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DIASPORIC ELEMENTS IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S JASMINE**Arun B. Khedkar**

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Abstract

Bharati Mukherjee has a special and a unique place for herself among other notable writers of the time . Her fame rests on some of the greatest novels where she mainly emphasizes on women characters who are victim of circumstances, their struggle to create a space for themselves ,search for identity etc .In jasmine a Panjabi girl Jyoti is a victim of circumstances trying to adopt American way of life as an illegal immigrant . so that, she could survive, all these things lead her to various episodes in life first in her native land and then in America and at the end coming out as a totally reformed women .During this time she has to change her identity on various occasions .All the diasporic experiences are skilfully woven together in her various works which remarkable quality of Diasporic writer Bharati Mukherjee.Moreover Mukherjee lived in foreign country leaving her own country her alienation own experiences of yearning for homeland in her life served as basis for her writing to record her own diasporic experiences in her novels. As this novel gives in detail the nostalgic feeling, loss of culture ,loss of true identity and sense of loneliness .

Key words -Circumstances , immigrant ,reformed ,woven ,diasporic ,nostalgic

Introduction

The present paper illustrates the genuine experiences of jasmine as an immigrant which is skilfully done by novelist .Bharati Mukherjee is an eminent Indian novelist who lived U.S A, her diasporic novels are the Tiger's Daughter, Wife, Jasmine, The Holder of the World, Leave it to Me, Desirable Daughters and the Tree Bride and her fame rests on her skilful sketching of various characters as diaspora is dominant element in her novels .As every one of her leading character suffers and tries to search her true identity in a society.Bharathi Mukherjee herself lived in USA so she records her own diasporic experiences through her characters .

Diaspora : meaning

Diaspora' is a Greek word and it means the dispersion of a person from his homeland. Similarly diasporic literature means the writings by those writers who go to reside at other land than their native place. It is a matter of great attraction for people crossing the boundries of not only a geographical area but also culture ,language ,style of living and whole atmosphere is different .

True Identity is very important element in diaspora literature. Stuart Hall has his opinion

'Identity' should not be considered as of as an accomplished fact, but should be seen as a production which is never complete."

some thinkers say that the term diaspora is used differently by a person based on his limited perception. Safran gives a definition of diaspora. He says -

"For something to be called as diaspora there should be a dispersal from homeland to two or more foreign regions; those people who are away from their homeland have a collective memory about their homeland; they have a belief that they will always be disgraceful in their host state; they idealize their accepted ancestral home; there is a belief that all members of that society should be committed to the maintenance or renewal of the homeland and a strong ethnic group consciousness with a belief in a common fate." (Safran, 1991).

Interesting feature of Diaspora writers is that they live two lives simultaneously together and Bharathi Mukherjee is no exception to this, She has faith for her nation and urge for new place. She has her memories of her motherland and because of this she has mixed state of mind

The Diaspora means a new identity in a new place, residing in the region and trying to adjust with that culture,environment set up which offers many strange things, many positive and negative impacts on immigrants . The term Diaspora is used for the migrants or the people who have been displaced from their own country , have emigrated from their homeland to another . They are unable to come to terms with reality, they are dislocated and henceforth, lost, fall victim to two different worlds, the feeling of detachment with own native land gives a feeling of frustration ,repentance ,yearning for past days because a new country offers new opportunities is true but sometimes it offers some problems too which raises the psychological complexities of the immigrants .

Patriarchic culture which was dominant then is highlighted in the novel .Jasmine is a "the fifth daughter, the seventh of nine children" (p.39). There was no celebration of her birth typical mentality of Indian people for a girl child. In fact, woman having a girl child was considered as sin. Therefore, the reason why jasmine says -

"If I had been a boy,
my birth in a bountiful year would have marked me as lucky,"

This is also an attack on Indian patriarchic culture .

The time her migration process starts , She says in agony -

"We are the outcasts and deportees, strange pilgrims visiting outlandish shrines, landing at the end of tarmacs, ferried in old army trucks where we are roughly handled and taken to roped off corners of waiting rooms where surely, barely wakened custom guards await their bribe. We are dressed in shreds of national costumes, out of season, the wilted plumage of intercontinental vagabondage. We ask only one thing: to be allowed to land; to pass through; to continue" (101).

