

Position of Woman as Projected in Bharati Mukherjee's Miss New India: An Analysis

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Abstract- This paper is an attempt to focus the delineation of women in the patriarchal society. Bharati Mukherjee portrayed the woman sufferings through all her novels; she raised her voices against the oppression faced by women in the male dominated society. *Miss New India*, a novel projects a life of a girl who anticipate to work in Call Centre, but her society try to deteriorate her ambition and force to enter the family life, from which she abscond to fulfill her dreams in alien land, though Bangalore is situated within India. She wished to legged up from her native state to other state, who does not knew the practical situation of that place, switched to other language, culture, tradition to modernity all these situation are adopted to attain her achievements.

Index terms-Cultural barriers, Modernism, Oppression, Alienation, Suppression

INTRODUCTION

India is a diverse land which has heterogeneity in culture, customs and tradition. Belongs to the land of India, Bharati Mukherjee considers herself as an immigrant writer and creating a new identity in the field of Indian Diasporic writing. She picturizes the novel with an innovative set of characters, shift in location, presenting the realities in the lives of common characters, cultural clashes, racial injustice, identity crisis, likewise she shows variation in themes while presents her novel. Her writings mainly focused on woman protagonists who suffer the problems of immigration, under the suppression of male dominated society, lack of self-identity, Psychological barriers, and cross cultural conflicts.

Miss New India, a novel which was published in 2011. It is the novel which portrays twenty-first century of India. In her novel, usually the protagonist leave their native country and migrate to other countries to live, where they were suffered from

separation from their homeland, alienation, assimilation, cultural difference, but in this novel, she entwined the setting within India, Mukherjee explores these themes but the protagonist, Anjali Bose never leaves India, but leaves 'home' and moved to hostile land of modernity, it's name called 'Bangalore', India's call-center capital. She faces the hardship in foreign environment and tries to find herself to overcome situation in different immigrant experiences within India.

The novel opens in the provincial town of Gauripur, in the state of Bihar. One such young woman is named Anjali Bose or Angie, which is the name she preferred to call by others. She graduated from Vasco da Gama High School and enrolled in Vasco da Gama College's B.Com program. Her father is working as a railway clerk who owned a peremptory voice and roled of upholstered patriarch. Angie had an elder sister whose name is Sonali, was a divorced single mother, living with her four-year- old daughter in Patna and working as steno-typist in truck rental company. She had been married five years before to a heavy drinker who was the choice of his father. According to Bose's family, marriage is about "It is not a question of happiness, yours or ours. It's about our name, our family reputation" (11). So even at the age of nineteen, Anjali was denied to yield her right to happiness.

Peter Champion, an English Professor, who was strange in his appearance and living monk like English-language tutor. He had double-majored in Political economy and folklore at a satellite campus of a Midwestern university. Angie had a secret crush on her teacher who was elder than his father. Mr. Champion, one who motivates by his words: "You will carry on,...You have the spark, don't crash and burn. India is starting to wake up. India is a giant still in its bed, but beginning to stir. It's too late for me,

but India is catching fire” (4). She explains, how difficult to tackle her family as a girl, it would be impossible to leave a town for a better experience related to jobs or higher studies but a woman can leave the town when she becomes the wife of someone who was the choice of her father. Angie shared her personal longings with him and didn't want to get married, moreover she expects something exciting and life-changing moments would happen in her life. Mr. Champion advised to leave a town for her betterment, that is “I told you at graduation you had to leave this place before you got trapped in a rotten marriage. I'm telling you again, let that happen and you're as good as dead....I have dreams for you. You get married to some boy from here, and the dream dies. You'll never see the world” (Pg 17-18). So, he warned her about marriage is a rotten, which destroys all of your dreams.

Generally, in the Bengali family, the girls were supposed to go to school, obey teachers and parents, graduate and get married, obey her husband and have children, and never had a serious discussion about anything. This was the duty of the Bengali girls in their lives. In the Bose family, Sonali, a married woman was forced to hold a job to support herself and her four-year-old daughter, she met a tragic end of her life through her father's handpicked husband who was a drunkard, and don't want to realize his family responsibilities. Sonali got divorced him and she advised Anjali that marriage talking was much as usual in home. Sonali's perception of marriage is different; she accuses that horoscopes might be correct in couple's compatibility, Is it calculates the marital happiness? But, it's in the hands of fate. While the matchmaking campaign began, she warned Anjali with the beautiful description that “matchmaking might start as a small cloud on the distant horizon, but before it was over, the marital monsoon would break, and no one in the world could hold the floodwaters back” (21). Traditionally, a girl can hold certain qualities, only if she possessed, she will be sustained in the marriage market. Anjali Bose was tall and slim but she lacked accomplishments such as singing, dancing, sewing which are the abilities expected for the bridal candidates. Angie was also stubborn, head-strong and impulsive.

