

Delineation of Woman Images in Bharati Mukherjee's *Miss New India* and Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta*

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Abstract

This paper blow out the points comparatively on the images of woman characters projected in the novels of Bharati Mukherjee's *Miss New India* and Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta* represents the contemporary women's struggle through their works and they tried to transform the society through the woman empowerment and make their protagonist to face the hardships in alien environment and determined to rebuild their lives against all evils and to overcome the situation. They raised voices against the oppression faced by woman in the male dominated society.

Keywords: Psychological Issues, Individuality, Humanity, Loneliness, Disappointments, Oppression.

“Each time a woman stands up for herself,
without knowing it possibly, without claiming it,
she stands up for all women”.

- Maya Angelou

Having said that, being of women, whom are subject to submissive under their opposite gender, but on the flip side, the projection of women through fiction has undergone an astounding changes, and alternatively, writers were away from the traditional portrayals of being subjugation, self-sacrificing woman characters and oppression faced in their life. Writers like Mukherjee and Sudha Murty represents the contemporary women's struggle in the society, they underwent the problems like traditional barriers, psychic trauma, physical abuse, dislocation, alienation, and being abandoned by society or their relations. Women writers were against the Patriarchal setup and transforming the society from ignorance to emergence of woman empowerment.

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Sudha Murty, who is a prolific fiction author in Kannada and English, through her works, she promotes her views on feminism, charity, hospitality, psychological realism and realistic portrayal of the socio-psychological issues faced by the contemporary Indian woman. While comparing with Bharati Mukherjee, in the same way Sudha Murty depicts the women's emotional longings, dreams, hopes, fears, disappointments, traumatic experiences faced by women in their native land and also in alien land, and make her protagonists to struggle to survive independently through her novels. Both the authors were concentrated their writing on combination of old Indian and also new trends of tradition in Indian culture.

Bharati Mukherjee considers herself as an immigrant writer and creating a new identity through her writings with an innovative set of characters, shift in location, cultural clashes, racial injustice, and identity crisis. 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. She raised her voices against the oppression faced by women in the male dominated society.

In her novels, usually the protagonist 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's *Miss New India* explores these themes but the protagonist, Anjali Bose never leaves India, but leaves 'home' and moved to hostile land called 'Bangalore'. Likewise Sudha Murty's *Mahashweta* is a tale of Anupama, who took decision to move from her village to 'Bombay' for her betterment in her life. Both the protagonists face the hardship in foreign environment and determined to rebuild their life against all odds and to overcome situation in different immigrant experiences within India.

Both the author's promptly connecting the girl's marital negotiation with the game of Snakes and Ladders, through which they exhibit; a girl has a hundred ways of disappointment like caste irregularities, incompatible horoscopes, dowry issues, lack of appearance and disabilities. In their novels, they bring up the exact situation of marriage, because of marriage they dissolve their dreams, from the birth of a girl child would consider in the following words: "Even though the female child is stronger than the male child at birth, as adults it is the man who becomes the oppressor, and the woman who suffers" (MNI, 1-2).

In the novel *Miss New India* the protagonist mother Mrs. Bose suddenly snorted; "Ill luck is ill luck" which betoken that she is having two daughters are like two donkeys not having a son. She gets hassled about dowries and never owns a house. Anjali bespeaks the fact that biologically or socially, sex determination is male-linked. "But this one isn't donkey-headed

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like.....Donkey for wife, Donkey for daughters!” (MNI, 27). Here too, the birth of a girl child became the state of tumbledown in the patriarchal social setup.

In the story of *Mahashweta*, Anupama was hated by her stepmother Sabakka, who yelled consciously and not allowed her husband Shamanna to afford to pay for Anupama’s education. Sabakka words furiously taunt Anupama that, “Let us not educate her further. It might become difficult to find a husband for her. Besides, she will not support us. She has to marry and go to somebody else’s house one day?.....Sheer jealousy prompted them to taunt Anupama by saying that just because she could write a few lines she was too proud of herself” (Mahashweta 20). But, fortunately, she had won a scholarship and escaped from her stepmother’s clutches.

