

PUBLICATIONS

S.No.	Name	Titles of the Papers Published	Names of the Journals
1	Swetha. S, Ph.D. Research Scholar, and Dr. Chitra Sivasubramaniam, Associate Professor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore 641043.	“Caged Bird Astha in Manju Kapur’s <i>A Married Woman</i> ”	<i>Studies in Indian Place Names</i> with ISSN no. 2394-3114 Vol:40 issue: 43 Month: February Year: 2020 Impact factor:6.3 UGC – CARE listed Discontinued from April 2020
2	Swetha. S, Ph.D. Research Scholar, and Dr. Chitra Sivasubramaniam, Associate Professor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore 641043.	“Matrimonial Discourses in Manju Kapur’s <i>Brothers</i> ”	<i>Inclusive Journal</i> with ISSN no.2778-9758 Vol: II, No. 22, July-August 2023 UGC – CARE listed



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Appendix L2

**(Item No 5 of
Check List) Details of Research
Publications**

S.No	Article	Journal	Other Details Vol/No/Page No/ Year	Published in UGC- CARE / Scopus Indexed/ Web of Science
1	CAGED BIRD ASTHA IN MANJU KAPUR'S A MARRIED WOMAN	STUDIES IN INDIAN PLACE NAMES	VOL. 40 ISSUE : 43 MONTH/YEAR FEBRUARY 2020 Pg: 165-169	UGC CARE DISCONTINUED FROM TH LIST IN APRIL 2020 (PROOF ATTACHED)
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*Proof of list of Journals from Internet to be attached along with copies of reprints.

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CAGED BIRD ASTHA IN MANJU KAPUR'S *A MARRIED WOMAN*

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ABSTRACT

Indian society from the ancient times remains a patriarchal society – a system in which the males dominate females. Though women are educated and have the power to voice their rights in the family as well as in the society, they are trapped in the dependence of men because of the patriarchal set up in the conventional Indian society. Manju Kapur's '*A Married Woman*' expresses the common expectations of the male dominated society about the role of women. The novel deals with the theme of alienation, the need to love, to be loved and understood; it also highlights that the wishes, dreams and aspirations of women as individuals are not taken into account seriously. In the patriarchal society, a woman is expected to play certain conventional roles like daughter, sister, wife and mother for which she is unrecognized. In this novel, Manju Kapur gives an account of how the life of Astha, the protagonist, turns from happiness to an unsatisfactory and disappointing one where she feels caged in her marital role.

Key Words: Mother, Wife, Marriage, Identity, Patriarchy, Suffering, Loneliness

The author in the novel *A Married Woman* portrays the life story of Astha. She is raised by her orthodox parents conforming to the prevalent norms of the patriarchal society. Right from her childhood, she is taught by her mother to pray for a good life partner because he is to be her next care-taker. Astha's father supports her to pursue higher education and helps her to follow her dreams but, being born a girl child, Astha cannot escape from the ties of the patriarchal society. As Astha is a post-graduate, her parents look for a right proposal and get her married to Hemant, who is from a bureaucrat family and a foreign-returned, MBA graduate. Astha and Hemant start their marital life on a happy note and their marriage bears fruit when Astha gives birth to a beautiful girl child, Anuradha. Hemant being educated abroad knows the value of equal participation of the parents in upbringing a child. Hemant is loving and caring as a husband and also as a father. When Anuradha is born he helps Astha by taking care of the child.

