CHAPTER V

Female Marginalization in Bharati Mukharjee’s

WIFE

1 Introduction:

Many women novelists have come forward to depict true Indian issues and techniques. Indian mothering plays pivotal part in maintaining Indian patriarchal system. Bharati Mukharjee’s all novels almost throw light on thses issues.

1.1 Biography of Bharati Mukherjee:

Bharati Mukherjee was born on 27th July 1940 in an upper-middle class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta. She is the second daughter of Sudhir Lal; a dentist, and Bina Mukherjee. She lived among 40 to 50 relatives until the age of eight. The extraordinary and excellent family background provided the children of the Mukherjees ample academic opportunities. Consequently, they all pursued academic endeavors in their careers. In 1947, Mulherjee’s father received a job in England and they all shifted there until 1951. This stay gave Mukherjee an opportunity to develop and perfect her language skills. Mukherjee earned B.A.with honors from the University of Calcutta in 1959. She and her family moved to Baroda where she obtained her Masters. Having planned to be a writer since childhood, Mukherjee went to the University of Iowa in 1961 to attend the prestigious Writer’s Workshop. She decided to receive Masters in Fine Arts and then return to India. But a sudden change occurred and she met a Canadian writer Clark Baise. She secured her M.F.A. the same year and went on doing her Ph.D.

In 1968, Mukherjee immigrated to Canada with her husband and lived there till 1972. Her fourteen years stay in Canada gave her the hardest experiences of discrimination in her life. She has spoken of hardships in Canada in many interviews. In those years, Mukherjee wrote two novels namely, The Tiger’s Daughter (1971) and Wife (1975), while working with McGill University in Montreal. During this she wrote the collection of short-stories namely, Darkness
(1985). Mukherjee received National Book Critic Circle Award for Fiction and Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts, USA and Canada.


1.2 Brief Summary of *Wife*:

*Wife* is Mukherjee’s second published novel that exemplifies the matter and manner of her early work. It takes place in USA and describes the story of a weak minded woman namely Dimple Dasgupta who fails to cope with American culture. The central character in this novel is Dimple Dasgupta. The marriage becomes a career for Dimple. She always dreamt of getting married to a prince. She spends most of her time in watching and reading books dealing with cosmetic issues. She always worries about figure. Her mother also stimulates her in the same direction. The aim of mother and daughter becomes the same that is to secure a proper bridegroom. So, she spends much time in applying many cosmetics on her face to look beautiful. Later, she gets married to Amit; an engineer who desires to immigrate to USA. Naturally, Dimple becomes happy to have such a husband who will fulfill her dream of life. She enters the Amit’ house to have a splendid life ahead. Unfortunately, the situation is appeared exactly opposite to her imagination. The apartment of Amit horrified her as it is full of cockroaches and rats. Her dream of conjugal life is shattered. She senses the inferiority complex in the eyes of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law. They always nag her at every behavior. But she dedicates her full life to Amit. He becomes her milieu to fulfill all her dreams of life. But later, Dimple realizes that she is not the dream wife of her husband. This thought pesters her. She tries to acquire the things in her that Amit aspires to
be in his wife. This inferiority complex and unsatisfied desires embark to develop psychic disorder in her life. The spark of violence appears in her personality which is displayed in different incidents. She violently aborts her fetus by skipping rope. It is so because she feels pregnancy as hindrance in her shifting to USA. She does not want to lose an opportunity to immigrate. She looks at USA as her destination to fulfill her long-suppressed aspirations.

Later, the couple arrives in USA and stays at the apartment of Jyoti Sen and Meena Sen. During Dimple notices the violent and apprehensive face of America in some incidents she has to face. Naturally, this apprehension dwells in her heart. It creates a rift between her and USA culture forever. Later, in some parties, she notices the patriarchal mind-set of Amit who prohibits her enjoying the candidness of American culture. He does not allow her to mingle with American friends and American culture. Thus, she remains aloof from all these temptations of life. She becomes a type-cast Indian wife there. All these things bring disillusion in her life. Her suppressed trauma converts into a psychic disorder in her personality. She develops her habit and creates a life full of freedom in her illusion. This obliges her to be secluded from others. Amit does not secure his expected job and it makes both of them nervous. They have to live frugal life in USA to secure some amount when they return to India. They live in the apartment of Mookerjees as care-takers. Basically, Dimple has dreamt of her own apartment in Manhattan but her desire does not fulfill because of Amit’s salary. Thus, day by day she lives in her world of illusion. Rigorous restrictions by Amit in case of tasting the freedom of USA make her gloomy. She spends more time in watching TV serials. Her life revolves around eating, sleeping and watching violent serials throughout the day. Amit fails to understand tremors of her mind. Instead of soothing her, he nags Dimple for every happening in their lives. This attitude pesters Dimple’s mind. She cuts herself from others and becomes psychic day by day. The shattering of her dreams makes her more morbid. Later, she receives soothing words from Milt Glasser to her ailing mind. She becomes happy in his company. This attempt of adultery again engulfs her mind. She becomes more and more hysterical regarding everything in her life. The failures on all sides develop hatred towards Amit who becomes the cause of shattering her life dream. So, she murders Amit in the same hysteric mood. Thus, her psychic disorder drags her on the path of debacle. All the diabolic attitudes make her life a wretched one.

