

Chapter- V
Conclusion

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In this study, it is researcher's humble effort to study Bharati Mukherjee's women characters. Bharati Mukherjee has portrayed the memorable characters. There are some similarities and dissimilarities as far as the women characters of the novelist are concerned. The women characters of Bharati Mukherjee's earlier novels are characterized by their rootlessness and their powerlessness. Their efforts to find their roots are either half-hearted or not realistic. They crave for their identities. Mukherjee's protagonists are neither Indians living abroad nor Indians who have come back home after a period of staying abroad. Though none of Mukherjee's novels is autobiographical perfectly, the novelist's experiences first in Canada and then in the US have coloured the perceptions of her characters. Her protagonists are characterized by certain qualities which are responsible for these characters being able to what Clark Blaise calls 'unhousement and rehousement'. Bharati Mukherjee's protagonists shift against an even wider world by leaving India and settling down as immigrants in the West.

Like Bharati Mukherjee herself, her women protagonists are all expatriates to have a home away from home. They shift to the Western world without fully breaking the hold that traditional Indian ideas and attitudes has on them. As an immigrant to Canada and then the US, Bharati Mukherjee has personally experienced both hatred and welcome. Her works mainly focus on the issues of Indian women and their struggle in migration, the status of new immigrants, and the feelings of expatriates. She herself was in exile from India, expatriate in Canada and an immigrant in the United States. Mukherjee's own struggle with identity works as motivating force behind her attempts to find identity for her protagonists. Her works are her attempts to find her identity in her Indian heritage. She is at her best to draw on her experiences of the India and Canada while writing with insight about the New World in America to which she now belongs. She describes her American experience as one of 'fusion' and immigration as 'two-way process' in which Americans and immigrants are growing by the interchange and experience. Her recent novels prove that she is an original writer in American immigrant multicultural literature.

Mukherjee's novels are mixed elements of feminine incarnations of Hindu idols like Sita and Kali. Not a single woman character can be defined traditionally because each character has an individual personality. Each character represents different characteristics of feminism. Mukherjee's women characters are so vivid that the rest of the characters, especially male characters are subordinated. Her male characters are suffering from superiority complex which is very much evident in her novels. Her women have to come out the rigid conventionality of the society and adapt the new environment. The problem that immigrants face is the basic necessity to hold on their tradition and culture but in this process they forget to adapt the new culture and new environment.

Mukherjee's women protagonists perpetually refuse to live fully in the present and their inner psychological urge prompts them to seek for a new imaginary world that gives them consolation, escape and some kind of an alternative reality. Most of the characters of Bharati Mukherjee are highly sensitive and has a subjective nature. Embittered by the present and with no hope of a satisfactory future, most of them show a market preference for escape into time and space.

In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Tara Cartwright is frequently overwhelmed by a sense of rootlessness. She is being homesick at Vassar and at Calcutta. Her delicate efforts to adapt herself to her new surroundings prove vain. In spite of the fascination of the West, in spite of an American husband, Tara fails to experience a sense of belonging in the West. Mukherjee's *Wife* concerns with the pre and post marital experiences of Dimple Das Gupta. She is an ordinary looking middle class girl. The present novel is an analytical study of Dimple's psyche. The novel depicts dilemma of the rootlessness of the protagonist and the mental trauma through which she passes. Dimple is an extremely immature girl who lives in her own romantic world. From the very beginning of the novel we find that Dimple is entirely different from other normal girls. She is an escapist lost in her own world of fantasy. *Jasmine* is the story of an uneducated, simple but courageous Punjabi peasant girl. She travels from the village in Punjab through the extent of the US in order to fulfil her far-fetched dream. Her determination and flexibility help her in the alien land. The beauty and brutality of US are encapsulated in the experiences of Jasmine who changes her name and identities from Jyoti, Jase, and Jane to Jasmine with equal ease. Tara and Dimple are unable to come out of their alien status and become an integral part of their new

milieu while Jasmine succeeds in experiencing life to the full with the excitement of immigration. Mukherjee's *The Holder of the World* is a story of Hannah Easton an abandoned child came to India in the seventeenth century and imbedded herself in its culture. There is a blending of fact and fiction, head and heart, science and religion, East and West and history and imagination in the novel. There is a quest for identity and transformation of the protagonist's personality in the novel.

Bharati Mukherjee's novels are an absorbing study in the progression of women from feminine to female as stipulated by Elaine Showalter. Her women characters are sensitively portrayed and therefore, are best appreciated in their psychological depths. Her characters come from all parts of the world with different ethnic, religious and cultural preoccupations. Her women characters suffer from a lack of cultural identity and are also victims of social oppression specially racism and sexism. However, the women in Mukherjee's novels are passive creatures who believe in wrestling with their own problems rather than trying to dominate their male counterparts. This is the concept of new women presented by Bharati Mukherjee in her novels.

