

THEME OF ALIENATION AND SUPPRESSION IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S "WIFE"

Shraddha Narayan Raut*
Dr. Hirve**

ABSTRACT

Bharati Mukherjee one of the feminist writers of diaspora. Her characters are true picture of reflection of the society. She portrays women characters so beautifully. They are suffering from alienation, cultural difference and suppression of thoughts. The life of Indian woman is surrounded by so many things. Central figure in Bharati Mukherjee's novel wife undergoes psychological skin foreign world. She feels suffocation because she is away from her friends and relatives. She also suffers from cultural conflict and social change. Before settling to abroad she sees India as a land of freedom and a place where women can enjoy freedom and equality. Present study aims to through light on female psyche. Protagonist in this novel is Dimple. Dimple expects too much from others. She wants to be appreciated by others but she has misconceptions about herself. She failed to love herself so she couldn't love others. She becomes victim of eastern and western culture encounter. Present study focuses on illusion and disillusion of protagonist in the novel.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Illusion, Disillusion, Nostalgia, Suppression.*

Introduction

Bharati Mukherjee was born in 1940 Bengali Brahmin family of Kolkata. Bharati Mukherjee's father was a pharmacologist and her mother is home maker. She took her education from convent school in Kolkata and completion of her education she joined Loreto convent faculty in Kolkata. As a faculty she tried to write novels and short stories. She had keen interest in literature. As a child Bharati Mukherjee was privileged and live with her parents in a luxurious house in Kolkata. Her family members believe in English education, E English literature and philosophy. They all were found of western culture however they also believed in Indian culture, Hindu practices and beliefs. Bharati Mukherjee is an immigrant author. Most of forwards are related to dilemma of people living abroad.

Bharati Mukherjee published sir novels and collections of short stories. She occupied higher position among Indian English female writers. Bharati Mukherjee presents complex nature of female psyche through her novels. She also focuses on issues created by cultural clashes of immigrants. The novel is divided into three parts. First part of the novel is related to Dimple's strong desire for liberty. She is suffering because of marriage and immigration. The second part of the novel deals with Dimple's experience as lonely house wife. The third part of the novel deals with Dimple's psychological condition. She tried to adjust with the situation but failed to get out of it. She is in dilemma of stress between cultural clashes, loneliness, alienation and her illusionary world.

Alienation and Suppression of Dimple

At the very beginning of the novel, Dimple is very happy. Dimple is engaged with Amit Kumar Basu. But soon she realised that he is not the man to whom she is waiting since so many years. Before marriage she is having romantic dreams about her husband and marriage life. Dimple find everything opposite to her romantic dream. After marriage she is living in large joint family. Always she feels uneasy in Amit's house. Dimple has to adjust in the joint family where she has not been given right to take her

* Research Scholar (English), Shri Jagdishprasad Jhabarmal Tiberawala University, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India.

** Research Co-Guide, Shri Jagdishprasad Jhabarmal Tiberawala University, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India.

decisions. Even they were not having their private bedroom. Dimple is educated but since her childhood she has not been given freedom to do something of her own. Her horizons were restricted as she is a girl child. She can experience freedom in her imaginary and illusionary world. Her all dreams are shattered. She was thinking that after marriage she will get everything she wants. Marriage would be blessing which would bring her freedom, fortune and pleasure. She is always in search of her identity. It become very difficult for her to digest that her mother-in-law calling her ' Nandini'. She is always busy in her imaginary world. It is utopian world created by herself which distract her to come in real world.

Amit is very annoying husband to Dimple. He is dominating and always blame Dimple for every little thing. He expects his wife should be mythological characters like Sita who can do anything for her husband. He proved himself as a bad husband in eyes of Dimple. Whenever Amit gets chance, he accuses his wife. Dimple is having romantic image of husband in her mind that her husband should be loving and caring. Their relationship is mere a burden to her and their marriage is ruthless. She expects warmth of love and care from her husband. Even he doesn't think about her physical needs. Amit is product of typical Indian society where women are objects for men. Amit also thinks that Dimple should be always ready to satisfy his physical needs. She is completely disappointed by her marriage life. She feels that her life is in a serious loss in Amit's home.

