

# Counterfeit Reality of Egalitarianism With Reference to Manju Kapur's *Brothers*

Jayajothilakshmi V.

Department of English, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Krishnankovil, Tamil Nadu, India

S. Mohan

Department of English, Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Krishnankovil, Tamil Nadu, India

R. Kannan

Department of Languages, Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

**Abstract**—The purpose of the study is to analyze the presentation of egalitarianism in traditional and modern world as colored by the hands of the woman writer Manju Kapur in her work *Brothers*. It foregrounds the relationship between the real world and the fictional world of women which is more or less the same. The chief finding is that the present life of women has a turn and development when compared to the previous generation, but the hidden complexity burst out at certain stage which proves that the convention is still prevailing. The study can help the readers to see the real world through writings and can understand and read the mind of women who suffer from sexual harassment, patriarchal dominance, in due time of optimistic life of fulfilled desires and courage of modern women. This article excerpts the proposed gender study and presents the gender discrimination of two generations portrayed by the writer which clearly exposes the deep variation as well as the oneness, and results in the projection of the real world in words. The positive changes in women's lives and the sexual deviations too have been discussed. This study focuses on the traditional and modern livelihood of male and female through the novel *Brothers* authored by Manju Kapur, a well-known Indian women writer.

**Index Terms**—culture and value, egalitarianism, gender, patriarchal domination, tradition and modernity

## I. INTRODUCTION

Egalitarianism is a widely spoken concept for decades. Egalitarianism might be upheld as a moral requirement, a component of what we fundamentally owe one another, or as morally optional, a desirable ideal that we might permissibly decline to pursue (Arneson, 2013). An egalitarian is one who maintains that people ought to be treated as equals –as possessing equal fundamental worth and dignity and as equally morally considerable (Arneson, 2013). Unlike early days, gender equality is given much importance at present. Women shine in all the fields and prove that they have multipotentiality than men and they are not slackers. This is a vast change we can talk about if we compare the present life with the last century life of women. Even it is a well-known fact that in early days women were not given rights to write and hence they wrote using pen names. A few centuries before women began their writing career openly and through that they exposed their feelings. Most of their works were based on women's life. Gender equality gave women an opportunity to express their feelings and emotions.

Most of the works of Indian women writers are about women education, marriage life, family bond, responsibilities of women, and their life in the hands of men and so on. Marriage life brings all these changes in the life of women. Marriage life is the second world to women when compared to men. Egalitarianism is an inherently normative view, and more specifically, a view about distributive justice—that is, about the appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens (Knight and Albertsen, 2018). The women writers create their protagonists either as traditional women or modern. Traditional woman protagonist represents the women tied in family bond, suffer under patriarchal domination, depending on others for each and every thing.

Modern women represent the independent women who think and act independently using the freedom given to them. Though writers pen about women's life, their feelings, success and career, there are characters portrayed by some writers about their suppressed life in patriarchal dominated family or society and their ups and downs in life. Apart from the general suffering of human beings, women suffer indifferent ways. This is the reality of the so called egalitarian society. Gender inequality is thought to show in a hierarchical view of genders, where men are above women, who are considered inferior and less valued by their gender. The gender theory and comparison method are applied in the work to evaluate the presentation of women in the patriarchal society based on the real life in our country. Gender theory explores the hidden deviations in the life of men and women of two different generations and is overviewed. This study focuses on Manju Kapur's portrayal of egalitarianism in her novel *Brothers*.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Egalitarianism is an equal state of all people in a society. Human rights state the equality of people in many aspects. The title of this article represents the reality of this egalitarianism with reference to the Indian author Manju Kapur's work *Brothers*. Egalitarianism also indicates the equality between men and women in any society of the world, which makes a difference among one another.

Gender equality in turn shows in equal value and opportunities for both genders (Mikkola, 2005). Gender equality varies between two generations that makes a vast challenge and struggle in the life of women. This struggle was well known in those days and got changed in this century, as the life of a woman is not a reflection of another, i.e., each and every one's life in one particular society or even a family is completely opposite, in which one's regular and common rights become a dream in another woman's life. Still life moves on with one's own expectations and disappointments. Rights of men and women are even more difficult to equalize, though the world rotates with the concept of equality. The very general problem of this gender issues exists in reality as well as in fictions. This concept is analyzed with the work of Manju Kapur. Her work shows the counterfeit reality of the two generations and the feelings of women and their unpredictable life.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is necessary to evaluate the concept with reference to the articles already published. An analysis was held in Netherlands to explore how education, secularization and the rise of women's labor force (Thijs, Grotenhuis, Scheepers and Brink, 2019) differ men and women. People should get the same, or be treated the same, or be treated as equals, in some respect (Arneson, 2013). The idea of equality stands as the central ideal of egalitarianism (Afolayan, 2015). Developmental scientists are concerned with how and why behaviors emerge and change over time, and gender developmental scientists narrow their focus to the study of the origins of gendered behavior and gendered thinking (Kristina M. Zosuls, et.al, 2011). Women have experienced increased rates of unemployment, heightened burdens of care, decreased access to health services and higher rates of domestic violence (Otto, 2020). Gender egalitarian values came out as the most important predictor. Specifically, more gender egalitarian values were associated with improved performance of boys with relation to girls in the same countries (Erikson, Björnstjerna, and Vartanova, 2020).

