

Vol 2 Issue 6 March 2013

ISSN No : 2249-894X

---

*Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal*

*Review Of  
Research Journal*

---

Chief Editors

---

**Ashok Yakkaldevi**  
A R Burla College, India

**Flávio de São Pedro Filho**  
Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil

**Ecaterina Patrascu**  
Spiru Haret University, Bucharest

**Kamani Perera**  
Regional Centre For Strategic Studies,  
Sri Lanka

## Welcome to Review Of Research

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

### Advisory Board

Flávio de São Pedro Filho Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Horia Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Mabel Miao Center for China and Globalization, China
Kamani Perera Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Ruth Wolf University Walla, Israel
Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Xiaohua Yang University of San Francisco, San Francisco	Jie Hao University of Sydney, Australia
Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Karina Xavier Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA	Pei-Shan Kao Andrea University of Essex, United Kingdom
Catalina Neculai University of Coventry, UK	May Hongmei Gao Kennesaw State University, USA	Osmar Siena Brazil
Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania	Marc Fetscherin Rollins College, USA	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Liu Chen Beijing Foreign Studies University, China	Ilie Pinte Spiru Haret University, Romania
Mahdi Moharrampour Islamic Azad University buinzahra Branch, Qazvin, Iran	Nimita Khanna Director, Isara Institute of Management, New Delhi	Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai
Titus Pop PhD, Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania	Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain
J. K. VIJAYAKUMAR King Abdullah University of Science & Technology, Saudi Arabia.	P. Malyadri Government Degree College, Tandur, A.P.	Jayashree Patil-Dake MBA Department of Badruka College Commerce and Arts Post Graduate Centre (BCCAPGC), Kachiguda, Hyderabad
George - Calin SERITAN Postdoctoral Researcher Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi	S. D. Sindkhedkar PSGVP Mandal's Arts, Science and Commerce College, Shahada [ M.S. ]	Maj. Dr. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director, Hyderabad AP India.
REZA KAFIPOUR Shiraz University of Medical Sciences Shiraz, Iran	Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	AR. SARAVANAKUMARALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI, TN
Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur	C. D. Balaji Panimalar Engineering College, Chennai	V.MAHALAKSHMI Dean, Panimalar Engineering College
	Bhavana vivek patole PhD, Elphinstone college mumbai-32	S.KANNAN Ph.D , Annamalai University
	Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary, Play India Play (Trust), Meerut (U.P.)	Kanwar Dinesh Singh Dept.English, Government Postgraduate College , solan

More.....

Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India  
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net



## MOTHER DAUGHTER CONFLICT IN DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS

P.SAMUEL AND P.HEPHZIBAH

HOD, Science & Humanities,  
Shree Sathyam College of Engineering & Technology, Sankari.  
Asst.Professor in English Nandha College of Education Erode.

### Abstract:

*Manju Kapur's novel Difficult Daughters is a story of a daughter's journey back into her mother's painful past. It spans the genres of fiction and history and falters in both. In the beginning, Ida, the narrator and daughter of protagonist, trying to reclaim her mother's secret life, turns out to be main story. Difficult Daughters was the outcome of her own conflict with her mother Virmati and Virmati with her mother Kasturi. Set in the pre-independence era, the novel traces the story of Virmati, the daughter of well-to-do Arya Samaji Brahmin parents. Virmati's entire life is a battle against tradition, against her parents and against the inevitable end of a girl's life-marriage. Her progress parallels the new-found freedoms of educated Indian women, but double standards prevail, increasing awareness of the ties that bind. This paper brings out the mother – daughter conflicts in the novel.*

### KEYWORDS.

Mother Daughter Conflicts in Difficult Daughters

### MOTHER DAUGHTER CONFLICTS

Difficult Daughters is a story of three continuous generations of women: Ida, the narrator, who is a divorcee. Virmati, her mother, who marries an already married professor. The novel is an attempt to resolve the conflict which runs deep through the three generations of women; the older one passes it on to the younger one, till resolved in the end by the creation of a narrative where female voice gets a space. The mother in every period acts like a flag bearer of culture and passes on the legacy of patriarchal system to her daughter, who may accept it, question it or rebel against it. Mother – daughter conflicts around which the story revolves between are: Kasturi's mother Vs Kasturi, Kasturi Vs Virmati and Virmati Vs Ida. In this novel, Kasturi and Virmati under their mothers' watchful eyes imbibe all their proper rules, etiquettes and behavior.

