

## **Examining Manju Kapur's "Difficult Daughter" and Gita Hariharan's "Thousand Faces of Night" and Their Representation of Mild and Bold Female Characters**

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**Abstract:** There are several crises plaguing contemporary Indian writing in English, each of which reflects and contributes to the ongoing process of change in Indian culture and convention. Here, 20th-century Indian authors attempt to portray the individuality of modern women who are torn between the demands of tradition and the frustrations of isolation and anger; these factors combine to give women significant physical, spiritual, and expressive sway in society. Culture is a violent place. It's always changing, and each time it's a radical departure from previous occurrences. Women in India have just recently begun to have access to education and speak out for their needs since the country's independence. Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*. Gita Hariharan's *"Thousand Faces of Night"* explores the history of India through the relationships between mothers and daughters and fathers and wives. Both *Difficult Daughters* and *Thousand Faces of Night* feature strong female protagonists who attempt to show how difficult it is for women to make it in today's patriarchal society. The characters have overcome many obstacles and are yet able to go on with their lives. They had to deal with issues including marital strife and financial hardship, but they managed to make it by using specific strategies. Their lives progressed from mild-mannered to defiant.

**Keywords:** Cultural trait, Isolation, Identity, Marital rift.

### **Introduction**

Language, national origin, historical time, and topic are only few of the ways that literature may be classified. It has the form of a human being. However, the collection of these well-organized written expressions is known as literature. Information on the writers, their publications, and any honours they've garnered are provided in this section. Since both books may be classified as examples of Indian Writing in English, there is much to be said about their beginnings and development.

The writing style is also very readable and straightforward. Conflict inside a marriage is a central theme in both *Difficult Daughters* and *Thousand Faces of Night*. Marriage now seems to be the most important social institution for humans. In Indian culture, this is seen as a necessary occurrence. It's the bedrock on which Indian culture rests. 'Marriage' is conceived of as a completely new kind of partnership. Marriage ceremonies are performed in a variety of ways in various cultures. It is an honour to host such an event for such an exclusive audience.

Both "Thousand Faces of Night" and "Difficult Daughters" focus on traditional gender roles and the expectation that women will marry by a certain age. If they don't tie the knot, they've committed a grave sin. The chapter's topic is very suggestible. Numerous events illustrate the point. Both books deal with women's strategies for survival. The female protagonists in both "Thousand Faces of Night" and "Difficult Daughters" have had to endure a great deal of hardship and effort in order to make it through each day. Though they have all faced adversity, the ladies have not given up hope; rather, they continue to work hard in the anticipation that good things would eventually come their way. Many women feel that they've lost themselves when they become mums and are confined to the home doing nothing but housework. They claim to be the wife or mother of a certain person. After being married, they forget who they were and what they were good at. They may have other goals in mind before getting married, but once they're settled down with a family, they lose sight of anything else and focus only on their domestic responsibilities. Men are too preoccupied with their careers to listen to their wives' aspirations. A married woman should not abandon her ambitions.

They are free to pursue their ambitions as they see fit. Both books have provided a wealth of insight into the significance of daydreaming. It does a great job of capturing the emotions of women who stifle their ambitions. They put their hopes and ambitions on the back burner to take care of their families, and as a result, they often lose faith in their own abilities. These books have given women permission to be themselves and take risks to achieve their goals. *Difficult Daughters*, a book by Manju Kapur, explores the many guises a woman might take and the stages of change she experiences as she moves through her life.

