

## **I. Women's Submissive Role in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*: A Study of Gender Subaltern**

Women and men are the two genders in society. The society shapes different condition or status of these two genders on the basis of already established norms. Masculine model of society is the established norms in Indian society. Each and every social stratum shapes the condition of women in particular community in definite time. In the same way, there is depiction of women condition and their struggle in Indian Community through the novel *Difficult Daughters*. This condition and struggle refers to the faced suffering of women because of their gender and powerless situation in the society.

The novelist is an Indian cultural born and she has portrayed the condition of woman in the Indian society. Manju Kapur has shown suffering of an Indian woman through the character Virmati, who is a daughter of Prakash and Kasturi. Moreover, the novel digs out the condition and conception of three women under the same family. Kasturi is a mother to Virmati and Ida is a daughter to Virmati. To establish them in the society they have been performing and functioning their own roles in the society. They accomplish what the society instructs as the unchanged ideology. They have to accept what the family and society instructs them. Such type of instruction means cultural taboos like fully depended upon family decisions, or woman existence that is enchained in the decision of her parents or husbands.

In *Difficult Daughters* Virmati is the central character. There are many female and male representatives in the novel but the plot moves under the domain of Virmati, who is the daughter of Kasturi and Prakash. Her mother Kasturi always remains busy in her pregnancies and she has become mother of eleven children. Virmati is the eldest to all the sisters and brothers. The society desires more offspring from the side

of married woman or the duty of women is getting married and begetting children. The issue of feminism suggests that the society is based on male models. Hence, Kasturi-the mother has to abide and give birth to many children, which makes Virmati the second mother to all her brothers and sisters because she has to nurture all the siblings herself due to the condition of her mother's health during and after pregnancies. Virmati has not got good education because of her busy life to caring her siblings. Despite the facts she had established her as an educated woman but her gender has determined her fortune. The male gaze looks woman differently. At college too, she is in the eyes of her own teacher and ultimately she has aborted her love infant because of the confusion. She did not adopt the situation and threw the baby with the perception of the doctor. She has done so because woman becomes victim because of the males but society blames woman for wrong doings. Her miscarriage to first baby and continuous domestic work has looted her desire of being mummy that second time also she has become the victim of self-abortion. This time she is married but her husband has already got a wife Ganga. Eventually, she begot a child Ida at her third attempt. It shows how a woman suffers in the society; psychologically, physically and culturally.

The powerful one dominates the powerless in the society. Virmiti has faced the difficult situations from the family members. The researcher studies this sort of domination as a gender domination which we study from the perspective of feminism. The research work also goes to deeper level and studies the novel from the domain of subaltern studies. The woman has got a subordinated role regarding her feeble figure in the society.

Spanning on the three generations, this story centers on a woman, who was born at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century into a Punjabi family. It tells of an illicit affair and its

wider social implications in the Indian community. We find long struggle of the Virmati for the marriage and finally the professor accepts her as her second wife. Later, he helps her for further studies in Lahore, which is a small consolation to her scandalized family. Or even to Virmati, who finds that the battle for her own independence has created irrevocable lines of partition and pain around her. The backdrop of the story is set in the real world not just a real place and time, but one that feels real, seeping out of the pages to envelope the reader. These facts are associated with the domination upon the feminine gender due to the male chauvinism open the problem of the notion of the gender discrimination which is best addressed by the notion of feminism as its concentrates on the notion of the domination upon the females in the patriarchal society. The research studies the factors of the society that causes the domination upon the woman. The domination is a miserable condition, which we study under gender subaltern. Hence, the research studies under the condition of woman in the Indian culture based on the novel.

The causes of gender discriminations are due to male stereotypical gaze towards the women. The male figures in the society regard them as the part of their entertainment with regard to the condition of Virmati and the professor. It has a political and social connection too i.e. the condition of a woman who is depicted in the novel is an only emblem of the culture which proves that woman are socially, culturally, biologically, sentimentally exploited in the male dominated society.

The story seems trying to cover several different themes simultaneously. It is at once a classic ghost story and a critique of today's society covering the themes of mental illness and racism. In this point Stephen Michael claims that:

I don't wish to sound ageist by mentioning this, as this is still a well-written piece, and he clearly has at least as much talent as a younger

author, but I do feel that he perhaps ought to have written about characters of his own age, as I feel he may have been able to characterize them more effectively. However, I feel that the latter of these themes would have fitted equally neatly into an earlier setting, and that the former is a relatively insignificant sub plot which would have been better left untouched in the context. (54)

Stephen Michael has reviewed the novel with comparison to Kapur's former novels. Kapur has presented the condition woman suffering in her writings which touched the heart of readers. The novel touches the heart of every reader that is successful to catch the cultural scenario of Indian Community.

The story moves on the periphery of the central character Virmati, who is a representative of Indian community. The tale has captured the theme of love, sadness and illicit affair. The scholar Paramjit Kaur has said that the novel concentrates on the theme of illicit love affair where a woman becomes victimize due to male gaze. The scholar writes that:

The story revolves around Virmati. Virmati is the protagonist of this novel. She is a young Punjabi damsel from a very bourgeois, stark and a respectable 'Arya Smaji' family in Amritsar. This is the tale of sadness, love duty and compromise. She is a callow girl, lacerated between family duties, sensual appetite for study and illicit love for a married man who has a father of one daughter. The heroine is the eldest daughter of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash. (24)

The protagonist becomes sufferer from the male who has already become the father of a daughter. The immature college girl becomes the sufferer from her own professor because of his sensual appetite. In the home also she has eleven siblings and she

remains victim of household burden. She spends her time on rearing her brothers and sisters. The scholar further writes that:

She has eleven siblings. They live in a joint family. Kasturi is an every year pregnant woman. She is always sick lady, so all the burden of household work and younger brothers-sisters had dropped on Virmati's susceptible childhood. She spends her life under the pressure of domestic duties and mother's restrictions at an early age. The Pampers day of her childhood, she is destroyed in domestic affair and nurturing her siblings. So, she procures maturity in an early age. (24)

Virmati, who represents the women in Indian Lahore Community, spends her life for the desire of others. At home she always remains busy in supporting her mother and her siblings. In the college she spends her time with the affair to her own professor, who initially uses only her for sensual purpose which we know seeing her desire to abortion.

