

## **Journey Motif 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:** *Psychological journey, Significance of the title, Marriage - sacred duty, Matchmaking, Communalism, Casteism, Superstition, Rituals and Transformation.*

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Indira Nithyanandam rightly says, Though Bharati Mukherjee considers her novels to be similar to Miniature paintings where both background and foreground are equally important; her novel revolves only around the lives of Protagonists. [78].

It is true that the novel Miss New India revolves around the protagonist Anjali Bose.

### **1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE**

A Journey motif is a story in which the main theme is of discovery. Here, in this novel *Miss New India* it refers to the psychological journey of Anjali Bose from Miss. Anjali Bose to Miss. New India. The title itself is a significant one. 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 that it is full of responsibilities and restrictions. Anjali Bose's sister Sonali is representative of old India. She married a man chosen by her father. He is a drunkard and leaves her with a daughter. Sonali lives as a single mother and works as a typist for her and her daughter's survival. Anjali Bose is the representative of new India because she crosses the traditional barriers and she boldly comes out of wedlock and family into a new one which she considers as bright, happy and a sense of pride. S.Sujaritha and N.Chandra rightly says,

A reading of Mukherjee's works chronologically reveals the transformations she underwent and her experiences in the new land.[ 145].

Like Bharati Mukherjee, her heroine, Anjali Bose had variety of experiences both sweet and bitter.

### **2. INDIANNESS IN MISS. NEW INDIA**

Anjali Bose is a beautiful girl of 19. She is the second daughter of a Bengali Railway clerk. She is tall, beautiful and attractive. She has completed B.com. Through Anjali Bose, Bharati Mukherjee traces the life of young woman in India's new technologically oriented society. Indians give more importance to Society, family and Rituals. In Mukherjee's words

Family weddings and funerals are the incontestable duties and rituals of Indian Life. [*Miss New India- 7*].

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* the protagonist's mother's aim in life is to find a suitable partner for her daughters. Here, in *Miss New India* the whole family prays for a suitable boy for Anjali Bose. Her father says,

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It's not a question of happiness, yours or ours. It's about our name, our family reputation. [Miss New India - 7].

For her father, marriage was a sacred duty. Her mother prayed for her pale eyes to turn black because she considers that if her eyes are black, she can get a bridegroom easily. "To marry her off was her father's Hindu duty:" *Miss New India* - 17]. Subodh Mitra is a suitor selected for Anjali by her father. But, he raped her before marriage. This is very shocking in Indian culture. But, for Subodh it is nothing big as he is well educated from America and has influence on Western corrupt culture. Anjali being shocked by this incident decides to leave her home to do something vibrant in her career. With the help of his teacher, Peter Champion she leaves Gauripur and reaches Bangalore. At first "Bangalore excited her, but it left her depressed". [ *Miss New India* - 97]. To Anjali "a job is the key to happiness." She calculated that a job brings respect and power. Money brings transformation. Money transforms a girl from Gauripur into a woman from Bangalore. Her aim is to win a place in Usha Desai's training centre and finds a job. In Bagehot house, she realized that it is difficult for her to escape from the family rituals. She realized, "you could run away from home, but not from the rituals of family." [ *Miss New India* - 126]. In Bangalore, she noticed the changes in her life. Her father hates Muslim and a Christian. But, now she was sharing a bathroom with a Muslim and a Christian.

Keeping a boyfriend is a different thing for Anjali. When her girl friend, Tookie, advised Anjali to keep two boyfriends: -- one for the workplace offering, convenient rides and innocent companionship and second one for a fun-time boyfriend, Anjali was shocked. In Bagehot house, Bangalore, she realized that her native is Gauripur. She also remembered her roots.

I have no roots anywhere but in India. My ancestors were hated and persecuted by everyone but themselves. I understand Sonali -di, even Baba. [ *Miss New India* -136].

On hearing the death of her father, she felt sorry for himself, her mother, and herself. She felt that she alone is responsible for her father's death.

### 3. VILLAGE VERSUS CITY

Sometime her feeling is changed. She compares her life in Gauripur and Bangalore. She says, I didn't have a life in Gauripur. I am here to dictate the terms of happiness. [83].

Her ambition in Bangalore is to be a call centre agent. She considers it as her vocation. After getting two weeks training from CCI, she felt that the training itself is a preparation for the new life she aimed.-that is independent career woman. Bharati Mukherjee presents the different personalities of Anjali. She says,

I am a woman now; she said to herself I'm quite a woman. I'm hot according to Tookie. Secretive and oh so mysterious, according to Husseina. Sherbet cool, Sherbet- refreshing, according to Moni. And funny and fascinating, if I'm reading Mr.GG.correctly. [ *Miss New India* - 227].

When bad time came, she thought that her parents were right. They told her that everyone in the world is corrupt and there are so many conspiracies everywhere in the world. In Gauripur, she doesn't have any bitter experience. She is safe with her parents. But, in Bangalore, after going so many trials, she realized what life is. She says,

My new beginning is here. But, different from Baba's and Ma's generation. They had to fight the British; their big fight was to establish an Independent India and create a nonaligned world. Theirs was a struggle ---lost, in Baba's case against communalism and casteism and poverty and superstition and too much religion. They were lucky. Their fights were not easy, but simpler and clearer than mine....Poverty terrified Baba. But, I 'm terrified, tempted and corrupted by the infusion of vast sums of new capital. [ *Miss New India* -304].

### 4. MISS. NEW INDIA

After going so many trials and difficulties in life, she achieves what she aims. Here, in this novel her journey is not only from Gauripur to Bangalore but also from darkness to light, ignorance to the world of intelligence. Through her journey of life, she gains self confidence, achievement and success.

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