Though Hemant is happy and takes care of his girl child, he insists on having a boy child saying "Of course we will have a son, and if we don't we needn't stop at two" (Kapur 61). Astha cannot evade from giving birth to another child. This shows that he sees Astha as a child bearing machine and proves that he is also a propagator of patriarchy inspite of being educated or exposed to foreign environment and its culture. This makes Astha dissatisfied and uneasy as she cannot fathom her

man and questions him, “I thought these things didn’t matter to you. What if we don’t have a boy?” (Kapur 61). He answers Astha saying, “Of course they don’t matter to me. I was so pleased Anu was a girl. But that doesn’t mean we should not try for a boy...” (Kapur 61). The birth of the male child is given importance and is celebrated greatly compared to the birth of a girl child because the male child will carry forward the name and fame of the family. When Astha becomes pregnant the second time, everyone hopes for the birth of a son. Though she declares to the foetus that she would love the child be it a boy or a girl but the very thought that if she does not bear a male child made her troubled and tensed. So, “When Astha’s son was finally born she felt gratitude... her status rose... she was fulfilled” (Kapur 68) and this eases her from the feeling that she will not be blamed by her husband or her in-laws for not bearing a male heir to the family. Astha’s son is named Himanshu. Now, Astha has everything that a woman could ask for – a dutiful husband and her children which “made her feel that she had partaken of the archetypal experiences marked out for the female race” (Kapur 69).

Hemant, who initially promised that he will equally partake in upbringing of the children, now denies doing it. He opens a TV manufacturing company and in connection with his business, he has to travel abroad quite often. Hemant’s interest towards family responsibilities has slowly begun to fade and “Between Anuradha’s birth and Himanshu’s, Hemant changed...” (Kapur 70). In the meantime, he persuades Astha to have a professional career of her own so as to establish her identity. Astha takes up the job because she feels that it is an opportunity which will give her exposure to professional life. But, she finds it difficult to manage between her family with two young children and her job. When she seeks help from Hemant, he deprives helping her which leaves her, “...cold, dreary and distanced from him” (Kapur 50). Hemant has become a corporate-minded husband as he neglects to take up family responsibilities. He does not show his concern towards his wife and leaves her abandoned to single-handedly cope with the children, job and the house-hold responsibilities.

Astha’s routine becomes tedious with the lack of support from her husband and she swirls between the roles of a mother, wife and teacher. She even toys with the idea of resigning her job so that she can pay full attention in good upbringing of her children but she does not wish to do so because now her job has given her the moral strength and the job “...represented security, not perhaps money, but of her own life, of a place where she could be herself” (Kapur 149). Astha is discontented that her husband comes home once in a while from his business tours and even when he is at home, his concentration and time is spent only on his business developments. Her complaint to Hemant is that, he is insensitive to the pain and agony she faces in upbringing her children without his support. Hemant does not understand her plight of wanting him by her side to look after the familial duties but has made her feel entrapped to be a domestic labourer at home. Astha feels caged because Hemant who initially promised to support her in all possible ways is not in a position to understand her inner turmoil.

Astha finds an alternative way to express her feelings to her husband when he does not pay attention to her. So, she turns to write poems whenever she finds time from her tedious schedule of familial duties. She puts her emotions into words as poems because “Poems are about emotions” (Kapur 81) and this brings a sense of relief in her. She even wishes to establish her identity as a

writer. When Hemant gets to read the poems, his reaction to Astha's writings is that "Good heavens, Az, they are all about cages and birds, and mice, and suffering in situations that are not even clear ...If others read these poems, they might actually think you weren't happy" (Kapur 81). Hemant does not like the writings of his wife because he is annoyed that she finds solace in art works. He expresses his displeasure that her poems are a reflection of their unhappy and incompatible conjugal life. But, Astha "...gave up writing and continued rather sadly to draw..." (Kapur 82) because art is a refuge for her as she struggles to put her thoughts on the canvas.

Astha's identity as a drawing artist gets recognized when one of her painting gets sold for its unique sketching. Astha gets an identity as an artist but, she is in a state where she can feel neither happy nor sad about it. She wants "...to say yes, I have done it, I have sold my first painting, I have achieved something, let us celebrate,..." (Kapur 150) but she cannot do so. The author delineates the anxiety and depression of the woman whose talent or inner potential never gets any recognition in the patriarchal world of the husband. Hemant has made her feel unrecognized and caged by her marital role where she cannot feel happy that she has found an identity of her own as an artist. Astha struggles to keep her identity intact as she tries to seek equal opportunities in the family as well as in the male-dominated society.