The critics have studied the novel *Difficult Daughters* from the perspective of family relationship, her busy life in family or household works. The above mentioned scholars have asserted that the protagonist of the novel Virmati remains busy because her mother always remains busy in her pregnancies. Thus, she has to play the double role of mother and sister with her siblings. Her college life has also become challenging because of her relationship to her own professor. The researcher studies the condition of woman from the perspective of gender subaltern. Virmati is the emblem of Indian woman who is doubly exploited. She has suffered much as a daughter in the house and faced all the toils there. Moreover, she is suffered from her own professor, who is also the representative of male and their power or authority. The protagonist is weaker to others so she is exploited and tortured.

The women in the society are performing their deeds according to their role. The society has given them the role to accept the male made rules in the society or in the houses or in the communities.. To generalize the condition the women are doing only their got roles not those that they perform voluntarily. They are subordinated in the eyes of males. The society also frees males but not the women because the society needs woman to be dedicated in her domestic work, and she has to make the male members happy.

The healthy relationship between man and woman is necessary for preserving utopic vision in this world. There needs good and cooperative relationship between these two biologically different beings. We cannot predict the continuity of the Earth in the absence of one. Absence of one being is the absence of entire universe or absence of human civilization. Woman is a motherly figure whose responsibilities help for the betterment of the family and the society. Despite her necessary roles, the society blames her and entraps her socially, culturally and sentimentally. The scholars Helene Cixous, Keith Kohen and Pauda Cohen in the essay “The Laugh of the Medusa” assert that:

Men have committed the greatest crime against women. Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs. They have made for women an anti narcissism! A narcissism which loves itself only to be loved for what women haven't got! They have constructed the infamous logic of anti love. (878)

The stereotypical gaze of male to the female figure is an unjust act which is a great crime. Man needs woman, man likes woman, man needs her beauty but men have

been committing crimes against women. They see woman for a means of pleasure without insidious love. They pounder upon women only for narcissistic gaze. The scholar affirms that men's gaze towards women is just an artificial one there lacks love or intrinsic affinity between these two beings.

Man treats woman only as a tool for pleasure. Pleasure is subsidiary thing in front of insidious love and feeling. Pleasure or a phallic necessity is only a gaze to woman. The scholar further illustrates that:

Man has been handed that grotesque and scarcely enviable destiny (just imagine) of being reduced to a single idol with clay balls. And consumed, as Freud and his followers note, by a fear of being a woman! For, if psychoanalysis was constituted from woman, to repress femininity (and not so successful a repression at that-men have made it clear), its account of masculine sexuality is now hardly refutable; as with all the "human" sciences, it reproduces the masculine view, of which it is one of the effects. (884)

It shows that women are treated only in terms of sexuality which is due to hegemony and subjugation. This sort of hierarchy or power relationship is a problematic issue. Males regard them as a superior. It is a covert way to dominate the woman which is a hypocritical way to dominate over woman.

Literature is a subtle way to expose such types of inhuman activities. *Difficult Daughters* shows the dominant group in the society. Here, dominant group is woman. Because of male gaze there establishes a binary oppositions. When one groups become dominant another becomes 'Othering'. The concept of opposition and establishes the concept of subaltern in the text. Hence, we regard subaltern as a social, cultural or sexual personal. When one becomes powerful and does not respect the

sentiment and dignity of another we regard that a matter of subaltern. Female or gender subaltern is the most pathetic in the oppressive level. In the oppressive level, the sentiment, love, feeling, desires or her own existence are dominated. In such a condition her own existence is threatened.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asserts that subaltern is a rejection issue in the past because the elitist researcher ignores the factual happenings. Those researchers did not concentrate upon the problems of oppression. Spivak in the essay “Can Subaltern Speak?” asserts that:

Subalternity thus became a novelty, invented *de novo* by Subaltern Studies, which gave old terms new meanings and marked a new beginning for historical studies. Domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance, revolt, and other old concepts could now be subalternised. By definition, subalternity had been ignored by all scholars in the past; thus, all the old research became elitist. (16)

Spivak adds that subaltern is the study of those marginalized groups who are deprived to assimilate main stream of political, cultural, or social system. In other words historically forgotten and ignored individuals or groups are known as subaltern people. Scholars also define subaltern in terms of economic deficiency due to which an individual or groups suffer. Somewhere it is hegemonic too. In studying Spivak Subaltern in the study of dominated, unaddressed, muted voices, or suppressed in the name of culture, social norms or due to power relationship.

When the majority rules under the minorities and expand their rude behavior that state is called the state of subaltern. Here, rude behavior means the condition where high class or ruling class community does not respect the sentiment of workers or labors. Stephen Morton asserts that:



Spivak extends the reach of the term [subaltern] in essays like 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' by using it to figure social groups 'further down' the social scale and consequently even less visible to colonial and Third World national-bourgeois historiography alike; she is especially preoccupied by 'subsistence farmers, unorganised peasant labour, the tribals and communities of zero workers on the street or in the countryside'. More particularly, her analysis is directed at the subject-position of the female subaltern, whom she describes as doubly marginalized by virtue of relative economic disadvantage and gender subordination. (75)

Subaltern Studies the areas towards farmers, work, women, Dalits who are unorganized and marginalized. They are always treated as the 'Other'. Even, such individual loss their subjectivity because of their social, economic status. The theorist asserts that cast or ethnicity is the cause to subjugate others. The so called higher cast people show their socially acquired power to dominate women.

In the novel *Difficult Daughters* the women became suffer not only from her social status, her roles and performances. Moreover, she suffers a lot from her biological variations too. A male wants to dominate a female for pleasure or for using her body for work; the researcher studies such a condition from the perspective of gender subaltern. Simone de Beauvoir in the essay "The Second Sex" blames man for not respecting woman and her sentiment. She asserts that "the flesh of the male is produced in the male's body and re-created in the embraces of the woman in love" (994). Men are born from the female body but they hate females due to their social strata and cultural gained knowledge. Male's activities make a women lost in this world. In every sector of the society male dominates woman and makes woman feel

their destiny is looted by the God. For insistence Simone de Beauvoir in the essay “Myth and Reality” asserts that “the men today show a certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to women, they are willing on their require her to remain the inessential” (1000). Men use women for the means of pleasure and requirements but do not see her necessity in overall field, even their own life becomes incomplete in her absence, which they cannot assume. The scholar focuses to respect women.

