

# Marriage Break-Ups and Its Effect on Children's Future: An Exploration of the Novel *Custody*

Jayajothilakshmi V

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

Mohan S

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

Kannan R

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

**Abstract**—Marriage life needs true commitment, love and respect. Many marriage couples today lack understanding which results in break-ups and divorces. This affects the couple as well as their children. Successful marriage with the couple's loyalty and love make their children grow up in a pleasant atmosphere with good mindset. Optimistic approach of parents, their sacrifice and care among the family members give progressive societal environment to children. The present generation of children is very intellectual in scrutinizing the happenings around them and hence parents need to keep the surrounding perfect. Parental care and secure life are the principal things to be given to the children for their future life. When trust and respect between a husband and wife are ruined, children's trust and respect on their parents will too be spoiled. Especially the separation between a husband and a wife affects their children's future. Their lack of concentration on their children leads their lives to a drastic hole which results in devastation of their future. This study focuses on marriage break-ups and how parents' lifestyle affects children and their holistic growth. It has been applied in Manju Kapur's novel *Custody* which portrays marriage bond through a middle-class family and explains the impact of husband and wife's controversies on children. The existing condition of many families and general issues have been analyzed deeply and presented with reference to the novel. This research article represents essential needs of strong marriage bond and the significance of parents' love for the betterment of children's life.

**Index Terms**—marriage, infidelity, infertility, abandoned children, custody

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage life and children's future are interlinked. A happy couple with good understanding can provide an excellent atmosphere for their children to grow with morality and clear mentality. Success of a marriage life is both husband and wife holding their hands on marriage and continuing the bond till the end of their life. Happy marriage life does not lie on luxurious life and money but on understanding and trust. Marriage is a beginning of new life with life-long commitment. A couple should be very conscious in bringing up the child. A child begins to observe the expressions, attitudes, words of its parents and imitates it in one way or another from its childhood. Children are the replications of their parents. Parents' problem solving ability, compassion towards others, self-motivation, and tolerance on others have heavy impact on children. A father and a mother showing love and affection between each other will accomplish in bringing up their children in a proper way and make them good citizens in the society. Healthy mind helps children to lead a peaceful life and problem free days with contentment. In the current scenario, some couples do not stick on a strong bond and hence they get mutual separation after a few years of their marriage, giving lame excuses. Most of the couples are not ready to sacrifice even simple things for the spouse that result in misunderstandings and arguments. In this situation, they fail to think about their children. Unlike olden days, now many couples are leading nuclear family and so either mother or father alone needs to take care of the child. When misunderstanding arises between them, their children become abandoned. They get divorce and start a new life with another man or woman for their well-being. Being intolerable and selfish, they fail to think about the children's life. Those children can express their feelings only through their behavior like being arrogant, adamant, annoyed and disgusting. A child's longing for father or mother's love will be expressed through its action or seeking emotional support. It can be noticed only when the well-wisher of the child observes its behavior. The past life of many children being detached from others or being rude is the result of their parents' failure marriages and wrong decisions. They may be happy with their choices but they fail in fixing the lives of their children in a correct way. Manju Kapur in her novel *Custody* deals with failed marriages and its impact on children. This study shows the dismal marriage life and how it affects children's mentality and how their lives get blemished. Parents and children's lives are interlinked and children reflect what parents do. In this article, parents and children relationship, their impact on one another is carried out with illustrations from Kapur's novel. The real situation of many children is echoed and explored through the novel.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review helps to identify the specific point of this study. Committed relationship and formal arranged marriages are taking place all over the world. Success gained in marriage life differs from one couple to another. An analysis is done on different marriage life experiences of two women (Thomas, 2013) which states the glad and annoyed part of marriage life. Marital relationships are set up on culture, norms of the society where the couple live. Women dare to break out the conventional chains (Santhi, 2015). Studies have been carried out based on women empowerment, uncertainties of matrimony in modern society (Azhar, 2013), extramarital affairs and the consequences (Srilatha, 2016), and traumatic state and adoption healing of abandoned children (Muntean et al., 2012). Financial infidelity (Jeanfreau et al., 2019) is very common in which either man or woman moves into another relationship for financial support. A study has been done on the psychological crisis of the rejected children (Burnstein, 1981). Abandoned children's life with step parents is based on the parenting task or children's age and varies across countries (Arat et al., 2021). This study focuses on the problems in marriage life, post-marital affair of a woman and pathetic state of children who are affected by sociological and psychological problems. It exposes the deviation in marriage life, stress between parents and effect of it on their children.