Bharati Mukherjee deals with the world of women. She depicts women both their positive and negative attributes. Women in Mukherjee's novels are no longer treated as objects for they become the subjects of her novels. She has presented her women in all her colours; the power of women, the artfulness of women, the courage of women and the helplessness of women. She represents the idea of split between desire and reason, dependent security and autonomy, social and psychic identity in her novels. She believes in the present not in the past which decides the destiny of her characters. Bharati Mukherjee, thus, imagines woman characters who take courageous liberties against patriarchal society. As a novelist, Bharati Mukherjee depicts race difference with growing ease, avoiding the dangers of multiculturalism in an enthusiastic exploration of Americaness. She examines the cross cultural crisis in her novels which will reveal her complete inversion from an outsider to an insider in American society.

Bharati Mukherjee reflects that the fundamental idea is self- empowerment, which is necessary for any human being and one can equate between the characteristics. This blending can create characters like Jasmine and the imbalance in

personality leads to someone like Dimple. Jasmine is a fusion of characteristics of both ‘Sita’ and ‘Kali’, pompous and balancing the inculcated ideologies. She is an embodiment of feminism who does not wipe out her ideas and culture to live a new life. She adapts to new life with ease while retaining her old culture. Balance between the two makes her a whole person .She is not hesitant and inconsistent minded like Dimple.

In Mukherjee’s novels like *The Tiger’s Daughter*, *Wife* and *Jasmine*, her women protagonists alter in the wake of a physical move from India to new culture. Tara, Dimple and Jasmine move from India to America either voluntarily or by force. With each transformation, a new name is associated with the characters, Dimple in the novel *Wife* and Jyoti, Jasmine, Jane or Jase in the *Jasmine*. Basically her protagonists are diverse bunch of Hindu feminism. Not a single character can be defined on a traditional pattern of set rules. Each and every character seems to be an embodiment of feminism. Mukherjee has portrayed the world of the women of today. Writing in the last phase of 20th century, she has left behind the clamorous feminist movement of the fifties and sixties. Mukherjee does not profess any special resemblance with feminist theories nor does she reveal a strong anti-male stand. She creates women characters who attempt to realize themselves and thus accomplish an identity and individuality of their own. Bharati Mukherjee deals with upper class or upper middle class, urban women. The only exception is Jasmine who comes from rural Punjab. Most of Mukherjee’s women protagonists are from ‘Bhadralok’ society of West Bengal. In many cases, these protagonists show a strange resemblance to each other. At the same time, their individual characteristics set them apart from each other and contribute to the variety of protagonists in her novels.

The protagonists of Mukherjee’s novels are neither typically Indian nor exotically westernized. To them, America is merely a land of opportunities, a place with financial gains, independence and freedom of movement. Whatsoever is there, the fact does not take away the diasporic experiences in any way. This process is traumatic and remains forever incomplete. The key ingredient in this process is the search for a voice remains mostly incomprehensive even to the protagonists. Mukherjee’s depiction of women and their different relationships portray the dominance of patriarchal practices in traditional society, as well as the forms of

liberation and empowerment which are available to women in their diasporic situation. Her female characters are real, modern and life-like. They are typical representatives of young woman particularly of the Third World countries who cherish the dream of emigrating to America for higher education and higher wages, and then after arrival there, aspire to settle there permanently. Their situations and the difficulties they face are also realistically portrayed.

There is a cross cultural crisis in Bharati Mukherjee's novels. Tara Banerjee attempts to get acclimatized to the new surroundings and culture. Though her desire to become a part of the new milieu is strong, her efforts seem to be superficial. She lacks the capacity to probe into the differences between the two cultures, accepts the merits of both or one and then adopts the necessary changes. She fails to feel at home at Vassar in spite of her best intentions. Dimple Das Gupta immigrates to America after a long wait. She hopes that America would welcome her and would start a new life of freedom and fortune. Though she imagines that moving to the US will bring a sea-change in her life, she soon realizes that her bitterness and loneliness only increase in the US. This hard reality makes Dimple's inner self disturbed. She feels a deep rooted sense of fear and insecurity in the US. She feels that she is unwanted and unloved and there is an adverse affect on herself esteem and she feels isolated.