2. Female Marginalization in Wife:
In the Indian social structure, girls are treated as deposits in their parental house. The parents imbibe on their mind the thought of marriage. They teach the girls that marriage is the only settlement in their lives. The Indian mothering waters the same thought in the mind of girls. This spoon-feeding disables them to cope with their lives. Basically, there seems ontology which develops male supremacy in the society. To fulfill this desire, women are used as tools in the Indian society. This diabolic attitude of Indian male-oriented society makes women marginalize at every stage of life. Unfortunately, sometimes this marginalization proves the cause for dilapidation of women in their lives. The present study exemplifies the series of marginalization in the life of Dimple, a central character in the novel, *Wife*. Dimple becomes the prey of patriarchy and gender biased perception in the society. Simultaneously, she is engulfed with the loneliness of her mind that enhances the psychic disorder in her personality.

### 2.1 Dimple:

Dimple is a protagonist in the novel *Wife*. The setting of the novel is Bengal and USA. Dimple hails from Calcutta whose life dream is to obtain a Prince in marriage. She appears very dreamy who continuously is engrossed in day-dreaming about her marriage, her happiest conjugal life in the hands of loving husband. The career or any other relevant independent forms of life remain far away from her dream. The marriage appears a carpet of happiness and joy for her. She applies various cosmetics to her face to look gorgeous. She does these attempts to secure good and kind-hearted bride- groom. Eventually, she marries Amit, an engineer who decides to migrate to USA. But her stay in USA shatters her dream of happy conjugal life. Her tremors begin after marriage with Amit. It mounts higher when they shift to USA. Her agonies and anguishs get converted into frustration which brings her on the path of her debacle. Being a woman, Dimple faces marginalization in her life.

#### 2.1.1 Patriarchy:

The male-dominated society manipulates the lives of women as per their convenience. Right from their birth, the locus of women attracts vivid criticism of societal view. The women usually get oppressed in the name of religion. From ancient times, religious books like “Manusmiriti”, “Vedas”, “Upnishdas” and other similar books have offered inferior status to women. The mythological references are conveniently used to restrict women at different levels and cut their
wings to prohibit them from soaring in the sky. The mythological images are projected among women to inculcate pure and serene feminine traits in women’s personality. Once imbibed on the mind, women strive for justifying the image of these mythological idols. Thus, the rein of women’s lives gets concentrated in the hands of patriarchy. Women follow the same code of conduct to make men happy.

Dimple becomes the prey of patriarchy while undergoing calamities of life. Right from teen-age, Dimple appears crazy for marriage. She does not think of other issues except her marriage. She attempts to look more and more beautiful. Her mother also encourages her by providing various beauty tips. Dimple wants to marry a neuro-surgeon but her father arranges a marriage with Amit Basu, an engineer man desiring to migrate to USA. Dimple’s husband Amit appears the representative of the patriarchal mind-set. He likes his wife dedicated to him the whole day. He does not like his wife to be engaged in reading in front of him. Once Dimple keeps on reading some magazines and Amit enters the room. He becomes angry because of sensing Dimple’s negligence towards him. He immediately says:

“Where’s my fresh lime and water?” “I forgot to make it. I’m sorry; I was busy reading.” (28)

He does not bear the negligence of his wife towards him. According to Indian culture, women are supposed to please their husbands. Mukharjee explains:

His disapproval was torture; all her life she had been trained to please. He expected her, like Sita, to jump into fire if necessary. (28)

Thus, the patriarchal mind set does not allow women to be happy without their husbands. Their happiness begins with their husbands and ends with their lives. If men expect women behave like Sita, then it follows that they should behave like Ram. But rules appear only for women and not for men. Thus, patriarchal forces play a pivotal role in shaping the lives of women. They are restricted to convenient traditions. Dimple becomes eager to hear about their shifting to USA. Therefore, she makes compromises to survive in Calcutta in the unpleasant domestic atmosphere of Amit’s house. She looks at these compromises as temporary and waits eagerly for her future welfare. However, she keeps on dreaming about her being in USA or Canada enjoying absolute freedom of life. Then suddenly she notices of her pregnancy. She does not want to be a pregnant
at this moment. She thinks that pregnancy could become interruption in her plan of immigration. Amit has imposed this unwanted pregnancy on her. She tries to get rid of this, but fails in every attempt. Simultaneously, she becomes afraid of the delay in the procedure of immigration. She knows that Amit will not allow aborting the child. According to Amit, women should be always ready physically and mentally for child-rearing duties. The patriarchal mind-set never considers whether women are prepared or not for all such circumstances. The society adores women for their pregnancies by offering special attention to them during that period only. Amit also looks after her and offers all kinds of help as he never did it earlier. Dimple realizes the cancellation of shifting abroad due to her pregnancy. So, she herself aborts the child by skipping rope continuously till she miss-carries. After release from such an unwanted pregnancy, they both decide to immigrate to America.

The patriarchal mind set never allows women to think and even express any opinion regarding any of the issues. Women are expected to shape themselves as per the desire of men. Dimple appears an exact follower of this dictate of patriarchy. She never goes against the wishes of her husband. Despite of her dislike for many issues, she keeps mum. The forthcoming incident illustrates how women are bound in unwritten code of conduct in the male-dominant society. With Amit and his other friends, once Dimple joins the party of Vinod Khanna, a well settled Indian businessman who is the resident of Manhattan near Columbia University. Obviously, many Indians gather there and are involved chit-chatting regarding every happenings in America. Dimple feels thrilled to enjoy such a party and USA appears to be a full vista to her. Mr. Vinod Khanna inquires of Dimple and offers her a job. He offers a job which she can join anytime. Amit listens to the offer and does not seek opinion of Dimple. He himself answers on behalf of Dimple. He says:

“One breadwinner in the family is quite enough, “said Amit, looking to Dimple for agreement. When she smiled, he added, “Besides, Dimple can’t add two and two. She would ruin your business in a fortnight.” (61)

Amit does not confer Dimple the freedom of choice even. Amit represents those people who want to subdue women. Like these people, Amit never believes in the individualism of women. He wants to keep Dimple in the custody physically and mentally. Here, Amit postulates the desires and opinions of his wife without considering the state of her mind. It shows that the
patriarchal mindset remains same in spite of being anywhere in the world. The mind-set does not matter in any nation. It emanates from the upbringing and the human psyche.