## III. MARRIAGE IN MANJU KAPUR'S *CUSTODY*

Manju Kapur presents the psyche of women, their desire, conflict, motherliness, and courage in her novels. It marks her unique among other novelists in Indian English Literature. She epitomizes the real-life characters and sets the places, people, incidents and story from her direct observations by visiting many places, meeting various people, interacting with them about the incidents, reading newspaper, etc. These help her to bring out her novels with excellence. She has given life to her characters. "As her novels are based on the issues like marriage, divorce, infertility, infidelity, adoption, sexual abuse along with split up and severance in the family, she is rightly called an 'issue-based writer' by critics" (Sahoo, 2016, p.169).

Marriage is a sacred commitment between two souls with two different attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and thinking. Marriage includes physical, spiritual and emotional union. It is a life-long commitment with sacrificing mind, adjustment, and concern for each other. A husband and a wife being determined in their contrary opinions will result in miserable marriage life. Once the dispute occurs, proper guidance and counselling of practical marriage life are required for the couple's reunion. No couple can be free from controversies, but they could settle their disputes with others help or self-help. One partner's satisfaction and dissatisfaction are connected with each other's emotional well-being (Carr et al., 2015). Blissful marriage life is the couple being faithful to each other having love and understanding. On the day of wedding, several sacraments based on the couple's society will be followed and oaths will be taken. The couple may feel excited with the gathering of relatives and neighbours, and their blessings. Once the rituals and other ceremonies are over, the couple has to live without any dependency on others. Their life prospers in the way they treat and respect each other's feelings after marriage. The real accomplishment of the wedding lies on how the couple adjust each other with love and care till the end. Tolerance makes them to lead a healthy life and being a role model for their children. A good marriage, children and financial security all make a woman blessed (Geetha, 2011).

Manju Kapur, the great Indian woman novelist has dealt with marriage and abandoned children's life in her novel *Custody*. "... *Custody* unfolds a number of lesser-told tales of ordinary family life" (Clements, 2011, p.21). The importance of husband and wife relationship and the impact of that relationship on their children are carefully handled by the author through various incidents.

Manju Kapur's sense of esoteric themes, especially the conflict between husband and wife is the core issue.

The emotional attachment between the husband and the wife is on threat because of internal and external influences they face in their lives from time to time. (Singh, 2015, p.116)

Manju Kapur intensely scrutinizes the children's psyche of divorced parents. She offers an accurate silhouette to those minds via two children in the novel. The author moves her readers to comprehend how a family should be and should not be. She presents three different marriage lifestyles in the novel. These marriage lives are in three different directions, which teach the readers how a husband and a wife should be to nurture their children in a good environment and how they should not avoid leaving the children to a pathetic state.

*Custody* portrays how marital life in India is fast disintegrating and being shaped by extramarital affairs, materialistic pursuits, and so on. It also offers valuable insights into the vulnerability of children of broken marriages and new 'happily divorced and remarried' statuses of Indian couples. (Kumari, 2016, p.62)

Manju Kapur describes the middle class people and the worst circumstances of their marriage life. The story reveals the crises behind their life and the way they rectify the situation. Kapur casts both husband and wife as victims of social changes and modernity. Wife turns out to be the victim of her passion and husband the victim of wife's wrong verdict. Even children are victims without recognizing what really happens around them. Nitonde (2014) says,

The novel is an intimate portrait of marriage and family. It reflects the difficult reality of divorce especially when children are involved... The subject of marriage and divorce and the complications arising out of it have been handled by Kapur in a meticulous manner. (p. 107 – 108)

Conflict in marriage life can be rectified by changing the aspects of their life (Wagner et al., 2019). Nowadays many marriage bonds end easily for trivial reasons and the couples leave without taking any effort to prolong the relationship. Educated people are lined up to seek divorce than uneducated people. A couple bonded with love in the beginning may change after a few years. They imagine that their grand wedding happiness, blossomed love will be with them forever, and fail to realize the fact. In such a state the problem arises, in which some hold the bond overcoming all the problems by standing together, and some give up the bond because of ego. Some divide the bond when he/she finds a better person as partner. Marriage life being peaceful or tragic is in the hands of the couple. "The institution of marriage which in our country is much more than sex and children is thwarted of its sacredness through divorce" (Kumari, 2016, p.61).