Mukherjee's women Tara Banerjee, Dimple Das Gupta, Jasmine and Hannah Easton are different in their perception of their roles in society and their expectations of life. Tara Banerjee considers her marriage to David as a liberated motion, but realizes that liberty presupposes a bondage which she is not willing to accept. Being a dutiful daughter of the Bengal Tiger, she wants to become a dutiful wife in traditional mode. She always craves to be appreciated by her husband and is most suspicious of his criticism. She does not possess the strength required to protect herself from people like Tuntunwala who seduced her. She decides to return to her husband like a child running back into the protective arms of an adult. Tara is not one of the surfacing women of the modern fiction. She represents Lord Manu's notion of women as *pita rakshati kaumarye, bhartha rakshati yuavane*. Thus, Tara represents her traditional roles of women as a daughter and wife. There is a lack of individuality of her own.

Mukherjee's Dimple Das Gupta differs from other women characters in much sense. Her role in society and her expectation of life are more traditional than that of

Tara's. She thinks marriage is a blessing in disguise. She thinks that marriage would bring her freedom, fortune and happiness. She hopes that all her dreams may be fulfilled after marriage. At the beginning of the novel, she is just waiting for her dream boy. Her parents are busy hunting for the eligible groom but she becomes impatient and feels that twenty years of her life have been wasted. Dimple thinks premarital life as a dress rehearsal for actual living. Dimple has always lived in a fantastic world created by her. But when she confronts the hard realities of life the feathers of her imagination are clipped. All her dreams crumble one by one and she becomes deeply upset. Amit is not the man she has imagined for her husband. She is not at all happy with her pregnancy though it is regarded a boon for Indian women. But she is singular in that "She thought of ways to get rid of." She feels to be burdened by it. She turns violent. Thus, Dimple is an extremely unrealistic and neurotic dreamer who is always disappointed with her life. Her final protest- the killing of her husband is against the Indian womanhood.

Bharati Mukherjee celebrates strengths of women rather than their follies in the character of Jasmine. The protagonist rises above being merely a daughter or a wife. Faced with a loss of identity at each stage, Jasmine acquires new identity at each stage. She decides her own code of conduct in the critical situation of her life. She is symbol of liberating women from the feudal society who owing to her immense strength seeks her identity on the American society. She is an incarnation of widow's successful attempt to reshape her destiny in order to get happiness. Jasmine is a fighter, a survivor and an adapter. Her journey through life leads her through many transformations-Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase and Jane. Jasmine is a rebel from the very childhood. She rejects the constraints and traditional values of the patriarchal society in which she is born for the liberal American values.

Jasmine is very different from other women protagonists and her reason for emigrating and her experiences too are very different. Moving to the US as an illegal immigrant with forged papers with a few knowledge of American culture and milieu, her entry into the US becomes dangerous and pitiful. She has been raped by the captain of the ship. She becomes Day Mummy to Duff, fits in easily into the vacant slot left by Wylie in Taylor's life. She has to run away from him fearing an attack by Sukhi, her husband's assassin. She even carries Bud's child without being married

to him. Jasmine's experiences are as varied as the vast American subcontinent which she traverses. It is quite obvious that for Jasmine it is her willingness to accept the new culture that makes the process of acculturation easy. She feels the culture shock and feeling of novelty that all immigrants have to face.

A perfect balance between tradition and modernity can be seen through the character of Jasmine. She retains her values while she keeps changing her identity and keeps pace with the American life. Her motivating force is to prove astrologer's prediction of widowhood false. Every time she changes her identity. She is reborn in her rebirth. She refuses to be idle and lives a life of sacrifice but does not be happy in it. She leaves Bud to be with Taylor in the end because of proving astrologer's prediction false.

Hannah Easton, the protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's novel *The Holder of the World*, is an abandoned child came to India in the seventeenth century and imbedded herself in its culture. There is a quest for identity and transformation of the protagonist's personality in the novel. Hannah Easton emerges from Bookfield, a puritan outpost in Massachusetts Bay Colony. She becomes Hannah Fitch under the care of her parents. On marrying Gabriel Legge, she becomes Hannah Legge. When she falls in love with Raja Jadav Singh of Devgadh, she becomes Salem Bibi. Hannah Easton is the only surviving child of Edward and Rebecca Easton, born in 1670 in Massachusetts Bay Colony, Brookfield. On the day Hannah turns one year, her father Edward Easton dies of a bee sting. She loses her twenty two year old mother in the Nipmuc's siege of Brookfield. Hannah has long disturbing memories of that night in August 1675 when her mother disappears with her Nipmuc lover. Her mother had deserted her in a forest of Brookfield to run away with her American-Indian lover. Hannah not only retains the memory of her beloved, absent mother, but also to deny her lustful image. She was overburdened with the images of her mother. She has witnessed the Fall of Rebecca, her mother not Fall of Adam although she loves her mother a lot. Hannah's journey to India is full of adventure, action and passion. She returns her native land, not as a reformed American but as a rebel. Like Jasmine, Hannah finds final satisfaction and joy in the adopted land. Hannah's life succeeds in questioning and discovering the new ways. Mukherjee's novels such as *The Tiger's Daughter, Wife, Jasmine* etc. the women protagonists physically move to new culture.

