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**EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF FEMINISM IN MANJU
KAPUR'S NOVELS**

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Abstract:

The novels of Kapur follow the common pattern in English of contemporary Indian women's literature. The middle one focus of her novels concentrates around woman characters within the territory of home and society. Like her illustrated contemporaries, Kapur too has foregrounded women's lives in her novels which depict both the external and internal dimensions of female-community. Out of her five novels, only three novels-Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman and Home incorporate the theme of female bonding in varying shades and degrees. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse into women's consciousness and their interrelations. Her female protagonists forge bonds or make attempts to do so as a strategy of survival and empowerment in contemporary society marked by unforeseen social change.

Keywords: Bonding, feminism, Home, Patriarchy, Society etc

Introduction:

Her novels orchestrate a wide range of theme related to women's lives in a context of patriarchal society: Women's Lives within the family, their relationships with the male and female members, their ambition for education and independence, their conflicts with other women and men in their journey towards the self-realization, their desire to have and possess children and finally their bonding with other women as a means of emotional support, survival and empower.

Joya Chakravarty also examined that the novels that are written by that Manju Kapur mostly describes the feminist struggle and provides an impression of a feminist fight against gender-like biases. As a result, while reading the novel written by Manju Kapur, readers get the impression about the life of a woman which is similar to the life of the nation that is going through several trials and tribulations" (Chakravarty 207).

The concept of patriarchy that still prevails in the society confines them to the four walls of their homes and ignores their wishes and aspirations and also discourages them in their struggle for their upliftment in society. The myths and legends create the images and the

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problems of Indian women rather than from the situations that are present in society and through their personal experience of their life and social situation.

Indian Women

Women in India have a different status, which is tracked historically and is considered as subordination and marginalization that is given to the socio-cultural and religious system. Many changes have taken place over years and the condition and role of women the Indian society have been changing from the times of Shastras, Smritis and Vedas. Vedas along with Shastras and many other religious scriptures that are read by Hindus would talk about the female species and the relation between man and woman. However, the Shastras has given the status of women based on the caste system, which was in 3rd century B.C. The religious treatises were authored by Brahmins, who belong to the upper caste in Hindus and would be regulating the life of women as per the ideologies. Based on religious scriptures, women were given the key position. They had the freedom and enjoy equal status to the male during the pre-Vedic era. Women education was promoted where they used to read and study Vedas along with male counterparts and take part in the debates on various topics in scriptures.

There was also a Gandhian Movement where women are allowed to take part in the social as well as political activities happening in the country along with men. Mahatma Gandhi stated that there is a dire need to eliminate the blogs that is explained in our Shastras, which are the traits that women have to ingrain. The social awakening has given right for women to show they are independent and promote themselves as self-made individuals in the patriarchal society.

Her very first novel Difficult Daughters reveals the idea of women's emancipation. It has an autobiographical tinge and touch. The narrator Ida in Difficult Daughters goes to Amritsar to clarify the name of her mother and she has taken the root from her relatives. She discovers many truths related to her mother's life and the sufferings that have been tolerated during her whole life to be a tiny mother of younger brothers and sisters; Virmati has to bear the burden. After meeting Shakuntala, she thinks she wants to make her own life come true

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and she tries to break the tradition of an orthodox family. However, she becomes a pendulum between education and marriage. She protests, and she writes to Harish, the teacher she loves the most. Piper always tries to feel her that she has to go away from her family, and tries to establish in her mind that she can lead her way. She has no interest in making her family- her children, her husband, and mother-in-law strong. In the end, Astha stands nowhere. Moreover, at the time of this state of mind, she comes back to her family and readjusts herself in ancient traditions. As Christopher Rollason remarks:

“The woman in India have indeed achieved their successes in half a century of independence; but if there is to be a true female independence too, much remains to be done.” (Rollason 31) The novel *Home* by Manju Kapoor unravels the life story of a middle-class family of the Banwari Lal who lives in Karol Bagh Delhi. It also represents the patriarchal attitude that is still prevalent in Indian societies towards the birth and upbringing of the girl child. She significantly describes it in Nisha’s dilemma, her migration from Lahore, arranged marriage and upbringing etc. Kapoor presents the girls who suffer physically and emotionally at violence at a very age. They have been denied to give a special space even in their own home. They suffer domestic violence and sexual assault even by their relatives. They have been considered as alien in their land. It throws light on the smothering closeness of Indian families and their devastating restrictions that leads them to live an unsuccessful life.