In *Feminist Political Theory* Erie Bryson sees the causes of inequality towards women due to the male power and supremacy. Males have authority and they adopt the traditional forms of society. The single flaws of men is they do not see the drawbacks of social evils where they have continued the same model of society that dominate their wives or female members in the society. Moreover, they do not concentrate on the dominations of their own daughters or sisters because of their unchanged mindsets that only destined towards the female oppression. Erie Bryson asserts that:

Feminist political theory, however, sees women and their situation as central to political analysis; it asks why it is that in virtually all known societies’ men appear to have power over women, and how this can be changed. It is therefore engaged theory, which seeks to understand society in order to challenge and change it. (1)

Men have power to dominate the society and they have been controlling the social norms. This tradition helps to continue and institutionalize the women domination but they do not have any intuitive power to change their unchanged thoughts.

The critics have raised the issues on feminism. They have talked cultural, social, or economic causes in terms of women domination. They have also raised how women are dominated due to cultural, or social roots in the family or in societies. The

research further elaborates the causes of women domination in the particular Indian Community. Mostly the research finds that the long time social and cultural practices and male stereotypical views towards women are the causes to treat women as an inferior being. Women are differently treated being women and regarding them as weaker being.

## **II. Biological and Cultural Mistreatment towards Women in Manju Kapur's**

### ***Difficult Daughters: A Study of Gender Subaltern***

Society, social norms and its cultural practice have a close affinity. These aspects of society formulate an intrinsic relationship which make easier to establish mutual cooperation among its citizens. Some strata of society have been changing according time and necessity. Despite the fact some strata like the unforgettable hostile psyche difference between man and woman needs change. A male figure because of his masculine power and social practice gets victory over woman psyche and physicality, which we study under the domain of gender variation that is discrimination in the society. Though gender is a social construct it is associated to biological difference. Being biologically different a woman becomes subjugated in front of male eyes made society, which we study under the domain of gender subaltern. In such a condition her voice is muted and her role in family or society is unvalorized because of gender or biological asimilarity.

*Difficult Daughters* bears the theme of gender subaltern. Virmati, the protagonist and the leader of the plot suffers a lot in her house since her birth. No time leaves her free; she remains always busy at her household work. This sort of busy life in domestic life is due to biological variation. The society demands a woman to be rigid in social norms. Moreover, her marital relationship is also determined by the society. But here, a male either father or husband becomes failure to realize the sentiment of their daughter or wife due to gender role.

Feminism talks on the issue of female. It sees the biased and deprived condition over women socially. It means that the theory sees the causes of male power over women either getting women body of the purpose of physical satisfaction or depriving women from the main stream of social and political power. This research

takes paintings to show the condition of women as well as appeal to them to raise the voice against male exploitation and domination. Elaine Showalter in “A Literature of Their Own” asserts the three phases in sustaining the female revolutions. The first wave of feminism concentrates on the surrender age, where women almost copy the art and creation of male writers. In this mode, they do not adopt any radical changes, only they follow the norms of male writers, but they include the domestic and family sphere in their writing. In the second wave of feminism, women protest them depicting the concept of sexism and stereotypical social image towards them. But in third phase of female movement they started revolution through their writing. In this mode, they discover their self-identity and found the consciousness, intuition on the self. The research on *Difficult Daughters* has shown victory to the dominated women in Indian society, where in the beginning of the text that we regard as the earlier form of society, women were treated as the subaltern figure.

Indian society is based on the authorial norms of male. In this regard the society is a male chauvinistic society because of the social established norms that work on the behalf of the men. But male does not become successful to be neutral with female in the society. Male gaze in the society treats woman a tool to produce offspring for the continuation of family and the society. The role of women is to be pregnant and to beget children as much as they can. For it D. H. Lawrence, in the essay “Lady Chatterley’s Lover” affirms the desire of men only for getting pleasure:

A man was like without a child with his appetites. A woman had to yield him what he wanted, or like a child he would probably turn nasty and flounce away and spoil what was a very pleasant connation. But a woman could yield to a man yielding her inner, free self. That the poets and talkers about sex did not seem to have taken sufficiently into

account. A woman could take a man without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power. Rather she could use this sex thing to have power over him. (8)

Kasturi-the mother to Virmati always becomes unwell because of her regular pregnancies. The health condition of Virmati's mother makes her remain always busy in household works. She is the eldest daughter to Prakash and Kasturi. So, it is her additional responsibility to care her siblings along with her education. In Virmati's discussion to her relatives she says that "you know, our mother was always sick, and Virmati, as eldest, had to run the house and look after us"(5). It shows that it is the responsibility of the daughter child to manage all the domestic works. Her father Prakash also does not show sympathy to her daughter which the researcher studies as the suffering or toil of female figure in the household works. The father of eleven children gives extra burden to his daughter despite the future of his daughter. For him also family management is important than the individual life or future of his own daughter Virmati. From these lines we can affirm that the condition of women is same in the then period, which the researcher studies from the perspective of gender subaltern. Her biological difference and her continuous toil in the domestic work is a road map to study the *Difficult Daughters* from the perspective of gender subaltern.

When a female figure becomes busy only in the domestic works she hates her own fortune because she cannot escape out from the reality or the real problems. Her only responsibility comes in fulfilling her family desire first then only her personal goal come at the second phase. But women do not get rest and peace in mind due to work. Regular pregnancies of mother make her and her eldest daughter busy only at the confined zone rather than the social or outer work. Virmati describes the situation as "how trapped could nature make a woman?"(7). The female figure thinks that the

nature has already looted the future of woman because the God becomes silence in the voice of women. Women also want to be free but the social taboos and the family responsibilities make them to tolerate the conditions. In this regard they think it is the rule of destiny to make women vulnerable at domestic works. The male eyes in the society think women are there in the society for the benefit of men and for making their deeds easier and comfortable.