The novel portrays the urge of women, their desires, wishes and goals. There are lots of hidden desires in a woman which has never been identified by men in this novel. Manju Kapur's protagonist strives to make an attempt to break the gender division up to a very huge extent. Woman is treated to be a machine that does household works, but they too have emotions. Whoever it may be, each one is supposed to be very particular in respecting relationships whether lined by mother, father, brother, sister, friend, cousins, teacher, student, children, secondary limits move cautiously in. When any one engages in confident interaction, it should be very exacting to be on limits. Such as early day's relationship, maturity is also intended to be more attentive in all the circumstances. Yet, the public is enclosed with imaginative culture; and they by chance entrust mistakes. In the present and future, they refuse to fulfill ethos, maybe out of fury or out of individual dissatisfaction. But assured things can be attained in a truthful way. Like Manju Kapur, the majority of the contemporary novelists portray their superwoman with various attitudes that points them to confront the current scenario. *Virmati* here is a warrior who fights for her own freedom but at times fall by the hard shoulder. In *Difficult Daughters*, *Virmati* asks for equivalent life chances and education but moves afar the rule, destroying them proves her fall. Giving respect to relationship is considered to be very important. That has to be sowed in our childhood days, only they boys when growing up will know the purpose of relationship. When a male kid sees his father or uncle not giving respect

to their wife, he will also do the same when he gets older and marries a woman. The society has to teach a male to respect women and give equal opportunity. Only then a female can at least step out of her house to achieve her dreams. *Difficult Daughters* is a novel that talks mainly about the struggle for freedom and liberty. Similar to how India has struggled under the British for so many years in order to get liberated, here *Virmati* strives hard to attain her freedom to live life as she wishes. As other women she too wants to get educated, get placed in a job then enter marriage life that too the one she wishes to get married. In the concluding stages, it becomes visible that she might have attained all that but it stops to be significant. For in the journey of struggling, she misses being her. She is tattered in two faces, among which one is the face she is struggling against her goal *Virmati's* story is a poignant reflection of India's ignominious victory. The professor has considerable influence among all this, but in a catalytic fashion. almost instantly, as the British did during the Partition. The public should be made aware that the wounds caused by division have not been healed despite decades of efforts to do so by governments, cultures, religious institutions, and legal systems. As the novel's final chapter puts it, "it's the accurate time for each human being irrespective of gender to treat both the male and female child as vague," it's clear that people had no choice but to accept their fate and make the best of it. Without prejudice towards either gender, a home may thrive. There was a time when the British had absolute power over India. The whites did not discriminate against either males or women. They were tormented the same amount. However, males now dominate society, and they actually treat women poorly by denying them fundamental rights. Everyone has the right to a good education and to gainful employment. Women, meanwhile, are stereotyped as mindless robots whose only purpose is to serve the needs of their male partners, their offspring, and the family. No one seems to care enough to challenge the men who are abusing their power over their female partners. They see it as a personal matter that no outsider has the right to interfere with. Marriage is portrayed as the pinnacle of success in both books. As soon as a girl reaches puberty, she is forced into an arranged marriage against her will. It seems to have been the norm in the past. Women who are still single at a certain age are looked down upon as immoral and often shunned by society. Many outdated and unjust laws are still in effect in today's world. If a man's first wife dies, even if they've had two kids together, he may remarry. But if a woman loses her spouse, even if she does not have any children, she is not permitted to remarry a male. She is to keep living in honour of her late spouse. She will be barred from taking part in any family rites. She will be cut off from the rest of civilisation. *Manju Kapur's* work *Difficult Daughters* is a sharp depiction of feminism. The novel's protagonist has a tough time of it until the last pages. While *Deshpande's* female characters are quite meek, *Kapur's* portrayals of female protagonists are more confident. Extramarital affairs are given central roles in *Kapur's* works, but this does not provide a factual key to the issues surrounding them.