In the novel *Custody*, Manju Kapur has dealt with the marriage life of Raman and Shagun, Raman and Ishita, and Ashok Khanna and Shagun in three different ways. Marriage is a beautiful bond uniting two souls. When the two souls have good understanding, true love, honesty, compromise and care for one another, their marriage life becomes a successful one. A couple's entire life will be in a mess when they lack loyalty in relationship. Husband and wife should consider each other alike and admire the spouse's desires. They should learn to take on the life situation they live. Growth in that couple's life needs both their involvements. Problem arises when one longs for a new sophisticated life leaving the spouse. This happens in the life of the middle class couple Raman and Shagun.

Infidelity and infertility are the two main streams of *Custody*. Kapur writes with honesty and emotion, a heart wrenching tale of infidelity, divorce and broken hearts. The story revolves around Raman's family and Ishita's family, the two characters who are the victims in the bond of matrimony. It deals with the trauma of divorce where Kapur explores the minds and hearts of the divorced couple Raman and Shagun, their future spouses and the traumatic effects of the complicated custody arrangement of the children, Arjun and Roohi (Kumari, 2016, p.58).

#### IV. INFIDELITY

"Disclosure of infidelity by a partner may cause feelings of deep pain, hurt, anger and resentment in the non-offending partner and feelings of guilt, shame and loss in the involved partner" (Duggal et al., 2011, p.45). Illegitimate relationship is another reason for increasing number of abandoned children. Men or women who undergo this relationship cannot expose it to the society. As a consequence, they throw their illegitimate child somewhere in orphanage homes or garbage can. It highly affects the children born out of those relationships and they long for parents' love throughout their life. In this taboo, the children are the victims of parents' act.

Raman and Shagun are happy in the beginning of their marriage life. Shagun is a dutiful wife to Raman and Raman is devoted in his love for her. She gets married in her young age and finds some discomfort in moving with the family after delivering two children. Though Raman and Shagun's opinions vary, they live their life adjusting each other. He provides everything that makes her happy and comfortable. They adapt living with the salary of Raman and find their happiness with children spending their time together. "He was the most committed father he knew, on holidays and weekends devoting himself to his son, giving his wife the break she needed" (Kapur, 2011, p.17). He believes that she is satisfied with what he provides her. But he is unaware of her inner feelings. He starts struggling to satisfy the requirements of his family but fails to devote his valuable time for them which is essential. The peace in them disappears when Ashok enters into Raman's life as a boss of the company where he works. Raman is blind to realize the end of his happy marriage life. Shagun's meet with Ashok in a function and Ashok's attraction towards her change the fate of the couple's life. Ashok identifies the need of a person before approaching him/her. "... he must first create a need before he could fulfil it. But he was used to creating needs, it was what he did for a living" (Kapur, 2011, p.4). Ashok's offer to Shagun to act as a model in an advertisement induces her hidden passion which was once suppressed by her mother thinking her future. But fate takes her to the path opposed by her mother. Shagun's desire of becoming a model and living a sophisticated life make her to turn towards Ashok, Raman's boss.