Mothers emphasize the importance of marriage and respect for the patriarch in the girl's life. Mothers in all periods act like flag bearers of culture and passes on the legacy of patriarchal system to their daughters, who may accept it, question it or rebel against it. Maternal alienation can be sensed all through the thoughts and deeds of daughters. The apathy that starts from the mother gives birth to this sense of alienation. Daughters never feel oneness with their mothers. The relationship has always an aura of estrangement. Daughters suffer in silence but are not able to share their private sorrows with their mothers. Firstly, because the mother is not inclined to share and secondly but more importantly because most of these sorrows are inflicted by the mother herself. A daughter's quest for identity begins with her identification

Title: MOTHER DAUGHTER CONFLICT IN DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS  
Source: Review of Research [2249-894X] P.SAMUEL AND P.HEPHZIBAH yr:2013 vol:2 iss:6

with her mother. Daughters search for self-realization through their mothers. (Ida in *Difficult Daughters* begins a journey into the history of her mother with a purpose to discover herself). Ironic it is then that the conflict in this relationship begins when daughters start their quest. For as long as daughters are asexual children and are not conscious of their individuality, the relationship runs quite smoothly. But as soon as the child becomes aware of her sexuality and starts asserting her individuality, the strain starts building up.

*Difficult Daughters* is the outcome of Manju Kapur's own conflict with her mother. Set in the pre-independence era, the novel traces the story of Virmati, the daughter of well-to-do Arya Samaji Brahmin parents. Virmati's entire life is a battle against tradition, against her parents and against the inevitable end of a girl's life-marriage. Early in the novel, the issue of patriarchy, which denies a woman voice and freedom, is raised. Virmati is the eldest child of a mother who is almost always in a state of pregnancy. Being the eldest, Virmati finds herself mothering a big number of siblings. She wants to study but hardly finds the time and it is assumed that very soon she must marry and resign herself to a fate very similar to her mother's.

While she is at Lahore for higher education, Virmati befriends her roommate Swarna Lata, who introduces her to a new world of Women's Conferences and the most revolutionary and progressive ideas. Discussions on the role of women in the freedom struggle open Virmati's mind. However, Manju Kapur effectively brings out the conflict in Virmati's life. Ida makes a nostalgic journey back to the childhood haunts of her mother after the latter's death. Virmati's life is described in greater detail than that of her grandmother or that of Ida. A sort of argument set the pattern of Kasturi-Virmati relationship. There was no female bonding, no emotional depth in Virmati's relations with her mother. Her parents were even considering a good proposal for her from an engineer. The generation gap was having obvious effect, with the daughter having to fight with her mother in order to delay the inevitable prospect of an arranged marriage.

She decided to broach the subject of further studies to delay marriage. Her mother felt bitter and angry. When she mentioned her cousin Shakuntala's choice in remaining single, her mother reminded her that, unlike her cousin, who was an only daughter, she had five sisters younger to her, waiting to get married and she owed them a duty, rather than harming them by not marrying. Moreover, her fiancé was getting tired of waiting for her. Kasturi conveniently forgot that she herself, in her mouth, had refused to bow down to the practice of child marriage common in those days. Her own mother had quarreled and was worried over her leanings towards Christianity as she had studied in a missionary school. Instead, with the support of her uncle she "became the first girl in her family to postpone the arrival of the wedding guest by a tentative assault on learning" (57). But, unlike the present Virmati, Kasturi got educated and at the same time managed household accounts and chores including expertise in knitting and cooking, in order to 'please her in-laws.' Even during her formal schooling, it was never forgotten that marriage was her destiny. Her father always felt that her tranquility, beauty and modesty would be 'rewarded' by a good husband. Kasturi had a traditional wedding. She had always been submissive to her husband. In fact at times of Kasturi resented her arrogance revealed in her refusal to submit to tradition. It came as a shock to her when Virmati chose to go her way. She never forgave her until the end.

