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Female Bonding In Bharati Mukherjee's Desirable Daughters

M. Vijaya Santhi^a, Dr. S. Ganesan^b

^aFull-Time PhD, Research Scholar in English, H. H. The Rajah's College (Autonomous), Pudukkottai - 622 001. (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli - 24)

^bResearch Advisor & Associate Professor of English, H. H. The Rajah's College (Autonomous), Pudukkottai - 622 001. (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli - 24).

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Abstract

At the universal level, women have been suppressed in myriad forms by patriarchy. Still, women try to overcome their unenviable fate by adopting various survival strategies. Female bonding is one of these strategies. More than a strategy, female bonding is natural and spontaneous. At a broad level, in everyday life, women share their joys and sorrows with their fellow women in offices, during journeys or in their chat with neighbours. Bharati Mukherjee, an American writer of Indian origin, has written many novels dealing with the predicament of Indian women in alien lands. In her novel, *Desirable Daughters* too, Tara –the –protagonist, establishes strong female bonding with other women. This article investigates the nuances of female bonding in the novel.

Keywords: patriarchy, female bonding, strategy, predicament.

1. Introduction

Desirable Daughters is Bharati Mukherjee's sixth novel, published in 2002. In the novel, Mukherjee depicts the numerous world of the three women who are real sisters. These three sisters represent women in traditional and fashionable contexts. Mukherjee's passionate protagonist, Tara, questions her individuality. The yearning and psychological state to specify one's identity is generated off when she has tackled the dishonest son of her much admired sister. Fakeness enters her life by force, devastating the pictures of family principles. The novel reveals the opinions and approaches Calcutta-born Brahmin family. In a family, one can find three sisters belonging to the upper class, known for their intellect, beauty, wealth, grace, and good class.

In the novel, Bharati Mukherjee focuses on the central characters' families, mental states and sense of belonging. Usually, the desirable daughters are a form of daughters that parents would be proud of and for whom every parent would desire. These three sisters are the great-granddaughters of Jai Krishna Gangooli and the daughters of Motilal Bhattacharjee, who belong to a standard Bengali Brahmin family. The second generation and their values within the homeland and straightforward acceptance by the primary generation, recognition of the original and new and the values affected by the American Culture are many themes focused on within the novel. *Desirable Daughters* is a story of immigrants and thus the sentiments and thoughts of three sisters and their methods of managing with circumstances. Tara, Parvati and Padma are representative or symbolic names of Shakti (a Hindu Goddess) having the grit to carve a

position for them. To quote from the novel, “Just as our mother hoped in naming us after goddesses, we have survived, even prospered” (DD, 21).

They are a pattern of customary and contemporary outlook. Parvati and Padma do not regret their preferences; the previous immigrant of racial source in New Jersey later married a boy of her preference and settled within the luxurious area of Bombay with an entourage of servants to provide her. Tara, the novel's narrator, takes the readers deep into the small print of the land (USA) and seems to drift rootless with time. The flexibility of her identity confirms not only her own but also the flexibility of the immigrants. She values her normal upbringing but takes pride in moving forward in life.

Mukherjee examines the oppositions of modernity and custom, permission versus descent, through the microcosm of female bonding. According to Wikipedia, female bonding forms a close personal relationship and patterns of friendship, attachment, and cooperation in females (*Web*). Mukherjee utilizes the dynamics of a group of three sisters to investigate how a tale is claimed, denied and conveyed, how even in the apparent homogeneity of three about identical sisters different roles are found, and what the political effects are of a place in a sibship. These all are imagined as a fictional and social model mainly replacing 'perpendicular' lines of descent. The three sisters, Tara, Parvati and Padma, and its members adapt to different milieus, as family stories and worldwide plots jockey for status as precedence narratives. In the novel, the Desirable Daughters, Tara, Parvati and Padma are hilariously part of a destined social group.

Middle daughters are less assertive and more plaint than their older Padmas or younger Taras. They feel Padmas or younger Taras. They feel less confident of their father's love. Even if they are the more favoured in beauty on intelligence, they are less confident. (DD, 43).

Tara frequently talks with her parents and sisters, but no one brings up bad feelings and arguments among them. Their sons are always acing experiments, gifts received are attractive, and all are doing the everyday things yearly. When a young comes to Tara's home looking for her sister, Padma, whom he asserts is his mother, Tara refuses to consider him. The young man is unrelenting, and Tara is forced to discover the truth behind the frontage raised by her family long ago. The middle daughter, Parvati, met her Indian husband at college in Boston. There is a love match and a cause for concern within the family. Padma leaves for New York as a young woman. Her family knows very small about her life. No one of her sisters will talk about the family humiliation with Tara, who cannot understand theirs following the old ways.