Had he been a home-grown Indian and not the boss, she would have found a way to refuse, but this man had been imported from abroad and she did not want to seem unsophisticated. So she went for coffee, and in the spirit of sophistication, dispassionately revelled in the admiration emanating from him, knowing she was still in a role, and it was nice to play away from home. (Kapur, 2011, p.11)

In the beginning of Ashok and Shagun's relationship, Raman fails to observe the behaviour of Shagun due to his trust on her. The moment he knows her illegal relationship, he is completely shattered. Shagun does not hesitate to move with Ashok leaving her husband and doesn't bother about her family reputation and dignity. She leaves her children to her mother whenever she meets Ashok. After a few months of their contact, Shagun marries Ashok for his fame, background and his promises to her. Raman's destitute state turns him like a mad without knowing how to recover from the situation and meet his children who are under the care of Shagun. He is mentally disturbed till he meets his children Arjun and Roohi. The sour experience in his marriage life converts him to be a new man deviating from his work, being lonely, and longing for something. Shagun doesn't consider her children's future while accepting Ashok Khanna. She imagines her modelling career and high-class life promised by Ashok. Her love for Ashok and her career is her priority than her husband Raman and her children.

Now the destroyer was in her heart, threatening what she had once held dear. All her energy was spent in keeping secrets. She had to be constantly vigilant, continuously invent excuses, convincingly justify absences from home, phone calls, even preoccupied expressions." (Kapur, 2011, p.33)

Manju Kapur has presented the life of women especially their marriage life in her works. She reveals the life of innocent village women living under patriarchal world and modern women struggling to achieve in their life. Kapur's protagonists constantly fight to come up in their life to reach their destinations like completing higher studies and succeeding in profession protesting against their family. Shagun is little different who frankly protests the living life as soon as she gets her dream achieved through another man, Ashok though she is married. She is valiant enough to throw away her family, dignity, and self-respect. She doesn't bother about anything in reaching her destination. She doesn't worry about the way reaching it. Ashok persuades Shagun even after knowing her marriage and motherhood.

The author has pictured Shagun as a negative character and discloses how a woman should not be. A woman like Shagun and a man like Ashok are the real enemies of the society and children's future. Shagun assumes that her dream to be a model has been spoiled by her husband Raman. He moulds her to be a dutiful wife, a sincere daughter-in-law and later a lovable mother of two children and so her entire life is tied around her family. She accuses Raman for her second pregnancy. She starts to think that she squandered her youth and beauty by becoming a wife in an earlier age and it makes her to keep worrying about her future. So this underlying feel turns her mind to accept Ashok when he offers her the chance of modelling and hence lighten her career. When there is a dispute between her new life with Ashok and her children's custody, she gives preference to her new life. She gets divorce from Raman only for her sake. She says, "It's hard to be a wife when your heart is somewhere else. If only I were not a mother, how happy it would be. To leave him, to live with you, just be happy" (Kapur, 2011, p.84). She is loyal neither to her husband nor to her children. Her one decision changes the fate of her children and her husband.

Ashok Khanna and Shagun's marriage is not of pure love but for beauty and passion. So, their marriage is like a dealing and illegitimate affair between an unmarried man and a married woman. They love their intimate life without any guilt, leaving Ashok and children suffer. Shagun is selfish and over ambitious woman who denies the fact that her infidelity is a blow on her children's life.

#### V. INFERTILITY

"In our Indian society infertility is constructed in such a way that even though it affects a couple it is the woman who gets the blame" (Srilatha, 2016, p. 80). In the novel *Custody*, Manju Kapur presents the pathetic state of a young woman Ishita. Ishita's husband leaves her for her infertility which makes her to think her life is a failure. Infertile women like Ishita keep on thinking to carry and own at least one child. Sometimes a couple's love for each other and emotional bond they had together for months or years vanish at the moment the husband confirms that his wife is barren. Kapur accurately portrays this concept through the couple Ishita and Suryakanta's life. To Suryakanta and his family, Ishita is nothing when she fails to deliver a baby. They forget that she has a heart and feelings in it and prick her often pointing her physical weakness. Suryakanta's parents decide to drive her away from his life and he too agrees with his parents' decision. His bond with his wife ends due to one reason, infertility. "A single man or a man without children is seen as unfortunate, but a woman in a similar situation is inauspicious, probably dangerous" (Kumari, 2016, p. 64). Inability to bear a child and others' pricking words bury Ishita when she is alive.