*Manju Kapur* vividly depicts the life of a woman who fights the patriarchal system in order to take her rightful position. The work is mostly on a woman's never-ending struggle to maintain her existential independence in the face of the wisdom of motherhood. The protagonist of this

work is a downtrodden young lady who is torn between her duty to her family, her desire to further her education, and her forbidden love. The culture of India is rich with ancient myths and legends. The tales are not only entertaining, but they are also faithful recreations of successful cultural norms. Alongside teaching excitement, adventure, and emotion, they also instill rich moral concepts and thought. The narrative provides a compelling evaluation of the mother-daughter bond over three generations. Through her frank portrayal of three generations of women and their plight, Manju Kapur has created a striking portrait of the evolution of the Indian woman's awareness over time, from before independence to after it. Manju Kapur's early portrayal of Virmati and Shakuntala, who choose their own path in life, demonstrates the author's bias for female protagonists. Further development seems to make clear that women who go against tradition are inevitably yanked out, browbeaten, and abandoned by society and their own mums. Over time, they develop a peculiar bond with their mother and pass on the burns they've learned to live with. The generation gap widens too much to be via ducted when temporal differences increase. However, unlike in typical mother-daughter relationships, they did not have a common understanding of childbirth. Tensions may have arisen because of how challenging the time of Partition and its aftereffects are depicted in the book. With her mother's passing, Ida is no longer threatened by her mother's pessimism, and she is free to chart her own course in life. The story shows how a mother's power may be upsetting to her daughter in different circumstances. How a mother, traditionally a symbol of sacrifice and care to her children, may transform into a symbol of self-centeredness and bitterness is a theme that Manju Kapoor explores in her work. Gita Hariharan's subsequent book, *Thousand Faces of Night*, follows Devi as she attempts to develop her own identity. It's possible that our heroine, Devi, returns to her mother in this scene.

Every girl fantasises about her perfect wedding day. They hope their partner will protect them, cherish them, care for them, and provide them joy. There are a lot of taboos around marriage in our society. In the actual world, they are severely disillusioned. The book *Thousand Faces of Night* does an excellent job of describing the difficulties that women confront both before and after marriage. Although the three ladies in the tale are from different eras, their hardships are strikingly similar. Marriage stands out as one of humanity's most important institutions. It provides a solid foundation for Indian culture. The marriage ushered in a whole different kind of partnership. Marriage ceremonies are performed in a variety of ways depending on the culture. It's considered a great honour by some to host such an event. Both "*Thousand Faces of Night*" and "*Difficult Daughters*" focus on traditional gender roles and the expectation that women will marry by a certain age. If they don't get married, it will be bad. Devi, Sita, and Mayamma are three women whose stories demonstrate the traditional patriarchal pattern in *Thousand Faces of Night*. The protagonist in Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is a lady who, despite her best efforts, receives only mechanical attention and care from her husband. They are not treated with the dignity they deserve. Several of the novel's female protagonists are victims of a male-dominated society. Gita Hariharan uses fictional characters to represent real people and the events that happened to them. These ladies are given the wings

of self-liberation and self-awareness to enable them escape the confines of traditional gender roles. The question of a woman's unique identity and the source of her inherent strength to endure is also addressed by Githa Hariharan. Githa Hariharan is frustrated by traditional norms that call attention to a wife's subservient role and works to establish a new order. Her vision spans the full progression of women's status and reveals a fresh, authentic woman. One's sense of self-identity is often cited as the most crucial aspect of a person.

Everyone is doing their hardest to distinguish themselves. Some people desire to be known as the greatest athlete, some as the top student or businessman, and so on. Although women and men are equally entitled to their own identities, in this narrative, male identity is privileged. Gender has no role in this at all. They shouldn't be allowed to exist as individuals at all. Their real mother and his wife's identities are kept secret. Most women struggle with difficulties of self-confidence and self-identity at some point in their lives. Many people's conceptions of Indians and their outward appearance are rooted on long-held stereotypes about both Indians and the rest of society. The fight for women to come into their own and choose for themselves what and who they need to be in spite of what society expects of them has deep historical roots. Virmati's miserable life as a childless, childless, and husbandless widow. If women are forced by convention to give up their individuality, their lives at every level would suffer as a result. Virmati is a strong, independent woman who is not afraid to take advantage of the opportunities that women's education may provide.