Male ruling society becomes an obstacle for women. Men could not bear all the compensation to women. Patriarchy does not understand the necessity of women and only uses them physically or sentimentally. Only domination flourishes in the societies. For it Heidi Hartmann asserts that:

Patriarchy as the set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enable them in turn to dominate women. Patriarchy is not simply hierarchical but hierarchy in which particular people fill particular places. (103)

The patriarchy uses women body as a matter for use. Such a tragic disaster cannot address the sentiment of women that is rooted in the psyche of me. It assumes social norms as a hindrance for the betterment of women future.

*Difficult Daughters* concentrate on the issue of female sufferings. The plot moves on the condition of Virmati who is the eldest sibling in the family. Her suffering gives her no time to concentrate on her personal carrier. Her only responsibilities come assuring the parental and sibling's happiness. She explores the situation as "Kasturi could not remember a time when she was not tired, when her feet and legs did not ache. Her back curved in towards the base of her spine, and carrying her children was a strain, even when they were very young"(7). The continuous work

of a woman in the work ruins her health too. It is not only the responsibility of a woman to guide or care every member of the family. Everyone in the family has to show their responsibility in fulfilling their responsibility. *Difficult Daughters* shows the suffering of daughter from the eyes of woman writer Manju Kapur. A female writer and her female characters make the text realistic too. It shows the real suffering and invented thought in the psyche of women due to continuous dedication in the domestic affair.

If a person becomes sufferer due to biological difference, that is also a sort of domination. David Ludden in *Reading Subaltern Studies* writes that “domination, subordination, hegemony, resistance, revolt, and other old concepts could now be subalternised” (16). The scholar views that all these sort of viperous gaze or mistreatment to another person is a state of subaltern. The person becomes victim because of her/his power that is institutionalized. In such a condition, there lacks even the basic human principles to respect others soul or body. The so called elite group always dominate the marginal group.

A woman necessarily does not prefer to spend their fruitful youth days in the behalf of her sibling. The masculine model of society and the social train has enchained her autonomously in her deeds, which the author presents vigorously a pathetic condition. A person cannot perform well due to long toil or household work. In case of Varmati she cannot perform her academic excellence. The author says that “eventually Virmati failed her FA. The struggle to do well in school while doing her duties at home was too much. With tears in her eyes, Virmati stared at the bulletin board. Higher education involved being on one’s own” (21). Additional burden in the work makes her unsuccessful in study. It proves that for women the education is less priority than the domestic work. The elder family members do not show any



sympathy in her home duty and study. So, she becomes a victimized woman in case of study too.

The society has constructed in the same way. The family members only concentrate on work and marriage of their daughter rather than good education. They think daughters are not the family members of their parental home. Sooner or later they have to send them in the home of husband. So, the parents only concentrate on the marriage of their children not the good education, sound health or her overall carrier. This all associate to gender differences. The author further asserts that “they are worried Kasturi knew of course. There was no question of the line being held up. Six girls to marry was not a joke, and nobody could help those who missed their destiny”(16). The social-cultural system has already shaped the minds of its members so that they see the roles according to gender differences.

Nandine Changfoot in the essay “Equality and Difference Feminisms and Simone de Beauvoir “The Second Sex” asserts supporting on the view of Beauvoir that women are different only biologically but they are similar in all respect to males, only social role model based on male norms becomes irresponsible to the women. The scholar asserts that:

How does *The Second Sex* contribute to understanding the tension between equality and difference feminisms? There are two locations of freedom in Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* that shed light on equality and difference feminisms respectively. The first resides in a masculine subject who has propelled the development of western society through history-making activity. (4)

This is the role model subject that empowers equality feminism. It is only the power that dominates women in the society. Men are in the center of ruling system because that was made by males on the behalf of the same.

In the parental home Virmati gets no time to think of herself. Her desire but unsuccessful in her education is its example. Younger girl is always victim by the words of her mother too. It shows that the mother is in same cultural practices. She herself could not go against the cultural established norms. She also wants her daughter remain busy in domestic works. Kasturi-mother, says to her daughter Virmati that “I told you it was too much for you’, said her mother, busy feeding the younger children”(21). The busy days of women are due to patriarchal models of society. There is none to listens her words nor there is anyone to respect her sentiment. In this means a woman is a subaltern figure in the society.

Regarding all the details daughters seem burden to the family. Family is based on masculine model. Such type of masculine model assumes daughter as the property of others and also treat them ‘Othering’. The family members, even the mother treats daughter as the property of others. They always seem to send them in her husband house so that they can get relief from the rooted torture to their daughter.

Familymembers as in the novel shows Virmarti’s mother assertion in a way that:

Kasturi found the fuss Virmati was making about failing unreasonable. It hardly made a difference to the real business of her life, which was getting married and looking after her own home. There was a Samaji family making enquiries. The boy was a canal engineering and doing well.(22)

At the early age women are to be married. At her seventeen Virmati’s family members had chosen a boy for her husband. But she did not decide any longer due to

her disinterest. When she was just a seventeen years old, she and the family got many proposals for the marriage of Virmati despite her education and age. It shows that the society wants women to manage their life by marrying. The female writer also explains the appearance of the protagonist. She does so to depict the society and the social belief system. The text further elaborates that:

Virmati was seventeen by this time. She had a long, fine face with large, widely spaced eyes, eyes with a dazed and distant look. Her nose was thin and straight, her colour pale as the inside of a banana stalk. Her lips were full and natural red, her chin small and rounded. (22)

These lines expose the true condition of the society. When a girl moves to maturity, that condition becomes an issue of tension in the family. Such type of description of a female figure is a realistic picture in the society. Matching the couple is also a challenging task, so the writer does so to portrait the condition.

Every Right to the female identity is determined by the males either by her father or by her husband. Denise Thompson in *Reading Feminism Today* writes that:

Politics is also concerned with social relations of power, and the relations of power which feminism identifies are those of male domination. Feminism aims to expose the reality of male domination, while struggle for a world where women are recognized as human beings in their own right. (8)

Here, the relationship between male and female is shown. The distanced relationship between these two is due to the social relationship of power. The pivotal cause is male psyche which they fail to realize and change since history. There lacked knowledge to make daughters educate is due to social culture that is continued in the male psyche.