Tara, Dimple and Jasmine move from India to America willingly or forcefully. In *The Holder of the World*, Hannah Easton travels from the puritan society of Massachusetts to South India where she alters into an Indian concubine.

Bharati Mukherjee's later novels include four more novels *Leave It to Me*, *The Desirable Daughters*, *The Tree Bride* and *Miss New India* in which she has portrayed four more women protagonists as Devi Dee, Tara Bhattacharjee, Tara Latta Gangooly and Miss Anjali Bose respectively. Mukherjee forms a trilogy in *The Jasmine*, *The Holder of the World* and *The Leave it to Me*. In these novels, once again, the novelist carries on the theme of immigration and completes the trilogy beginning with *The Jasmine*. The women protagonists of these novels Jyoti, Jasmine, Jase or Jane, Hannah Easton or Salem Bibi and Debby or Devi Dee are in search of their identity. Only their positions and the places from where they commence their quest may differ. All these three women protagonists of Mukherjee want to make their own destiny. Dee's quest for true identity enables the novelist to depict the stereotype problems of identity, culture and nationality.

The characters like Debby Dee, Tara Bhatacharjee, and Tara Latta Gangooly Miss Anjali Bose in Bharati Mukherjee's later novels are more determined and strong-headed. They are way-off from characters like Tara Banarjee, Dimple Dasgupta who exist in psychedelic circumstances. Debby dashes forward destroying each obstacle out of her way. She becomes puzzled and uncertain in the beginning but sure and determined later on, to achieve her goal of finding her biological parents. No one can stop this inbuilt hurricane. She thinks that when one does not inherit anything the whole universe is hers to ask.

Debby Di Martino is a central figure of the novel *Leave It to Me*. She is a fun-loving, twenty three years old American girl. She is the adopted daughter of Manfred and Serena Di Martino, an Italian-American couple of New York. Her bio-parents leave her in the desert of Rajasthan. The Gray Nuns of the Sisters of Charity save the child and send her to the United States for adoption. The adopted American girl Devi Dee begins her quest in Schenectady, New York. Devi Dee is a wonderful combination of the East and the West. As a diasporic immigrant, Debby's immigration is neither a willing nor a forced one. She is passionate lover like Mukherjee's other women protagonists like Tara, Jasmine, Hannah and Padma.

Debby carries on her search for her bio-parents. Here Bharati Mukherjee applies Hindu mythology into the novel by introducing Debby's transformation to Devi Dee.

Debbie Di Martino is basically apart from Dimple Dasgupta. She, the protagonist of *Leave It to Me*, is to be considered assimilated American form of Bharati Mukherjee. Debbie or Devi is aware of how to accomplish herself in the world. Her parents give her a hinder but that enables her stronger. She is not like Dimple complaining about her conditions in America. The difference is that Dimple is an immigrant and she has to adapt herself to a new surroundings but Debbie is brought up in America. She satisfied after taking revenge on her lover and marches forward finding a new identity. She is more like Jasmine who make acquainted herself in the new country.

Debbie is supposed to represent the American moral principles of individualistic attitude, of taking and giving only that much which is desired by her. The brutal details of murder and burning the house of her lover can be the part and parcel of her life. Treacherous timing and lack of ethnic approach are fascinating aspects of character. But still she craves to find her parents. She is not fulfilled with her adopted parents. Mukherjee's recognition of finding her roots in America initiates her to model her protagonists on tremendous feminist attitude where Debbie takes revenge on her enemies like Goddess Kali. She continues to fight for her rights and achieves and follows what she thinks in. She is an orphan, discarded by her parents, leads a very different life but the fact is that she is human and she craves to know her identity yet she is a rule unto herself.

Mukherjee's *Leave It to Me* symbolizes the rooting of the author into the American culture. She celebrates her American status with the social and economic realities of the society along with mixture of Indian origin of women protagonist. The novel represents the cross cultural alteration of the protagonist Debbie. The present novel revolves around Debbie who is the adopted daughter of Italian-Americans. As she grows, the distinctiveness of her physical features evokes doubt in her mind about her origin. This quest is to search her lost identity in order to understand her psyche and to find her bio-parents. Her journey is of an American to search for her Asian roots. She is not searching for a new identity, but her journey to some extent suggests the journey inward to find her own identity in the universe. Like the Hindu Goddess, she reincarnates herself as Devi and kills the demons to reach her destiny.