Dimple got news of her pregnancy after few days of her marriage. But instead of being happy and excited she feels that this baby will give her loss of happiness. Her pregnancy is hurdle to the imaginary world. She is not mentally prepared to become a mother and thinks that her husband-imposed motherhood on her. She wants to get rid of the pregnancy as early as possible. She becomes rebellious and starts hating her child who is in her womb. She becomes restless and thinks about ways like skipping the rope and attempt to slip in the bathroom to terminate the pregnancy. She never thinks once about killing of her own child is a crime. As soon as she becomes successful to abort her child, she becomes very happy. She always dwells in the illusionary world and escapes from the reality. She lost herself in fantasy with the traditional taboos of a housewife.

The second part of the novel depicts the life of Dimple living in abroad with her husband. She imagines that her immigration to U.S.A. will give her those things to which she is waiting for. Her illusionary world restricts her to become aware of reality. She expects that life in U.S.A will give her freedom. She can break the chains of social and cultural bondages which she was experiencing in India. Dimple was fed up of loneliness and her husband's ignorance towards her. She weaved many romantic dreams about their life in abroad. But everything happened opposite to her desire.

She was expecting colourful and unrestricted way of living in abroad. But all her wishes remained unfulfilled. In U.S.A. she has to do household works that she was doing in India. Arranging home and kitchen and obeying orders given by Amit is unbearable for her. She becomes frustrated and this creates bitterness in her marital life. Her relationship with her husband becomes loveless and boring. She makes up her mind and things that the root cause of miseries and suffering is her husband who have no value for his wife. Dimple's unfulfilled dream make her restless, nervous and more emotional. Advanced stage of her life she developed extreme hatred towards husband. Her husband ignores desired and expectations and it imposes heavy burden of homely duties on her. Dimple's disturb psyche and emotional separation makes her violent. Dimple failed to control frustration and violence creeps in her mind. Amit's image of worst husband in her mind leads to end his life. Dimple killed her husband in the fit of anger.

Dimple's emotional crisis drawn her from the ethics and morals of life. She reached at the extreme level of human psyche where moral control, rational thinking and life's ideology becomes useless. Dimple becomes insane because her mind is having violent reactions of cultural indifference. Dimple is the best example of women immigrants who are suffering due to cultural indifference and loneliness.

The protagonist of the novel Dimple tried to assimilate herself in civilized society but she couldn't do so. Her migratory tension and oppressed female desire made her character insane. Dimple is a weak hearted character shown by Bharati Mukherjee who you cannot easily adjust with the atmosphere and the society. Dimple was lacking essential skills to be a mother and wife. Early days of her marriage life when leaving image joint family of Amit made her suffocated. Dimple's mental and physical health is getting down in the novel because she is not ready to accept the real world. She becomes violent in the novel. Dimple's act of killing her own husband and multiple attempts of killing her baby in her womb makes her negative character in the novel. Bharati Mukherjee shown the reasons behind insanity but her behaviour is not easy to digest in the humanist world.

Conclusion

Bharati Mukherjee's novel 'Wife' is expression of female psyche of voiceless women characters living in abroad. Dimple character symbolises the predicament of plight of women who is forced to lead dual life without thinking about delicate emotions within herself. Dimple's feminine sensibility makes her introvert and she always escapes from the real world. We all have fascination of the Western life and world but nobody can think about women who are suppressed because of cultural and communication gap. Dimple in this novel starts communicating with herself and her false perception towards her life made her murderer of her own husband. The disastrous ending of Amit gives her temporary relief but permanent loss.

References

1. Banerjee, Debjani (1993). "In the Presence of History: The Representation of Past and Present Indias in Bharati Mukherjee's Fiction" in *Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives*. New York: Garland.
2. Dayal, Samir (1993). "Creating, Preserving, Destroying: Violence in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine" in *Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives*. New York: Garland.
3. Pandya, Sudha (1990). "Bharati Mukherjee's Darkness: Exploring the Hyphenated Identity." *Quill* 2.2.
4. Sybil Steinberg (1989). *Bharati Mukherjee*, *Publishers Weekly* (Aug 25, 1989), p. 46-47.
5. Bharati Mukherjee (1990). *The Tiger's Daughter* (New Delhi: Penguin Books 1990), p.34. Subsequent References are in the thesis.
6. Alison B. Carb (1989). *An interview with Bharati Mukherjee*, *The Massachusetts Review* (winter, 1988-89), p. 619.
7. Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee (1977). *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, (Garden city, New York: Doubleday), p. 284.
8. M. Sivarankrishna (1982). *Bharati Mukherjee*, *Indian English Novelists*, ed. Madhusudan Prasad (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1982), pp.71-86.

