

SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF WOMAN IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S MISS NEW INDIA

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Abstract:

Women novelists in Indian Fiction in English occupy prestigious position. Many women novelists wrote about the feelings of Women. One among them is Bharati Mukherjee. She is an Indian born American writer. She is a novelist, short story writer, and co author of non - fiction. She is the winner of National Book Critics Circle Award. In Miss New India she talks about the feelings, struggles, failures, achievements, self pity and confidence of Anjali Bose. Bharati Mukherjee skillfully presents both the physical and mental journey of Anjali Bose.

Keywords: Assimilation, Diaspora, Immigrant, Alienation,

Bharati Mukherjee's all the earlier novels deal with the women protagonists in assimilation of unfamiliar cultures in unknown lands. But Mukherjee's Miss New India entirely takes place in India and Calcutta and Bangalore in particular. The influence of the western cultural also plays a significant role in developing the theme of the novel. It arises a new direction for woman identity pertaining to the traditional thoughts of patriarchal system and modern western life style in India. The present novel deals with various issues like domination of male-dominated society, hunting groom for daughter, gender discrimination, gay relationship, evils of divorce life, rape, teenage runaway, terrorism, police brutality, prostitution, suicide, art of photography, homelessness, job at call centre, immigration in India, cross-cultural crisis etc. In the prologue of the novel, Mukherjee talks about immigration in reverse circumstances. In an exclusive interview, Bharati Mukherjee talks about her latest work, Miss New India. She says that the novel is an endeavour to explore globalization and its emotional and distressing effects on India, in general, and Bangalore, in particular. Mukherjee further says that the globalised financial system has made possible the empowerment of women.

Anjali Bose is the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's Miss New India. Anjali becomes 'Angie' and represents the Miss New India. She is the cleverest daughter of a conventional lower middle class family in a small town Gauripur, Bihar. She is nineteen years old taller girl than any other boys in her class room. She is the player of the hockey team. She is the best-looking girl. Because of Anjali's assertive features, her parents are worried. She always makes an outstanding first impression. She has studied from Vasco da Gama High School and enrolled in Vasco da Gama College's B. Com. programme. Mr. Champion, her teacher addresses her as 'Angie'. Like all other Vasco da Gama students, she addresses him as Sir and Mr. Champion to his face, and as 'the American' behind his back. Anjali is the glowing star for a modern India of gigantic dynamism and eminent objectives. She simply desires to hold her position in the world. Anjali is an ambitious girl. Her prime ambition is to progress to a more modernized place and have an accomplish life where she can make and execute all her decisions. She has a sister named Sonali. She is married five years before to a bridegroom whose address and picture is seen in the matrimonial column of a Bangala language local news paper. Now Sonali is a divorced single mother, living with her five year old daughter in one room flat in Patna. She is earning her livelihood as a steno-typist for the owner of a truck-rental company. Her husband is a heavy drunkard and philanderer. Finally she applies to Institute of divorce proceedings for the divorce. Her father has turned against her for wreaking in the Bose family the public shame of divorce. She is against her marriage. She asks for knife or poison but she has nothing except snobs

in a room. About Sonali's divorce, her father has a simple explanation that it is not a question of happiness but it is question about our name and fame in the society.

Anjali refuses for her marriage, her father gets angry. Most of the girls get married at Anjali's age. Even at nineteen, Anjali is determined not to yield her right to happiness. She likes the idea of not having to go right back home to her father's bullying and her mother's tearful silence. They are obsessed with finding a respectable son-in-law who would overlook negative such as green eyes, a stubborn personality and nominal dowry. Anjali's father blames her for her lack of 173 matchmaking success. In Indian male-dominated society, daughter and her life are directly linked with the honour of the family. In Indian society girls are allowed to leave their home only as a bride with a man selected by parents. He usually points out to her T-shirts and jeans. He further asks her that it doesn't matter what you are, how you walk and talk. It means that boy from some good family should come to look her twice. In the patriarchal society, the woman must follow as per her father's wish in case of marriage because she is dependent on man as father, husband, son etc. in the various phase of her life. This condition leads to never-ending crimes against women and suppression of their fundamental human rights. But Anjali craves for her own identity in the marriage market. The novelist unfolds the truths of Indian society and tries to discover the inner conscience of aspiring girls who becomes the victim of early marriage and destroying their potentialities within four walls of the houses. Her sister Sonali is a conventional girl who becomes victim of evils of matrimony. She is not made aware about her husband's job and his nature. It is the main reason for her unsuccessful marriage. The restrictions and rigidities of patriarchal society ruin her life completely. Her mother never explains her about the animal nature of men in the marriage. All these makes Anjali to think thousand times for marriage. Mrs. Bose is also worried and requests Anjali.

Anjali has a large number of admirers. The young boys are fascinated by her beauty. She thinks that if she gets degree of B. Com, it will increase her stock in the marriage market. She doesn't care for any social criticism for the young unmarried woman on the back of the bachelor American's scooter. She visits her teacher's home several times. She has completed English conversation course and advanced English conversational skills course twice. She does not want to get married. She wants something exciting, life changing, to save her from the tedium of Gauripur. So far as Anjali's talent is concerned, she has very good command over English with good American accent, even better than her mother tongue Bengali.