Ida escaped, making a disastrous marriage that ended in a quick divorce. Her mother was sad and disapproving as she lamented about what would happen to her when she was gone. She kept on mourning that she was nothing, husbandless, childless. History was repeating. The earlier conditioning, in spite of her own not too successful a marriage, was being expressed by Virmati.

In the relationship between Virmati and Ida, her daughter, it is told that Ida found her mother silent, brisk and bad tempered. She tried to drill into Ida that she had always to 'adjust, compromise, adapt' – lessons she had tried unsuccessfully to follow in her own lifetime. Things were always wrong and difficult between them. We are told that people commented on Ida's divorce that it was not surprising as she was Virmati's daughter – a case of the daughter outdoing her mother in breaking society's norms. Ultimately, Virmati gained nothing much from breaking away from tradition. To be enslaved to the man she loved, to be insecure as his second wife, all in the name of love. Just as she hurt her mother, her daughter sought to hurt her, going one step further. Ida never wanted to be like her mother. She broke her maternal bonds and made a further mess of her own life. Perhaps, Virmati was not at all that happy even when he got her professor to herself in the end and she turned out to be the loser compared to her mother in terms of society's conventional codes.

The novel points to how a mother's influence could be unsettling to the daughter under different hate and bitterness, how a mother, traditionally an epitome of sacrifice and goodness, could become a symbol of selfishness and resentment to her children. *Difficult Daughter* is certainly autobiographical to some extent. Like Virmati, Manju Kapur was born in Amritsar and teaches in a college. Manju Kapur's father was a professor like Virmati that she herself had been a difficult daughter for her mother whose priority was nothing but marriage.

The entire novel is an answer to Ida's declaration at the beginning that she did not want to be like

her mother. She closes the story by asking her dead mother to leave her alone and not to haunt her anymore. Manju Kapur narrates a powerful story of universal mother-daughter conflict. As Sandhu Sarabita says, Virmati's daughter Ida develops hatred towards her mother who comes in the way of her progress. The writer has remarkably shown the gap in the mother-daughter relationship. In other words, it is a conflict between the old and the young; the traditional and modern" (Sarabita Sandhu 1991)

In *Difficult Daughters* one finds that it is basically Virmati's story during the 1930s but the landscape of emotional and sexual life of the three women living at different times in history disrupts the linear time period. In short, the time period shift is within the text- the narrative moves from Virmati to Kasturi to Ida. Virmati, like so many other sub-continental women, is asked to accept a typical arranged marriage. She rebels against that destiny, to the lasting shame of her family, above all of her mother.

Virmati has to fight against the power of the mother as well as the oppressive forces of patriarchy symbolized by the mother figure. The rebel in Virmati might have actually exchanged one kind of slavery for another. But towards the end she becomes free, free even from the oppressive love of her husband. Virmati is even not allowed to attend the funeral of her father. The novelist has portrayed her protagonists as a woman caught in the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a yearning to be a part of the political and intellectual movements of the day. Throughout this novel Ida's declaration echoes that she doesn't want to be like her mother and wants to assert her autonomy and separate identity. Ida wants liberty and doesn't want to compromise as did her mother. This idea of the novel can be summed up in the utterance of angry Ida:

"This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word-brick in a mansion I made with my head and my heart. Now live in it, Mama and leave me be. Do not haunt me anymore." (108)

Virmati's daughter Ida, who belongs to the post-independence generation, is strong and clearheaded. She breaks up her marriage as she is denied maternity by her husband. The forced abortion is also the termination of her marriage. Ida by severing the marriage bond frees herself from male domination and power and also from conventional social structures which bind women. She has that strength which Virmati lacks. Manju Kapur brings out the underlying comparison of the three generations of women Kasturi, Virmati and Ida.