Hemant starts to blame Astha that, "You can't paint and teach, every time I come home you are lying on the sofa. You are suffering, we are all suffering" (Kapur 148) and compels her to resign her job because he wants Astha to be confined only to the family. Astha understands that her husband expects her to be an unpaid servant at home. Hemant exercises his patriarchal control in every sphere of her life. She thinks that she should not be a puppet playing her role as instructed by her husband. She now has realized the importance of asserting her own identity where she is not ready to give up drawing or her job as she feels that, "I want something of my own" (Kapur 148) as she feels imprisoned by her husband. Astha wants freedom from her familial duties so as to voice out her thoughts and emotions. She wants to be recognized for who she is.

Astha feels that she wants a space for her own at her house because she feels suffocated with her role to fulfill the growing needs of her family but not her wishes, dreams and desires. She knows that it is presumptuous to ask for an independent space because a woman is to be found adjusting to the space available for her in the family as well as in the society. If she strives for a space of her own, it is against the norms of tradition. But, Astha voices out her thoughts to her husband that she needs an independent working space at home because she feels torn between familial duties and responsibilities. Hemant feels disgusted as he says, "What is wrong with working down here?" (Kapur 157). Hemant denies Astha to have a space of her own and he thinks that it was a mistake that if he had not given the autonomy to establish her identity, she would not have made such demands and would have restrained to the family. Astha, "Constantly reminded of the space that nobody thought enough of her to give ..." (Kapur 157). The denial of space for her own makes Astha feel that she should assert her identity strongly. The lines of Kamala Das' poem *The Old Playhouse* "...the urge to fly, and the endless, Pathways of the sky..." (4-5) beautifully explains the urge of Astha to fly away by breaking the familial cage so as to attain freedom and independence.

Astha is educated, works as a teacher and she is also an artist which gives her a recognized identity in the society for which she is unhappy because when she is unrecognized for the roles she plays in the family she feels caged and unprivileged. Though Hemant asserts her to find an identity, he asks her to step down from establishing her identity when she is not available to him at his time of need but on the other hand he fails to think that Astha too at a point of time needed his presence and be available to her. This shows that Hemant's persuasion to his wife to establish her identity was a false pretense and that he has not thought of his wife as equal to him. This has made her feel that she should move out of the marital roles in order to hold her position as a teacher and an artist which will make her independent. She wants move out from the family-ties in order to come out of loneliness and make her identity strong as a professional. Hemant should have made her feel secured because Astha needed the love, care and recognition from him to feel happy for who she is as an individual, which he denied and that made Astha feel that living on her own only will provide her the freedom and independence. He should have been a pillar of support her in all her endeavours which he promised to render but he failed to keep up his promise.

Joya Chakravarty in the article *A Study of Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman* quotes the words of Manju Kapur who says, "Love is made up of needs, security...the way people talk of love is very deceptive, it leads to disappointment in many ways and that is why in my books I am always keen to show what happens after you get married" (61). These words express that the life of a woman changes when she gets married. Thus, the life of Astha has changed after her marriage. She who had the hope when she started her career as a teacher, that her education will ensure her freedom and independence feels like a caged bird unable to find a meaning to her life.

The novel *A Married Woman* enables the readers to get an idea of the female struggles against the biases of the patriarchal society. Astha tries to achieve autonomy of self within the marital roles. If she had been recognized for the roles she played as a mother and wife and had she been given the space and freedom to express herself, her path to achieve identity would not be in vain. Thus, life of a woman has to pass through various trials and tribulations to ascertain her identity.