Dimple is aware of the patriarchal attitude of Amit at every step. Even though staying in USA, Amit does not wish his wife to get associated with the American culture. He is afraid that she should be a liberal like Americans. So, he imposes restrictions on her to do anything freely of her own choice. In one of the parties thrown by the Mullicks, Mrs. Mullick offers drink to Dimple. Amit immediately rejects the offer on behalf of Dimple. He even does not let Dimple a chance to utter a single word. Thus, the patriarchal attitude is reflected in what Mrs. Mullic says:

    Now- would you like another Seven-up, or could I tempt you to have a gin and lime?” “She doesn’t like alcoholic beverages,” Amit said,” “She doesn’t like Coke.” (77)

Amit himself retains the answers and obliges Dimple to be silent. Basically, she wants to enjoy American life but her husband compels her every time. She even gets afraid of Amit for doing anything she knows that he can dictate everything to his parents and her parents also. So, she becomes mute regarding everything. She feels herself under the strict surveillance of Amit. Despite living in USA, Amit expects his wife to remain stuck to the typecast Indian culture and womanhood for perpetuating the male pride. Indirectly, he prohibits his wife from consuming wine and even enjoying the freedom in USA. The patriarchal system always restricts women on the ground of ‘being responsible women’.

More often, Dimple faces the clutches of patriarchy around her. Dimple dwells in a perplexed atmosphere because of Amit’s continuous brooding over own culture and establishing differences from the American culture. On the other hand, Amit does not wish that Dimple should forget her roots of being an Indian.

Dimple too maintains Indianness in her personality as per the instructions issued by Amit. He manipulates his wife as per his desire and his level of expectations. Once he takes beer and obliges her to drink it. She shows reluctance to have it but consumes for the sake of her husband. Amit’s behavior displays the dominance over Dimple. He forces her to consume wine when he feels but in other cases he prohibits her to do so. Thus, Dimple’s life is completely controlled by Amit.
From her mother in India once Dimple receives the news of her friend who dies of scalding. She becomes depressed after learning about the death of her friend. Now, in this situation she expects kind generous soothing of her mind from Amit. Amit gives a very neutral and practical reaction to Dimple. Naturally, she becomes sentimental and becomes sick inwardly on account of Amit’s dominance over her. She does not have daring to say anything in front of him. Consequently, she suppresses her feelings mutely that results into the planting of the psychological disorder in her personality. In such frenziedness, she starts to live a double life. Dimple starts to live in illusion where she releases her suppressed feelings. Thus, she becomes habituated to turn her feeling in her illusion where she frankly embarks to resist her dislike. Amit never comes to console her mind; instead he advises her to wear a cotton sari rather than a synthetic while cooking. Amit, being a male, never realizes the mental trauma of his wife Dimple. She expects warm loving support of her husband who can tell her tenderly something by counseling rather than commanding. Naturally, she dislikes his way of interaction. But being a submissive wife, she always adopts silence. But this silence pricks her mind and develops hatred against Amit. She wants to utter some words against his dominant attitude.

The Indian men especially conservative men look at their wives as an object of fulfillment of their own desires. They use them as puppets and make them act as per their aspirations. Many women become the victims of such patriarchy. The male-dominant society always marginalizes housewives and excludes them even in the decision of home-affairs. Actually, the housewives do more work than any men do outside the house. Despite this, men impose several duties on them and oblige women to do so. They never think of their capacity, their health, their liking or even their mindset.

The same goes with Dimple who gets marginalized frequently on all sides in her life. Amit appears a typical Indian man who does not permit her to do some work as she desires. Unknowingly, he pokes his desire on her and expects a mutual acceptance from Dimple. He does not make any efforts to know her feelings, her aspirations. Despite of living in USA, he behaves like a typical Indian man in stead of enjoying his stay in liberal country like USA. Amit’s remark throws light on the patriarchal psyche of Amit. Bharati s Mutherjee illustrates:

“--- Dimple said. “I was planning a dinner for Bijoy and Ina Mullick.” ‘Let’s have the Sens over also.’ Amit said he looked surprised and enthusiastic and began
speculating on what they should serve. “I thought we could invite that boy, what was his name, Milt or something like that. I thought we could invite him with the others.” “Why him? I don’t have anything to say to him.” “It doesn’t look nice if we ignore him. After all, we’re staying in his sister’s apartment,” Dimple persisted. “Thursday, around eight?” Amit asked, and before she had nodded her agreement, he dialed the Mullicks’ number. (121)

Thus, the dominant decision maker in Amit does not wait for Dimple’s consent. Amit always blames Dimple for every small thing. Amit is a representative of male-dominant society that lacks emotional intelligence in his personality under the false pride of patriarchy. Dimple wants to have a drink for herself as a fun but she suppresses the idea because of Amit’s indifference. She fully gets trapped by Amit’s presence and attitude. Bharati Mukherjee depicts:

If Amit had not been there she thought she might have permitted herself a sip or two. But Amit would always be there beside her in his shiny, ill-fitting suits, acting as her conscience and common sense. It was sad, she thought, how marriage cut off glittering alternatives. If fate had assigned her not Amit but some other engineer, she might have been a very different kind of person. (126)

Thus, Dimple embarks to think through Amit, talks his words and behaves according to his principles. She behaves so as if she does not possess her own identity. Her life goes on as per Amit’s desire. He strictly observes traditional Indian principles to be followed by Dimple.