Generally Bharati Mukherjee's novels concern with immigration, assimilation, cross cultural crisis, disillusionment of expatriation and nostalgia for a lost home. But Mukherjee's sixth novel *The Desirable Daughters* makes a new trend in her writings. In her earlier novels, Mukherjee depicts leaving one's own native for an alien land. In the present novel, the novelist acknowledges the alternative ways to belong. She also focuses on cultural hybridity which makes the post-colonial condition of our existence. The disporans feel double identification that constitutes hybrid forms of identity. Here, Tara Bhattacharjee, the protagonist of the novel is the best example of such cultural hybridity. Mukherjee's *The Desirable Daughters* revolves round the three women characters Padma, Parvati and Tara. Tara Bhattacharjee is a mixture of both the traditional culture and her adopted American culture. Like Hannah Easton of *The Holder of the World*, Tara settles in the end her past and her future combine to reconstruct her present. She tries to rebuild her present by searching her roots. She tries to cope up with both the cultures, her past and present.

Mukherjee's *The Desirable Daughters* begins with the Tree Bride, Tara Latta Gangooly in order to narrate the tale of Indian tradition. There is karmic connection between two Taras- Tara Latta and Tara Bhattacharjee. Tara Latta represents the old patriarchal world where child marriages were widespread. Tara Bhattacharjee, unlike Dimple in *Wife*, believes in staying afloat like Jasmine. She frees herself from the shackles of marriage of ten years and the symbolic phallic power. She prefers to live a free life with her live-in partner Andy, a Hungerian immigrant, and her son who is gay. Her Indian sensibility takes a nose dive into abyss as this fact is revealed to her, but she refuses to disown her son on the grounds of his sexual preferences. Thus, Tara Bhattacharjee stands for revolt against patriarchal society of India.

Mukherjee's all women characters are thoroughly different from each other in their attitudes to marriage and matrimonial relationships. However, marriage is not a pivotal issue in her novels. All these women have different expectations from marriage. Tara Banerjee does not consider marriage to be the complete goal as Dimple Das Gupta does. Tara Banerjee marries a non-Indian but does not reside on this fact. Tara does not even seriously convey her expectations from marriage. She realizes that her husband David being outsider, she never expresses her inner self to him. For Dimple, marriage is a total disappointment. In her college days, marriage

seems to be a romantic ideal but her expectations are totally different from the reality. Marriage provides her no romance and not thrill for that she only blames on her husband. She considers Amit responsible for her unhappy married life.

To Jasmine, each marriage and marital relationship performs a different purpose and fulfills a sole need. Her marriage with Prakah Vijk brings her out of the traditional feudal set up of rural Punjab. Her concept of marriage totally undergoes change in the US. She lives with Bud and she does not feel hesitation even carrying his child without being married to him. She attempts to be dutiful wife to him. At the end of the novel, she runs away with Taylor in order to settle down to a happily married life with him. Same is the case with Hannah Easton. She becomes Hannah Fitch under the care of her parents. On marrying Gabriel Legge, she becomes Hannah Legge. When she falls in love with Raja Jadav Singh of Devgadh, she becomes Salem Bibi.

Bharati Mukherjee's women are different in the respect of extra marital relationship. They prefer to western society and attitudes. Tar is a traditional wife even if she is away from her husband David. Dimple's mild flirtation with Milt is merely another half-hearted attempt of western life style. To Jasmine, the relationship with each man is important during the course of that relationship. She remains fully faithful to Bud and Taylor during her relationship with them. Her relationship with both of them does not seem to be momentary extra marital relationship. At last, she breaks her relationship with Bud and prefers to live with Taylor because of her fascination towards America.

Bharati Mukherjee's protagonists are Indian women migrating to America. Motherhood is regarded as a boon for Indian women. But the novelist's most of the women have the common concept of showing no liking for motherhood though which is enormously liked with women. They escape to perform their duties as a mother consciously or unconsciously. Dimple is not at all happy with her pregnancy though it is regarded a boon for Indian women. The Indian woman is considered as 'mine of ratna'. If a woman fails to produce a child, she is criticized in the society. But Dimple is singular in that "She thought of ways to get rid of." She feels to be burdened by it. So Dimple decides to terminate the pregnancy without taking Amit's consent. None

of Mukherjee's women see anything positive in the idea of being a mother. Tara is shown fruitless for seven years after her marriage.

Mukherjee's women characters are enjoined into the novelist's self-created group, a galaxy of individuals who are in the centre of their own universe. They are individuals with their own realities and destiny to deal with and come out as victorious. Feminism in the characters of Bharati Mukherjee is equipoise to make them vibrant and colourful. Each one of the characters is an individual. The power inside each one of them which is inactive at some point is forced out to make its presence felt. The very aspect of femininity, the weakness turns into energetic self-empowerment, which helps them to move forward in their life. The passive existence of each character undergoes a dramatic change. The attitude of servility, to look up to men with worship can be seen in the traditional Indian patriarchal set-up. But the women protagonists in each novel, by the act of violence, self-transform to live as they wish in the New World. The image of *Shakti* is used candidly to project the power within and it has been highlighted in each of Mukherjee's novels.