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Matrimonial Discourses in Manju Kapur's *Brothers*

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Abstract

Women have to be compatible to face challenges that threaten their identity, which is defined by stereotypical gender roles like being a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, and mother. Manju Kapur presents the social institution of marriage which has an impact on the lives of the major women characters, Tapti Gaina and Sonal. Tapti, the protagonist of the novel, Brothers (2016), is a strong-willed woman, who metamorphoses her identity from a child-bearer to a breadwinner after she encounters marital discordance. Tapti, the wife of Mangal Singh and the youngest daughter-in-law of the Gaina family is treated to be a child-bearing machine. Sonal is abandoned by her husband, Himmat Singh, who exploits his wife for her wealth and family property. To transform the monotonous life of women, Tapti and Sonal desire to achieve physical and economic independence to establish their feminine esteem. Tapti becomes the breadwinner of the family, gets rid of dependency syndrome, and triumphs in her efforts to attain individuality in the family and society. Manju Kapur's characterization of Tapti and Sonal educates the women folk to overcome patriarchal obligations, raise their voices against injustices, prove their stability to change the profile of their survival, and be determined to achieve self-independence.

Key Words: Identity, Prejudice, Martial discordance, Independence, Individuality

Full Paper

Manju Kapur has highlighted the women's space and her participation in ruling nations, involvement in the nationalist movement to being pushed into the domestic household space, and finally their resurgence as super-women today. Her writings have given vent to women's education, empowerment, and emancipation. Meena Shirwadkar observes that:

As women received education, they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their feelings. The awareness of individuality, the sense of compatibility with their tradition - bound surroundings,

resentment of male dominated ideas of morality and behaviour problems at home and at place of work or in society - all come up in a welter of projection. (Shirwadkar 1979, 20)

Feminism has shown its impact on Indian soil and has changed its colours with respect to the social milieu of India. K. S. Ramamurti remarks that ‘...the emergence of women writers during this period is of a great significance and he remarks that it marks the birth of an era which promises a new deal for the Indian, Women’ (Ramamurti 1987, 66). The women writers write differently from men; men write about affairs of state, war, business, espionage, and sexual encounters, women write about themselves. The main contention is the distinctive women’s sensibility and it reflects itself in the literature of the contemporary times. Jaidev reflects the thoughts of Indian feminism as:

A feminine novel for India is not a novel which a woman will write just because she is a woman and knows how to write. It will be written by one who has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurized by all kinds of visible and invisible contexts, by one who is not carried away by fetishes but is mature enough. (Jaidev 1960, 63)

Kapur’s women characters evolve, realize the need for independence, fight against injustices and resist patriarchal norms and codes but at the same time these characters realize that certain things are not sustainable in practical life and so adjust to the societal system to lead a ‘normal’ life for themselves. This confirms the idea of Indian feminism, which is different in this sense that there is a struggle and resistance in different forms and yet there is some sort of belongingness and rootedness to one’s culture and codes of conduct. In this context, Indian feminism departs from the Western concept of feminism which fights for equality and gender rights. Indian feminism advocates that, women change and at the same time keep core values and ethics related to the Indian culture.

Manju Kapur has emerged with new trends in her writings and presents the women protagonists as a strong force capable of taking charge of their life with or without the support of male folk in the family and society. The women protagonists of Kapur revolt against the traditional role of the woman, voice their dissatisfaction and make their feeling of alienation and frustration known. Kapur displays the struggles of women to gain self-respect, identity, right to express and choose, right to say no, and break the self-sacrificing image that the men folks have built. The women protagonists of Kapur are representative of the voices of all Indian women suppressed and harassed for a long time. They are revolutionists who are not ready to play the

roles of traditional wives any more. However, the Indian writers never viewed marriage as a barrier to their independence and children as the binding force, a hurdle in their progress. K.M. Kapadia while discussing the concept of marriage, writes:

Marriage was a social duty towards the family and the community, and there was a little idea of individual interest. The social background provided by the authoritarian family afforded no scope for the recognition of any personal factor, individual interest and aspirations, in the relation between husband and wife. (Kapadia 1958, 169)