Many studies have been undergone based on the concept of egalitarianism. Those articles dealt with gender difference and gender behavior and values. This study is focused on the gender reality of two generation women in the aspects of education, freedom struggle, politics, family and sexual harassment, with reference to the literary work of the writer Manju Kapur.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

This study has been done with special reference to Manju Kapur's work *Brothers*. Here the egalitarian aspect is applied on various concepts like marriage, education, politics, decision making, etc. Gender theory is applied to bring out and justify the concept. It looks at masculinity and femininity in a mutually created characteristic shaping the lives of men and women (Encyclopedia). It covers the fields like sociology, religion, education, health, philosophy, history, literature, culture, politics, and so on where men and women fix their feet and travel together. Through gender theory and studies, the role of men and women in all the above said fields are focused and their disputes are listed by applying on the work of Manju Kapur.

The methods discussed above are employed on men and women characters of the novel and hence the problem is associated with the reality of the world based on the gender issues. Gender study has been carried out on studying the two generation men and women portrayed as characters who were the representatives of the previous generation people in India. So this study projects the differences, improvement and hidden dissimilarities of two generations as well as two different genders. In gender identity, social factors are important than biological factors. In the childhood itself children learn to know that their concerned duties are many and more or less they are forced to do. The restricted system pertained in the olden days and has its mild reflection till now. The believed egalitarianism and the reality are well carried out by the author in her work.

## V. MANJU KAPUR

Manju Kapur's novels deal with the family bond, middle class, upper class people, marital life, sexual life, human relationship and especially women's struggle in life. In all her novels one can find women characters under some sorts of dilemma, facing recurring problems, abandon present life, entering new life, dissatisfaction with the existing life, and keep moving on. So we shall say that Manju Kapur's works are women centered.

Manju Kapur's works are based on Indian society. Her novels deal with the women in society and in patriarchal world. She also deals with the child abuse, sexual harassment, traditional family life of women, realities of everyday life, social structure, politics, etc. Manju Kapur's female characters deal with emotional, intelligence, and spiritual crisis. In those days women lived within that structure, in which they were forced and denied of free life. They accepted the notions whether they like or dislike. They sacrificed their life for the welfare of the whole family. Their identity

depended on her family patriarchy, either father or husband or son. Changes in social condition change many things. Women started living their life not for others but for themselves. Their likes and dislikes become their own. They become more prominent in their life. To achieve their needs they come out of their beliefs, customs, and traditions and so on. It does not mean that they object the societal patterns but they frame their own pattern. Generally, the gender hierarchy shows in the family, inheritance laws and customs, the valuations of women's work as opposed to men's work, decision-making power in the society, the family, church and social networks (Mikkola, 2005).

The writer has portrayed her women characters representing both tradition and modernity. In her novels, the orthodox women protagonists flee from that life and try to adapt with a new life which is completely different from their culture. It doesn't mean that they are protesting against the society. They try to search their identity and prove themselves equal to men. Sometimes they succeed in their attempts and sometimes unfortunately they are caught in the hands of men. They have to depend on their husband or father. Nitonde (2014, p.27) says,

All protagonists in the fictional works of Kapur are women. She writes about every aspect of Indian women's life in India and outside. All of her protagonists struggle to take charge of their own lives. In the course of his struggle they suffer and their lives become difficult to live with. They seem to lose control over the patriarchal background in which they live.

Globally women's lives more than men's are centered at home (Mikkola, 2005). The concept of gender partiality is present in Manju Kapur's latest novel *Brothers* too. Manju Kapur has pictured men and women characters reflecting the society of two generation. Gender division and discrimination still exist in some places. This research article is about the gender difference and controversies between two generations present in Manju Kapur's novel *Brothers*. The title of the novel, *Brothers* makes us think that the story is about men. But the story focuses on the woman protagonist Tapti Gaina too. The difference between the two generation lifestyle of both genders is clearly depicted by the novelist. The generation gap brings a vast change in the life of men and women. Virpal and Dhanpal, the first generation brothers' lives are completely different from the lives of the second generation brothers' Himmat Singh Gaina and Mangal Singh Gaina. As well as the first generation women Gulabi and Mithari's life differ from the second generation Sonal Gaina and Tapti Gaina's lives. These differences are of changes in the society, advance thinking of mind, education, etc. Culture and values (Weil, 2005) differ from one generation to another.