The question arises why the family members concentrate only on marriage of their daughters but they do not concentrate on making their daughters self independence. The family members even the mother thinks that the daughters are for getting children and managing the house. So, she makes her daughter to work in the house rather than focusing on her study. The author asserts that “Virmati was already missed too much school,’ said the great aunt, as she sat down to eat what was left. And once she finishes, it will be time to get her married. Already people are asking” (22). They believe the day of marriage is already fixed in the cosmos by the God. They only want to make their daughter children at work which makes easier for daughters too to manage their houses after marriage.

Ketu H. Katrak views that there is gender biasness to women in respect to men, in the Indian culture. The family that is constructed in male model treats women for work. She affirms that:

In India, prejudices against girl children are played out differently at different historical times—what female infanticide did to the adverse male-female ratio in the nineteenth century is today replaced by mal- and undernourished females. India has the dubious distinction of having the lowest sex ratio in the world (933 females per 1000 males) . . . 4% of all the child workers are girls as compared to 2.1% boys.

(236)

The data shows that the number of female child worker is higher than the male child labor. The data of the time has a similar feature to that of the domestic workers. In the same way the daughters are used for work in the house which is a common reality in the country. This sort of child labor is also an example of subaltern. Being unspeakable person the girls are used in domestic work.

Women have to perform more responsibilities too. It is their responsibility to accomplish the official preparation of the husband. They have to do the necessities at home so that the official work of husband becomes easier for them. Women got tired due to their day long house work, in the evening they get no rest preparing husband's work. Luckily, if a husband gets literate wife that emerges more boredom to the wife being more busy in every work-domestic and official. *Difficult Daughters* further elaborates the situation as:

The woman copied down the letters carefully, but when it came to her husband's daily test, she found she had forgotten which sound went with which letter. Then they would do the whole thing over again, adding a few more letters, because the husband didn't have all the time in the world, and he wanted his wife to become a companion quickly. Meanwhile the life of the house flowed around them. Women were sewing, knitting or preparing food, amidst ripples of talk, while children played in the angan. (40)

The society demands wife to be part of their husband for making his deeds easier and for fascinating the familial work. They want a girl or a daughter or a wife to be busy in sewing, knitting or preparing food and welcoming the guests but they do not want to see her getting higher education.

With a greater effort the protagonist of the novel Virmati has pursued her course on Fine Arts. It is an exceptional example in the society. An educated girl in such a community becomes preferable to the every boy.

Virmati passed her FA with marks that were respectable enough for a girl, her parents thought. She now wanted to study further. Her parents thought that she had gone far enough. The parents of her fiancée

thought she was already well qualified to be a wife of their sons, the canal engineer. They didn't want too much education in their daughter-in-law, even though times were changing; Virmati wept and sulked.

(45)

The social or cultural norms become prejudice towards girls. This custom sends girls to their husband's house in their early phase. The family members are also worry towards their future and exercise much to find the suitable husband for their daughter. In the novel Virmati becomes sulked getting talk of fiancée at her early age. It proves how male made social norms have been functioning in the society.

Ketu H. Katrak further illustrates that there are social and political layers that determines the identity of a woman. The society that is based on male rulling that is out fashioned model treats female as weaker being and regards her as an object to use and get benefit physically or biologically from her. Women writers present the struggles of protagonists to resist patriarchal objectification and definition as daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, and mother-in-law. The scholar asserts the situation that:

Socio-cultural parameters of womanhood— wifhood, mothers of sons valued more than mothers of daughters, infertility, and widowhood— are grounded within economic, political, and cultural normsthat consciously and unconsciously constitute an ideological framework that controls women's bodies. For female subjects, experiences of colonial domination are genderspecificand rooted in the control of female sexuality throughout a woman's life. In most postcolonial cultures, a traditional, pre-colonial patriarchy is reinforced by colonial Victorian morality. (9)

The society wants to see its daughter member in well disciplined manner in terms of sexuality. It demands purity and serenity to the women. Entrapping her in the label of different criteria the men rules always wants to control over her body and soul. The control over body is due to gender variation.

*Difficult Daughters* shows the family members do not allow girl for study. For them the birth of daughter is a curse, only bless is her physical work which she does before marriage in her parental home. If the parents allow their daughters for study it was unsatisfactory which the author asserts as, "Virmati entered AS College, the bastion of male learning. It had four hundred boys to six girls. Virmati was the seventh" (45). The number of girl student was also easily countable in fingers. A girl or a woman loved only for her muscles or appearance. In the house or in parental house she is loved for making easier the domestic works. Similarly, in the husband's house she is loved for making the household work easier and also she is loved because of her appearance. A girl at their sweet seventeen is obviously liked by other. So, she has to encounter many talks on marriage affair, which the novelist proves by the character Virmati.

J. Maggio in the essay "Can the Subaltern Be Heard?" assumes that there remains a gap between speaker and the hearer. It shows that in case of women the social poisonous eyes treats women as a subjugated being and they make women muted. If she dares to speak her voice is unheard by the society. Maggio views that "in yet other words, there is no clear-cut distinction between the isolated speaker and listener. There is always a conflict, an inherent tension, between the speaking subject and the hearing subject" (430). In such a case a woman is a dominated one biologically that is an obvious condition. Moreover, the scholar views the condition of women as the sufferer of subaltern one.

The eye of society is vulnerable to preserve the females' voice. Neither the females do arise their voice nor do they revolt against the society. The dominant issue is woman education. Out of four hundreds boys there were only seven in a school, which shows the condition of the then society. There were only a few females who enrolled in school but the condition did not become befriend to them. With a great effort they go on achieving their goal but that becomes much difficult to adjust them in study. Even the eyes of their professor do not become unprecedented to them. In school "days passed, and Virmat's confusion grew. She would sometimes wish that...but what could she wish? Early marriage, and no education? No Professor, and no love? Her soul revolted and her sufferings increased"(54). It shows how the days are difficult to women to get education and to be befriend with the teachers too. Women education in the then Indian society was much challenging if women were enrolled in school their days invited many unbearable suffering.