Mukherjee has modulated her characters, time to time, through her own personal experiences. The protagonist of her earlier novels exhibit a conflict in character. They are not able to adjust in the new environment. They are babies reborn in a new culture. They are not able to forget the past and anxious about future, they forget to live the present. The adjustments take a valid turn either way. They assimilate or turn out to be split personalities. Largely, Mukherjee's characters are based on her multicultural background. Sometimes her characters cry out to be seen for whom they really are, sometimes weak and tired, and sometimes they surrender to taking in the identity of the type that others see them to be. One question arises in our mind why the novelist has put her protagonists in so violent circumstances in which her husband is killed? As the novelist indicates, this frustration comes out loud and clear at her own helplessness in understanding the old society she has left and the eccentricities of the new world which does not embrace her.

When we think on Mukherjee's three women protagonists Jasmine, Hannah Easton and Debby Di Martino, we see a similarity and one comes to the conclusion that one has to compromise with one's own inheritance of virtues to assimilate into the New World. Though this is a very basic fact that one who visits anyone, one has

to take up first in order to adapt. Even when a married girl leaves her father's house to be in her in-low's house, she has to change herself. All the three women live a life which is beyond the norms and values of Indian lifestyle. And this can be condemned even by the American upper class society. They are more balanced than Dimple who is from a traditional background.

As the women protagonists absorb their race and sexuality through different lenses throughout the novels, they come to realize that the concept of a singular identity is a fallacy. The reality of the South Asian diasporic experience is the indeterminacy of multiplicity. Unlike other Indian writers such as Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai who treated the Indian immigrant situation as one of conflict and adjustment with a little understanding and love, Bharati Mukherjee gives it a new, challenging perspective enabling the immigrants to emerge out of their cocoons of defense into the openness of assertion and say that they do not belong. She believes in adaptation and assimilation not by negating ones cultural values but by merging them. The narratives of Bharati Mukherjee mark each phase of her own evolution also. The earlier novels Bharati Mukherjee depict the emotional upheaval that she goes through.

Literature, primarily, reflects its author's life and times in the work. Each writer's work reflects his or her own culture, social system, tradition and political situation of his or her time. Bharati Mukherjee's works also reflect particular experiences of her life. Her writings either fictional or nonfictional are extremely autobiographical in nature. Bharati Mukherjee's life experiences and incidents can be easily traced by analyzing her works. Bharati Mukherjee has changed several citizenship and culture during her life. Her novels and collection of short stories are more or less autobiographical. Her experiences as expatriate in Canada and immigrant in North America are chronic themes in her works. Her biography and her works have a close connection. Her biography is not mirrored directly but imaginatively and artistically in her writings.

Bharati Mukherjee's first novel *The Tiger's Daughter* mostly reflects her personal experiences as a woman caught between two different cultures of East and West. The protagonist of the novel Tara Banerjee, a young upper middle class Bengali Brahmin like the writer, returns to Calcutta after staying seven years in United States

with her American husband David Cartwright. When she visits her family, she discovers the country has changed completely within the seven years. Her childhood memories, refined lifestyle of Brahmin family are detained by the current condition of poverty, population, political conflict and riots. *The Tiger's Daughter* reflects the two opposite end which cannot merge together, either at the cultural levels or individual level. This novel represents the expatriate experiences which Bharati Mukherjee herself has faced during her stay at Canada.

Bharati Mukherjee and Tara Banerjee have a common background. Bharati Mukherjee was born in upper middle class Brahmin family and lived a privileged life, as daughter of Sudhir Mukherjee, an owner of pharmaceutical company while Tara Banerjee was also born in upper middle class Bengali family and lived a privileged life as daughter of the Bengal Tiger, an owner of Banerjee & Thomas [tobacco] co., Ltd. Sudhir Mukherjee had dominant influence on early years of Bharati Mukherjee's life. He became the model for the Bengal Tiger of her first novel, *The Tiger's Daughter*. Through the character of the Bengal Tiger, Bharati Mukherjee has actually written about her father Sudhir Mukherjee. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Tara also married American writer David Cartwright against her father's wish. The Bengal tiger also found a suitable boy named Amya Chakravorty, earning high salary from Govt. She ultimately married David in the court without matching horoscope, and informed her parents about her marriage. Such cross cultural relationship between Bharati Mukherjee and Clark Blaise has its difficult moments. Bharati Mukherjee's marriage with Canadian novelist Clark Blaise had majorly impacted on her academic career and writings.

