

A girl in Indian society, is brought up with traditional virtues like grace, modesty, self-effacement, tolerance, empathy and sacrifice and considers her as 'Paraya dhan'. To find a suitable groom for her is the only responsibility of the parents. She is shown as an attractive commodity in the marriage market. Marriage is the be all and end all of her life. A woman can in no way even dream about her career due to her constant apprenticeship in different roles she has to play. Kasturi, Virmati's mother is presented as either absent or ailing or weak of patriarchy. "During Kasturi's formal schooling, it was her destiny. After she graduated, her education continued in the home. Her mother tried to ensure her future happiness by the impeccable nature of her daughter's qualifications. She was going to please her in Laws..."(58). After her marriage to Suraj Prakash, her role is confined to her reproductive capacities. As a result, her constant pregnancies proved to be a constraint upon her 'clandestine activity' i.e., reading. Bound by the parameters of 'femininity' she is not able to communicate her sad predicament to her husband. She suffers mutely and takes a heavy toll on her health. She does not raise her voice but feels satisfied in the stereotype image of a woman. She, too, expects that her daughter should learn to play the role of an archetypal woman devoted to her family. When Virmati rebels against the conventional set-up of marriage. She bursts in despair "She married -betrayed us. Made sure we are all ruined (205). Ganga, the Professor's wife too, leads a passive life. Unable to read and write, she is completely devoted to her husband. In other words, she continues to adorn him even after his second marriage. She polishes his shoes, washes his clothes, presses his legs and even makes delicious food for him. She has mastery over "pure Vegetarian diet". She was quick and inventive with the embroidery and knitting needles, as well as sewing the machine - she learned the ways of her in-law's household from the moment of her arrivals (37). But what she gets in reward is a loveless relationship devoid of understanding and trust. Unable to raise her voice against the injustice made to her, she suffers mutely, succumbing to her mother-in-law's advice that "our destiny is predetermined...We cannot control ourselves."(194). like Kasturi, Ganga believes that the sole purpose of woman's life is marriage and her first and foremost duty is to serve her husband to the hilt. "Some women come to believe that others will love them (and become permanently devoted to them) because they are serving these others so much and so well. The tragedy here is that people usually love others for this reason. They may dependent on their services, but that is different from real love and interest" (Miller, 64-65). On the other hand, her husband, Harish discovers his incompatibility with her and gradually draws towards Virmati. With the passage of time, this attraction turns into love and he marries Virmati. He takes her into confidence "You are my other self. Let her wash my clothes, if she likes. It has nothing to do with me. I don't want a washer woman. I want a companion"(201).

Lajwanti, virmati's aunt, is also a keen supporter of traditional ideology where woman is an epitome of care and nurturing. She snubs her educated daughter, Shakuntala for leading an independent life in

Lahore. "She lives for others, not for herself, but what to do, everybody in our family like that .And with this reading writing, girls are getting married late."(15) The dignity of woman is seen in her marriage. As Beauvoir observes "Marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to woman by society" (B, 444). Virmati, the protagonist, is a woman of self-will. The novel depicts her journey from a little girl to a mother of a child. Playing different roles like mother, daughter, sister, beloved and wife, constitute a part of the Indian cultural legacy. In the beginning, we find her caring and nurturing her little siblings. She is bound of her homely duties at the age of playing with dolls and taking swings freely. "She did her best to make sure that none of the smaller children went over to the aunt's side to pee or shit, that they looked neat and tidy when anybody came to visit. This did not improve her temper, or draw her close to brother or sister, but the children's clean and oiled looks drew admiring comments from those who met them"(6). Simone de Beauvoir is right when she says "in particular, the eldest sister is often concerned in this way with motherly tasks, whether for convenience or because of hostility and sadism ,the mother thus rids herself of many of her functions ,the girl in this manner is made to fit precociously into the universe of serious affairs..."(B 1997:312). Refusing to join the axial line of femininity, Virmati is a woman "who breaks rules and defies traditions to get something" (Gurdev, 5). She does not want to be like her mother who breeds like 'cats and dogs' she is not ready to remain silent and subdued. What she craves for herself is a new independent identity like her Cousin, Shankuntala. " I want to be like you, Pehnji"(25). But her mother's belief that "Woman's Shaan is in her home" remains an obstacle in fulfilling her dream. On the other hand, she finds it a hurdle in pursuing her studies. In order to survive in such a patriarchal set up she has two choices, either accept the traditional role of a woman or be thrown out of it if one cannot conform to its norms. "Most Indian Women are taught by other women that they have no choice, that this oppressive condition incorporated both *strijati* and *Stridharma*" (Nabar,37). Feeling uneasy in the identity handed over to them, she rebels against the system which marginalizes her position. Torn between her duty towards her family and her love for the married professor, she chooses a different path for herself. She decides to go to Lahore for Higher Education but she is strongly opposed by her mother as she believes "It is the duty of every girl to get married... what is the need to do a job" (13). Virmati's pre-marital physical involvement is only an attempt to fulfil her long awaited desire for love as she does not receive it from her family. Her illicit relationship with the professor makes her to go for an abortion. As in our social set-up, a woman has no place to go once she is stigmatized. It is considered an unforgiveable crime for a young girl to have sexual intercourse with a man without marriage. But she is not one who suffers silently. She is aware of her being wronged. What she wants from him is a legal relationship named as marriage. In a fit of frenzy, she exclaims: "I break my engagement because of you, blacken my family's name, and locked up inside the house, get sent to Lahore because no one knows what to do with me here. I am in position of being your secret wife... be honest with me" (137-38). Love is an essential need for both the sexes. But its meaning is completely different to them. For a man, it is just

