

Tradition Versus Modern – A Study on Manju Kapur’s Difficult Daughters

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Abstract- Our generation has seen two types of change in the society in which we live. It is the year-old traditions that have made life successful and the modernism that ruins our life in all the dynamics and vicissitudes of life. Whatever we find, invent or discover should be passed to the next generation as we cannot take anything with us when our life ends. So it is very important what we pass to the next generation. It is the good things that are passed or bad is a very important thing to be noted because it is going to design the future of planet Earth. Ancient people lived in this planet and they gave the planet in its good condition and our fore fathers too handled the same beautiful earth to the present living generation. The question is, are we successfully protecting the anciently followed, well maintained, worshipped nature as it was in its birth or we deplete the quality of our planet? It is an important question to be taken in to consideration by each and every one of the human beings of Earth. In this paper the difference between Ancient and Modern is discussed in the light of Manju Kapur’s Novel Difficult Daughters.

INTRODUCTION

People lived in the time from the beginning of the planet has never depleted nor damaged it unless some natural disasters like, draught, famine, fires, volcanic eruptions, earth quakes, tremors and the much like natural disasters affected the structure and the quality of the land. But the present century has seen much growth in the field of education, technology, inventions, and discoveries and in science. A vast tremendous growth has been recorded since the 20th Century. People started to explore, discover and invent things as they have been blessed by divine wisdom. This was not the scenario before a couple of centuries back. Ancient people fought, learned, and had all types of wisdom without the present modernity. They used battle weapons, they were treated for medicines, had sports of all kinds etc. they

lived happily for many years mostly up to 120 and above. They knew why we are here in this planet. But the present generation with all its modernity is feared for the way it goes forward. People are after technology and fashion and are caught by unknown new diseases, while people of the past worked hard and have never seen belly fats etc., unless some disastrous disease washed them away.

They cultivated their fields without using artificial chemicals and their food was good but now it is full of poison. Are we going in the right path? Manju kapur’s novel has in it the difference between the tradition and modern. It has neatly contrasted the two milestones and the reason for the change and the impact it would cause on our planet Earth.

The novel speaks about all the minute aspects of life from the birth to the grave. Virmati is the central character of the novel but when the novel opens we see the daughter of Virmati cremates her mother and goes to the village in which her mother lived to collect various memories of her as though of becoming nostalgic. Ida is a modern girl but not Virmati. Virmati is a girl who has seen both tradition and modern. It is through Ida and Virmati Manju Kapur compares and contrasts the difference that makes the title. Many instances are there in the novel and some are briefed here for a good understanding. Tradition is good always when followed, but modernity is always dangerous. We see Ida in a train enjoying the nature outside the train. People flocking in the river, green fields, farmers cultivating the land and poor people enjoying each and every moment they have with their meager amount of money. In the train the poor people offers Ida their eatables though they have not seen Ida before nor will they see her again. In Virmati’s house the entire thing is different. The air is pure and life giving. The water is fresh and chill. The place is like heaven to Ida who was always

in a rush city life. She is taken to the house by a rickshaw where she sees all types of flowering and fruitful trees that makes her mind happy. When her blood relatives saw her they took her inside on a wave of accusations and explanations. Ida started to probe her mother and her village. The school fee is very much low and money was not a much important thing to them. Ida was given a cup of milk that had a thick layer of malai, yellow not white, like nowadays. "I am without husband, child or Parents. I can see the ancient wheels of my divorce still grinding and clanking in their heads. The milk had thick layer of malai, yellow, not white like nowadays. And when the food was cooked, ah! The fragrance of the ghee."

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Ida had grown up in the mythology of pure ghee, milk, butter etc. but is now seeing them in her senses. People don't sit and talk in the city where Ida lived but she is overwhelmed by the laughter of people sitting together. Not like the modern girls who couldn't give child birth at least once, Kasturi, virmati's mother was in her eleventh childbirth. Ida's mother was attuned to the signs of her mother's pregnancies. Kasturi prayed for getting a miscarriage. In mornings the whole family used neem twigs to brush their teeth. During functions people also bring dals, rice, flour, ghee and other spices of good quality and they took necessary water from the pump in the centre of the village. Kasturi, virmati's mother enjoys the hill station climate to get a relief from her continuous childbirth where at evenings it rains. Few dared to mention shakuntala's unmarried state, a cousin of Virmati. Divorce was a great insult to womanhood in the era of Kasturi. The favourite guest welcoming snacks of the day is milk, home-made jalebis, fragrant with saffron, crisp, hot and sweet.