Nadine Changfoot in the essay "Equality and Difference Feminisms and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*" asserts that the prominent cause of women domination is due to biological difference. Men and Women are alike in all respect except the sex organ. So, it is the eyes of society to regard and treat women as a subordinate figure. The scholar asserts that:

There were also feminisms that focused on sexual difference as key for understanding women's subordination. French feminism and maternal feminism insisted on privileging the feminine. Feminisms of sexual difference inspired the thinking that for women to experience true equality, women would have to explore femininity distinct from existing male-created institutions, norms, and practices, often *without* men. (2/3)



The college teacher does not let the beautiful girl student out of his sight. Even the professor seems dwelling in the appearance of the girl student rather than thinking academic excellence of the student. Virmati, a girl student receives frequently the love proposal from her professor then “Virmati read this brief letter several times. She searched the words, but could find no sense that she was important to him, no impatience to be united with her. But maybe, thought Virmati indecisively, these things came after marriage?”(56). The girl student in such a community becomes successful to enroll in the school. They feel doing better in their study was their single motto. Due to this desire, the girl student like Virmati does not think about their marriage or love proposals. Hence, the girl or the student put those letters on the parapet assuming them as unnecessary affair. In addition, the touch of the professor to the girl student is really physical violence and a vigorous domination to the student. The novel depicts the situation as “wasn’t her future partner decided by the first touch of a man on her body?”(57). The answer becomes no because the touch to the female body represents passion not the love. The case is same always because the male gaze does not become neutral to the female appearance.

Nadine Changfoot further asserts that men always want to entrap women in their palms by spreading stereotypical beliefs or by continuing the social prejudice authorities. The scholar further asserts that:

In truth women have never set up female values in opposition to male values; it is men who, desirous of maintaining masculine prerogatives, have invented that divergence. Men have pretended to create a feminine domain-the principle of life, of immanence-only in order to lock up women therein. (6)

The life of women is a life of struggle and suffering. In the novel the female character Virmati has been experiencing inexcusable toil in her life. In the early days woman suffers from the domestic work in the parental home, and after marriage too she has to remain much busy helping her family and making her husband happy. As the days go the woman neither assure the parental decision nor do they can accept the marriage proposal. Due to lack of education and self desire restricted by the male made social norms, the woman becomes submissive in front of family and the society.

The scholar Denise Thompson further asserts that “the love ... is a pivotal of women’s oppressive today. The problem with romantic (heterosexual) love was the unequal power relationship between the sexes, the way love was constituted at women’s expense” (25). If a male loves women only falling on her beauty truly that invites problem. Male has a courage to do show because of their power which they get from social norms of masculine model of regulations.

Also, the society wants to see a woman busy in domestic works life work in the kitchen, field or doing some needlework. The education and the time help women to think against such discrimination. The text shows the condition in a way that:

Kasturi held back worries about the behaviour of an unmarried, educated seventeen year old. Her father, in particular, loved watching her. Such gentleness and tranquility, beauty and modesty were sure to be rewarded by a good husband, he felt, as with her threads and needle Kasturi joined the ranks of women who have stitched hours of waiting into intricate patterns. (63)

The family issue always moves on the subject of marriage. Parents do not like to take the risk of their daughter in the parental home. They feel only solution of the burden

is marrying their daughter and feeling relief this load. We feel lack of responsibility towards them.

Indeed when the eldest daughter remains unmarried that becomes problematic. In the condition parents assert that “Indu is going to marry Inderjit. You must have heard that already”(88). Indu is younger than Virmati. Despite the discontent of elder daughter the family is going to marry the younger daughter. When elder one becomes spinster that becomes a rumor and talk in the society. The social group regards the convention as the fate that is written by the destiny. The parents further assert that “nobody can escape their karma”(92). Everyone in the society blames the role of destiny for shaping the life and fortune of daughter or woman. The God has already determined the life of woman so she has to obey the Godly created rule in the society. The author further picks up the parental assertion and adds that “a woman without her own home and family is a woman without moorings”(111). The assertion may touch the heart of a woman so that she can assure the parental advice.

We also see the features of hegemony in gender subaltern study. Alongside the naturalization of capitalist values, influences the ability to make choices on one’s own behalf in the daily lives of economically marginalized as well as economically privileged communities around the globe. The rise of religious fundamentalisms with their deeply masculinist and often racist rhetoric poses a huge challenge for feminist struggles around the world. The scholar Mohanty Chandra Talpade further asserts “I believe these political shifts to the right, accompanied by global capitalist hegemony, privatization, and increased religious, ethnic, and racial hatreds, pose very concrete challenges for feminists” (508). Ethical, cultural, religious capitalist or hatredness are elements n feminism.

The contemplating ways of family members especially, the family accepts the authority and decision of father in our society. In this regard, father force or masculine decision plays a role in the family. All the members have to perform what he instructs and shows. The social culture, pave ways in such a way that a girl is a class that is to be sent in her real home after marriage. The present home or parental home for a girl is temporary and it is a burden to keep her more in parental home. This attitude in the society makes the family to select bride for their daughters or sisters in home so that they get relief from her. When a girl reaches to her teenage, she often gets marriage proposals. The society does not think that this age for a woman is for study or building up her carrier. In this age she cannot decide what to do and what not to do. Hardly if she gets opportunity to study she has to entangle in the problems.

When a girl or a woman leaves the house for purposes obviously that invites infinite problem during her tenure there. Manju Kapur has shown the same condition in the novel. A girl Virmati has faced the challenges after leaving house to study. Neither her days at home get relief to her nor do her days in college free her. Her days become harder and harder. Virmati asserts her difficult situation as:

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, being able to live in peace, study in peace...and why? Because I am an idiot. (149)

In such a condition a woman becomes submissive in front of society and the family too. Neither do she can assert her view nor the male gaze free her. In such a condition

a woman becomes victim doubly. Here, doubly mean one of being woman and another being reaction less or speechless person.

When a woman leaves her house to search and grasp more opportunities it becomes uncomfortable to her to adjust in the society. During the period of stay or during the college session the woman sometimes becomes pregnant by the professor. It shows how far a woman is secure or insecure in front of the male gaze. The eye of male dominates the woman. Ultimately, a woman becomes the sufferer of the condition and the situation establishes hardly comfortable for the bearer one. The male, though he has a different social status, contributing in the field of education becomes blind to manage the situation. In the hospital “the doctor asked her a few routine questions, date of last period, any complications in her gynecological history, number of pregnancies, which Virmati answered with averted eyes”(170). The condition of unmarried girl becoming pregnant is really a condition of intolerable. The doctor asks several questions to find out the causes. On the other side, the parents are worried on the unmarried state of their elder daughters.