## VI. EGALITARIANISM

### A. Education

Education is a powerful tool for both men and women to bring any desired changes in the society during the passage of time which is a universal fact accepted throughout the world (Karan, 2017). Education is part and parcel of our life. At the same time education teaches us what life is, that we cannot abscond. Once, the value of education was not understood by many. Later equal education was given to men and women and they learnt and got benefited. Now education becomes mandatory that no one is ready to avoid it. At least humans learn to read and write. As generation passes the concept of education also changes. Reformation did not free women either and consequently some of the traditions from those times still carry on even to the church of today (Tucker and Liefeld, 1987).

Education is vital for women as it makes women self-reliant. Writers do not fail to uncover anything, even education. In their writings they reflect the education system of past and present clearly. Women writers steadily present the education of women in contrast with the education of men. Education was not given much important in those days. People were not much aware of education. They did not know that education would give them a new perspective towards life. People lived in the same way as their forefathers showed the path. With more educated women, the old power of hierarchies of religious, economic and political nature is more likely to be confronted. Gender equality is intrinsically linked to the right to quality education for all and to achieve this, we need an approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men, have access, complete and are equally empowered through quality education (Munhoz, Ndebele, 2020).

Manju Kapur has carefully voiced education on gender discrimination. The life of Dhanpal and Virpal was at the mercy of their parents. To them learning was a kind of amusement. In author's words,

When there was nothing more important to do, the brothers amused themselves by listening to the pandit give lessons under a tree. Such sporadic attendance was not unusual. The pandit received his fees in grain and ghee, and accepted the low priority studying had in the lives of his students. (Kapur, 2016, p.59)

Virpal had the urge to study a little than Dhanpal. But he never had the intention to go alone to pandit to get education. He accepted the words of Dhanpal and stayed back. They lack the knowledge of studies. To them even without education they can be powerful like their father. From the words of the author about the brothers,

We must learn, Virpal would urge Dhanpal, but Dhanpal saw no point in it. There were pandits and letter writers to deal with written word, why waste hours over such a useless enterprise? Their father, a sarpanch, was illiterate, and he was the most powerful man they knew. (Kapur, 2016, p.59)

Virpal got a chance to enter into Ajmer city. Gaur Sahib helped him in his education. But he failed twice in his eighth class. With that his education came to an end. Later he realized that education is very essential to lead a good life in the city. Himmat and Mangal, the second generation boys get good education and that changes their lifestyle. In the

beginning Himmat found it difficult to study in the city school. Virpal was very stubborn saying, 'Himmat was going to be educated, whether he liked it or not. It was a passport, a passport he was at present too ignorant to value' (Kapur, 2016, p.119). It means that without education there will be no identity for Himmat. Finally he cleared his LLB papers and got his degree. Mangal too passed his BA. The sons of a farmer are educated now and became the first graduates in the entire village.

Women education was to the lowest in the first generation mentioned in the novel. Social norms of early marriage, financial burden of school fees, and minimal opportunity for girls beyond marriage affect girls' education (Raj, Salazar, et.al., 2019). Gulabi and Mithari, the first generation women were completely illiterate. Women education was given less importance than men. Women were not given priority for education. Unlike them, the second generation women Sonal Gaina and Tapti Gaina were educated. They both know the worldly happenings. Tapti Gaina was also a degree holder. Even after her marriage she was allowed to take a job. In education, gender discrimination was a barrier in the life of Gulabi and Mithari, but gender equality lifts up the life of Sonal and Tapti. It doesn't mean that they attain what they want in their life. Equality in education helps many in gaining a degree and the next forwarding step in the life with that degree is closed for many women in the society. The best illustration for this is Sonal, an educated woman, who is denied to take up a job but sentenced to do her household duties. Here education is trapped in the mind alone and cannot be executed in any part of life.

Education is the key to eliminate gender inequality, to reduce poverty, to create a sustainable nation and to foster peace. This is true not only for our nation, but for countries around the world. And women and men are just like two wings of a bird, or we may say that they are the two wheels of a single chariot (Karan, 2017). Though education was not a precious thing for the older generation, it is prestigious for the present generation. Manju Kapur has clearly presented it in her novel. This novel is not solely about education, but education takes a vital role in this novel.

Gender discrimination has left its footprints in education too. Himmat and Mangal completed their education before they were entering into their family life. But Tapti got married when she was in her third year. She was not allowed to complete her course before her marriage. This was because they didn't care much about her education. Everyone thought that her life would be complete in her marriage. No one in the family knew the importance of women's education. The educated women should insist on exercising their civil, social, political and economic rights. This will help improve the overall condition of women in the society (Margaret, 2017).