Thus, Dimple becomes a victim of patriarchy and feels guilty to disobey her husband. Initially, she wants to live the free life in American culture but the apprehension of Amit’s act suppresses her feelings. So, when Ina; her friend offers her modern attire to clad she rejects the idea revealing that it is uncomfortable for her. Dimple’s answer contains the impact of Amit on her body and soul. Ina recognizes the trauma of Dimple and asks her to ignore the caution of Amit regarding wearing attire.

But being a good Indian wife, Dimple gives some other reason hiding the real cause behind it. Indian women always hide the mistakes of their husbands. Here, Dimple does the same thing. She does not point out Amit’s nature to anyone.

Actually, Dimple too wants to experience freedom of American culture but Amit does not expect such a kind of behavior from her. So, he always controls her from mingling with
American culture. She knows the attitude of Amit towards American culture. So, she suppresses her mind in the name of her own dislike rather than denouncing Amit’s attitude. Her suppression usually appears in her own illusion in which she unfolds the truth of her life. Amit’s indirect prohibition of wearing American attire gets its due place in her illusion. In her daydream, she thinks of profile of Amit as a prospective bride-groom. She specially wants to quote Amit’s tagline that displays his real nature. She starts to fulfill her suppressed desire in her illusion. Bharati Mukherjee remarks:

“---Husbands should not permit their wives to wear pants. A healthy society and mutual respect are based on the clear distinction between the appearance and the functions of the sexes. (158)

Thus, she expresses her thoughts with a retort to what Amit has imposed on her. It displays the dictatorial mind-set of Amit. The impact of the traditional Indian culture makes her follow Amit who appears a representative of the patriarchal mind-set. The patriarchy always lays some unwritten rule for others, especially to women. Women emulate the Indian culture blindly. The male-dominant society always postulates women human beings without brains. It is considered that women fail to tackle the issues of importance. They imbibe it on the mind of women in such a way that they do not escape from this impact even in the absence of men. Dimple faces the rigid kind of patriarchy that does not allow her to taste the freedom of life. Amit indirectly reins her life by reminding her of Indian cultural lifestyle. He guides her how to speak, how to behave and on which topic she should react. He continues to guide her about dealing with people and financial matters. He reacts very rudely to her at each act so, naturally Dimple follows him blindly. He does not like her to be like Ina, an Americanized Indian. He desires that his wife should cling to Indian culture that binds her to him alone. Dimple behaves as per his code of conduct. In his absence also, she follows all the rules laid by him. Indian women always feel guilty if violated any rule of patriarchy. Dimple’s life revolves around Amit. She entertains those people whom Amit likes but Amit fails to understand her mind. He wants to shape and does not shape his wife as per his desires. This suppression causes a psychological disorder in her, an invisible cause for sprouting negative thoughts in her mind dragging to her debacle. The imposed prohibition against doing certain things waters the malpractices in her mind. Dimple too goes in that direction in maintaining ideal Indian wife in front of Amit’s eye. Initially, she exhilarates in the company of Milt who treats her as someone
special. Once she goes out with Ina and Milt, meantime, Ina leaves the place due to shortage of

time. So, Milt offers her pizza but her loyalty to Amit does not allow her to dine with any

other man except her husband. Inwardly, she wants to go with him but gets afraid of Amit. Simultaneously, being an Indian wife she feels guilty of establishing relationship with Milt. She feels afraid of even imagination of dining with Milt. Her attachment with Milt drops her in the well of guilt. The patriarchal culture does not permit women to live the life on their own terms or even to enjoy the freedom of life without males especially their husbands. Dimple dislikes various traits in his personality but does not dare to go against him. She tries to walk on the path fixed for her by Amit. This suppression makes her suffer from psychological disorder but Amit fails to sense her mental trauma. So, when Milt offers her the invitation of eating pizza with him, she construes it as guilt. In Indian culture, to think of ‘any other man’ besides husband is like committing conviction. Therefore Dimple is tempted to eat with Milt but on the other hand she construes it as a ‘guilty adventure’. Thus, the male-dominant attitude of the society does not allow women to enjoy life without husband. Naturally, many women lead their lives as does parrot in a cage. They possess the wings but do not have the capacity to soar in the sky of freedom. The reins of their dart permanently remain in the hands of males. In Indian culture, women are supposed to be loyal to their husbands.

Rather enjoying dining with Milt, she thinks what to tell Amit about it. Truly, it is the impact of male-dominant society that prevents women to enjoy freely their lives. Thus, Dimple comes out with Milt for strolling. But instead of tasting grand moments of life, she remains panic because she considers it as an act of infidelity towards husband. Later she thinks of giving excuses to Amit about her outing with Milt. Bharati Mukharjee continues:

---Or she could convince herself that she had gone out with Milt, because to go unwillingly was not to go at all. That way she would have nothing to explain to Amit eating a pizza, was, after all, a very small crime and should not require too great an explanation. The main thing was to convince herself that Milt had forced her into the pizzeria. (194,195)

Thus, Dimple always feels apprehension of Amit and his patriarchal mind-set. The male-
dominant society usually makes women to ‘switch-off thinking mode’ of their brains and oblige them to paramount their husbands supreme in everything and superior to them. They never offer an opportunity to defend. Hence, patriarchy never considers mental twisting of woman. It simply
decrees and makes people obey whatever may be the annoyance caused throughout it. In patriarchy, especially women suffer from suppression resulting into fringes of their mind. She nearly becomes the puppet in the hands of males. In this regard Mathur (2009:158) comments “The misery of women who are constantly pressurized to neglect their own needs has for a long time not been observed, but it is partly reflected in the high number of women suffering from mental health problem.”