*World Health Organization* in its web version 2012 on “From Female Sexuality and Hysteria to Feminine Psychology: The Gender of Insanity in Literature” shows the multiple consequences due to women depression which the researcher studies from the eyes of subaltern studies too. The organization focuses that:

Depression, anxiety, psychological distress, sexual violence, domestic violence and escalating rates of substance use affect women to a greater extent than men across different countries and different settings.

Pressures created by their multiple roles, gender discrimination and associated factors of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, overwork, domestic violence and sexual abuse; combine to account for women's poor

mental health. There is a positive relationship between the frequency and severity of such social factors and the frequency and severity of mental health problems in women. Severe life events that cause a sense of loss, inferiority, humiliation or entrapment can predict depression. (1)

A woman has to suffer from multiple violence and discrimination. The domestic violence that may be physical or psychological, that we call the violence in terms of sexuality. In this means a woman is treated as the inferior being and the powerful one always dominates her, which we study from the perspective of subaltern studies.

Nadine Changfoot studies feminism in case of difference that is a biological difference which men understand as the weakness or lack, and consider a means to dominate women through their weapon maleness, and social norms.

There were also feminisms that focused on sexual difference as key for understanding women's subordination. French feminism and maternal feminism insisted on privileging the feminine. Feminisms of sexual difference inspired the thinking that for women to experience true equality, women would have to explore femininity distinct from existing male-created institutions, norms, and practices, often without men. (3)

The scholar sees the domination that is institutionalized due to male rigid psyche towards female. Men feel women as a weaker being and exploit her biologically and physically.

Moreover, the society does not allow women to choose their single decision. The society or the male based family does not let women outside the house for pursuing academic qualities or for getting better opportunities. Even, the society does not allow woman to select the appropriate husband herself. The author asserts the

bitter reality in a way that “and now Virmati was married away from home, beaten by her mother, and declared dead. What had happened?”(223). The self selection of the husband is against family norms or ethics. If an offspring specially, a daughter, does not obey the tradition family norms that becomes an issue of misbelieve and assumed a betrayal to the family. The family goes to blame such the member and the one has to bear the loss given by the family. The mother herself becomes a tool not respecting the sentiment of her own daughters. The father, who represents the male or manhood in the society, does not excuse his daughter even for the self choice of her husband. In the research, the father “had died without forgiving her”(240). The social or family becomes much rigid towards their daughters. The research assimilates such a female suffering from the perspective of gender subaltern.

Another scholar Akifumi Otani in the essay “Beyond Feminism” focuses the use of language in the texts written by female writers. Language is a means to portrait the condition of women in the society. Otani with the help of scholars Derrida and Lacan focuses on the use of language. For Otani language is always disturbed, the identity of sex is disturbed as well. According to Foucault, sex is regulated by power, and there is no essential identity of sex. And, according to Lacan, sex is formed by language. This language has power, which is formulated with the help of language. Otani writes that:

Penis is the active force in the construction of language and culture, and it stands for the Law of the Father and the fear of castration. For Lacan, the symbolic is the realm regulated by language, and the real is the chaotic realm which is expelled by the symbolic. Female sex is set to the position relevant to the chaos of the real (the position to be the

Phallus), and male sex is set to the position of the symbolic that expels the real (the position to have the Phallus).(5)

Thus, the means of domination to the female is the male organ. Male got victory over women because of their sexual organ that made them powerful since history. This sort of victory does not have any logical significance.

The days and the life of a woman become much complicated. On the one side her days at her parental house is much ruined because of her regular toil in domestic affair and on the other side her days in college are not satisfactory. Due to regular pressure at home and desires encourages her to establish self identity. A woman like Virmati has not done any wrong but she becomes the sufferer. A man uses her to satisfy his passion but he seems irresponsible to grant all the responsible of the consequences. *Difficult Daughters* shows the situation in a way that “Virmati became better, but not less dull. One abortion and one miscarriage”(246). Due to more psychological tension and physical fatigue, a woman becomes victimized. When a boy friend or the premarital life partner does not take the responsibility to the unborn child, in such a condition she does what she decides temporarily. She has none to balm her in her suffering. Only way she thinks may be abort the child or die the self. Here, in *Difficult Daughters* she aborted the first child during her college days. In the second attempt to she got married with a due pressure but this time too she has to face the voluntarily abortion because of the burden. Ultimately, to make her life legalized she married a man with a wife and two children. The narrator further clarifies that “Virmati’s life in Lahore was isolated. She was married with a husband, a co-wife and two step children”(250). It shows that a woman has no rest and peace but the cause of every suffering was male or man.



Gyanendra Pandey affirms that the temporal bond between men and women made women a subaltern figure. In the name of physical relationship the bond seems temporal, male desires her only for pleasure but in this condition a woman is always victimized. Pandey asserts that:

The sad multipositionality of the gendered subaltern is elucidated here as a compound temporal bind, within which women are endlessly cajoled into temporal displacement, as child, wife, and mother, and that belongs to others and effects the erasure of their agency. The grim monotony of multipositional displacement of these textual not-yet-even-subaltern-citizens is interrupted by rare yet sufficiently untamed literary figures from the same period which can serve as apertures of a Hegelian slave restlessness, and thus, of emancipator endeavors. (3)

In the society there is a gap between these two poles. These poles are incompatible with each other in terms of equality. In this means a woman is dominated by the male eyes due to his authorial power in the society.

In the socio-historical reality of race, gender, class, ethnicity, caste, religion, and sexuality the majority or the powerful one dominates the weaker one. Each society has certain role models which dominate or rule the society. In *Difficult Daughters* the central character Virmati becomes sufferer being a woman and as a worker. She gets no time for rest. In her parental home her major responsibility goes to caring up her siblings, and in her husband's home her responsibility goes to serve as a wife, as a worker there and moreover she has to obey the socio-cultural norms in the society.

Mohanty writes that there is demarcation between people or groups in the society which needs to be corrected for the betterment of ideal society.

Feminism without Borders is not the same as “border-less” feminism. It acknowledges the fault lines, condition, differences, fears and the containment that borders represent. It acknowledges that there is no one sense of the border that lines between and through nations, race, classes, sexualities, religions, and disabilities, are real- and that feminism without borders must envision change and social justice work across this line of demarcation and division. (2)

Here, Mohanty shows the gender difference between being a male and being a female. There is a faulty boarder line between these two poles. This faulty line shows tears, difference of these two group in the society which is a social unjust.