### *B. Freedom Struggle*

Freedom struggle of Indian independence cannot go without pinpointing women's participation in that. The effect of freedom was the team work of men and women. Women might not be given much importance at that time. At the same time people cannot deny the struggle of women during freedom struggle. A critic says,

Women were lauded as good satyagrahis (non-violent activists) but the real issues that concerned them as women were regarded by the men as of secondary importance. Participation in the Satyagraha movement gave women a sense of power, but it was localized power – for a particular historical struggle for independence. It was not the kind of power that challenged the deeply entrenched structure of Indian society nor did it challenge the dominance within the family or the community. (Singh, 2006, p.4)

Manju Kapur's novel *Brothers* describes the political life too. Before Independence, Indians lead a struggling life to get freedom. Our national leaders boldly came forward to protest and others followed them. Even women took part in that struggle. They took charge in the struggle when men were arrested and prisoned in jail. In the political sphere, women remain largely underrepresented (Millazzo, Goldstein, 2019). Manju Kapur has not failed to talk about freedom movement and politics in her novel. There is a gentle touch of both as a part of the novel. During the period 1930-1940, Gandhiji's march towards Dandi was held. Gandhiji was sent to prison for violating the salt law. But that was a milestone in the freedom struggle, and though he was arrested with many, the news has been spread to nook and corner of the country.

Virpal was aware of the independence movement, and Gandhiji's march to Dandi. With the hope of joining in the freedom movement, he left his house. But he was only twelve at that time and Gaur sahib turned his life upside down. In the later part of his life, he had a chance to take part in the freedom struggle. Their struggle was described as,

Gandhiji's message, Do or Die. At last the Mahatma was allowing the Indian people to take matters into their own hands. On the evening of 15th August thousands gathered before the police station in Gol Dak Khana Chowk. ... Some impetuous young men climbed on the roof of the police station, pulled down the Union Jack and unfurled the Indian flag. ... The four of them were thrown into jail. Among them was Virpal. (Kapur, 2016, p.89)

Virpal's childhood desire to become part of the freedom struggle movement was fulfilled. As a man, he could leave his wife and family and did as he wished. In contrast to Virpal, his brother Dhanpal never thought of taking part in any struggle. But a time came to make him take part in a war. In 1944, Dhanpal was wounded in war and was sent home. In our life, sometimes things will not happen as we think. It will make us to accept the way it is. This became true in the life of Dhanpal.

In the case of women, no character was involved in any struggle. While Virpal and Dhanpal were fighting against the enemies, Gulabi and Mithari were in their home doing their regular works. Gulabi was unaware of the word 'war'. In

this way most of the women were kept at home unaware about anything. Their home was their world. When Gulabi heard about 'bullet', 'war' for the first time, she was trembled. Dhanpal explained everything to her.

Likewise, Mithari could not be peaceful while Virpal entered into freedom struggle. She was afraid that 'her husband disappeared into the depths of unreachable place.' Men were characterized as bold and women were like meek and fearful creatures. During Indian freedom struggle, many women courageously fought against the British. In this novel, women were innocent creatures who didn't understand the meaning of war. But though they were not involving in the war physically, they were always thinking about the war, as their partners were involved. Normally this kind of mental involvement is far worse than physical involvement. Despite women constituting half the world's population, they account for less than a quarter of the membership of national parliaments globally (Iyer, 2019).

### C. Politics

Manju Kapur has also dealt with the political issues. Politics began in our country around the time of independence. No one can predict anything in politics. Nothing is permanent in a political party or in its amendment. It will take a new direction in an unexpected way. To become a leader of a party is also not an easy task. The person has to undergo many struggles, insults, appreciations, blames, etc. Only a stubborn and furious person can withstand in politics. Gender equality is believed to be in politics too. But the majority leadership is still manhood where women are just a part of it. Political egalitarian deals with this concept where gender discrimination is found. The novelist Manju Kapur hasn't failed to look into this aspect. In *Brothers*, politics has been discussed through the characters Himmat, Virpal and Bishnoi Sahib. Being a villager was not an obstacle to become a leader in the case of male. Himmat proved it by standing firm in his political path. His thought to be leader was for certain purpose. He believed that by becoming a leader he can easily manage everything with that, even his studies. His fond of becoming a leader increased day-by-day.

Become a leader. Be known, and in the cauldron of college, where varying ambitions seethed and churned, it was possible. By now Himmat was sure that the key success lay in student politics. If you were the kind of person who could get votes, your life was made. Then you didn't have to bother with studies, there were different exams out there in the world. In classes he slept, in anything to do with politics, he was wide awake. (Kapur, 2016, p.152)

Himmat's dream was centered only on political life. When he became eligible for the post of union president, he approached his uncle to meet Bishnoi Sahib, the IPPP leader. Soon Himmat married Bishnoi's daughter. In the next election in the year 1985, Himmat stood in the election instead of Bishnoi and won.

