

RESISTANCE TO ACCULTURATION IN THE NOVELS OF BHARATI MUKHERJEE

Rohtash kumar

H.No. IIIrd-C-88, VV Colony,
NTPC Shaktinagar, Distt. Sonbhadra, UP,
PIN Code 231222

Email: drksankhla@gmail.com

Abstract: Bharati Mukherjee is a third world Indian born American writer whose novels deals with the South Asian women resistance to acculturation. The socio cultural conflicts are diligently portrayed in the novels of Bharati Mukherjee. It certainly means that cultural differences are responsible for a great deal of conflict, confusion and hostility. Mukherjee's believes in the Hindu philosophy, which is reflected in her novels. Her sensitive portrayal of history infused with her imagination makes her themes and characters lively, throbbing pulsating. Her protagonists experience the cultural conflicts at home and abroad are so accurate and intense.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Acculturation

1.0 Introduction:

The present paper, I explore the cultural resistance, unpleasant occurrence and endorsed the consciousness of every immigrant experience in the unfamiliar country. People who migrate to an alien land feel lonely and isolated and they feel helpless and deprived of relations in an alien land. They make their own community and try to retain their own culture. Bharati Mukherjee considers that the United States melting pot approach to immigration appeared now infinitely better than Canada's stance on multiculturalism. Indian immigrants feel as an outsider in American society. Dr.Sethi and Das Gupta describe the experience of an Indian immigrant in following words:

Very few – American accept you on their own in the first generation and very few will. We interact with the middle class. But there also apart from the professional meetings, there is very little social acceptance in the first generation. You can feel this in the first generation. You can feel this barrier. There are some basic differences.(P.54)

In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Bharati Mukherjee illustrates, how the female protagonist Tara, who migrates from her homeland to foreign land, and attempts to be acclimatized in the new surroundings and culture. In the new milieu, the taboo issues are openly discussed. Tara with her Indian sensibility finds it very disgusting.

Stayed up till two in the morning discussing birth control with the dormitory neighbors ... (Tried) cycling blithely from class to class, rubbing Nivea cream on her face to protect it from the hostile weather.(P.11)

This shows how the religious belief and cultural traditions are resistance to acculturation the new environment. It is very strange and difficult for the protagonist to adjust to the new milieu, though she has a strong desire to become a part of new society. She feels homesick in Poughkeepsie and she faces the sense of discrimination even with her roommate. It is obvious from a description that the process of acculturation is loaded with pain and suffering. Immigrants may change their physical appearance by dressing up like foreigners but from the core of their heart, they remain the same old Indians, who would pray to their Gods and Goddesses for the spiritual solace, at the time of crises. Tara's adherence to the Indian habits and manners symbolizes the psychological makeup and Indian consciousness of thousands of Indian immigrants. Tara married with a foreigner and she is unable to talk freely with her husband as of their cultural differences. After seven years stay at foreign land Tara plans a trip to India. The outlook of Tara's has changed. She is unable to bring her old sense of perception. It is difficult for her to acculturate with Indian society.

The novel *Jasmine*, Mukherjee describes numerous challenges faced by protagonist as an immigrant and traces the significant milestones of immigrants, final absorption in an adopted cultural milieu. Her experiences are as varied as the vast American subcontinent, which she traverses. It is clear that Jasmine made her mind to

acculturate herself into new culture; she is determined to leave her past behind to keep away from the Jyoti. In order to survive in the tough circumstances she willingly and consciously shed the strict regime of her home-grown social moral discipline. America also embraces her with open arms. Her widowhood is not a social taboo in American society. Jasmine too is willing to accept and assimilates the foreign culture. The novel must be treated as a socio critique whose polemics are subtle rather than vociferous but is no less powerful. The slow erosion of cultural identity, upwardly mobile characters in flux, their unmitigated situations, their loss of so called traditional values are the issues voiced powerfully in the novel ,

In *Wife*, the story rotates around the female character Dimple Das Gupta who gets married with Amit, her attempts at acculturation are limited. They learn shop at the supermarket, watching T.V., listening to discussions on mugging, kidnapping, rape and finally a mild flirtation, or succumbing to seduction with Milt. These are superficial attempts; Dimple can never become a part of American society. Dimple fails to acculturate in the foreign land. She feels loneliness and thinks that it is not easy to live in midst of those people who do not understand the value of Hindu religion particularly about Durga Puja. For Indian religion, Durga Puja is an integral part of life and Dimple's failure to assimilate with American is due to lack of 'shared – faith.' In America, she thinks about her past life and realizes that it is very easy to communicate and share her own feelings with people in Calcutta. Even the policemen face appears to her very friendly but now the scene has changed completely in the new environment;

In the novel, *Leave It to Me*, the female protagonist Debby is a multiracial orphan, and abandoned, then adopted by an American family in New York. She is confused and travels various racial, cultural, social heritages to find her bio-mom. Mukherjee exhibits through the novel the struggle of the female protagonist Devi to discover her identity as she crosses cultural boundaries. Mukherjee deals the truth of 'Time travel'; an individual comes to grips with the different culture around the world to find his factual identity.

2.0 Conclusion:

Bharati Mukherjee's heroines are brave and assertive. They have strong potentiality for flexibility; they line in the firm ground of reality and accept the better truth of their life. Mukherjee observations are sharp and acute. The new generation immigrants are confident sophisticated, and poised, as well as one who do not melt into an American mainstream but visibly expand the margins of what one may call "the American experience" These new Americans are neither nostalgic for their personal past nor afraid of the unfamiliar present their main strategy is adoption without surrender. Mukherjee characters are genuine and fall in the above definition. Jasmine, Tara, and Dabby are Mukherjee women characters who undergo much the same experience. In the course of time, their experience grows wider and becomes expanded. Mukherjee has dedicated herself to celebrate immigrant voices instead of treating the life of exiles and expatriate with condescension. Mukherjee has tried to minimize the distance between her and readers, it means that the ironic tone adopted in the earlier works were replaced by more intimate perspective

3.0 References:

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