A woman does anything for the sake of love. A male does not feel so. *Difficult Daughters* shows the same thematic meaning her. Far way education despite the social or parental agreement, challenging physical relationship to a married man and abortion due to having no support from the husband, the life of a woman obviously seems a hell. In such a condition the novelist asserts that “of course I made a disastrous marriage”(279). In the traditional norms marriage system should be in full agreement of the parents. But the self determination to marriage and some decision against family advice becomes a disaster. Here, in the novel *Difficult Daughters* Virmati the protagonist does not get support from her parents. Even in her weddingday, most of the nearest relatives were absent and she was not called back in her parental home after marriage till the demise of her father.

The scholar Ketu H. Katrak in her book *The Politics of the Female Body, Post-Colonial Writers of the Third World* asserts that women in the society do not go on assimilating the male imposed power and domination in them rather they go on accepting the challenges. Katrak affirms that:

Despite tragic and negative conclusions-madness, death, suicide, other forms of social exclusion and un-belonging-in in women's text, it is important to regularize the only available avenue of resistance. Women writers portray how their protagonist resists their patriarchy or colonial oppression covertly from within the system rather than overt political resistance or imprisonment depicted more commonly by male postcolonial writers. (3)

As the text shows women at their last breathe struggles to get the justice and to find out their status in the society. They covertly go against such modes of life. Virmati's passion to get education is the example of this struggle. Males are assumed as the colonizer, they go on colonizing women as far as they can. Virmati has faced much challenge in life but she was strict in her decision and struggled throughout her life but she did not think of suicide or death. In this means she is a revolutionist. Also, "Kasturi became the first girl in her family to postpone the arrival of the wedding guests by a tentative assault on learning"(62). It shows that early marriage and full parental authority in case of marriage are due to men made social rigid norms which the present women dare to face and change.

In *Difficult Daughters* there is a game of domination and hierarchy. The domination is culturally constructed and the females are subjugated. A woman suffers due to cultural norms rigid norms and due to her submissive role in the society. Dipesh Chakravorty indicates "the nature of this resolution by affirming their basis concern with the thorny question of consciousness and by defining subalternity as the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy" (18). In this regard there is a game of domination and resistance in subaltern or sufferer. Sometimes speechless becomes a tool of resistance. Virmati in the novel resists the

situation by denying the marriage and leaving home to complete the passion of study. In this means blurs the male hierarchical system and subjugated role due to her gender.

Simone de Beauvoir in the essay “The Second Sex” gives masculine social model as an obstacle in affecting the women condition. She affirms, “The flesh of the male is produced in the mother’s body and re-created in the embraces of the woman in love” (994). Women give birth to male but the same male establishes him as a viperous due to social practice. Beauvoir claim is that the male forgets his creator woman (mother) and mistreats woman. Mother as a woman gives birth to a son or male body but later, that body continues the social stigmas and finally forgets his own creator. In this regard male is a part of woman but woman is not the part of male.

Simone de Beauvoir in the essay “Myth and Reality” asserts that “the men today show a certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to women, they are willing on their require her to remain the inessential” (1000). Here, Beauvoir focuses that the essentiality or the identity of women are lost due to male’s treatment to females. Male are male only due to biological difference. The biological variation should be addressed or respected. If males cannot respect the female body, then they do not have authority to dominate woman body. It does not mean that it is their responsibility to dominate women. By so established social norms the society treats women as second class beings. Sometimes the society regard them as the much weaker being.

All these associate due to gender difference. Being female the masculine norms treat them willingly. Being female is neither a sin nor a virtue. Its just a worldly natural phenomena. The divine needs the necessity of both the biological beings for the prosperity of the Earth. Hence, it is the responsibility of the all males to respect the soul for the fruitful continuity of the worldly process. Now, the society is

changed. The male mindsets have been refreshing and thinking to treat all equally.

Today we learn, the culture can also be changed if this becomes unjust to a particular group, community or any levels. The different global movements in the issue of women rights, human rights, workers rights, women education, different organization has changed and still working to make the situation balanced in the society.

### III. Past and the Present in Gender Subaltern

The research finds the condition of women in the Indian societies on the basis of representation in *Difficult Daughters*. It finds that the condition of women is unsatisfactory because they have to confine within the strict social and cultural norms in the society since history. They are treated differently because the society is guided by masculine model. It discovers that such a condition is very pathetic. As the text in Indian Community proves, women do not get warm love from their family and the society. They are treated as not being the part of the family. They are also physically and sexually exploited and left in the chaos world tearing their future and prestige.

Biological variation and cultural norms are the causes to treat women. Being women only they have to indulge in labor work much, and also being women they lack position in decision level even at home. To uplift from this sort of problem, women have to struggle a lot. They manage every domestic or family life and manage a short time to study. Ultimately, women got victory. The novel shows how the suffering transformed to happy ending at last despite uncountable toils in the life of women. This happy ending is not the ends but it is the vision of writer. We all need, harmonious relationship between men and women or we need social balance.

Manju Kapur has shown the condition of women's domination or suppression through her writing. The society was functioning in the favour of male. Hence, men do not want to blur the social hierarchical system because that system favours them. Here, men's free will has dominated the society as in Nietzsche's word. Men adopt and obeys what they think, what they feel truth, what they want to continue. The unchanged men's psychology became the cause to dominate women. Women are also deprived from food, good schooling, and sound health. In such a pathetic condition, they cannot think over their rights and freedom. Only they have to obey or accept

what comes before them. Ultimately, women became organized and successful in getting their rights. Here, free will means the social condition and mental thoughts that men thought and applied to dominate over women regarding them as the weaker part of the same society. It is so due to social and ideological concepts and thoughts to women.

Ultimately, the researcher sees the inevitable harmonious relationship between men and women in the society. For bringing the situation balanced, men are also responsible in feeling the necessity of women rights. Women became conscious due to changed education and due to the impact of international movements. Finally, there is harmonious relationship in the society. Up to this period, women have struggled a lot to get their rights back that is for the welfare of the society and the human civilization.

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