In this novel, the political leaders and members are only men. There is no woman who dreamed to be a political leader, or member of a political party, neither MP nor MLA. Even in the students' union council, men dominated in all and grasped the post. Bishnoi Sahib, after his rule, gave that post to his son-in-law and not to his own daughter Sonal. Also, Sonal was not given any chance to think or speak about politics. She could only be the wife of a Minister and not a Minister herself. There were many great women leaders in India, who stood as Prime Minister, President, Activist, Poet, etc. They were exceptional, because many women were left at their home and kept silent. When Himmat was undergoing political dealings, Sonal was being at home unexposed to the situation. Her work, action or desire had not been discussed at any point when the story focused on Himmat's political movement. Singh (2006, p.8) says,

Women in the national imaginary were placed on a high pedestal but in reality, as we know pedestals are extremely precarious places. In the newly homogenized Indian tradition women were set up as emblems of it but unfortunately their difficulties and discriminations were hardly discussed.

### D. Marriage

In Indian society, woman is unconditionally obliged to marry and once married, she loses her identity. Whatever identity she has in her father's family, she loses it and is unable to make space for herself on her own. Though marriage seems an adventure, she finds herself entrapped in an illusory biographical trap and finally evolves as a mature woman or at least realizes her innate potentialities to fight against oppression (Velmani, 2010).

Marriage is the union of two minds. It is the special moment in a man and woman's life. Marriage life is not just about the harmony of two souls, but their family too. Child marriage was very common in earlier days. Even before the maturity period, the bond was made and soon after that the girl will be sent to her husband's house. They did not know each other. Without knowing anything about family, husband, marital life, girls entered into their new home and started doing their duties to the family. When they were at their mothers' home, they were taught to cook because that would be their life in the future. Educational attainment and child marriage are inextricably linked. Promoting education for girls can prevent child marriage, while preventing child marriage can promote secondary school completion (McCleary-Sills, Hanmer, Parsons, & Klugman, 2015).

Marriage brings many changes in the life of a couple. The biggest change happens at this moment in the life of a woman. Her residence, family, habits, responsibilities, relationships, everything differ after her marriage. She is responsible for everyone in the family. But she should be under the control of patriarchal society. Unlike women's life men's life was what they decide. They expected their wives to do all duties for him. Women had to obey their words. They could not oppose even if they didn't like anything. In South Asia, unlike many other parts of the world, marriage is still the main context for sexual intercourse. Getting married therefore signals the start of exposure to the chance of becoming pregnant and the earlier a woman gets married, the longer she will spend exposed during her fertile years

(Marphatia, Ambale, and Reid, 2017). In the marriage bond, men and women were not given equal rights. Some considered women as breeding machine. Such an annoying condition prevailed in women's life. It required a profound change in the old patriarchal world where the roles of men and women were distinctly different - women's identity and roles centered on the child bearing (Miles, 2006).

Women in the national imaginary were placed on a high pedestal but in reality, as we know pedestals are extremely precarious places. In the newly homogenized Indian tradition women were set up as emblems of it but unfortunately their difficulties and discriminations were hardly discussed (Singh, 2006). Men had the rights to do remarriage even when the wife was alive. Women should lead a miserable life if her husband died. She should accept that and live throughout her life crying over the dead husband. At this juncture, if a woman chooses her life of her own, she cannot express it boldly, and in case if she does so, she must endure negative opinions from the surroundings. Her sacrifices in her marriage life are many. Everything is hidden and noticed by very few men. Women also have the power to build a home and to destroy it. A family's name is in the character of that family's girl. Women break the circle around her when she is suppressed. In India, marriage decisions remain within the purview of the family (Desai, 2010).

The novel *Brothers* presents the marriage life of both first and second generation as well as men and women's life after marriage. Gulabi and Mithari's marriage life was an ordinary one than Sonal and Tapti's. The first generation people got married in their childhood itself.

Virpal and Mithari, both children of a village, had been six and five when they married. Immediately after the ceremony the bride returned to her parent's home to wait out the years until puberty. When the girl became a woman, her father sent word to her husband's village... (Kapur, 2016, p.72)

They were married even before knowing what marriage was. Girls had to leave their house at a very young age and trained themselves to adapt with the new family. Especially they had to do all household works. Manju Kapur's women characters and their marriage life mirrors the society existed before independence. Gulabi started her new life with her husband Dhanpal after her physical maturity. Mithari was sent to her in-law's home, though her husband Virpal was not there. Virpal ran away from his house when he was twelve, and returned only after a few years. But Mithari waited in his house even without knowing whether he was alive or not. To her that house was everything. Saharan (2013) says, 'The Indian home is essentialized as a site of woman's seclusion and subordination but woman rearticulates it as a site of struggle and conflict to assert her right and control over her life.'