Some realistic events of Bharati Mukherjee's life are reflected in Jasmine's life. At the age of eleven she knew that according to her horoscope, she would marry a foreigner and settle far from home. Bharati Mukherjee's marriage with Clark Blaise and her decision to settle in America fulfilled two key predictions of her horoscope. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine's future was foretold at the age of seven. Jasmine opposes astrologer. Jasmine rejects the notion of fate in traditional society and she converts the scar into a sage usually reserved for men. When Bharati Mukherjee was three years old, she slipped and hit her forehead on a metal door knocker. The catastrophe resulted in a faint scar. Jasmine got scar from astrologer while Bharati Mukherjee got scar on her forehead by an accident. Only difference between Bharati

Mukherjee and Jasmine's scar is: Jasmine's scar is the result of violence against a girl who disobeys the male dominated society whereas Bharati Mukherjee's scar is the result of an accident. Bharati Mukherjee rejected patriarchal authority and tradition of arranged marriage. She married with Canadian Writer Clark Blaise in the court. Like Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine also married with Prakash Vijn in the court. After two weeks of their courtship, they got married.

Bharati Mukherjee has a profound faith in Hindu god and she is particular devotee of the destroyer of evil the goddess Kali. Bharati Mukherjee has used the myth of the goddess Kali in this novel. On her way to America, Jasmine was raped by Half-Face in the motel in Florida. She was ready to kill herself with knife but suddenly she remembered about her incomplete mission. She cut her tongue and transformed herself into the goddess Kali. Her mouth filled with warm blood and she cut Half-Face's neck. Her act of killing Half-Face was a kind of self-assertion. During Bharati Mukherjee's stay in Baroda has started to believe in the god Ganpati. According to Hindu mythology the god Ganpati uproot every evil in everyone's path. Jasmine kept sandalwood Ganpati's idol in her purse to uproot every evil in her path. Bharati Mukherjee depicts her own experiences in her novels. The characters of the novel *The Desirable Daughters* Padma, Parvati and Tara are based on Mira, Bharati and Ranu respectively.

Bharati Mukherjee's life experiences absolutely reflect in *The Tiger's Daughter, Wife, Jasmine and Desirable Daughter*. The female protagonists of her novels shift from East to West. Bharati Mukherjee is aware about the problems of the third world women and she tries to give voice to the problems of the women of her culture in her novels. Even she writes about her own society in which she is brought up. She writes about her own experiences in Canada and America as an immigrant in her novels. In the first two novels Bharati Mukherjee is closer with the protagonists of the novels.

The protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee's novels change their name and identity again and again. Jyoti from Punjab becomes Jasmine, Jase and Jane. Devi leaves for San Francisco ignoring her foster mother's request to stay with them. Debby, who has changed her identity as Devi Dee, is jealous of those who had an identity of their own. She wants to know about her inheritance. Devi Dee realizes her

fractured identity when strangers claim her as a fellow lost in China town. Devi feels jealousy of Indian and Chinese students.

Bharati Mukherjee writes about male dominated Hindu family. There is gender biased society and limitations are loaded on the women in the patriarchal Hindu family. In *Desirable Daughters* three sister's complaint against the limitations imposed on their lives in patriarchal society. Three sisters – Padma, Parvati and Tara revolt against this society. Padma falls in love with Ron Dey, during her teenage. She becomes pregnant and she gives birth to an illegitimate son. She keeps secret from her family and hides from everyone. Her father is against her relationship with Ron Dey because marriage between Brahmin and Christian is not possible in that society. He sends Padma to Switzerland for sometimes. Ron Dey places his illegitimate son in orphanage and he never discloses any information about mother of his an illegitimate son. After this incident Padma moves from Switzerland to England and she finally settles in America. Padma lives traditional life in New Jersey with her Punjabi husband Harish Mehta, a divorcee with two sons.

Parvati falls in love with Auro Banerjee when she is in USA. Aurobindo Banerjee is from a middle class Bangali family and he gets higher position in corporate world by his hard work. Parvati's parents think that Parvati deserves better man than Aurobindo Banerjee. She jumps the marriage queue by getting married before her elder sister Padma's marriage. Tara's father finds a suitable boy for her and she marries with Bishwapriya Chatterjee without getting any personal information about him. She gives divorce to Bishwapriya because the promise of modern life in America is not fulfilled by her husband. She lives with her son Rabi and a live-in-lover Andy in San Francisco after her divorce.

