

RESEARCH ARTICLE



ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

REINVENTION OF THE SELF : IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S "MISS NEW INDIA"

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.7119.322>



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ABSTRACT

Bharati Mukherjee (1940) has been a dominant writer of Indian origin, in her writings, rewarded importance to the condition of the Indian woman immigrants. Her stories are about psychological transformation, especially for women immigrant. Miss New India is a novel full of contrasts; the contrast between the old and the new, between dedication to family and dedication to self. The protagonist Anjali, who prepared to call herself by the more modern Angie, was torn between a life described by traditional rituals and a life of independence in the glowing city of Bangalore. Angie begins to throw off her old traditional way and gave birth to her new identity. In order to, "make it", Angie will need to re-invent herself in ways she never dreamed of. This theme of re-invention of the self is a main theme in this novel.

Keywords: Traditional rituals, Immigrants, Reinvention, Modernization, Transformation

Introduction

A journey theme's is a story in which the main theme is of discovery. Here, in this novel Miss New India refers to the psychological journey of Anjali Bose from Miss Anjali Bose to Miss New India. Anjali Bose is the representative of Miss New India. In Miss New India novel, Bharati Mukherjee presents both old and New India. Old India in the sense of full restrictions and responsibilities. Anjali Bose's sister Sonali is representative of old India. She is married a man chosen by her father. Her husband is a drunkard and leaves her with a daughter. Sonali lives as a single mother and works as a typist for her daughter survival. Anjali Bose is a representative of New India because she crosses the boundaries of traditional taboos and holdly come out of wedlock and family into a new one which she considers as bright, happy and sense of pride. S. Sujaritha and N. Chandra rightly says, A reading of Mukherjee's works chronologically reveals the transformations

the underwent and her experiences in the new land (145). Like Bharati Mukherjee, her heroine, Anjali Bose had a lot of experiences both sweet and bitter.

Indianness to Miss New India –

Anjali Bose is a beautiful girl of 19 and a daughter of a Bengali Railway clerk. She is tall, beautiful and attractive. She completed B.Com. Through Anjali Bose, Bharati Mukherjee points the life of young woman in India's new technologically oriented society. India gives more importance to society, family and rituals. In Mukherjee's words family wedding and funerals are the indisputable duties and rituals of Indian life. (Miss New India, 7). For her father, marriage was a sacred duty. Subodh Mitra is a suitor selected for Anjali by her father. But she was raped by him before marriage. Anjali Bose shocked by this incident and decides to leave her home to do something different in her career with the help of her teacher named, Peter Champion she leaves Gauripur and reaches

Bangalore. At first Bangalore excited her but later she is depressed.” (Miss New India – 97). To Anjali “a job is the key to happiness.” She calculated that a job brings respect and power but money brings transformation. Here also, Anjali transforms herself from a girl of Gauripur to woman of Bangalore. In Bangalore she noticed the changes in her life

Miss New India gives a picture of India as we have never truly seen it before, as country up-to-date – and as traditional – as many places in the world. Mukherjee employs a very classic plot : A village girl goes to big city that throws off the old traditional ways and discovers her new identity – as modern girl with American accent, this transformation is also represented through change of her name from Anjali – to Angie. Anjali feels as though she is “part of the bold India, and equal to anywhere, a land poised for take-off.”

The title Miss New India is very significant. Here Mukherjee depicts the picture of two different India – first one which she realize in her early childhood like full of restrictions and social bondage and one which is at present where there is a lot of opportunities for a woman to grow and make identity for herself. In ‘old India’ women are restricted to four walls of houses and do not cross the border lines or ‘laxmanrekha’ of manners and morality linked with patriarchal society. But in the novel ‘Miss New India’, these two facets of old India and New India have been discussed explicitly. Sonali Das, Anjali’s sister represented as the traditional women of old India who has been married with a man chosen by her father and Anjali Bose, the protagonist represented as the woman of New India who throws off all her traditional barriers but crosses the boundaries of her house to the exceptional limits of the society to make her future bright and vibrant . Through Miss New India Mukherjee reveals to all American readers a similar truth about India, with similar effect – as she herself has experienced in her young age in America. Of course, the seductive pull of life in the New India does not come without a dark side. It sets for freedom of the confines of class, cast and gender. It is not only about struggle but about re-inventing of the self. The portrait of social change in India provides food for thought . The title Miss New India

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New Miss India is, therefore, a rendering of the experience of culture shock and dilemma of Anjali Bose who encounters India’s juxtaposed culture when she undertakes a journey from Gauripur to Bangalore to accomplish her ambitions. Anjali understands that the culture of every country is shaped by its own set of ideas and myths, food and clothing habits, education and value systems but within every country one can experience the cultural nuances while moving from rural to urban, from small town to big metropolis or megacities. Gauripur and Bangalore, with all their cultural and social differences, bring together the two separate worlds of tradition and modernity, status quo and

change within the nations. To survive this change, one needs the spunk and the girt.

Conclusion :

Anjali has been a role model to many Indian girls, who are eager to achieve great. In the metropolis, high-tech city, Anjali undergoes many bitter and better experiences and finally re-invents herself. The struggle and liberation of an Indian girl is well pictured by Bharati Mukherjee in her novel *Miss New India*. Unlike earlier novels, which highlight the transnational migration concerns, *New Miss India* explores the trend of internal or domestic migration and reverse migration. In dealing with these issues, the novel represents a departure from her previous novels.

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