In *Brothers*, the author has not mentioned about any remarriage or break up in the first generation. This is because they lived in such a situation that they had to act as per the will of their parents and they should not disobey parents. Gulabi and Dhanpal did not have cordial conversations and they did not spend time sharing anything to each other. As a man, Dhanpal's duty was to do external works and Gulabi's work was household duties. The two sisters led a monotonous life every morning by preparing tea, rotis, food, and doing cleaning works, etc. Her life was to be dedicated to the service of her husband, family and the freedom of the country. She should be able to lay down her life for the sake of fidelity and chastity (Jandial, 2003).

Lack of education is both a risk factor and an outcome of child marriage (Klugman et al. 2014). Mithari's life in the beginning as a daughter-in-law was pathetic. There were no humble welcome, or warm and soothing words for her. Her father let her stay in that house and left. Her mother-in-law showed a place for her to stay. At night the darkness grew and the darkness in her life too grew. She couldn't think what her life was, why she was there, and what kind of life she was leading. Her only companion in that house was Gulabi. The people in that village made her life more miserable by passing wounding comments. She lived her life like a meek creature. Neighbors' poisonous words made her to think like this:

To be a wife without a husband, that was no life. She had to hear comments like man-eater, inauspicious, bad karma, etc. No reply was expected to any of this; all she could do was pull her ghunghat lower over her face.

From time to time Mithari wonders whether she is a widow. (Kapur, 2016, p.75)

Gulabi and Mithari were in the same condition when Dhanpal joined in the army. Through these two characters, Manju Kapur has nicely portrayed the life of women of those times. They did not get any rights to tell their opinions, take decisions, or deny something they dislike. They lived with what was given to them. Mithari's life changed completely when Virpal came. He took her to Ajmer. That was the life Mithari never imagined. Virpal loved and cared Mithari. His love was the medicine for all her wounds.

In this marriage life, Virpal and Dhanpal's life did not have much changes. Their life was same as before their marriage. They had no compulsion to leave their home like women. They did what they like. They played the dominant role in the family. In this way their life differed from women's life. Gender balance, and gender equality were not present in their life. For each and every problem in the house, women were blamed. Mithari suffered a lot in this. Even they couldn't meet their mother whenever they want. Only their pregnancy and delivery helped them to spend time with their parents. Women undergone a long suffering process to deliver the children, but the husband decided the numbers. Women valued the sufferings of men. They too suffered when their husbands suffered. But men did not feel to that extreme for their women. A critic says,

The success of marriage depends on the mutual understanding and mutual respect between the husband and wife. But in many societies which are deep rooted in tradition, still believe in gender inequality. Thus in a patriarchal society that is deep rooted in traditions, men have always used this belief as it suits their

convenience. This makes the male dominance over the women completely acceptable in this society. Even were made to feel that they need to function as subordinate beings to the opposite sex. (Tripathy, 2016, p.50)

The second generation women got their rights to some extent when compared to the first generation women. Sonal and Tapti, the second generation women had their rights to live their life as they wished in some aspects. Still, women's life is different from men's life. Sonal selected her partner of her own. Tapti got married around the age of twenty. Their life was refined than Gulabi and Mithari. Though these women had better choice, a few women were leading the first generation life. Himmat got married in his boyhood like his father and uncle. But he divorced his wife just to marry Sonal. His first wife, the unnamed woman led her pathetic life with her son in her in-law's house.

The second generation women had rights to decide about their life. Still directly or indirectly they were under patriarchal control. Sonal married the one she loved, but without her father's permission, she could not marry him. Fatherless Tapti married Mangal, whom Himmat introduced. Though she was not fully convinced with him at the beginning, she accepted him for the sake of her family. Women had to think about her family, society before thinking about her. But men did not. Himmat did not think about his first wife and his son while divorcing her. He wanted to get rid of her. He did it. Again his first wife sacrificed her life for his happiness. So sacrifices were meant for women and not for men.

Violence against women is ingrained in the patriarchal system and is responsible for the internalization of female inferiority through a process of socialization, customs, religious laws and rituals. The nature of family relationship forces women to struggle alone against violence where society supports the husband to assert to dominate and control the wife. (Saharan [Breaking the Silence], 2013, p.42)

Himmat's divorce made her wife to cry. Men expected their wives to be obedient. Himmat completely refused their definition of obedience and hated his first marriage to the core. He says, 'Obedience? Is that all I want from a wife? As for the son, I keep telling you. I was forced to do that' (Kapur, 2016, p.204). The nights he spent with his wife were just to prove his manliness. He could not accept her as his wife. But to her, he was everything. Till the end of her life she could never think about any other man in her life. Himmat easily got signature in the divorce paper and married Sonal. At the same time, when Virpal's son died, his wife became a widow. The sorrow she expressed in the privacy of her ghunghat could not be an interest to anyone. This shows the marital discrimination between men and women. Though years differ, though centuries differ certain things will never change.