Jasmine, the main titular heroine ,protagonist and narrator of Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine novel , was born in the year 1965 in a rural village Hasnpur. Here narrator is jasmine telling her own story ,She tells her story as a twenty-four-year-old pregnant widow, who lives in Iowa with her crippled lover, Bud Ripplemeyer. She takes some time to adjust herself in Iowa. Meanwhile , Jasmine comprehensively narrates her earlier life in her own village andher later years in America. Some of the episodes are set in

Iowa. Her journey is full of unknown struggles and also eventful different settings, two murders, rape, suicide attempt etc.

Kingsland says to Jasmine, "Don't truss dat mon, no way" (106), and gives her a small knife to defend herself, telling her she can depend on that blade if nothing else.

Multicultural Impact –

As the novel progresses ,as it advances ,as this is a journey of transformation at various stages the novel, the protagonist's identity, along with her name changes from Jyoti to Jasmine, Jasmin to Jazzy , Jassy to Jase and Jase to Jane. In course of time , Jasmine moves from Hasnpur, to Florida then , to New York, to Manhattan, to Baden, Iowa, and at last to California going through many episodes in her course of life. Jasmine the novel which was based on her earlier work narrates the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who becomes a widow after her husband's accidental death . The couple had already planned to go to Florida but unfortunately, jasmine has to carry out this journey all alone facing many problems in her journey .

Jasmine is largely a victim of multiculturalism . As America is a multicultural land and people from all over the world go to America for fulfilling their dreams .Indian society is different from than that of America where gender roles are almost fixed sa similar in the novel in Jasmine . Mukherjee deals with what she more more clearly talks about in her several works . Although her upbringing is a typical Indian girl she finds it difficult to adjust with alien culture and American people .jasmine even thinks about committing suicide-

" I didn't feel the passionate embrace of Lord Yama that could turn a Kerosene flame into a lovers caress. I could not let my personal dishonor disrupt my mission. There would be plenty of time to die; I had not yet burned my husband's suit. I had not stood under the palm trees of the college campus" (117-18)

Diasporic elements

Jasmine is an excellent example of diasporic novel which throws light on the question of identity and transformation from the beginning to end . The struggle for survival ,complexities of situations and the quest for the identity ,in alien culture are some of the characters are used in background to highlight the main character just as in Jasmine Jasmine is showing the alienation of American life compared to her old native culture of india. Thus, Bharati Mukarjee's Jasmine is the lively example of of diaspora; female oppression and transformation of a woman , yearning for homeland is a key feeling of immigrant women in an a new country .

individual, the concept itself a Person not knowing who she or he was was unimaginable in

Conclusion -

Jasmine as a protagonists is a victim of various circumstances after marrying with prakash ,he immediately dies in an accident yet she boldly faces the situation goes to America during journey she is exploited on ship yet she is firm to her plans various episodes in her stay at America highlight her character.She earns a new identity she is a new women

after facing reality of the diasporic experience is the multicultural land. Indian culture is ideal where we have a special purpose in life .The following lines in jasmine signify the message with ethnic purpose.-

-cultural experiences relate to a process involving complex negotiation and exchange. Mukherjee always has a concern that the new identity should not suffer from marginalization and suppression from any society. To avoid such circumstances she portrays her characters with qualities like individualism, independence, courage and decisiveness. Duality and conflict is not merely a feature of immigrant

‘The Lord lends us a body,
gives us an assignment,
and sends us down.
When we get the job done,
the Lord calls us home again for the next assignment.’ [Jasmine

As she lives in USA ,as she spends her time there Jasmine becomes a totally transformed lady and a new woman . This story is not only of Jasmine story, but also a story of a woman who undergoes transformation in society and is empowered through various experiences and finally becoming a fearless lady . Finally, she becomes a totally independent woman who decides to live with the man of her choice . she becomes more assertive,ambitious she is also a great fighter. , Jyoti’s life and journey is full of struggles her integrity to truth ,consistency and fearlessness always make her move on .She is ever ready to face any challenge that came in her way.

Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine a diasporic novel, the protagonist, Jasmine symbolizes a new woman who wants to enjoy the liberation of woman and appears with rebellious nature and adventurous spirit. The feminist perspectives in the novel have tried to explore the various images of woman.The novel Jasmine throws light on Jasmine’s life towards achieving her true - self . Her journey to America is a process of her quest to know her true-self. the protagonist’s struggle highlights her cultural rootlessness and her transformation ,dislocation many unsettling moments . her attempts to accept foreign culture are praiseworthy. It shows the writer’s skill to handle the diasporic experiences of protagonist and her struggle for self-identity in lively and the most skillful manner .

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