The same goes with Dimple in this novel. Amit too sidelines Dimple for everything. He denounces her even for every trivial mistake she commits but acquires himself from his own blunders. Dimple feels irritated on account of some of his habits but does not show any daring to confront him for those. In Indian culture, women are not supposed to ask any questions to their husbands. Dimple too suppresses various things of Amit. The following description focuses on the internal trauma of women suppressed under patriarchy. Amit says to Dimple:

You’re too extravagant. The important thing is I’ve been working seven months and we haven’t even saved a thousand dollars.” (212)

Upon his saying so, Dimple wants to retort but suppresses again her anguish without disclosing. Mukherjee depicts:

She (Dimple) noticed the Wheaties flakes on the counter. And sugar- he always spilled sugar on the counter. It was one of the little things that irritated her. She thought how horrible to have to spend a whole lifetime walking him spill sugar on counters, how many pounds of wasted sugar that would add up to in thirty years or forty years; but he never thought of such things, never thought how hard it was for her to keep quiet and smile though she was falling apart like a very old toy that had been played with, sometimes quite roughly, by children who claimed to love her.(212)

Amit teases Dimple’s extravagant attitude. He does not want to spend all money on house hold welfares. He aspires to save a lot of money when he will return to India. Dimple immensenly gets shattered by Amit’s attitude. She becomes furious when Amit teases her of extravagance. She adopts silence to avoid intricate situation. Lack of sharing with her husband makes Dimple psychologically ill. Eventually, it results into her trauma that makes her to attempt Amit’s murder. Due to tremors in her psychological upheavals, Dimple even forgets the differences in
the act of reel life and real life her own life. After the murder, looking at knife sustained with blood Dimple says:

“I wonder if Leni can make a base for it; she’s supposed to be very cleaver with her fingers.”(213)

Thus, emotional suppression by patriarchal structure makes Dimple’s mind morbid. As a result, she becomes haunted with violence and becomes assailant of her own husband who fails to understand her anguishes. The lack of co-ordination between Amit, an egoistie representative of patriarchy and Dimple, an excited girl become the cause for the debacle of both of them. Thus, the clutches of patriarchy almost kills the Dimple’s life. Dimple’s faces morbidity in her personality due to patriarchy which acts as a slow-poisoning on women’s mind.

2.1.2 Gender bias:

The gender stratification of Indian social structure appears partial that dominates males’ views and sidelines females’ existence even. Indian women get crushed under the false belief of gender role. It conveniently goes on the side of men and neglects women. Indian societal culture advocates the tradition of changing the names of women in marriages, if their in- laws felt to do so. Relegating this, women cannot say ‘yes’ or ‘no’, even though it goes against their desires. There is no example of changing the name of male partner in marriages by anyone. This authority of changing name is conferred to men only and not to women. Women cannot do this even if they like or dislike. In fact, they have no choice to do so. Thus, the cultural mood of society always has a biased attitude towards women’s desire. There is no provision of women’s likes or dislikes regarding anything. Bharati Mukharjee’s Wife points out the same perception only because of the lack of women’s solidarity. Amit's mother herself takes initiative in changing the name of Dimple as ‘Nandini’ which Dimple dislikes. Amit also mutely consents to it which lies in following thought. Mukharjee depicts:-

“There’s one small thing,” he said. “My mother wants to call you Nandini. She doesn’t like Dimple as a name.” “What will you call me?” “Nandini, Dimple . . . what’s in a name, for goodness sack?” “Everything,” Dimple said. (17, 18)
Dimple does not like the name ‘Nandini’ but she tries to get habituated to this word. Basically, this is the only treasure of “their names” that women carry along with them while entering the house of in-laws. Women’s identity goes with the first name right from their birth. So, change in name makes her rootless resulting into displacement of life, displacement of image, displacement of mind also. The situation of women in marriages becomes like “Pygmalion Effect.” According to Haralombs (1981:464) “In terms of marriage, the pygmalion effect refers to the wife’s ‘redefinition of the self and an active reshaping of personality to conform to the wishes or needs of husband.”

Thus, various surveillances imply that women make many more adjustments and compromises after their marriages. Wives conform to their husbands’ desire and try to act according to their wishes. Naturally, women become reflections of their husbands into becoming subdued and subordinate.

The gender-biased status of women runs always in patriarchal mindset of Indian men and women. The conversation of these immigrants often revolves around the personality of Mrs. Mullick. Mrs. Mullick is one of the immigrants but she adopts American culture more than the Americans. She enjoys her life in USA, makes friends with Americans and tastes the freedom. Her candidness becomes the reason for all immigrant Indians to underestimate her personality. The gender-biased perception is deep-rooted in the psyche of Indian human being. So, wherever such people go they do not discard such biased views from their mindset. In USA, they all talk about Mrs. Mullick’s involvement in joining the night college. In the Indian social scenario women are not allowed to go out from their houses at night. Modern culture of USA does not divulge the attitude of male-oriented societal Indian mindset from their mind. Jyoti Sen and Amit represent those Indian people who are filled in with gender biased attitude regarding women. It runs in the following conversation that goes around Mrs. Mulik. Bharati Mukharjee comments:

“She started going to school at nights,” said Jyoti. “She met bad types,” said Meena.” “You mean you can go to college at night?” asked Dimple. “If you want to get mugged on the subway,” said Jyoti.” I blame Bijoy,” said Meena. “Jyoti is right,” said Amit. “With so many Indians around and a television and a child, a woman shouldn’t have any time to get crazy ideas.”(68, 69)
Thus, male oriented society looks at women as milieu to child rearing duties. They do not like such freedom of women that drag them away from house-hold duties. Dimple too becomes the victim of such a gender biased view. Right from her childhood days, she grows up with one aim of becoming beautiful wife to satisfy her husband by all means. So, she engrosses all the time in cosmetics and appliances to make her beautiful. An academic zest gets sidelined in her channel of thinking. Gender-biased culture gives priority to the beauty of women that becomes the paradigm of their personality in order to obtain a bride-groom. In this regard, the statement of Chada Mohanty is very apt when she (2008:147) says “Marriage is articulated not just a relationship but also a career. But it is more bonded labour than a simple job. The social stigma of opting out ensures that there are few second chances. Wives are aware that even though education and social status may give them more options than were available to their mother’s generation they may not be quipped to survive as single women in a hostile social environment.”