Women are educated only in subjects that made them ideal wives and mothers; the education that is meant for the self-empowerment of women is not encouraged in the family and the patriarchal society. Family is a dominant milieu that constructs the identity of women and prescribes their role to be a daughter, wife and mother. Marriage and motherhood are viewed as social responsibilities in the Indian cultural context. They bring about a change in the identity and status of women and how their existence becomes very much not of theirs but of their family and society. Jyothi Puri states that, 'Although..., marriage, and motherhood each define important cultural turning points and involve widespread changes in the life of a woman... marriage and motherhood are social statuses that also entail social responsibilities and rights.' (Puri 1999, 137)

The notable factor in the writings of Manju Kapur is the feeling of alienation which is a result of unfulfilled desires or the marginal role offered by male domination or the feeling of otherness that tortures women inwardly, irresistibly. The women protagonists live in conflicts, the conflict between husband and wife, inclination and duty, society, and self, restrictions and freedom, existence, and adjustment, physical reality and inner self. The oppression of women in marriage and family is dealt by Manju Kapur. Marriage is a major theme in the novels of Manju Kapur namely, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant*, *Custody*, and *Brothers*. She represents the disturbed man-woman marital relationship that prevails in the present-day society and the resultant alienation in the middle-class Indian family.

Difficult Daughters describes the problems of Virmati, who is trapped by her partner in the matrimonial discourse. *A Married Woman* is about the predicaments of Astha, who battles to establish her own identity. *Home* reveals determination of Nisha to achieve self-reliance and get rid of the dependency syndrome. *The Immigrant* projects the dilemma of Nina that arise out of patriarchal compulsions like marriage with an immigrant groom. *Custody* presents the emotional and legal difficulties of Shagun and Ishita in the journey of

motherhood. *Brothers* reveal the exertion of Tapti's motherhood to bear a male heir, who is presumed to continue the family bloodline. The novels of Manju Kapur unfold the unbelievable uncertainties of matrimony in today's modern society.

The women protagonists of Kapur recognize the primal essence of family bond, marriage, cultural construction and societal predicaments while they strive to assert their identity. Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita and Tapti Gaina are aspiring individuals confined in a cage within the restrictions of a bourgeois society but they insist on liberation from the constraints of patriarchy. They evolve, realize the need for independence, fight against injustices and resist patriarchal norms and codes that confine their life within the matrimonial institution. Marriage is inevitable in the lives of women in Indian society and it brings numerous obligations that affect the significance of womanhood. The novels of Manju Kapur highlight the fact that marital oppression is common to women irrespective of caste, colour, creed and country. Motherhood is a crucial phase to venerate womanhood but Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita, and Tapti Gaina are humiliated in their marital homes and disgraced by their husbands if they fail to give birth to a male heir. Marital adjustments become unfeasible as the husbands pay no heed to the physical and emotional difficulties of their wives with regard to pregnancy.

The protagonists of Kapur are subjugated due to gender discrimination and domestic violence in their marital homes. The women protagonists of Kapur find it arduous to communicate with their male counterparts as there is an absence of friendly acquaintance and a lack of mutual understanding in the husband-wife relationship which leads to marital incompatibility. Culture plays a crucial role in the shaping of women protagonists' lives. The male domination and the dynamics of power in the family destroys the mental strength of the women protagonists. Virmati, Astha, Nisha, Nina, Shagun, Ishita and Tapti Gaina are denied basic human rights when they become puppets in the hands of their husbands. Restrictions are imposed in the name of family welfare, social prestige, taboos, and superstitious beliefs which deter the women protagonists' path to success. Their pursuit of happiness is torn between their familial responsibilities and societal expectations. They suffer the emotional trauma of being ignored in their marital homes. They are dissatisfied to be docile and subservient in the domestic sphere where their sacrifices and dedication go unrecognized.