Nisha, the protagonist, grows up as a beautiful girl. Vicky, her cousin, is now fifteen and he begins to take interest in Nisha. She cannot understand his intension. She becomes mentally disturbed and nobody could understand what to do. Then her parents sent her to her aunty’s home who is nonetheless than Rupa. After spending most of his in her aunty home she managed to pass her graduation. Her aunty is very cautious about her freedom and she wants that she should pursue her higher education. From her childhood, she has to suffer through the hands of her mother who has the notion that daughters are mere helpers in the kitchen and they should be confined to their homes. Nisha has to perform all the pujas despite of his unwillingness. She’s got to do the lessons and the art of domesticity and service. Maybe she’s a riddle to her parents when she discovers manglik. To a great degree, her life changes

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when she meets Suresh. However, she is a modern girl with conventional opinions. She protects her chastity and never lets her chastity be abused by Suresh. She faced several questions when her affair is established, and each member of the family looks at her with suspicion.

She becomes the prisoner in her own house. After that, only an issue of her marriage is discussed day and night. She convinces her uncle Premnath to meet Suresh and send him to inquire Suresh. However, on the other side, Suresh responds calmly on marriage and gives priority to his family more than marriage. She thinks that she is cheated badly. Then she decided to do business that deals in Salwar Suits. Her father has much trust in her more than her mother does. Her father encourages her mostly to do new things in her business. Now she is free to marry herself and she decides to the match with a family who will let her work. She marries thirty-four-year-old manglik widower, Arvind. She does not give up her business She has four-fold duties as a wife, a daughter-in law, a grandmother, and a business woman. Then she becomes pregnant and her mother cares her good and does not let her go for the business. She does not like too much concern about Arvind for his mother. She feels that Arvind does not love her. She feels pleased with her position as a mother and daughter when she gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl.

HOME:

The novel portrays the struggle of Nisha between conventional values and the way of life of modems with the assistance of institutions such as family. Her character is delineated by business, schooling Caste, marriage and class. In Indian culture, a tiny but important unit of society is the family. A conventional fact is the joint family structure in India. The Home of Manju Kapur deals with the cultural contact of a common family. The family head, clearly a patriarch, adhered to others and forced them to obey. Women in such a family were unquestionably expected to follow the normative ways. These women were made conscious of their rights by the progressive spread of education in the new world. I've begun to lift their voices against the undemocratic regime. Home not only deals with women's issues but also

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outlines the rising consciousness of women in changing times. Yashpal discarded the traditions of the family, which produced dust in the family.

A significant factor in the fixation of marriage in Indian culture is also the family history of the Boy and women. In relation to class and caste, two families should be equal in credibility. The same class should belong to both families. Yashpal and Sona belonged to two financial states that were opposite. Therefore, the marriage was opposed by Yashpal's kin. Yashpal's mother held Sona to be responsible for the snare. On the marriage question, there is hardly any compromise between the rich and the poor. Yashpal agreed to marry a girl whose family history did not match his context. When they realised that, his parents did not approve of the marriage. Yashpal did not have his mind altered. The father, a practical businessman, endorsed the decision of his son to save the family from fragmentation. Daughters are required to maintain the unity and dignity of the family at all costs in the laws of the family; they need to sacrifice their interest and personal reputation for the family's name and popularity. The same condition was faced by Sona. In the interests of togetherness, she has been subdued. She decided to move on with higher education.

Home is a representation of Indian culture's paradoxes in terms of gender, class and caste. It deals with the rules and regulations of the middle class's conventional world. A girl moans under the pressure of the patriarchy at home in India. She finds in her own house, herself homeless and lifeless. She tries to make room for herself. In order to survive, she seeks to be self-sufficient. Lastly, she has to abide by the laws and regulations.

The novel tackles the plight of women in middle-class families in India. It's about their misery and their awareness that time changes. Their perception calls for more room for them. In order to reinforce the marginal parts of society, this pushes social thinking. Each person in society claims their room. When conflict is rejected based on class, caste, gender and language, conflict is produced. Individuals do not want to be marked by their class or sex in the post-modern period.

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