Temperament of infertile women is clearly painted by Kapur through the character Ishita. "The mental turmoil and physical torture of Ishita is a common sight to be found in many middle-class families" (Nitonde, 2014, p.116). Ishita's love for Suryakanta is vain. "Now instead of love all around her, there would be rejection" (Kapur, 2011, p.61). She decides to live alone without any dependency in future. This disappointed life and depressed state lead her to view her future in a different perspective. She expresses her aversion towards marriage life. Her mother's continuous pester for her second marriage is vain. But Ishita's love for children increases. Hence, she decides to take part in serving children by joining with Mrs. Hingorani. Her meet with Raman and his depressed state turn her fate and she starts to admire Raman for his genuineness and love for her daughter. Their concern for each other brings them physically close, resulting in marriage with mutual understanding of the two families. Though Ishita cannot give birth to a baby, she showers tons of love on Roohi like her own daughter.

Few people think that the foremost thing in marriage life is progeny, and so they discourage and spoil the life of infertile women. While describing Ishita's state, the author says, "The couple were young but it was better to prove that the machinery worked early on in the relationship. Producing grandchildren was a moral obligation" (Kapur, 2011, p.52). An infertile woman longing for a child can understand the feelings of children longing for mother's love. "In Indian society, the problem of infertility is considered as a curse for every female and mostly woman is considered responsible for it" (Sahoo, 2016, p.173). Infertility is another reason for marriage break-ups. Currently, infertility of a woman leads to divorce or beginning of a new relationship. Ishita's life is an apt illustration for this.

#### VI. CHILDREN'S STRUGGLE

Children's attitudes are mostly associated with the role of parents in their life. Usually, children observe their parents' activities and reflect it in their behavior. At the same time, children's behaviors should be monitored and corrected by their parents. "When one parent becomes a less visible participant in a child's life, the normal development of that child's mental health may be negatively impacted" (Wallenborn et al., 2019, p. 2). A child's dispositions are

highly impacted by the behavior of its parents. The role of father and mother is the most prominent thing in a child's life. It decides the future of their children.

The children of divorced parents lack stable mind and will always be in a state of depression. As they are raised by single parents, their depressed state keeps them aloof from others. "In the failures of these marriages it is the children who suffer mostly for no faults of theirs" (Nitonde, 2014, p. 108). Those children do not mingle with other children easily either in school or in family side. It is difficult for them to come out of the hectic state. They will entirely be in a destitute state when they are left in other's care. "The time spent by the abandoned child within child's protection services impacts the child's development very often bringing conditions that generate complex trauma" (Muntean, 2012, p. 276). Proper care and motivation are mandatory to make them strong, and to move ahead in their life with confidence. They ought to be treated in a friendly manner to bring them out from depression and solitude state.

The personal clashes and deviations between a husband and wife not only distress them, but also the people around. The best illustration for that is the couple Raman and Shagun in *Custody*. "It highlights clearly the wife's sense of suffocation, the husband's fear of abandonment and the pendulum shifting of children from one home to the other, with painstaking sincerity" (Azhar, 2013, p. 37). They prepare to separate mutually and also insist their children to accept the reality and adapt with the situation by choosing either father or mother. Being ignorant to the situation, the children struggle in between their father and mother and spend their time here and there according to the court order. In this struggle and often changing lifestyle, their behaviour, attitude, mind, mood change and they cannot live with their parents happily and fail to get their true love fully. "Much research over many years found that children who experience the divorce of their parents... are at higher risk for an extensive variety of negative outcomes" (Hashemi, Homayuni, 2017, p. 2).

Nitonde (2014) says, "It is these marriages it is the children who suffer mostly for no faults of theirs" (p. 108). Arjun and Roohi are too young to realize the happening between their parents Raman and Shagun. After Shagun's marriage with Ashok Khanna, her children are supposed to call him as father. Shagun trains them for that, but it is challenging for them to follow her words. Arjun is in chaotic state. He cannot perform well in his studies. He hesitates to go to school as everyone knows the problem between his father and mother. He decides to take the option of joining in a new boarding school as no one there is aware of his family problem. He can't be open to his own father about the happenings. He longs for the days he spent with his father and the subjects his father taught him. Shagun leaves Arjun in an International school and visits him once in few months which increase the communication gap between the two and she fails to teach him life and to pour love on him. He feels stress free in the new school but longs for his old friends and the old school. His new school offers him a new beginning to a new life with the new parental care. He changes into a silent boy who starts to skip visiting his father and behaves in a different way with Raman being very quiet at a certain point. His life goes only around the school and classmates. Parents' role in Arjun's life is least as he gets only financial assistance for his studies, few visits to a foreign country where his mother and step-father Ashok reside.