The protagonists of Kapur resist the patriarchal norms and codes that confine their lives within the matrimonial institution. Marriage is inevitable in the lives of women in Indian society and it brings numerous obligations like inequality, unequal division of familial responsibilities, unjust expectations of the spouse and

his family members, discomforts or misunderstandings between the husband-wife relationship, and financial crisis that affects the significance of womanhood. The male domination and the dynamics of power in the family destroy the mental strength of the women protagonists. Sudhir Kakar in the article, observes that:

The ideal of womanhood which, inspite of many changes in individual circumstances in the course of modernization, urbanization and education, still governs the inner imagery of individual men and women as well as the social relations between them in both the traditional and modern sectors of the Indian community. (Kakar "Feminine Identity in India" 1988, 57)

Manju Kapur presents the character of the female protagonist, Tapti Gaina, as a modern and educated woman. Tapti gets married to Mangal Singh soon after the completion of her graduation and her marriage compels her to withhold the desire to become an IAS officer. As the youngest daughter-in-law, Tapti experiences male hegemony and struggles to define herself in the stereotypical roles of women in the conservative family of the Gainas. The Gaina family members are strict followers of patriarchal principles and they expect the women to confine themselves within the boundaries of home and family.

Tapti is disappointed with her marital family when they treat her to be a submissive woman and her identity revolves around the perception of women as child-bearers. The birth of her two daughters is unwelcomed by her husband and his family members and she is cursed for the failure to give birth to a male heir. In a patriarchal society, the preference marked for male children and a family is considered to be incomplete without the birth of a son which forces women to undergo unending pregnancies. Mangal Singh is unhappy about his daughters' birth as he expresses that, 'It made him feel awkward...and embarrassed' (Kapur 2016, 260) without the birth of a male heir. Tapti is unable to convince her conservative husband that the birth of daughters is also as powerful and equal to that of sons.

Tapti is against gender biases in the birth of children but her sister-in-law, Sonal belittles her thoughts and criticizes her views against gender bigotries. Sonal proclaims that women should abide by the family laws with regard to motherhood, which is celebrated and sanctified for giving birth to a male heir. Tapti rejects accepting the opinions of her husband and his family members regarding another pregnancy. Mangal Singh is agitated of his wife's objection and questions her stating that, '...how could daughters take on the responsibility of a business, or carry on the Gaina name?' (Kapur 2016, 268). His male chauvinism is expressed when he insists that it is, '...my right' (Kapur 2016, 269) to have a male-heir, who would continue his family bloodline,

his business, and be the inheritor of his property. He remarks that, 'For now, though it is his son who will make his toil worthwhile, his son who will work beside him, who will stretch the fruits of his endeavour into the future, and give his struggle a meaning and continuity.' (Kapur 2016, 268)

Manju Kapur represents the strong patriarchal belief about gender stereotypes and favouritisms which mortify the birth of girl children in Indian families. The constant pestering of her husband to undergo another pregnancy makes her think that, 'What was she, a machine that would go on producing children until he got a son? At twenty-four she felt there was nothing left of her youth, so swallowed up by babies...' (Kapur 2016, 268). She is anxious that '...it was physically impossible for her to have more children' (Kapur 2016, 273) and tells her husband that, 'I don't think I can go through this again, she murmured. It will kill me... Two daughters are enough...' (Kapur 2016, 266, 268). Her physical and emotional discomforts regarding pregnancy are brushed aside by her husband, who is stubborn in his decision to fulfill his expectations of procreating a male heir. Mangal Singh ignores the health conditions and post-partum depression of his wife and persuades her saying, 'Never mind...there is always a next time...My mother had to try many times before she gave birth to a boy that lived.' (Kapur 2016, 266)

Tapti is frustrated with her husband's demands '...and it hurt her that he saw nothing of how she was feeling, his main concern not her, but his seed, his line, his name' (Kapur 2016, 268). She strongly objects to him stating, '...I am sorry' (Kapur 2016, 272), and opposes the preferential treatment of children based on the clichéd gender bias which prevails in the patriarchal Gaina family. Mangal Singh is not able to accept the resentment of his wife and her individual decision regarding the third pregnancy. He unveils his chauvinistic attitude as he abandons his wife validating that his masculine self-conceit is disrespected when Tapti stands against his stipulations. He sheds his fatherly and familial responsibilities and Tapti is left alone as a single parent to cater to her daughters' needs. She stumbles to confront the humiliation of her dictating husband and the Gaina family members. Her marital life becomes miserable as 'Nothing in her marriage was as she had expected. The ache, the dissatisfaction, the yearning..., it stretched through days, months, threatening to gobble up years as well.' (Kapur 2016, 275)