Mangal's marriage life was different from others. Like his brother Himmat, he was not married in his boyhood. He waited till completing his studies. He married a woman chosen by his brother. Tapti was that girl. She was a virgin, but Mangal was not. It shows that women sexuality is to be ashamed of and male sexuality represents power. In all these aspects men are being in a step higher and women are still living within criticisms which depict the society of gender inequality. Girls may be more likely to come in contact with men outside their families, resulting in a potential love affair (Desai, 2010).

Post marital affair and sexual harassment are common in the present society which results in separation of the couples, divisions in family, disputes, and lack of peace. Lack of understanding between couples may also lead to post marital affairs. Sexual harassment is the shame of our society in which even children are victims. People cannot have good relationship and cordial moving with the family members, colleagues, known persons nowadays, as one cannot be sure that all are trustworthy. The novelist has presented an illustration for this through the character Himmat who forces Tapti to accept him. This results in loss of a life and destruction of the whole family. Himmat's domination over Tapti was solely of his power in the society as a man. Women's real achievement in this society is to live without any illicit tortures from the patriarchal men. That will be considered as the real equality along with the balanced achievements in all the fields.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Women across the world continue to suffer from gender inequality, including child and forced marriage, gender-based violence, sexist policies, as well as barriers to participation in education and employment. Women's work more often than men's is invisible (Mikkola, 2005). Equalitarianism is like an illusion which is not present but believed to be present wherever we see. God created this world and human created the norms to live especially separate norms for men and women. Changes in the lifestyle made everyone to fight against the norms and began to follow equality in everything. But that equality is unfamiliar to many in the world. Educated women too believe that they live a life of liberty but without their conscience they are under patriarchal world. This is represented vividly by Manju Kapur in her novel *Brothers* through different characters and different generation. Kapur's portrayal of characters and incidents prove the presence of egalitarianism is a counterfeit in reality.

## VIII. STUDY OUTCOME

The study shows how egalitarian concept is juxtaposed to the reality as represented by the novelist Manju Kapur in her work *Brothers*. The incidents, politics, marriage and all other concepts given in the novel clearly shows how men and women's lives are different from each other in the precious generation and also in the so called egalitarian present generation. Whatever discussion and status is given to women in this world, they are more or less dominated by men.

