

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-55799

Title: Exploring Womens Struggle for Identity and Freedom in Manju Kapurs Difficult Daughters

Recommendation:

Accept as it is
Accept after minor revision
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	...			
Techn. Quality		...		
Clarity		...		
Significance	...			

Reviewer Name: Dr. Ishrat Fatima

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The paper offers a feminist literary analysis of **Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters**, focusing on women's struggle for identity, autonomy, and freedom within a patriarchal Indian society. It situates the novel in its historical, cultural, and social context and emphasizes education as both an empowering and constraining force for women. The study aligns itself with established feminist criticism and draws on a wide range of secondary sources to support its argument. The abstract clearly outlines the central concerns of the paper: women's oppression, the quest for identity, education, and patriarchal dominance. It successfully conveys the scope of the study and foregrounds the protagonist Virmati's struggle as representative of middle-class Indian women. However, the abstract tends to be descriptive rather than analytical, and it could be strengthened by briefly stating the specific critical contribution or original insight the paper aims to offer beyond existing scholarship.

The introduction effectively contextualizes women's marginalization in Indian society and introduces *Difficult Daughters* as a narrative of resistance against social and familial constraints. The discussion of Virmati's transformation from obedience to self-awareness is well-articulated and supported by references to critics such as Sanjay Kumar and Veera Alexander. The link between women's education and awakening of consciousness is convincingly established.

However, the introduction occasionally summarizes the novel excessively, which reduces analytical depth. A sharper thesis statement clearly indicating how this paper differs from earlier feminist readings would enhance academic rigor. The paper provides a thoughtful examination of Virmati's evolution, highlighting her internal conflicts, emotional struggles, and repeated attempts to claim autonomy. The contrast between Virmati and Shakuntala is particularly effective in illustrating alternative models of female freedom. The discussion of Swarna Lata adds political and ideological depth by linking women's personal liberation to collective activism. The treatment of marriage as an oppressive institution is one of the paper's strongest aspects. Virmati's marriage to Harish is convincingly portrayed as a continuation of patriarchal control rather than a resolution of her struggles. The paper aptly demonstrates how Kapur critiques marriage as a site of emotional silencing and intellectual suppression for women. Nonetheless, the analysis sometimes repeats similar arguments about patriarchy and oppression without sufficiently deepening them through close textual analysis or symbolic interpretation.

The literature review is extensive and demonstrates the author's engagement with major critics of Manju Kapur's work. References to scholars such as Vikram Chandra, Malti Mathur, Bhagabat Nayak, and Bruschi provide a solid theoretical foundation. The review successfully situates the study within feminist discourse on identity, education, and marriage. However, the section could benefit from better organization and synthesis. At present, it reads more like a compilation of critics rather than a critical dialogue among them. Clear grouping of scholars based on themes education, marriage, identity, patriarchy would improve coherence and scholarly impact. The methodology is clearly stated and appropriate for a literary study. The use of close textual analysis supported by

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secondary sources is suitable for examining feminist themes. The statement of the problem and significance of the study effectively justify the relevance of the research. That said, the paper could strengthen this section by explicitly stating which feminist theoretical framework (liberal feminism, radical feminism, postcolonial feminism, etc.) informs the analysis, thereby giving the study stronger theoretical grounding.

The results and discussion sections reinforce the paper's central argument that education alone does not guarantee women's freedom in a patriarchal society. The comparison between India's national freedom movement and women's lack of personal freedom is insightful and well-aligned with Kapur's narrative vision. However, the discussion largely reiterates earlier points. Greater engagement with symbolism, narrative voice (Ida as narrator), and generational contrast could have enriched the discussion and added originality to the analysis. The conclusion effectively summarizes Virmati's journey and reiterates the persistent constraints faced by women before and after marriage. It rightly emphasizes that Virmati's struggle leads not to complete liberation but to a partial, hard-won sense of self-awareness. The conclusion aligns well with the paper's feminist stance, though it could offer stronger forward-looking implications for feminist literary studies or contemporary gender discourse. The language is generally clear and accessible, suitable for literary and gender studies research.

However, the paper contains grammatical inconsistencies, typographical errors, and occasional repetition, which affect academic polish. Improved proofreading and stylistic refinement would significantly enhance readability.