Anjali has a romantic nature. She assumes any man can love her. She has always imagined herself in Mumbai or a larger city. According to Mr. Champion, she is innocent. She is the most favourite student of Mr. Champion. He wishes she should leave this place for better prospects because she is a talented girl. That dynamics is given wings by Peter Champion, her America mentor. Anjali is his adored student, the one with impending potential. Peter counsels her not to reconcile for a married life as her parents would have her do, but instead move to Bangalore and put her ability to use in the modern economy. Mr. Champion, her teacher, emphasizes Anjali to go away from Gauripur to emerge as a modern working girl in Bangalore.

Anjali's father admits that he has made horrible mistake in picking Sonali's husband. It is catastrophe in the Bose family, a divorced single mother forced by circumstances to hold a job to earn her livelihood. It suggests that Bose family does not like to have a woman of the family working. It means that her father never allows her to go for a job in other big city like Bangalore. For her parents, her marriage becomes burning issue in the family. Her father thinks that it is the duty of Hindu parents to get the daughter married.

To Anjali's father, it is a big problem finding a suitable Bengali Brahmin match. Mr. Bose says to his wife that he should find a suitable match. He continues the search and says his wife taking the sips of his whisky. Mr. Bose searches always Bangla Brahmins only. Anjali finds 99 per cent of boys simply unappealing. Thereby, Anjali rejects over thirty boys and none could qualify for her interview. Mukherjee

tries to show the helpless condition of a father having only daughters. Then, Anjali posts her personal details on Bengaliwedding.com to find a suitable match. After a long time, Mitra family agrees to visit Bose family to see Anjali along with their highly educated son Subodh Mitra. Anjali agreed to meet the next acceptable boy. He is 24 year old, tall enough for a girl like Angie. He is clean shaven, handsome enough to charm mothers and turn any girl's head. He gets engineering degree and first class with MBA from a business college in Kolkata. He arrives Gauripur from Asanol in a red Suzuki car for meeting. They are allowed for an afternoon alone meeting to get to know each other. Mr. Mitra visits Bose family to discuss the marriage and it results in a disaster about which no one can think or imagine. Subodh takes Anjali inside his car and drives away to a very isolated place. Subodh rapes on her by saying that it is his right. He discloses her underwear. When Anjali resists, he suspects on her character and her relationship with Mr. Champion.

There Anjali is seduced and she has been raped by the suitor Subodh Mitra. According to Anjali, he is a monster. Thus, the virginity of Anjali is destroyed before her marriage by him. Back at the house, she runs from the car directly to the bathroom. She looks helpless. She can not sleep that night. She thinks like a ghost. She drops her stained sari in a corner of the bath room to let her mother know the traces of her glorious jamai. Anjali decides to run away from home to Bangalore to fulfill her dreams. She leaves her home in the night leaving her dearest Ma and Baba writing a letter and requesting not to find her. She goes to Patna to see Sonali and to make her aware about the hellish misdeed of Subodh Mitra.

Mr. Champion has given her some amount of money and two addresses of Bangalore for instant shelter. After reaching Bangalore, Anjali takes shelter at Bagehot house, owned by Minnie Bagehot at Kew Garden. Peter has given address of Bagehot house and Mrs. Usha Desai who runs a training institute for the aspirants of call center job. Later on Anjali takes training of call centre job and settles in Bangalore. Anjali rationalizes her future by taking a resolution that she has an individual right to pursue her own happiness. She leaves her parents a note saying that she is ready to take her place in the world. She runs away to twenty-first century Bangalore as per Mr. Champion's guidance to relocate her stars. It is there where she regains her true self. Thus Anjali begins the toil of carving her path in the world. In Bangalore she experiences life in a very different perspective. She gets liberty from the clutches of traditionalism. She gets involved with many things. She gets so fascinated with her innovative life that she does not look forward to the evils that hit her. She learns frequently very important lessons of life through all her journey.

Anjali leaves her village life for her bright future in Bangalore. She first moves into the Raj-era mansion owned by Minnie Bagehot. She reaches there alone carrying only a suitcase and an address for a boarding house. Anjali comes to know that the life in Bangalore is not smooth what she expected. Her first meetings with young call-center workers of her age like Husseina make her harassed and frightened but instantly she makes up her mind to fulfil her dreams she has cherished. Mr. Champion has introduced the two women to the hostess as his friend Miss Usha Desai and Mrs. Parvati Banerje. (of Desirable Daughters) She finds atrocities of the Raj, calm ethics personified by the other young women lodging there, Islamic terrorism and contemporary fashion. Her rapid exposures to all these make her feel alienated. What does she want in Bangalore is her career as a call-centre employee. Right then 179 and there she falls in love with Mr. GG and he is madly in love with her.

Anjali gets knowledge of American games, television shows, and pop culture in life at Bangalore. She harmonizes to this reality and apprehends that it is the explanation to her continued existence. Anjali returns to her home village to address Peter Champion's students as a successful business woman. Mukherjee represents 21st century India in a digital age when American customs and ethics are introduced and altered by a young Indian woman in the country. Mukherjee portrays Anjali as a depiction of a growing universal financial power. Anjali is the monarch of light and angles. She alters her position from that of the faithful daughter of conservative Bengali parents to a free spirited successful business woman of modern India. She is the representative of modern India because she crosses the traditional barricades and she comes out of

matrimonial bondages of family into a new one which she estimates as amazing, happy and a sense of pride. Thus Anjali Bose's story is an optimistic version of a young woman's self-empowerment.

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