a 'refuge' from solitude. Woman fulfils this with her total subservience to him. She cannot enjoy sex unless she loves the man. Once the lovers become husband and wife, their relationship is changed. Virmati's case is not different. Marriage does not give her much except the respectability of being a wedded life. She remains an outsider in her husband's house. Her mother-in-law puts the blame for her son's action on her. "All this was her fault. If she had not gone after him, he would not have strayed, the family would not be torn apart now" (192). Even professor's love, she feels is nothing but a farce. Now, she feels entrapped in the cage of marriage. Moreover, she holds herself responsible for Ganga's ruin. Unable to find no proper resolution of her discontentment, Virmati makes a compromise with the prevailing situation. "The Indian culture places a greater value of compromise on the capacity to live with contradictions and to balance conflicting alternatives especially for women" (Chitnis, 93). No doubt, woman is a victim of male dominance, but at the same time she is also a victim of her female counterparts. The most important transmitter of this patriarchal ideology is the mother who teaches her daughter to maintain a web of relationship in worse circumstances. A young daughter does not want to be dictated by her mother. This conflict marks the beginning of mother-daughter damaged relationship. In *Difficult Daughters*, Ida, rebels against her mother openly. "This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word a 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" (259). Virmati's daughter, Ida, represents the role of a woman of self independence. Ida does not want to be like her mother as she declares "The one thing I wanted was not to be like my mother" (3). Like an ideal wife, she is not ready to bear the atrocities imposed upon her. To steer out of the monotony of a loveless marriage, she breaks the conjugal code of conduct. In Indian society, a separated woman is morally demoralized. Even her near and dear ones think her to be a victim of helplessness and loneliness. Without caring about the rigid social norms, she begins to lead an independent life. A deep study of the female characters of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* shows that woman in Indian society can attain her desired status only if she opts for a liberated life, and refuses to accept the myths created and nourished by patriarchy.

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Colonial Stranglehold on the Indian Psyche: Has there been any Resistance to it?

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Abstract: This paper purposes to show how the colonial rule of the British for 200 years in India has had disastrous consequences on the Indian mind, changing its very structure and causing irreparable damage to it in the process. It demonstrates how the British, with ulterior motives, indulged in a systematic denigration of Indian culture, its glorious traditions and great achievements, while at the same time projecting Europe as an enlightened, democratic, progressive heaven. Through such subtle means, they succeeded in making the Indians believe in their own hopeless inferiority and in the immeasurable superiority of the West. The paper establishes how the Western impact has proved too much for the Indians – how they have, not being able to resist the attraction of its 'fair front', willingly succumbed to it without even a show of resistance- how they have, in defiance of all scientific theories and natural law of things, prostrated themselves at their colonial masters' habits of feeling and thinking and their ways of living.

Keywords: Colonial stranglehold, de-Indianisation, prostration.

No Indian who is interested in the survival of Indian civilization as a distinct one can shut his eyes to one of the most momentous events that happened in the long history of India – the colonial rule of the British for two hundred years and its disastrous consequences on all its habits of feeling and thinking. The rule of the British in India and its aftermath – which may be called the Western Impact on India – is so very crucial in the Indian history, crucial because it has changed the very structure of the Indian mind, causing irreparable damage to it in the process. Hence great minds like Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Ananda Coomaraswamy consider this event to be a tragedy – in fact, the worst tragedy that India has ever suffered. 'It has', as Prof.T.V.Subba Rao admirably puts it, 'snapped the umbilical cord between us and our civilization'. (*English Literature V*) So many invaders had come to India before the British and had ruthlessly plundered it, but they could only rob India of its wealth and treasures – they could never rob India of its mind, though some tried to do it also by demolishing its great achievements like temples and by forced religious conversions. But this event has proved fatal in that it has completely robbed India of its psyche, and has taken a devilish possession of it, from which release, leave alone redemption, seems a remote possibility. How the British stealthily crept into the Indian mind – how they amorously seduced this oldest but most beautiful of civilizations without facing much resistance and how they took a firm hold on it are all very important questions dealt with at length by Michel Danino, a Frenchman and a student of Indian culture, in his memorable books like “*The Indian Mind Then and Now*”, “*Is Indian Culture Obsolete*”, “*The Invasion That Never Was*” etc. He rightly says that the British achieved their aim, not through sheer brute force, but through

very subtle means, clothing their insatiable greed in lofty ideals and justifying their presence in India as a “divinely ordained” civilizing mission. They called it the “white man's burden” of civilizing less enlightened races. They spoke of Britain as “the most enlightened and philanthropic nation in the world” and condescendingly declared that they had come to India only to perform the noble task of saving the Indians from their barbaric civilization and to bring to India the glory of Europe's commercial and industrial civilization, and so forth. To inject these poisons into the unsuspecting Indian minds, they asked Macaulay to devise a system of education exclusively for them, which Macaulay also, being a loyal Evangelist of Westernism, carried out to the letter and designed an English and Christianized education, which projected Europe as an enlightened, democratic, progressive heaven. Simultaneously, the British indulged also in a systematic denigration of Indian culture, its glorious traditions and its great achievements like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