Some people, like Virmati, began to practise a chronic inequality in gender relations and recognise that the unequal power-sharing between man and woman, which led to the development of the feminist movement. Women who already had a hard time fitting in with males in a patriarchal culture found themselves much more marginalised. Because of their gender, they were subjected to abuse and discrimination. Sita, Devi, and Mayamma, the story's three main female characters, personify the unique Indian women who go through a lot in the course of ordinary life. They have never been permitted the luxury of living their lives entirely as they like. Sita and Mayamma stand up for all the women who struggle to rise above their assigned positions and social environments, while Devi represents the indomitable spirit and tenacious will to live. She despises the idea of becoming submissive and shy like her mum or Mayamma. Devi is portrayed by Githa Hariharan as a young, dynamic lady who steers her life from passivity to defiance. All the women in *Thousand Faces of Night* are emblematic of the struggle for individuality and liberation that throughout the novel. In this setting, female characters may get married and have kids. Women in patriarchal societies are valued primarily for these two characteristics. The ladies in this article wholeheartedly advocate personal autonomy, in line with the third wave of feminism. Gita hariharan has portrayed the customs and traditions of Indian women.

Devi has reached a crossroads in her life, where she must choose between being resentful for the rest of her days or finding freedom. She makes up her mind to confront the world head-on.

She realises that she has never ventured out to make a choice on her own. Finally, she makes the courageous choice to abandon Gopal and return to her mother in the role of a daughter in an effort to establish her own sense of self. She destroys any obstacle in her path by kicking it to the ground. For the first time in her life, she makes a choice without consulting anybody else. Both books' female protagonists are meant to represent the difficulties women face in a patriarchal culture. Githa Hariharan's 'feminism' has Indian overtones since women persevere through adversity using their own feminine connection and inner strength. From an exclusively Indian background, she formulates a feminist theory of the female predicament. Her novel's focus on an inner experience is based on her own real-life reflections. Her brand of feminism is distinct from that of today. It has deep roots in the soil of India. She takes a realistic, feminist approach to the plight of women. The universal truth about fear is that it affects everyone. But when exactly did this happen last time? The truth is that nobody ever finds out. Jobs, partnerships, and business deals that might change your life are out there, ready to be taken advantage of. The terrifying downside of letting fear control our lives is that we have no idea of our own potential. At the beginning of the narrative, the female protagonist has concerns about her parents and forgets that she has a choice in the matter of her passion, leading her to eventually marry a seemingly unpleasant man. They stopped caring about themselves and started existing only for the sake of society. Mayamma, Devi, and Sita, the story's three primary female characters, encapsulate the spirit of traditional Indian ladies. They do not have the right to choose for themselves in matters of daily living. Sita and Mayamma stand for all women who make an attempt to adapt to their responsibilities and environments, while Devi represents invulnerability and tenacity in the face of adversity. She has no interest in adopting Mayamma's passive demeanour or that of her mother, Sita. Devi is portrayed by Githa Hariharan as an unconventional lady who steers life from passivity to defiance. Both *Difficult Daughters* and *Thousand Faces of Night* feature strong female protagonists who strive to make it in a male-dominated world. They've had to overcome a lot of obstacles, but they know how to keep going because of their training. Both stories' characters have had to resort to particular strategies in order to make it through difficult life circumstances, such as marital strife and financial hardship. Their lives progressed from mild-mannered to defiant.

### **Conclusion**

The study's multifaceted nature is its most striking feature, including topics as varied as culture, identity crisis, human relationships, women in culture, conflict, a feminine perspective, rural life, mother-daughter relationships, poverty, and more. Many aspects of the east-west encounter have been addressed by previous researchers, but a comparison of the two authors' ideas on gender has never been done. To that purpose, this analysis critically analyses and sheds fresh light on the gender viewpoints in a selection of books by Manju Kapur.

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