Indian mothering is the exact product of gender-biased attitude of society that implants a marriage as a career in the mind of girls. The Indian mothering differentiates between males and females right from their births. Naturally, both these sexes grow up sustaining the same attitude in their personalities. Obviously, Amit appears as an exact bundle of type-cast gender-biased man. When Amit and Dimple reach USA, he does not anticipate his wife to get affected by American culture. He wants her to remain the same a typical Indian wife ready to follow husband’s happiness all the time. But being man, he himself enjoys American culture but prohibits his wife to do so. On the contrary, Dimple seems ready to enjoy American culture but her husband’s reluctance towards this culture for women obliges her to get under the burden of imposed womanhood and false male pride. Amit expects his wife to stick to Indianess but these parameters are not applicable to him. In the party thrown by Mullicks, he enjoys every bit of moment like drinking, dancing and all. Amit does not bother about drinking by his other friends’ wives but restricts his own wife to do so. When a lady in the party offers Dimple a drink, Amit immediately replies on behalf of Dimple by rejecting it.

In the same party, Amit meets Prodosh and Marsha Mukherjee, who have stayed in USA since six years. Amit notices about her job of teaching and inquires about it. An inveterate gender-biased perception appears when he says:

“You mean you’re a lady professor?” asked Amit.
“Just a professor,” she said. (82)

Thus, this focuses Amit’s gender-related point of view. Amit does not like liberated personality of Inna Mullick who appears more Americanized Indian than an Indian. So, he prohibits Dimple to imitate her in any case. He does not wish his wife to be an Americanized Indian. So, he always tries to keep her away from Inna. He dislikes his wife to be a free bird, but expects her to be living in the restriction of typical Indian wife. Thus, even being in USA, Dimple never tastes freedom of American culture. In fact, she is obliged to follow Indian culture in USA. She suppresses her emotions by following her husband’s gender-biased perception.

2.1.3 Subordination:

The locus of women in the Indian social structure is subordinate. They are always marginalized in every field of life. From generation to generation, women get trapped in mere house- hold duties and men remain vagabond. Afterwards, the traditions involve women in child-rearing duties in the name of affinity to children. Because of this, they remain involved there and men fathom various external resources to run the world. Consequently, men become stronger on the contrary women get confined in the name of various bondages of society. Later, men become stronger and women accept their subordinate situation.

Dimple surrenders herself to male-dominant society by adopting pleasurable feminine traits in her. She appears an exact image of male-desired submissive woman. In Indian culture, women appear a thing of beauty that satisfies the eyes of men. According to Beauvoir women are always called a sexual being. Men expect that women should look beautiful forever and remain graceful all time to them. Dimple’s mother keeps on suggesting various things to her daughter to become a beautiful girl who may satisfy the male psyche. Therefore, Dimple Dasgupta aspires to look beautiful, and remain graceful. She looks at the marriage as a career and milieu of freedom. These efforts are nothing but the self-subordination of Dimple in her own life.

For years after years and generation to generation, women get lessons of being remain graceful. Dimple all the time worries about her beauty, her sitar-shaped body and rudimentary breasts. She feels that her husband will be disappointed if she does not appear to be bosomy and fair like Bombay starlet. She likes to walk in beauty, enchant man and so she wastes lot of time her in
finding various beauty-tips and cosmetics etc. throughout the day. In male- oriented society, women’s dimension relies on beauty. This attitude throws the light on the subordinate status of Indian women in the society. The marketing world projects women by subordinating them to a mere commodity. So, many advertisements pictureize the subordination of women by screening her as a mere beautiful figure. Dimple gets under the impact of such foolish temptations and become crazy for cosmetics for obtaining gracefulness. Her mother enhances the thoughts of beauty in Dimple’s personality right from her teenage. Regarding Dimple’s mother’s recommendation, Bharati Mukharjee remarks:

Instead she prescribed prebath mustard oil massages, ground almond and honey packs, Ping-Pong homeopathic pills and prayers to Lord Shiva, the Divine Husband. (5)

The above lines show how the social scenario projects women as mere dimensions of beauty. Their lives begin with beauty and end with skin and thoughts. They remain away from the thought of developing career or individuality. The Indian mothering implants subordinate thoughts in the mind of girls from childhood. So, a majority of girls dream of marriage and restrict their lives to become an ideal wife like Sita. Dimple retains the ideas of being a model wife like Sita. Dimple’s mother endeavors and employs the thought of marriage in her life. It is the seed of subordination soiled by male-dominant society through mothering that makes Dimple think of marriage rather than of a career. She appears very much traditional-sticken who looks at education as a path to secure a good husband. Bharati Mukherjee remarks:

“Two days later, while she was memorizing passages from The Doctrine of Passive Resistance for the exams and thinking not of freedom fighters and fasting armies led by a balding bespectacled old man but of herself at some future date, a good wife,a docile wife conquering the husband enemy by withholding affection and other tactics of domestic resistance, (9)