Roohi is a kid to realize the situation. During Shagun's affair with Ashok, she considers Roohi as burden and leaves her in toddler in her innocent stage. The child is rejected by her own mother in its childhood itself. After Shagun's marriage with Ashok, Roohi is like a ball moving to and fro between the foreign country where Shagun resides, and India where Raman resides. Roohi is reserved like Arjun, and innocent in understanding why she often travels from one place to another. During her custody period under her father, she meets Ishita, a young divorcee, who shows much attention and care towards her. Ishita's love gives Roohi a new feel and she begins to admire her. Their bond and Roohi's love for her father bring meaning to her life. Ishita's possessiveness for Roohi stops her to permit Roohi to visit her mother after her custody period. Ishita too feels completeness in her life after meeting Raman and Roohi and longs for a family.

A child's mental strength also includes courage, smart thinking, trust, genuineness, creativity, perfection, loyalty, and so on which are gained through parents in its learning stage. Parents are the inducing and hidden power of a child. Their proper guidance will reduce their stress and fear, giving them protection. When a child lacks this from its parents, it will become zero in future and will suffer with anxiety, emotional and behavioural disorders. Some children come up with their own effort being stubborn in their goal. They are rare but they too long for parents' love personally.

In *Custody* Shagun is not a perfect mother and her role is replaced by Ishita in taking care of Roohi by giving her motherly love. Ishita could understand the exact role of a mother and she performs it well. She can't leave Roohi for a second and not ready to send her to Shagun when the court custody turn comes. She is very curious in protecting Roohi than her father Raman. Roohi and Ishita have better understanding that even Roohi never thinks about her real mother Shagun. Roohi learns good manners from Ishita and melted by her care and love. The ways the two children, Arjun and Roohi are brought up get reflected in their behaviour. Arjun cannot move friendly even with his real father easily but Roohi can easily attach with Ishita and others. Children could be moulded easily in an earlier stage. The delicate stage should be occupied wittily by parents to shape them mentally and emotionally. When parents fail to do that, then their children's lives take different directions.

... in settings where women's roles are more closely tied to having children, where producing children for one's family is considered an important obligation and where marriage is defined in terms of producing and

raising children, infertility is likely to have a greater negative impact on couple relationships. (Greil et al, 2010, p. 164)

Infertile women know the real value of children in their life and they dream for that. Women like Shagun are also in this world who give up their children and live for self-pleasure by chasing another man leaving their family. Even after seeing their children's face, their mind doesn't change and look after their well-being alone. Shagun is entirely a selfish character who is unlucky to enjoy the simple and happy life with good name in the society.

"Destructive conflict behavior, such as verbal and nonverbal anger, disagreement, hostility, and withdrawal, lead to conflict escalation and thereby to dissatisfaction with the outcomes" (Huss, Pollmann-Schult, 2019, p. 4). On the other hand, parents who argue in front of children and show their back to each other are pushing their kids to the worst part of their life. On seeing their actions, the children will be mentally disturbed and lack good qualities. A baby cannot be decided to be good or bad on the day of its birth, but the lessons it learn from its parents will decide its character. Nowadays many grown-ups are difficult to handle by their own parents and become threatening persons in the society. When their backgrounds are analyzed, there may be some problems being deep between their parents result in the arrogant nature of the child. Arjun and Roohi's lives totally change with the wrong decision taken by their mother Shagun.

## VII. OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

A couple should move into a marriage life with hope and confidence to tackle all the situations and be united supporting each other both in happiness and regrets. When one thinks his or her spouse is a burden, from the very minute a gap arises between them which leads to a critical state of the relationship. The gap spoils both the couple and their children's life and degrades their family reputation. Problems next to their fight cannot be rectified when it affects the children. So, parents should be conscious and consider the life of their children too without being selfish. Their selfish attitude results in the worst situation and the blow will be on the entire family including children. In the novel *Custody*, Shagun's selfish decision results in the destruction of her children's life. Their life changes with different people and places.

