades her to obtain divorce but her husband for it.

Shagun is a beautiful wife of Raman. She loves her husband’s boss illegally. She is in the role of wife, mother and a lover. She is not allowed her children with Raman but she asks divorce from him. Ashok Kanna shows his business tricks in the life of Shagun and Raman. He misuses his influence and his high financial position affects Shagun heavily. Ashok spoils Shagun’s and Raman’s happy married life with his status and money. V. Sangeetha says about Kapur’s novel Custody:

…the novel Custody reveals the unimagined uncertainties of matrimony and the sufferings of children during a divorce. The wife’s sense of suffocation, the husband’s fear of loneliness and the constant shifting of children are evoked with painstaking sincerity. (52-53)

Shagun’s affair not only disturbs the Indian customs but also spoils the future of her children. The problems of parents affect the life of the children. T.S. Eliot states the absurdness of parents in his Cocktail Party: “Two people who know they do not understand each other, breeding children whom they do not understand and who will never understand them”. (The Cocktail Party 32) The selfishness of the Shagun changes the life style of her children upside down.

The decision of Shagun devastates her children. The children of the Shagun Arjun and Roohi get mental trauma. As Arjun is matured, he understands the problem
between his parents but Roohi is immature to comprehend the situation. In *Custody* Manju Kapur insists the mental trauma of the children from their childhood, Roohi and Arjun. Due to their parents misunderstanding, a small child Roohi faces woes.

In *Custody*, without understanding each other, the couples (Shagun /Raman and Ishita/Shandra Kandha) united by their marriage. Their misunderstanding or non -understanding of each other produces the problems. Misunderstanding of couple is easily solved but non-understanding is hard to solve. The irresponsibility of Shagun troubles Raman and Shandra Kandha’s silence before his parents spoils the life of Ishita. The confusions of the families create the societal chaos. It is a fact that Kapur portrayed the real picture of the Indian family in her novels and not merely telling the story. The ignorance of the women characters causes misery. Kapur has opined that women become the victim of exploitation. In spite of all the legal back up and constitutional safeguards, women in India are, by and large victim of social economic political exploitation. Shagun likes to keep her children with her. She has no awareness of rights and her ignorance is a root cause of their sufferings and societal chaos.

Kapur depicts women’s innocent behavior of women in all her novels. The protagonists do not know about the surrounding as they married in their early age. In *A Married Woman*, Astha is unable to identify her husband’s superiority complex and male chauvinism. After getting the experiences, she realizes the arising problems of a family, contradictory ideas, and clashes. While she married, Astha feels proud as she recognized in the society. She thinks everything is in good condition and he is pound on her life partner. The negative character of her husband is unable to be identified. Astha underestimates strength. Trotsky says in his *Women and the Family*: “To alter the position of women at the root is possible only if all the conditions of social,
family, and domestic existence are altered” (45).

Trotsky’s consideration about women is true that women’s empowerment surely makes the country’s empowerment. Most of the women characters in Kapur’s novels believe Satyagraha. As they have soft and meek feminine qualities, they like to follow non-violence. So women participation increased in freedom struggle but after getting independence they were left out without understanding their oppression. In Kapur’s novels, women protagonists are not only preferred for housekeeping but also for partaking in freedom struggle. In marriage consent, all the women are expected to follow Ahimsha both in marriage life and society.

Women in Kapur’s novels give importance to both profession and family. Virmati in Difficult Daughters maintains her family with profession, Astha in A Married Woman traps between profession and family and Shagun shows importance to her profession but she loses happiness of family life. Kapur depicts the essentiality of marriage in the society. Majority of the characters in Kapur’s novels get suffering from mental depression due to their spouse’s illegal affair. Ganga in Difficult Daughters, Astha in A Married Woman, and Nina in The Immigrant disheartened to get love.

In this materialistic world, woman has to work, fight for the familial, and financial expenditure. Kapur’s middle class female protagonists have independent income and liberation. Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nine, Shagun and Ishita are having different kinds of problems. Virmati in Difficult Daughters faces the existential crisis, Astha in A Married Woman, lives for her children despite of her husband’s not caring nature, Asha in Home has to adjust and live within her husband’s income. Due to horoscope problem, Nisha is not getting married in oldness. After marriage and child bearing, she is unable to upkeep her garments, Nina in The Immigrant, she fights for
her existential crisis without anybody’s support in an unknown place. Shagun and Ishita in, suffer to fulfil their love in Custody. The protagonists of Kapur’s are wrestling with their individual affairs and with the society.

Kapur focuses on the female infanticide, child marriage and child abuse in her novels. Equality between men and women exists while the both sexes are able to share their thoughts equally. Actually gender equality shows the empowerment of woman. Woman in Kapur’s novels work as an unpaid and they adjust all kinds of working conditions. The fear of insecurity arises Ishita to loss her life and with crisis of existence.

About three generation, the grandmother Kasturi does not know the value of family planning, mother Virmati aborts her child but daughter Ida never gives chance for childbearing. Without health awareness of family planning, Kasturi bears eleven children continuously. No one is a competitor to protagonists of Kapur but they are. Though women possess innocence, flexibility and generosity, they expect love and affection from men.

As an immigrant, Nina gets heavy pressure between her own culture and Canadian culture in an unknown country in The Immigrant. And she is practising to make the surrounding in a smooth relationship and contradictory ideas. As a newly married woman Nina has to face the two challenges: one is her husband’s characters and her new country. Nina gets dilemma not only ought to learn her husband’s likes and dislikes but also the Canadian ethnics to follow.

In all the novels of Kapur, she expresses the pre-marital and extra-marital affair, love failure, suicide attempt, childlessness, prohibition of education, economic suppression, psychological depression and mental agony, loneliness, lesbianism etc. Specifically dowry death in Difficult Daughters, lesbianism in A Married Woman,
child abuse in *Home*, painful experience of immigrated people in *The Immigrant* and the illegal relationship of women in *Custody* are clearly portrayed the sufferings of women in Kapur’s novels.

Thus this chapter justifies that women face the predicaments of social, cultural, political, legal, educational, economic and sexual oppression at home as well as by the society to reach empowerment. Women can distinguish their problem and recognize that solution well but they fright to lay a step. Gloria mentions that violence never comes from outside world but it starts inside the home. They fight to get right inside their family. Gloria Steinem says in *Revolution from Within*:

> Patriarchy requires violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself… The most dangerous situation for a woman is not an unknown man in the street or even the enemy in wartime but a husband or lover in the isolation of their own home (259-261)