Bharati Mukherjee's protagonists such as Tara Bhattacharjee, Dimple Dasgupta, and Tara Banerjee etc. are getting education in order to get a good husband. Tara Banerjee is also admitted in the convent school, but her life is changed with her forced migration to the USA. Dimple does not complete her graduation because the purpose of her study is solved after her marriage with Amit. Tara Bhattacharjee gets a good offer from the graduate school of Paris, London and New York after completion of her M.A. from Calcutta University. Like Tara, Dimple Dasgupta's views about relationship between husband and wife are changed. Dimple, under the influence of American culture, develops illicit relationship with Milt Glasser. She takes wrong path to free herself from the clutches of traditional marriage. At the end of the novel

she becomes neurotic and kills her husband. Tara decides to give divorce to Bish after a decade of marriage. Tara wants to live free and independent life.

In the Bengali Society child marriage is largely burning issue in the society. In *The Tree Bride*, Bharati Mukherjee has discussed this social evil in detail. Tara Lata, a five year old girl who was a victim of the archaic custom of child marriage. She was married to a tree when her groom was died because of snake bite on the eve of her marriage. Her father gets married her to the God of the forest and she became the legendary Tree Bride. In Hindu culture, it was authenticated that a father should give away his daughter in marriage before she reaches puberty. If he does not do so he will go to hell and all his good deeds would destroy. Tara-Lata's father Jai Krishna Gangooly realized his mistake of child marriage. Jai Krishna Gangooly decided Tara-Lata to get her marry with a tree to save her life from widowhood. After her marriage with the tree she never left house during her whole life. She becomes freedom fighter. Even she healed the wound of injured freedom fighters.

All kinds of violence are treated seriously in Bharati Mukherjee's novels. She also became a witness of domestic violence in her home. Her grandmother always condemned her mother for giving birth to three daughters instead of son. Bharati Mukherjee also gives voice to evil of dowry in her novels. She has seen enough violence around her. In *The Tigers Daughters* she writes about the class war between the rich and the poor. She depicted the condition of upper middle class and lower middle class during Naxalite movement. Even Tara Cartwright becomes victim of violence. Physical exploitation and seduction of women in the society is also given place in her novels too. In *The Tiger's Daughter*, Mr. Tuntunwala, a political leader, rapes on Tara Banerjee and she remains unspoken and passive. She does not fight against Mr. Tuntunwala and she decides to leave Calcutta. In *Jasmine*, the protagonist becomes victim of rape. In her journey to America, the captain of the ship, Half-Faced man rapes her in the motel so she kills Half-Face with knife. In *Wife Dimple* is suffering from psychic violence. Dimple becomes victim of persistent violence in America which impacts on her mind. Abortion is also considered one kind of violence in the society... Violence becomes integral part of Dimple's life. In her madness she kills her husband. Dimple is an abnormal girl from the beginning so she reacts violently with anyone without any reason. In *Jasmine* violence is represented vitally in the novels. The Khalsa Lions kills Masterji without any reason. Even her husband Prakash becomes victim of the Khalsa boys on the eve of his departure to America.

Actually Jasmine's life is badly affected by the violence. She loses her husband without any reason because of the Khalistan movement.

To conclude, it can be said that the important aspects of Bharati Mukherjee's novels are women. Even the protagonists of her short stories are women. She represents her women protagonists with her strengths as well as follies. Feminism is prevailing in her novels. Tara Banerjee in *The Tiger's Daughter* suffers because of her voicelessness and passiveness. Even she cannot express her feelings for anything. Ultimately she is proved as an escapist. She always runs from the problems. When she faces problems in her marriage life in America, she comes to India. Tara's lack of communication is reason behind the each problem. Bharati Mukherjee also represents Indian mentality in her characters. Dimple of *The Wife* is the foremost example of it. According to Indian culture, the parents select the groom. The girls have to follow parents' footsteps. Jasmine, Hannah Easton and Dibby Di Martino are most powerful characters of Bharati Mukherjee's novels. Jasmine is survivor, fighter and adapter.

So, a study of Bharati Mukherjee's novels so far seems to conclude her claim that as an immigrant writer in America, her goal is to project her rapid and dramatic transformation of the United States since the early 1970s. Her most recent novels portray some of the contradictions of contemporary American culture and society. Nothing in her novels suggest that the character's of Bharati Mukherjee's novels provide a role model for immigrants, but it is representative sort of the restless search for identity that has always characterized Americans, often leaving old responsibilities for new possibilities. She chooses to speak her own voice about what it means to be an immigrant from India, an Indian Canadian and an American. Bharati Mukherjee in her novels reflects the basic idea of self- empowerment, which is essential for any human being and one can equipoise between the characteristics and the blending, can produce characters like Jasmine and the imbalance in personality leads to someone like Dimple. Jasmine is a mixture of characteristics of both *Sita* and *Kali*, flaunting and balancing the inculcated ideologies. She is a personification of feminism. Thus in Bharati Mukherjee's novels the creation of identity emerges as a continuous process.