Anjali makes digression of all her hardships in Gauripur, she trampled to Bangalore with all her new dreams, hopes and new opportunities will approach to perceive the better world through to get a fix on migrated society. Mukherjee made the protagonist, Anjali was done such thing and how she liberated herself from the patriarchal dominance over her life. 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” (MNI 110).

Anupama’s familial life distorted her in many ways. In the middle part of the story, a protagonist Anupama and Dr. Anand got attracted and fell in love with each other and get married in grand manner, but, Radhakka, a practical woman who is a mother of Dr. Anand, she masked her disappointment, realized the situation and agreeing her son’s wishes to marrying Anupama and maintain her standing in the community. She was still adjusting to her new environment and her survival was diffident in her in-laws home. Before her marriage, she was a free bird but after her marriage she felt, “She had been a free bird and had gone wherever she pleased. Now, she felt as if she was locked up in a gilded cage” (Mahashweta 41). As days passed, she was affected by leukoderma which ruined the marital life of Anupama, and her emotional condition got worse and become despondent, no one felt to take care under this situation rather they tried to humiliate and befallen on her, Girija who is sister-in-law to Anupama, shown her vengeance face on following words: “You wanted to expose me, but now you are exposed” (Mahashweta 53). She was berated low by her own family; she was not permitted to perform puja’s, if she done that she is polluting the purity of everything. She began to feel humiliated and suffocated.

As a said “Marriage is a gamble”, both the authors tried to exhibit the saying overrule the situations carried throughout the life of married woman in their novels. Bharati Mukherjee’s

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Miss New India, she portrays the life of Bengali family, the girls were supposed to obey everyone, graduate and get married and never had a serious discussion and not having personal desire in their own lives. In the Bose family, Sonali, a married woman who met a tragic end of her life through her father's handpicked husband who has a drunkard, and don't want to realize his family responsibilities, moreover, Sonali was forced to hold a job to supporting her and her daughter. Sonali's perception of marriage is different. But, both Sonali and Anupama falls in the same sublime of the perception quoting below became coincidentally as, "Marriage is a gamble. The result cannot be predicted beforehand. Finding the right match is a matter of chance. I was unlucky in this. May you be more fortunate" (Mahashweta 65).

Sudha Murty beautifully expresses the traumatic experiences of Anupama, who was abandoned by her husband Dr. Anand, who is not ready to understand the feelings of Anupama. She expecting his soothing words and pacify her but she get disappointment in every way. He forgets to maintain his promises but he is the oppressor, as notice his behavior he treated Anupama as a beautiful object rather than giving importance to her feelings and left Anupama alone in the hands of loneliness, after sometimes, her husband had realized his mistake and approach her but Anupama rejects him, she expressed her agony through the words as,

Even household pets are treated with love and cared for when they are unwell. I was your wife, lonely, scared and totally dependent on you. All I wanted was to hear a few kind words from you. They would have been my strength, but you never bothered to console me even once". (Mahashweta 147)

At final, she raised a question against Dr. Anand that, "How can you possibly expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree?" (Mahashweta 148). She explained her present situation of living, her past is different and she is not so naïve as before, but now she realized her goals and looking forward to execute in successful way and she don't need anyone's help to reach her destination.

Similarly, both the authors were exhibit their woman characters and make them to travel in a same path to define their identity in which the society throws them out and their works shown the realistic problems faced by women in the society, family relationships, and silent suppression of women and how they overcome their problems in the society. The novels shown that how woman get self-esteem through the struggled life they underwent from the society, overcome to assert their individuality and sustainability to prove their capable of being a 'human' rather than a 'woman sex'. Both the novels were carried their protagonists as a inspiration of other woman who do suffer in the dominated society. Being a woman, they overcome the sufferings and explore them in a perfect way. Through their writings, they try to explore the humanistic approaches and its impacts of human values.

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