Both sisters are self-empowered and question their individuality. Tara questions her existence as her sister attempts to expose the family secret a saving her psyche and spirit. She attempts to reconnect with the past to provide genuineness to her current survival. Debbie's enthusiasm originates from her being as she creates chaos around her by avenging her wrongdoers. She embraces life without any doubts. Tara's life takes a real twist when faced with the actualities, and her values are up for questioning. She questions her sister who is happy in her South Asian American States.

Moreover, she concludes that the fraud cannot be a relative. She utilizes self-rejection to soothe her troubling soul. Avoidance of facts thought, is not her approach. Instead of seething inwardly and keeping the self-respect of the high class good Bengali family, she chooses to bring forth the wrath of her sister.

The six years between the two sisters, Padma and Tara, appeared as a yawning break in the progressiveness towards the daughter within the Bengali family. The extent of Padma's surrender to sustain family prestige seems impossible to Tara, who divorced her husband because their approaches to life had deviated. The restricted, confined life imposed on the sister in their youth may have determined Padma to rebel. However, she chooses in her adulthood, the USA, somewhat paradoxically, to relapse to a necessary description of the Indian wife.

Tara introduces to her sister's world where she considers a royalty any has her chuck and relationships or affairs, when she goes to meet her sister Padma. Her husband lives under Padma's shade.

She runs various types of business with her friend Danny Jagtiani and others. Tara is asked to have a renovation. She is sleepy and looks fatigued and old by Padma's standard and physically. Padma overlooks the point why Tara is looking tired. Tara's conflict with the imposter leaves her tired. She surrenders to her sister's demands. She is treated like a model, where she is made to swathe a luxurious fashionable sari and wear weighty gold jewellery to the party planned by her sister. Tara is introduced to the south Asian immigrant society and the regular at these parties. The satire of the condition is that Tara does not recognize the objective behind Padma's kindness. She keeps on calculating her budget: if she would be capable to pay for the jewellery and sari, little understanding that she is being utilized like a model on demonstrate for people to look and purchase the product. The detached manner and approach of Padma is a setback for Tara. She has been taken to a corner and asked to take out the set because it is sold. She feels bereft, undressed and thankful that she has not been asked to take out her sari. All these episodes happen in good excitement. Tara, the protagonist meets the new personality of her sister who is away from acknowledgment.

The two sisters and their specific lifestyles signify the two boundaries of the immigrant vision. Padma's husband, Harish Mehta has a doubtful profession as a counsellor. Their house and way of life is representative of the fighting immigrants who flee from the conventions of India, only to struggle on the fringes of American society.

On the other hand, Bishwapriya Chatterjee, Tara's ex-husband is a technical wizard. Bharati Mukherjee highlights him as a super successful software tycoon. The financial safety has facilitated Tara to strike out on her own in her quest for self-completion, a Californian desire. However, Bish was incapable to keep his wife glad in the marriage. Although, Padma has to push for her day-to-day life, this has pushed her on the reverse track, presenting the external manifestation of a characteristically married woman of India. At first, Tara is incapable of settling her essentially Indian sister with her rebellious younger self. She intuits the liability line within the family, separating her from her Didi.

Tara and Parvati stay in the country, but Tara has not met her sister for a long time. In India, She is more in contact with Parvati. Parvati is busy with her patriarchal feudal set-up in India. So talking to Parvati is hard. She keeps talking about her procession of servants, horrible experiences in Bombay and its unkind society. She is busy managing her house, servants, and children and worrying about the worsening circumstances in Bombay. The long letters that Parvati writes to Tara depict her will, where she reproaches her sister for doubting her inheritance and gradually depicts the details of the family secrets, pushing Tara towards an identity crisis. The lengthy letters written by Parvati to Tara also disclose some secrets about their family, which make Tara distrust her faith. Parvati advises Tara not to become too Americanized in her ways. She believes in God: "The near disaster had strengthened Parvati's faith in God, her variness of human capacity for evil enlarged. The housekeeper was a thief, a murder's accomplice". (DD, 70).

2. Conclusion

As in other feministic novels by female writers, *Desirable Daughters* is a complaint against the boundaries imposed on females' lives in conventional societies. The three sisters – Tara, Parvati and Padma- stay alive by breaking these behaviour codes. Padma tries to tackle her adolescent love issue. Parvati's rebelliousness is limited to falling in love with Aurobindo Banerjee. However, her actions do not have any caste taboo as her husband is a Bengali, although he was not known that the gorgeous and clever Parvati could have commanded more in the marriage market of Calcutta. Tara seems at first to be the most agreeable, submitting to an arranged marriage. She also disobeys the Hindu patriarchal system by separating from her luminous software tycoon husband when she finds herself muffled by the life that requires a wealthy wife. Thus, the oppositional forces exercised by life in the USA that the characters in *Desirable Daughters* must be observed. It is in conditions of the limits forced on women within the patriarchal Hindu family. To conclude, despite their limitations and vulnerability, the three women in the novel face the social reality boldly, thanks to their strong bonding.

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