

**The Image of New Women in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters***

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**Abstract**

Over the past few years the image of women in India has taken many changes, because of modernity. Today women have started realizing their potential, status and rights in the family and in the society. So this new outlook made a great impact within women's individuality and slowly transformed them into the very concept of "New Women". In this regard how Bharati Mukherjee's protagonists of *Desirable Daughters* withstand the compulsive immigrant's problem and emerges as an authentic image of new women is the main culmination of this paper.

Key Words:

Indian Women, Modernity, Education, Immigrant, New Image.

Generally women plays multi-faceted roles in domestic spheres as well as in public such as mother, daughter, house wife, daughter-in-law, beloved, police officer, lawyer, doctor, engineer, etc. so one does not come across just one image of women, but variety of images of women in different categories. Whether the women is acting a role of home maker or career women, she passes through several stages and difficulties physically, psychologically, economically, spiritually and in short socially. Thus passing through various spheres of life, she emerges with a new spirit and in fact getting a new modern spirit and varied experience, the ideal image of women get shattered and thereby she emerges as new women.

Mukherjee one of the outstanding immigrant writer in India has artistically woven the story of the emergence of new women in her novel *Desirable Daughters*. *Desirable Daughters* is a story that revolves around the three sisters namely Padma, Parvati and Tara. All the three who belonged to a traditional Bengali Brahmin family were known for their charmness, intellectual, wealth and privileged position in the society. Though three sisters shared their birth date on same, carried different attitude and maintained their own distinct life style.

Padma, the elder sister who got married to Harish Mehta lived in New Jersey as an anchor to an Indian television program. Though she is in New Jersey, yet lived as an Indian which can be witnessed through her attire and attitude. However, in spite of her confrontation life between traditional and modernity, she opted traditional life and lived a life of her own choice to attain individuality.

Parvati the middle sister, though got her education in United States and led as a corporate wife, yet remained an Indian and led a happy rich life. She respected Indian customs and values.

This can be witnessed when her in-laws and their relations, came home, she treated them as a great guest with love and sophisticated hospitality.

Like other two sisters, Tara the younger one was very different as she was a liberated. So she remained the main protagonist of the novel. Her life in America transformed and made her to throw away Indian traditions. She felt that migrated country would give her a liberated and comfortable life and also escape from the clutches of traditional ethos that makes her margin. So she moves to America joyfully. She states, “This is the life I’ve been waiting for, I thought, the liberating promise of marriage and travel to the wider world. Bless Daddy and Mummy, they found me the only man in the world who could transport me from the enchanted garden of Ballygunge to Stanford university in the early 1980’s which has to count as one of the intellectual wonders of the modern world. (81)”

Tara’s life in America transformed and made her to throw away Indian traditions. She slowly started to cultivate American style of dress, food and in short fashioned herself in new way. So when she got married to a great millionaire Bishwa Priya Chatterjee she could not lead a conventional role of wife and a mother, as she longed for independent. This eventually made her to divorce Chatterjee. Tara states as, “When I left Bish after a decade of marriage, it was because the promise of life as an American wife was not being fulfilled...he also became, at home, more of a traditional Indian. (239)”

The protagonist felt very independent after her divorce. She even flirted with Andy and enjoyed sexual freedom. She also volunteered herself as a pre-school teacher in a school and

enjoyed working as she relished that she needs protection and so has to be economically independent.

To wind up, Mukherjee has presented her women characters in *Desirable Daughter's* as modern, especially depicted Tara as an emerging new woman. Three sisters represented three different faces of female experiences. Both Padma and Parvati, balanced between traditional values and American values and thus lived an independent life with their husband. They were liberated and modern in their own way. Whereas Tara was ultra modern then the two sisters. Tara met all the stresses and strains to create a full space for her independent identity. So she was bold, mature, confident and assertive in all the ways. Finally Tara emerged as a powerful new woman and befitted herself in the centre of the wheel. To be precise, words of Shobhaa De, an Indian women Novelist, would fit aptly here, "This woman represented the new face, changing face of India-glamorous, capable on top of her life, career oriented, ambitious and successful...a mental image of the central character to fix on" (SD, 333).

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