Ida in her quest for identity begins the search of the person who was her mother. She begins with resolution that she would not be like her mother but as the story unravels she finds herself identifying with her mother. What started as alienation ends up in complete identification. But not all daughters are as fortunate as Ida.

Virmati herself could never belong to her mother Kasturi. Her pleasures, her pains, her pathetic life as a mistress and then a second wife all remained her private sorrows. She could never share them with her mother. Kasturi never understands her, never attempts to understand her. Virmati becomes used to the tartness in Kasturi's voice. There seems a barrier between them which Virmati fails to pull down. Ida tells the readers:

From time to time Virmati glanced furtively at her mother, and the wall she encountered forbade her from making the attentive gestures that might have made the journey bearable for both (102).

Besides all other allegations, Kasturi grudges Virmati the fact 'She's become so independent' (161).

When the daughter, Virmati, who was difficult for her mother to handle, herself becomes the mother of a daughter, then she realizes the meaning of being a mother. She imposes the same restrictions over her daughter, Ida, which was once imposed upon her by her own mother, Kasturi. Ida states candidly: "My mother tightened her reins on me as I grew older; she said it was for my own good. As a result, I am constantly looking for escape routes" (Kapur 279). The daughter who first felt alienated from her mother, now, by reconstructing the past of her mother, arrives at a better understanding.

Even though Kapur highlights the daughters' fight with the familial bondage, she never fails to showcase about how families would be broken because of a woman's feminist way of thinking (disagreements, parting or divorce). In this novel, Virmati does not give ears to her mother's advice and thus she loses all brothers and sisters in her family. She is not allowed to talk to them and her mother also hates her very much. As the Professor parts with her first wife, his children lose the love of their father. They are not able to be intimate with their father since their mother has parted with him and someone else has come in that place. Ida is also unable to be cheerful, because she comes to know about the tearful story of her mother which breaks her heart. So, she also abhors married life and eventually divorces her husband.

**CONCLUSION**

Manju Kapur's novel, *Difficult Daughters*, thus touches various dimensions of mother daughter relationship. Initially, the daughter, belonging to the same sex, identifies herself with the mother. Then a stage comes when in her attempt to assert her identity, the daughter breaks away from the mother and feels alienated. However, when the same daughter, after being an experienced self, looks back at the past of her mother, she realizes what it is to be a mother in a patriarchal society.

**REFERENCES**

1. Manju Kapur, *Difficult Daughters*. Delhi: Penguin, 1998. All quotations are from this edition and the page numbers are given besides them.
2. Sandhu Sarabit, *The Image of Woman in Shashi Deshpande's Novels*, Prestige, New Delhi, 1991
3. Satendra Kumar, *Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters: A Semio-Cultural Analysis*, *The Atlantic Literary Review*, Vol. 11, No.4 OCT-DEC 2010
4. Boyd, Carol J. "Mothers and Daughters: A Discussion of Theory and Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family*. No.51, 1989.



**Publish Research Article**  
**International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal**  
**For All Subjects**

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished research paper.Summary of Research Project,Theses,Books and Books Review of publication,you will be pleased to know that our journals are

**Associated and Indexed,India**

- \* International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- \* OPEN J-GATE

**Associated and Indexed,USA**

- DOAJ
- EBSCO
- Crossref DOI
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Databse
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database

Review Of Research Journal  
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005,Maharashtra  
Contact-9595359435  
E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com  
Website : www.isrj.net