Through the novel *Custody* the author has clearly presented the traumatic state of the divorced parents and their children's future. Raman and Shagun's life decision disturbs Arjun and Roohi. The kids are in confusion as they see new parents with new attitudes. Their minds are not calm or stable and their lives become fearful and threatening as they lack love from their parents. They face constant arguments between father and mother, and so they undergo stress often. When parents stop loving each other, their children too will stop loving their parents. After the second marriage of either father or mother, the child has to adjust with the step-parent, which is challenging and stressful. Children lack true love and whenever they see other children spending time with their parents, they may be ferocious towards their separated parents or hate themselves for being aloof. Their self-hatred makes them never care about their character and hence do whatever they like even if it is a sin, and sometimes against either father or mother's words who takes control over them. Arjun becomes a reserved boy when he is admitted in a new school by his step-father. His nature changes and he does not take anything seriously. His family time shrinks and he spends most of the time in school and hostel like an orphan. He is not emotional or sentimental to be attached with any relationship even his own father and mother. He finds no one as a loyal person to share his feelings like he shared once with his father.

The kid being away from father or mother may be stubborn being quiet and that may become their nature in future, which intakes many secrets consisting of feelings, depressions, emotions and cries. A correct person on time should involve in that kid's life to divert his/her mind and guide that kid to reach the destination in life. At the same time, the guidance should last long to achieve the target or else the child can never be brought back to normal. The novel *Custody* proves this through the life of the children Arjun and Roohi. Ishita takes full responsibility for the life of Roohi and she is not ready to leave her at any point. She considers herself as Roohi's own mother than step-mother. Her failure in marriage life, her infertility, hopeless mind all transfer into happy life with a girl child Roohi. The novel is the depiction of break-ups and children's mentality. It depicts the failed marriages and the psychological conflicts of the two children (Sangeetha, 2012).

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Manju Kapur as an Indian woman writer exposes the marriage life of Indian women and the consequences arise out of broken marriages with various reasons which may be silly or meaningful and the reflection of the couple's fight over children and their future. It is easy to break-up a relationship while finding another better partner, but the scar will be a permanent one either for the couple or for their children. Shagun finds reasons to avoid her children and husband to get connected with Ashok. Later, her desire to take her children abroad is destroyed and she feels alone without them. People who really care their children will never think to escape from the family, instead they will try to overcome every problem and be together forever. The novel *Custody* sketches the minds of husband and wife and the psychological problems they face through failed marriage. Raman and Ishita are fed up with the decisions taken by their partners and take much time to come out of that. Their feelings for children are different in the beginning and later they join to fight for the life of Arjun and Roohi. Their emotions help to bring Roohi in a good environment and good mind-set.