Even in this modern world not a single girl child can go alone safely. This means that the world is yet to change and give way for the independent and safe livelihood for women and female child.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Afolayan, Adeshina Lanre. (2015). Egalitarianism. *Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics*, Springer edition, Henk ten Have, 3-14.
- [2] Arneson, Richard. (2013). Egalitarianism. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Retrieved August 16, 2002, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/>
- [3] Desai, Sonalde. (2010). Gender Scripts and Age at Marriage in India. *Demography*, 47 (3), 667 – 687. Retrieved August, 2010, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3000052/>
- [4] Encyclopedia. Gender Theory. *Encyclopedia of European Social History*. Retrieved November 24, 2021, from <https://www.encyclopedia.com/international/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/gender-theory>
- [5] Eriksson, Kimmo., Björnstjerna, Marie and Vartanova, Irina. (2020). The Relation between Gender Egalitarian Values and Gender Differences in Academic Achievement. *Front Psychol*, vol. 11. Retrieved February 20, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7044344/>
- [6] Iyer, Lakshmi. (2019). *Getting more women into politics: Evidence from elections in India*. Retrieved May 24, 2019, from <https://voxeu.org/article/getting-more-women-politics-evidence-india>
- [7] Jandial, GurPyari. (2003). Evolving a Feminist Tradition: The Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur. *The Atlantic Literary Review Quarterly*, 4 (3), 108-128.
- [8] Kapur, Manju. (2016). *Brothers*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House.
- [9] Karan, Bablu. (2017). Enhancing Women Education in India: An Immense Challenge Towards Effective Human Rights. *International Education and Research Journal*, 3 (3). Retrieved March 15, 2017, from <https://ierj.in/journal/index.php/ierj/article/view/710>
- [10] Klugman, J., Hanmer, L., Twigg, S., Hasan, T., McCleary-Sills, J., and Maria, Santa. (2014). *Voice & Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity*. DC: World Bank Group, Washington.
- [11] Knight, Carl and Albertson, Andreas. (2018). Egalitarianism. *Oxford Bibliographies*. Retrieved December 17, 2019, from <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223-0155.xml>, 2019.
- [12] Kristina, M. Zosuls., Miller, Cindy Faith., Ruble, Diane N., Martin, Carol Lynn., and Fabes, Richard A. (2011). Gender Development Research in Sex Roles: Historical Trends and Future Directions. *HHS Author Manuscripts*, 64 (11 – 12), 826 – 842.
- [13] Margaret, Prameela. (2017). Women Education in India. *International Journal of Development Research*, 7 (12), 2017. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://www.journalijdr.com/women-education-india>
- [14] Marphatia, Akanksha A., Ambale, Gabriel S., and Reid, Alice M. (2017). Women's Marriage Age Matters for Public Health: A Review of the Broader Health and Social Implications in South Asia. *Front Public Health*, vol.5: 269. Retrieved October 18, 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/doi/10.3389/fpubh.2017.00269>
- [15] McCleary-Sills, Jennifer., Hanmer, Lucia., Parsons, Jennifer., & Klugman, Jeni. (2015). Child Marriage: A Critical Barrier to Girls' Schooling and Gender Equality in Education. *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*, 13 (3), 69-80. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15570274.2015.1075755>
- [16] Mikkola, Anne. (2005). Role of Gender Equality in Development. *A Literature Review*, RUESG and HECER Discussion Paper.
- [17] Miles, Carrie A. (2006). The Redemption of Love: Rescuing Marriage and Sexuality. *The Economics of a Fallen World*, Brazos Press.
- [18] Millazzo, Annamaria., Goldstein, Markus. (2019). Governance and Women's Economic and Political Participation: Power Inequalities, Formal Constraints and Norms. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 34 (1), 34 – 64.
- [19] Munhoz, Fabíola., Ndebele, Philani. (2018). Gender Equality in Education Vital to Achieving SDG4. *Global Campaign for Education*. Retrieved October 11, 2018, from <https://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/2018/10/11>
- [20] Nitonde, Rohidas. (2014). *In Search of Feminist Writer*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House. 140.
- [21] Paras, Andrea., Otto, Jenine. (2020). COVID-19 is Stifling NGO Efforts to Promote Gender Equality When it's most Needed. *AEDT*. Retrieved December 9, 2020, from <https://theconversation.com/covid-19-is-stifling-ngo-efforts-to-promote-gender-equality-when-its-most-needed-150601>
- [22] Raj, Anita., Salazar, Marissa., Jackson, Emma C., Wyss, Natalie., McClendon., Katherine A., Khanna, Aarushi., Belayneh, Yemeserach., & McDougal, Lotus. (2019). *Students and Brides: A Qualitative Analysis of the Relationship Between Girls' Education and Early Marriage in Ethiopia and India*. BMC Public Health.
- [23] Saharan, Asha. (2013). Body as an Ideological Site: Representation of Female Bodies in Manju Kapur's Fiction. *Littcrit*, 39 (2), 87-92.
- [24] Saharan, Asha. (2013). Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence. *The Quest*, 27 (1), 40-45.
- [25] Singh, Anita. (2006). Problematising the Role of Women in India's Freedom Struggle: A Reading of Some Contemporary Indian English Novels. *The Atlantic Literary Review Quarterly*, 7 (1), 1-12.
- [26] Tripathy, Nirjharini. (2016). Marital Dissension in the Novels of Manju Kapur. *Writers Editors Critics*, 6 (1), 46-52.
- [27] Thijs, Paula., Grotenhuis, Manfred Te., Scheepers, Peer & Brink, Marieke van den. (2019). *The Rise in Support for Gender Egalitarianism in the Netherlands 1979-2006: The Roles of Educational Expansion, Secularization, and Female Labor Force Participation*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou103>.
- [28] Tucker, Ruth and Liefeld, Walter. (1987). *Daughters of the Church*. Zondervan Publishing House.
- [29] Velmani, N. (2010). Woman's Abnormal Relationship as an Antidote for Masculine Superiority: A Study of Manju Kapur's Novels. *The Literary Criticism*, 45 (4), 15-21.
- [30] Weil, David. (2005). *Economic Growth*. Addison-Wesley Publishing.



**V. Jayajothilakshmi** has completed her M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil., M.Sc (Psy.), and pursuing her Ph.D in part-time in Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education. She is doing her research in Indian Writing in English. She has been working as Assistant Professor for seven years. Her teaching areas are Indian writing, British Poetry, Canadian Literature, American Literature and others at both under and postgraduate levels. She has presented papers at conferences and published six articles in various journals.

**S. Mohan** is a faculty of English at Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Tamil Nadu, India. He has taught a number of courses on World Literature and Language Teaching over the years, as well as more general courses on Communicative English, Business Communication and Soft Skills. His research and publication interests include ESP, ELT, African-American Literature and Education. He has published and presented more than fifty articles in various reputed journals and conferences. He also served as an External Examiner for Ph.D scholars in different universities and Associate Editor, Editorial member in various International Journal publications in home and abroad.

**R. Kannan** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Languages, Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science, Chennai, India. His research interests include ELT and Literature. He has published research articles in reputed national and international journals besides being actively participating in national and international conferences. He is a certified Speaking Examiner for Business English Certificate Courses by Cambridge Assessment English, UK. Recognized research supervisor for Ph.D and an External Examiner for Ph.D. Scholars in different Universities across India.