
DISLOCATION OF WOMEN: A STUDY OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S *MISS NEWINDIA*

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Abstract: Bharathi Mukherjee in *Miss New India* gives a clear account of the women's issues in traditional Indian society and their way of life. The novelist exposes women's silence, resistance and oppression against the order of patriarchy, horror of rape, the phobia of pregnancy and craving male companionship, as the experiences that are common both to native heritage and the cultural surroundings of the country of their immigration. She explores the dislocation of women in the country.

Keywords: Bharathi Mukherjee, Marriage, Women.

Introduction: Bharathi Mukherjee's fictional world is an account of women's experiences in indifferent cultural spaces. She seeks to find a common conclusion through the realisation of being a woman. She brings out the unconditional surrender of women in many cases. She exposes women's silence, resistance and oppression against the order of patriarchy, horror of rape, the phobia of pregnancy and craving male companionship, as the experiences that are common both to native heritage and the cultural surroundings of the country of their immigration.

In the novel, *Miss New India*, Anjali Bose is the protagonist, a nineteen year old girl, who is unaware of the traditional ways of the world, but is sufficiently conscious of her own desires and choices. The story opens in the market place; Anjali is talking to her teacher as well as friend Mr. Peter Champion. In the village of Gauripur, no women are educated and employed. Some of them are educated little and some of them are working in the Pinky Mahal, which is so famous in the village. While Anjali is talking to her teacher, the people who are watching her talk something about her. Anjali noticed everything, and then Mr. Peter asks her about her future plan. But Anjali said to him, that her father was finding a suitable match for her. Peter advises her that this is not the time for her marriage. Peter gives an idea to her that she has to go away from Gauripur to make her future bright. And he says "the money isn't my investment in you. My investment is you, Anjali Bose" (MNI 48). But Anjali stays back because her parents are planning about her marriage as in an Indian patriarchal society "family wedding and funerals are incontestable duties and rituals of Indian life" (MNI 7). She explains to him about her sister's marriage which was arranged by her father and since it ends in divorce she lives alone with her daughter Piyali in Patna.

It was too late when Anjali's father found that the bridegroom was a heavy drinker and philanderer. But when Sonali found this kind of a husband, she proceeded to divorce, but her father turned against her for creating the public shame of divorce on the family. "A divorced single mother supporting herself

and her four year daughter by working long days as an office typist" (MNI 17).

In Indian society, the girls are allowed to leave their home only as a bride with a bridegroom, who is selected by their parents. When Anjali refuses to agree with her marriage, her father gets angry and says that, "it is not a question of happiness, yours or ours, it's about our name, our family reputation" (MNI 7). The author explores the inner conscience of aspiring girls who become the victims of early marriage and exhaust their potential within the four walls of the houses. In Ireland also, one can come across such a situation. A.E. George Russell in "Religion and Love" says, "The Irish peasant girl 'will follow her four-legged dowry to the house of a man she may never have spoken twenty words to before her marriage'" (Mikhail 25). In *The Shadow of the Glen* Synge brings out the plight of Nora. Nora as a timid Irish peasant girl walks out of her marriage. "Nora's protest is not only against an individual called Dan, but also against an institution called marriage. She boldly walks out of her marriage" (Frederick 155). Similar courage is found in when she walks out her marriage.

Anjali, the talented person wants to do something in her life. She does not want to be a traditional Indian woman, "she didn't want marriage. Her classes were dull. She wanted something exciting, life changing, to save her from the tedium of Gauripur" (MNI 11). Anjali's aim is, that she wants to become a call centre agent. Peter guides Anjali, she has to go away from Gauripur, and try in larger city. She has more knowledge in English with a good American accent. So Peter sends her to Bangalore. In Bangalore, Anjali meets Parvati, who interviewed her saying, "we are Bengalis, but my family settled in Bihar long ago. My Hindi is better than my Bangla, and My English is better than both" (MNI 181).

Anjali recalls her life with her family. When her father chose a bridegroom for her, she accepted him, but she is in the mood of escaping the traditional wedding. She expresses her thoughts to her sister. Sonali warns her with the words that "match making might start as a small cloud to the distant horizon, before it was over, the marital monsoon would break,

and no one in the world could hold the flood waters back" (MNI 18). Anjali watches the present life of her sister; she "secretly looked forward to its destructive fury"(MNI 18). She dislikes the wedding, but in the Bose family the wedding rituals are going to be performed soon. But Anjali is not prepared for marriage. She rejects thirty boys and none could qualify for her interview. Seeing all this father shouts at her, "I will decide who is good. I have left you too much in charge. You are abusing a privilege that was never yours to begin with"(MNI 28).

At last, her father finds her a suitable match in Subodh Mitra, who got a chance to study business abroad and he shines in his field. When they come and meet the family of Bose, Subodh Mitra takes Anjali to a desolate place and he rapes her. Being ruined before the marriage, Anjali did not commit suicide. During that night, she didn't sleep, she wandered like a ghost and decided to run away from home in order to fulfil her dreams. She moves to Patna to see her sister and tells her about the

incident. Anjali tells Sonali, "It would be just like your marriage, except that he showed his true nature even before the marriage" (MNI 70). Her sister says that she is not living very safely because she is alone with her daughter. She was disturbed by her office secretary.

After reaching Bangalore, Anjali takes shelter at Bagehot house, owned by Minnie Bagehot at Kew garden. Anjali got training from Mrs. Usha Desai who runs a training institute to train aspirants as call centre agents. Later Anjali takes the training and settles in Bangalore, with the influence of Peter. Peter sends a letter to her, that her father was no more, and her mother lives with her sister in Patna.

Conclusion: The word 'marriage' has destroyed the Bose family. An authentic relationship which is the expectation by any woman is not here to find. The novel gives a clear account of the women's issues in traditional Indian society and their way of life. Thus, the author explores the dislocation of women, which is much more favourable in the country.

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