Children's physical, emotional and mental development can be strengthened by parents. Only they know their needs and emotions and feed them accordingly. Children who have stressful parents will have emotional instability and psychological distress. They may lack social support and fail to adjust with the society. This is crystal clear through the two kids portrayed in the novel. Thus, parents should have parenting efficiency for emotional regulation in children. Healthy parents give healthy children to the society. Manju Kapur highlights the consequence of broken marriages and ridiculous state of children through her novel.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Arat, Ece., Poortman, Anne-Rigt, & Lippe, Tanja van der. *Parental Involvement in Stepfamilies: Biology, relationship type, residence and gender*. Retrieved December 24, 2021, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jomf.12817>
- [2] Azhar, Darkhasha. (2013). Universal Angst of Modern Marriage: A Critique of Manju Kapur's Custody. *Cyber Literature*. 32(2), 37-46.
- [3] Burnstein, H.Michael. (1981). Child Abandonment: Historical, Sociological and Psychological Perspectives. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*. 11, 213-221.
- [4] Carr, Deborah., Freedman, Vicki.A., Cornman, Jennifer.C., & Schwarz, Norbert. *Happy Marriage, Happy Life? Marital Quality and Subjective Well-Being in Later Life*. Retrieved September 2, 2014, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4158846/>
- [5] Clements, Madeline. (2011). Fractured Families Rev. of Custody. *The Times Literary Supplement*. 8(11), 221-227.
- [6] Duggal, Chetna., Agrawal, Jyotsna., & Shah Anisha. (2011). Marriage after Infidelity: A Case Analysis. *Indian Journal of Social Psychiatry*. 27(1-2), 45-51.
- [7] Geetha, P.G., Ravichandra, C.P. (2011). Identity and the Domestic. *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*. 39(2), 78-87.
- [8] Greil, Arthur L., Slauson-Blevins, Kathleen., & McQuillan, Julia. *The Experience of Infertility: A Review of Recent Literature*. Retrieved from January, 2010, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3383794/>
- [9] Hashemi, Ladan., Homayuni, Halleh. (2017). Emotional Divorce: Child's Well-Being. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*. 21(1), 1-14.
- [10] Huss, Bjorn & Pollmann-Schult, Matthias. (2019). Relationship Satisfaction Across the Transition to Parenthood: The Impact of Conflict Behavior. *Journal of Family Issues*. 41(3), 1-29.
- [11] Jeanfreau, Michelle., Holden, Chelsey., & Brazeal, Michelle. (2020). Our Money, My Secrets: Why Married Individuals Commit Financial Infidelity. *Contemporary Family Therapy*. 42(5), 46-54.
- [12] Kapur, Manju. (2011). *Custody*. Penguin Random House, India.
- [13] Kumari, Janatha.R. (2016). Unimagined Uncertainties of Matrimony: A Peel into Manju Kapur's Custody. In Prasad, P.V. Laxmi (Ed.), *Critical Readings on the Fictional World of Manju Kapur* (ix, pp. 58-67). Jaipur: Aadi Publications.
- [14] Muntean, Ana., Tomita, Mihaela., & Stan, Violeta. (2012). Complex Trauma of Abandoned Children and Adoption as a Healing Process. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 46, 273-276.
- [15] Nitonde, Rohidas. (2014). *In Search of Feminist Writer*. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House.
- [16] Sahoo, Gobinda. (2016). Distorted Intricacies and Convolutions of Split in Marriage and Family Life: A Study of Criss-crossed Relation in Manju Kapur's Custody. In Prasad, P.V. Laxmi (Ed.), *Critical Readings on the Fictional World of Manju Kapur* (ix, pp. 58-67). Jaipur: Aadi Publications.
- [17] Sangeetha, V. (2012). Consequences of Marital Break-Ups and Psychological Conflicts of Children in Manju Kapur's Custody. *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*. 40(2), 52-53.
- [18] Santhi, S. (2015). Treatment of Women in Manju Kapur's Custody. *Trends in Kalis Research*. 8(1), 73-76.
- [19] Singh, K.K. (2015). *A Critical Companion to Manju Kapur's Novels* (vii, 213). Jaipur: Aadi Publications.
- [20] Srilatha, G. (2016). Motherhood Versus Freedom from Marriage in Manju Kapur's Custody. In Prasad, P.V. Laxmi (Ed.), *Critical Readings on the Fictional World of Manju Kapur* (ix, pp. 58-67). Jaipur: Aadi Publications.
- [21] Thomas, T.T. (2013). The Quest for Fulfillment in Manju Kapur's Custody. *Indian Journal of Postcolonial Literatures*. 13(2), 124-130.
- [22] Wagner, Adriana., Mosmann, Clarisse Pereira., Scheeren, Patricia., & Levandowski, Daniela Centernaro. (2019). Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Marital Quality. *Social Psychology*, 29, 1-9.
- [23] Wallenborn, Jordyn T., Chambers, Gregory., Lowery, Elizabeth., & Masho, Saba W. (2019). Marital Status Disruptions and Internalizing Disorders of Children. *Psychiatry Journal*. 1, 1-6.

**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 Literature and ELT. He has published research articles Scopus Indexed Journals as well as 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 (BEC) Courses by Cambridge Assessment English, UK. Recognized research supervisor for Ph. D and an External Examiner for Ph.D. Scholars in Universities across India. He is also serving as a member in editorial board of various International Journals in home and abroad.