Manju Kapur writes about the traumatic psyche of Tapti, who is driven to the extent of committing suicide, 'Anyway what should I do now? Kill myself?' (Kapur 2016, 37) but her mother convinces her saying, 'Hai beta, don't talk like that. Think of your children' (Kapur 2016, 37) as the kids would suffer without parental nurturance. Tapti realizes that she has to put an end to marital authoritarianism as 'She needed space

to distance herself from Mangal's desires. Like an oyster reacting to a grain of sand, she vowed to establish a professional life, become someone who could not even remotely be construed as a stay-at-home breeder of male children' (Kapur 2016, 266). She leaves her husband as well as the marital home to focus on the lives of her daughters with futuristic thinking that, '...the idea of an independent job that came with an attached house began to look like the essence of practical wisdom.' (Kapur 2016, 270)

Tapti continues her education to fulfill her aspirations to be a working woman, strives hard to clear the civil services examination, and procures a job as a probation officer in the department of rural development. She becomes the 'New woman' when she triumphs in her efforts to withstand familial and socio-cultural pressures and earns a respectable feminine status in the patriarchal society. Manju Kapur represents that the social institution of marriage dominates the lives of women as Simon de Beauvoir opines that, 'Marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to women by society' (Beauvoir 1997, 444). She portrays the plight of Indian women, who are treated as child-bearing machines to give birth to a male heir. The matrimonial myth coerces women to compromise greatly not only with their origin, belongings, and emotions but also with their desires and temperament.

Manju Kapur remarks that women suffer as victims at the hands of their husbands, who exploit the marital relationships due to their chauvinistic outlook as they expect their female counterparts to be submissive. Child marriage is eradicated to a great extent in Indian society but still, such marriages take place in the rural and underdeveloped parts of the country. Himmat Singh, the eldest son of the Gainas gets married as a child at the age of seven and his child bride makes his family hierarchy proud when she begets a male heir. He forgets about his marital life and abandons the child bride when he shifts from his village to pursue his higher studies. He becomes a famous politician and his uncle, Virpal tries to reunite him with his wife as he has to look after his family.

Himmat Singh falls in love with the home minister's daughter, Sonal, and refuses to accept his wife, who lives in exile hopefully waiting for her husband's return and reunion. He tells his uncle that he would divorce his wife to marry Sonal, who is talented, richer, and highly educated. His uncle is agitated about his decisions and shouts at him stating:

Wives are no like dolls. You can't buy another when you get tired of one. Has she been unsuitable anyway? She has given you a son, she has never disobeyed you...You think this is

how family life is conducted? What about the ones who arranged the match, you want to blacken their faces? What about the years she has lived in your house? Do you think whims and fancies can change all that? Your father will never allow it. Never. (Kapur 2016, 203-204)

Himmat rejects the orthodox thoughts of his uncle and remarks that, 'Obedience? Is that all I want from a wife? As for the son, I keep telling you, I was forced to do that' (Kapur 2016, 204). His attitude projects male chauvinism as he considers his wife to be a mere toy and it disgraces women's integrity in the family and society.

Himmat Singh marries Sonal, the woman of his choice but his marital life becomes incompatible when he fails to pay attention to his familial duties. He is always busy crafting his political venture and turns out to be an unsympathetic husband. He adapts to the tide of capitalism and materialism, becomes a dictator in formulating his opinions, and disregards the sacrifices of Sonal, who renders her constant support, both, physically and emotionally to develop his identity as a politician and tirelessly balances her servitude in the role of a wife, a daughter-in-law, and a mother. He is utterly blinded to his wife's emotional apathy and children's progress as his attachment to the family remains superficial.