So, Dimple becomes disappointed after learning about the postponement of University exams. It is so because for her education is a path of securing husband. So, now she feels dim chances of her dream coming true. She says:

--- All the handsome young engineers would be married by the time she got her degree.” (10)
These words explain how women become crazy for beauty to impress men. Regarding imbibing subordination, Indian mothering plays a vital role in shaping such a psyche of their girls. Consequently, very few girls surpass such an attitude and others indulge in the dream of marriage. Such girls spend their all time to seek various solutions and ideas that can glorify their personality. They always keep themselves busy in re-shaping male-desired figure. Dimple appears parallel to this kind of attitude. She keeps on doing various things to look beautiful, to impress males and get her in wed-lock with Mr. Right for further happy marriage. Her life becomes crazy for marriage and centers on the thoughts of the bridge groom, the marriages and nothing else. To retain the world of marriage becomes a full time job of Dimple. Her mounting craziness is displayed when she thinks of committing suicide for the sake of minor defects in her body. Her mother confers her moral ideas to make her beautiful. The goal of mother and daughter in their lives becomes to secure a good husband for Dimple. Her mother finds out ideas and shapes Dimple’ body as well as mind as per the desires of the male dominant society. Such mothering emphasizes subordinate status of women in the society. Women always remain an object of show-case. So, Dimple’s mother desires a good photograph of her daughter to impress the other party. She looks at the best photo as a conquering of battle of marriage.

Such an attitude of mothering becomes the cause of imposing the subordinate status of women. Dimple clicks the best photograph to impress herself as a potential bride-groom. Dimple’s mother does not give a chance to oblige her to think of life beyond marriage. The subordination of women embarks right from the thought of trails, make-over and training of getting ready for marriage. In the male- dominant society, mothers do not give opportunities to their girls to think beyond marriage. Dimple is involved in the dream of marriage and continues to think of engagement, of her bride-groom, and honey-moon etc. She always nourishes very fascinating thoughts about marriage. She says:

“Marriage, she was sure, would free her, fill her with passion, Discreet and virgin, she waited for real life to begin.” (13)

Regarding women’s subordination, there seems to be lack of the women’s solidarity that carries women at compromising level. Despite this, the male-dominant society focuses the Indian mothering that results into lack of solidarity and underlines women subordination. The would be
mother-in-law and sister-in-law has objections to certain things about Dimple that highlights the universally approved status of women years after years. Bharati Mukharjee remarks:

Mrs. Basu objected to the name Dimple, which she considered too frivolous and unBengali, and the candidate’s sister, Mrs. Ghose, felt that Dimple was a little darker than the photograph had suggested. (14)

Thus, instead of violating traditional–sticken image of women, these women themselves extend their hands to patriarchy to place the class of women at the subordinate level. The aesthetic dimensions always restrict women to be a sexual being; an object to satisfy the male sexual hunger. The male-dominant society does not like the strong and confident women. Their bravery gets saddened by males. The conversation between Amit and Dimple goes on:

That night before she fell asleep, she said to Amit, “When I was a little girl I pulled a snake by its tail. I pulled it straight out of its hole! Can you believe that?” “There aren’t any snakes in the city.” “It was in Bihar. My grandfather was the manager of a colliery or something. I was two and half and I was very brave.” “Shall I tell you about the time I wrestled with a python? Or the time I fought a tiger?” He did not believe that she had pulled the snake. (39)

Amit does not even believe in Dimple’s bravery. It happens because of the prudence of men against women. Men postulate women as subordinate creature devoid of strength, presence of mind and ability to fight with wild creatures. So, Amit’s upbringing prejudices him about women’s ability and does not allow him to believe that Dimple can do such an adventure. This happens because of the deep-rooted thought of female subordination in each male’s life. Thus, Amit always ignores Dimple on the ground of subordination. The negligence of women’s bravery is because of the false customary pride. In this regard, Beauvoir (1997:357) says “Custom makes independence difficult for them. Careless gaiety is in itself bad deportment; the self-control that is imposed on women and becomes second nature in ‘the well-bred young girl’ kills spontaneity; her lively exuberance is beaten down.”

The same disappointing thing happens with Dimple. Amit never gets convinced of any deed performed by Dimple. Men go to earn money and women sit home performing domestic duties. Domestic works do not have any valuable identity mark in quotidian. Moreover, the whole work of a day appears to be futile on the ground of valuation. The work of the housewives appears
invisible that cannot be counted in hours. So, men always underestimate the service of women to nothing. The sarcastic speech of Amit throws the light on women’s subordination. He says:

“What the hell do you do all day?” He asked. “In the next incarnation I want to be a wife and sit at home and do nothing.” (121)

This kind of statement is often heard in many Indian houses where housewives seem marginalized. Here, Amit marginalizes his wife devaluing her domestic work that obviously drags her into server depression. Dimple feels subordinated under the impression of the cultural effect. The arrival of Ina and Milt does not make her pleasant but enhances her burden. Ina notices this but perhaps misconstrues the behavior of Dimple. Dimple appears a typical Indian woman who mutually adopts everything. Dimple tries to become happy in her world of kitchen. She likes to get appreciated by everyone about her equality of cooking. But Ina’s sardonic attitude nearly kills her. Ina says:

“And what else does our little housewife do?” (169)

Dimple feels it to be an irritating remark by Ina. She realizes her subordinate status in the eyes of Ina which hurts her most. The domestic routine of housewives always appears futile on the canvas of dimensions of life. The women engross in hospitality, domestic work, taking care of everyone by offering eatables to keep them healthy. But these works get devalued by the society. Initially, the working hours of women go beyond that of males. Naturally, an invisible work seems always marginalized by society and of them also. So, housewives always nurture subordinate status in their psyche. Dimple represents those wives who dedicate huge amount of attention to home and even are secluded from proper appreciation. All of a sudden once Meena Sen, drops in Dimple’s house alongwith Mrs. Roy. She expresses apology for any inconvenience caused to Dimple. But Dimple’s reply to them focuses the subordination. Dimple says:

“I never do anything important,”---. (173)
This statement illustrates the deep-rooted subordination in Dimple’s mind. The marginalization begins from such thoughts of subordination. Amit nags her all the time. He even does not feel it necessary to share with her, to talk with her about the issues. After the Amit’s negligence and seclusion from others, she tries to maintain relationship with Milt Glasser who always values her desires and likings. He even appreciates her look. She has never received such sort of admiration from anyone especially never from Amit. Amit always treats her as a substitute and a negligible creature in the house.