Arranged marriages by means of the matrimonial advertisements are becoming prominent in the lives of women for their marriages and a daughter should

obey the male authority choices, then only their brought up and behavior must be accepted as good in the society. If a girl, who denied her parent's wishes, Anjali explained in her words, “Her parents could live with another failed marriage. They could tolerate her misery so long as they felt they'd done their duty. But they would not survive the shame of a second daughter's act of defiance and insubordination” (47). It is the reality that marriages are arranged by parents, especially the father; the girl should subsume her individual identity into the patriarchal dominance, social and cultural identity. Women are considered as properties in the hand of male dominated society.

Mrs. Bose suddenly snorted; “Ill luck is ill luck” which denotes that she is having two daughters are like two donkeys not having a son. She worried about dowries and never owns a house. Anjali brings up the fact that biologically or socially, sex determination is male-linked. “But this one isn't donkey-headed like....Donkey for wife, Donkey for daughters!” (27).

Mukherjee, how precisely connecting the girl's marital negotiation with the game of Snakes and Ladders, through which she exhibits; a girl has a hundred ways of disappointment like caste irregularities, incompatible horoscopes, dowry issues, ancestral scandals, lack of appearance and disabilities. She brings up the exact situation of the Bengali girls' livelihood after their marriage, girls with good grades, good minds and ambitious to become doctors and teachers, because of marriage they dissolve their dreams, but after marriage, they never got the proper education. In the novel, Angie got the situation like “If she married, she'd be lost to Peter. If she didn't marry, she'd be dead to her father” (51).

Subodh Mitra was twenty-four years old, tall and handsome guy who had also earned a first class MBA degree from a business college in Kolkata. He worked a year in Bangalore at a call centre, but now he returned to marry and settle down. Mr. Bose chooses him for Anjali and she fulfill the etiquette demands of the marriage markets. Once, they were out for sometimes and she felt comfortable, secure in Subodh's company and completely trust him. But, suddenly he misbehaves with her, the reason behind that soon she is going to be his wife. He abuses her physically and also mentally by wrong words. So she was brutally assaulted by him.

Anjali planned to move Bangalore to her job, but she doesn't have enough money so she moved Patna, met her sister Sonali and asks to help her. Anjali expelled her opinion, that "Piyali was lucky. Her father had dropped out her life. No visits, no checks, no harassments, no disappointments" (72). Anjali longed to share all her sufferings with her sister. Anjali recounted the assault by Subodh Mitra. She was against to her parent's decision, she said, "And they were Going to marry me off to him....The brute, just like your marriage, except that he showed his true nature even before the ceremony" (72). Sonali understood the situation prevails in Gauripur and doesn't tolerate her father's same mistake again in her sister's life. Anjali experienced the man as different perspectives, they are 'befuddled' as Nirmal Sen, 'bully' as her father, rapist like Subodh Mitra, lying cheat like Sonali's husband and exploiter like Sonali's boss. She could experience the ill-treatment of male chauvinistic behavior and she hates the male-society.

Anjali kept aside all her hardships in Gauripur, she legged in Bangalore with all her new dreams, hopes and new opportunities will approach to see the better world through the eyes of her in migrated society. A new confidence and courage would clutch her and she was determined to mingle one of them, because "She had nothing to lose, no good name to tarnish. No one knew her parents had no idea where she was" (83). Most of the Indian girls are never left India, for the sake of true family feelings, if Mukherjee made the protagonist, Anjali was done such thing and how she liberated herself from the patriarchal dominance over her life. She could create her space and being composite. In the new land, she realized that, there is no room for sentimentality in this city. She decided to be courageous and confidence to accept the reality of the city in which she calculates her life as "A job is the key to happiness...A Job brings respect and power. Money brings transformation. Stagnation creates doubt and tyranny. Money transforms a girl from Gauripur into woman from Bangalore". (110)

Through this novel, Mukherjee explores the notion of modern India with all its technological growth and possibilities. The so-called 'Call-centre' culture, how it works and workers are expected to completely forget them in order to make their clients to fulfill with their services. Angie realizes that it is the key to her survival in the new land. In Bangalore, she can do

anything whatever she wants and able to change her life. She declares herself as a new Anjali, but her experience at Bangalore totally turns her tradition to modernity. Angie, was hung between a traditional rituals and a life of independence in the metropolitan city like Bangalore.

Mukherjee portrays an old customs of a country co-exist and clash between a new social morals and rituals. The traditional beliefs and rituals have been overtaken by modernity. Anjali accepts modernity she develops the mental maturity of handling the problems in a better way. She has left the traditional ways of life and finally who adopted modernity. India is embedded with cultural customs and traditional beliefs; in this novel *Miss New India* explores how young Indians are dismantling age-old social practices by generating new identities for adapting or assimilating in the alien land.

Bharati Mukherjee through her female protagonists expresses her concern for the problems of dislocation, assimilation, mode of living with new materialistic values encouraged by alien land. To conclude, through this novel Mukherjee exemplifies the position of woman in the society. From childhood to adulthood or more than the stage of this, whoever it may be, but if a woman faces the hardships from her birth to till her death. Society should pave the way for the enlightenment through education and encourages them to become empowered in their life.

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