Himmat Singh, who gets involved in social activities and becomes a politician develops extra-marital affairs with the ladies of the political party. He deceives his wife and breaks the trust and foundation of matrimony. Sonal loses confidence in her husband when she realizes that Himmat Singh has never approached her with true feelings. Her husband is a deceiver and a noxious invader, who hurts her emotions. She feels trapped and defrauded by her husband. Manju Kapur remarks that the hypocrisy of men is well apparent when they have more money and it exposes the chicanery in marital relationships. Barbara Stuart mentions that:

The success of a marriage depends on the effective working together of both husband and wife, because each has specific responsibilities set out by God for the permanence and quality of the marriage. Still, the factor of responsibility in the marriage for husband and wife must not be interpreted as a gender-marked-role-identity. Rather, it is an integral aspect of the relationship mandated by God since creation, for harmony and stability in the home. (Stuart 2005, 31)

Himmat Singh destroys the significance of brotherhood when he indulges in having an affair with his brother's wife, Tapti, who rejects to pay heed to his request for sexual favours. He begins to injure her physically and emotionally stating, 'I wanted to see you, no, that's not quite accurate, I needed to see you. Needed, you

understand... You are mine...Mine. Against all sense and reason, mine' (Kapur 2016, 307, 310). When Tapti chastises Himmat Singh and reveals that she would raise a complaint against his malicious acts, he threatens to accuse her of being a corrupt officer and will ensure that she loses her job using his political influence. The intrafamilial sexual abuse fractures Tapti's character and her professional prosperity. Himmat Singh not only collapses the transparency of matrimonial bonds but also the purity of brotherhood.

Marriage, which is one of the most important social institutions for an individual, becomes a hindrance in the life of women as they are forced into the relationship without a proper understanding of their place in the family. The concept of marriage in India is considered as an important event in the life of women and a sacred ritual for mankind, but the practice of inequality through patriarchal norms creates the worst scenario for women in the marital relationship. In marital life, it becomes the bride's responsibility to make major adjustments in the family, especially with her spouse. Women should be prepared to make sacrifices in terms of their own needs and from the childhood they are taught to be modest, hardworking and should always contribute themselves to the family. The society advises women to be docile and subservient. The state of being subservient leads wives to obey the orders of their husbands and in-laws. The society teaches a wife to treat her husband as God and that she should be loyal and obedient to him. In the novel, *Brothers*, Tapti, and Sonal lead a life pertaining to societal norms. As women, they blindly accept their submissive role without raising any questions since they believe that the patriarchal norms and practices of male domination cannot be altered. They remain supportive, compliant and subservient in their marital life as long as possible. They respect their husbands and obey all their orders without demanding a reason that makes them the perfect wife, daughter-in-law, mother and the perfect women according to the norms. Manju Kapur depicts the plight of perfectly groomed women, who are put to test their womanhood under severe patriarchal clutches.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Indian English Literature has grown from a struggling eaglet to a full-grown eagle soaring into the skies of world literature. It reflects the culture, thought process, mythology, ideals, and way of living that is exclusive to Indian society. It paints the true colours of the Indian way of living and provides the details of history and philosophy with a realistic portrayal of human thoughts and experiences. Indian English literature has been documentaries that present the reality of changing social and political conditions focussing on the issues like personal struggles, socio-economic challenges, gender disparity, communal diversity, and cultural fragmentation. The writers expose the fallacies of social indifferences that exist in India which propagate gender-based inequalities and relegate the women populace to domestic responsibilities.

The literary endeavours of the women writers in Indian English literature are major milestones to record the injustices imposed on women. The writings of women raise voices against the social immoralities to ameliorate the status and position of women. The women writers crusade against the age-old established social systems to give a new definition and dimension to the liberation and empowerment of women. Their writings are more assertive and articulate the essence of female individual consciousness. Meena Shirwadkar in the book, "*Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglian Novel*" (1979) observes that:

"As women received education, they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their feelings. The awareness of individuality, the sense of

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