This subtle strategy of theirs worked miracles for them, sometimes even producing results which exceeded their own expectations. Even as the freedom struggle was gaining momentum under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi with more and more number of people joining it everyday, the number of Indians getting de-Indianised and westernized was also steadily on the increase. Even among the freedom fighters, this number was constantly increasing. This is not to say that the patriotism of India's great freedom fighters was suspect or questionable. No one can question what was beyond all suspicion. Everyone knows how selflessly and heroically they all fought for the freedom of India, for which Indians should remain indebted to them for ever. This is only to point out that a curious phenomenon, which is more often than not overlooked, ensued from the process of the Western impact. On the one hand, freedom struggle against the British was going on, but on the other hand, the process of de-Indianisation and westernization was also simultaneously taking place, keeping pace with the freedom struggle most of the time, and sometimes even overtaking it. Patriotism to free India from the British rule and make it an independent country was very much there but the drive to ensure India's survival as a distinct civilization was completely missing. Patriotic Indians wanted nothing less than 'Poorna Swarajya' (Complete Independence) for India. They could not stand the very presence of the British in India; they wanted them to leave India and forced them to leave also, but (How very important this 'but' is!) retaining everything about the West, cherishing it even now and trying to develop India also along the lines of the West. Much stronger is the ambition to go abroad, leave this 'hell', fly to some 'heaven' across the seas and settle down there comfortably. What a wonderful way of resisting the dominance of the colonial impact – cease to be yourself, become something else which is totally alien to both your nature and culture and identify yourself completely with it! It's now more than 60 years since the colonial masters left India, but then the after-effects of their rule continue to this day, in fact, with more vigour. Because most Indians do not want to be cured of these effects – they only

want to continue basking in them. These after-effects are very much there in their facile ideas, beliefs, habits, manners, tastes, in the very tones of their voice, in their vulgar celebrations of days like English New Year, St. Valentine's Day etc., in their servile language (One can see many learned Indian professors and scholars themselves writing sentences like "I *humbly beg* you and *request* you to *kindly* grant me half an hour permission") and in the very choices and preferences they make in life. Take, for instance, their enthusiasm for English which almost amounts to some sort of mania. No doubt, English has a set purpose for them. There is nothing wrong in learning and using it for the purpose for which it is meant, but learning and using it at the expense of their own languages, that too, with the consciousness of being superior to others who do not know English is something unpardonable but that is what one invariably finds in most of the English speaking Indians. Again, as Prof. Subba Rao argues, learning English is justifiable, but using it in all the places – even in places where Indian languages will naturally be the right ones – cannot be justified under any circumstances. (*Indian Writing in English* 17) Where else can all this feeling of superiority, this snobbish attitude come from, if not from the enervating colonial mentality? Danino finds this colonial imprint in the imbecile comparisons most Indians make. They call Pune "the Oxford of the East", Ahmedabad "the Manchester of India" and Coimbatore "the Manchester of South India". Even Pondicherry calls itself "India's Little France" to attract tourists. This imprint could be seen in the academic world also. Kalidasa is called "the Shakespeare of India", Kambar or Valmiki "the Milton of India", Tagore or Bharathi "the Shelley of India". All these one way track comparisons speak for the ever tightening grip of colonialism. Would it ever be the other way round? "Would the British, as Danino asks, ever call Shakespeare "England's Kalidasa"? (*The Indian Mind Then And Now* 57) The general Indian mind is so much hypnotized by the West—its progress, its cleanliness, its science, its rationalism, its democracy and its emphasis on unrestricted freedom to all the individuals—that it can only conceive of it as a 'heaven' on this wretched earth. When the westerners themselves feel now very much worried about the fragility of their civilization and admit that its inner decay cannot be hidden for long, Indians have the bliss of ignorance, and are happy to indulge themselves with their 'ideas' and 'images' of the West. They certainly believe that everything is wonderful about the West and cannot even imagine of anything against it, though great thinkers of all ages and all countries had too many doubts about it. They made no bones about uttering the bitter truth that the West, for all its healthy appearance and looks, bears in its heart seeds of death. In his beautiful little lecture *Is Indian Culture Obsolete?*, Danino reminds us of the great French writer Andre Malraux's observation: I see in Europe a carefully ordered barbarism (16), and quotes another Western thinker Pierre Thuillier, the French historian of science, to show how misled Indians are in their ideas of the West:

Westerners remain convinced that their mode of life is the privileged and definitive incarnation of "civilization"; they are unable to understand that this "civilization" has become as fragile as an