In the novel a pleasant aspect of the old tradition and life style is portrayed. But everything is different in the place where Ida lived. Ancient people lived a very happy life filled all kind of natural luxury. They played in the lap of nature having nature as their mother. But the modern world is moving towards a dead end with all its developments. Today's world is filled with technologies and high improvement in all fields. By moving towards modern we are killing ourselves and depleting the quality of our planet. We are killing nature and the lives of future generation. Today the foods we take from morning to evening are like slow poison. The milk we drink is from hybrid

cows grown by powerful and harmful injections. In order to get more quantity of milk many artificial methods and dangerous medicines are used in the growth of cows and in turn the milk we get contains all the negative side effects of the medicines. In the novel we see a term called 'malai' that is a thick layer of yellow colour spread on the top of smilk after it is cooked which is said as original milk without any kind of adulteration. But the milk we drink nowadays are rarely original and this milk with added chemicals and medicines like steroids are the cause of extra fat and early puberty in girls. In the past it is difficult to see a girl to attend her puberty at an early age like 14 or below. But nowadays we could hear news of girls attaining very early puberty. It is because of the food habits that we follow. In the past people ate country chicken and lived a healthy long life. But it was slowly changed in to broiler chickens that are grown in a time of 2 months in a closed and contaminated area. More over broiler chickens are injected regularly with steroids that is highly harmful to humans. In the past there were rice of good natural breeds but now the rice is smoothed and the vitamins are washed away and we eat rice that are fertilized with chemicals and disease killing pesticides. Moreover, the land is littered with plastic and other harmful things. Radiations from electronic devices and cell phone towers change the climatic conditions and make this uncongenial for small living birds and other organism. Because of Hydro carbon and Methane extraction Programmes the modern people are destroying the planet earth. Pollution is a powerful opponent the world is going to face. In the past there were place for emotions, sentiments, love, care but this society now has changed in to poverty with struggle for survival with mental unrest, stress etc. in the past people lived by eating homemade snacks that where made of naturally harvested flours and vegetables. But now we have found different flours added with chemicals and starting from a year-old child to the old eat this constantly. Death meant great lamentation to the people of the past but now it is happening as if no one has time to help others and wait for other's welfare. Adulteration is an another harmful thing that the tradition didn't had. They used neem twigs and their teeth were healthy. They used charcoal added it with salt and pepper which made them avoid dentals. But modernity has given us many doctors and they need patients for their survival. And

they introduce chemical based tooth paste. Advertisements advertise various products and make frequent of them. They each time bring us each type of tooth paste like, one having salt, other one having neem and the other having pepper and so on. This makes them earn a lot of money but gradually people's health is completely changed. The modern world is longing for luxury and wealth while people of the past lived a simple and austere life and they lived a happy life. They had no divorce and certain traditional values in their married life. Modernism has multiple divorces, several marriages and the result is un happy life to the parents and to their children. The modern parents set a bad example for their children in turn make their children's life miserable. Before democracy and independence people lived a clear life without depriving nature but modernism is going to end the world soon. People of the past were able to give double digit child birth normally but modern people couldn't bear a single child birth and caesarean has become a term for earning money. Drinking water is contaminated and not good. Many reasons contribute to the modern fashionable world. Because of radiations from cell phones, laptops and other electronic things disease like cancer are developed. New diseases unknown to the previous centuries has entered. Destroying forests and trees for the sake of buildings is another impact of modernity.

If modern people or the people of the 21st century didn't take steps to correct that mistakes to bring traditional way of life style the planet earth with all its living beings should be destroyed. Technologies are good, developments are good but all findings inventions are discoveries should be useful for the development of human race and not for destroying it. Life has become tough to live because of the computerised world. Through new technologies people are slowly destroying the planet. In the field of medicine human life is not seen as a valuable thing instead it is considered as money making machines. Money has become an important part. Because of this many people die. Because of fashionable foods people get disease and other complication and die very soon. Heart attacks have been increased in large scale. Diabetes have widespread. All these because of modernisation of human world. Transport was once lifesaving and time saving but now it has become a killing machine by accidents and pollution. Already

ozone layer has big holes in it and global warming is becoming a huge issue. We should care about this but it has gone beyond. Because money loving politicians and authorities take care of themselves and not others. They do not care for the life of other people or for the world's future. They live just for their life only. We have to move back otherwise we cannot save the planet from its harmful effects. Soon because of all our ambitious mistakes our planet is going to be destroyed. We may have a little relief in believing our scientists who are searching for new planets. We may believe that our human race can be shifted somewhere else but it is not sure. Our planet has all the congenial qualities suitable for human existence but we are destroying it. Once we destroy the good qualities we cannot rebuild our planet but certainly loose living. We are not sure whether human race will end or flourish. It is nature's decision. But in our hands is now our planet. We should certainly ensure the freshness and goodness of our planet for our future generations. The sad thing is we are doing the opposite. Unity is very important for any group to be successful. It is not unity between districts, states, or some countries but the unity of each and every country, every people need to change and protect this world. Surely we have change to the traditional life style of our Ancestors. Every technology is good but it is spoiling as in many ways they are deadly. We have to unite and make certain promises like safe guarding natural vegetation, reducing transports, like bikes and cars for individual, extraction of Methane beneath the land surface while methane can be extracted by various other natural ways. Medicines and other technologies are for man but it is now changing as man for Technologies. Though many organisations are found for this unification for extending the lifespan of our planet they are not working in full-fledged manner. They act biased for various people who use the technologies towards the destruction of the planet. We can live without Mobile Phones, bikes, cars, methane petrol etc. but no one can survive without natural food and without the traditional life of living. This doesn't mean technologies are a waste completely but they should be used wisely. We should take necessary precautions to save our planet from any kind of human disasters for ourselves and for our future generations.

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