Amit appears very rude to her and absolutely unaware of her mental trauma. He fails to show his feelings of special love towards Dimple. In the meantime, Dimple gets attracted to Milt Glasser and feels blessed while talking to him. His words exhilarate her when he says:

“Dimple, You’re the most gorgeous creature in New York - did anyone ever tell you that? (201)

She truly feels blessed and privileged and honored. Basically, she expects it from Amit but he is so much engulfed with his life and with the accounts and expenditures of the house. After her seductive act with Milt, she feels guilty and suffers from severe headache. It happens because of the immense effect of Indian culture on her mind. The statement of Mohanty appears very significant while describing the infidelity of women in conjugal life. Chanda Mohanty (2006:565) says “Adultery, further, takes on very different aspects, according to circumstances and customs. Marital infidelity in our civilization, where patriarchal traditions survive, still seems much more heinous for the wife than for the husband.”

This statement is very significant in the light of trauma that Dimple suffers after having close relations with Milt. Amit ignores her mental trauma and tantrums. He concentrates his thought on pointing out her extravagant nature instead of soothing her by soft words. Infidelity in conjugal life always becomes a trivial issue in the American soap operas but for Indian women it becomes the matter of loyalty and morality towards their husbands. Indian women are not allowed at any cost to establish any extra-marital affair. The Indian social structure does not allow women to be seductive even though their husband’s trouble them. The same goes with Dimple who becomes tempted to talk to Milt but even that makes her feel guilty. She tries to convey it to Amit. She says:
“I don’t feel it right,” Dimple said. “There is something wrong with my head.” “Is it all stuffed up? Take two aspirins and go to bed.” “No,” she said, inching closer to him so that only a pillow remained between them. “It’s not that—it’s just that you—” She gropes for rightwords and then remembering Ina and Milt, she pounced on an English word and trotted it out the way Ina had done on a more eventful day. “You just aren’t supportive, if you know what I mean.” (208)

Amit rarely shows concern to her. He fails to construe her loneliness, her trauma. Instead of, soothing words he teases her. Naturally, Dimple always feels inferior to him. The following conversation throws light on it:

“If I tried to commit suicide, would you save me?” Dimple asked.

“I’m sure you’d bungle it,” Amit laughed. “There’d be no need for me to save you. You’d, save yourself.” (209)

Dimple expects emotional support from him but he remains practical. His priorities go to money, savings and budget and not to Dimple. Dimple always feels sidelined by Amit. Once after watching T.V. Serial, he turns to the monthly budget. He appears unromantic and rude towards her feelings. Amit says:

“--- Let’s go over our monthly budget. You’re spending too much on cleaning fluids and pesticides and cake mixes and useless items like that. We’re not running a hospital, for God’s sake. Come out to the kitchen.” (210)

Dimple never receives appreciative word from him. He denounces her for every trivial matter but Amit never ponders over his own expenses. It again enhances the disorder in her psychology and feels humiliated. In this regard, Beauvoir’s observation is absolutely apt for Amit’s character. Beauvoir (1997:491) says “The constraint of ‘conjugal love’ leads, on the other hand to all kinds of repressions and lies. And first of all it prevents the couple from really knowing each other. Daily intimacy creates neither understanding nor sympathy. The husband respects his wife too much to take an interest in the phenomena of her psychic life that would be to recognize in her a secret autonomy that could prove disturbing, dangerous; does she really find pleasure in the marriage bed? Does she truly love her husband? Is she actually happy to obey him? He prefers not to ask; to him these questions even seem shocking.”
The same happens with Amit who never becomes attentive to such issues. He postulates his wife and sidelines her in every way. Naturally, Dimple gets suppressed because of the negligence shown by Amit. The feeling of subordination makes her furious. It disturbs her psyche when she escapes from real world to reel world. This symbolic behavior leads her to mental decay, obsessions and even crimes. The suppressions and repressions make her hysterical that results into her husband’s murder. The catastrophe of Dimple happens because of deliberate imposition of subordination on her in domestic affairs. This marginalization becomes an intolerable situation for her. Thus Dimple becomes the victim of subordination.

2.1.4 Submissiveness:

In the Indian social structure, women are symbols of submissiveness. The male dominant society expects women to be submissive. The lives of Indian women begin with their husbands and end with them. They never anticipate the spaces in their lives. The male dominant society too desires women to be submissive without uttering a single word. The social reformist in Maharashtra Tarabai Shinde long back wrote a book “Stree-Purush Tulana” where she directly pens the thoughts regarding the social attitude towards Indian women. In the case of submissiveness, she asks question even to God about the partial attitude of society towards women who always remain submissive to men by serving them every time. Women never expect anything in return from them. They never receive any chance to utter a single word or go against the word of men. The male-dominant society too appreciates submissiveness of women by offering the images of Sita and Savitri. Women too feel proud of being submissive towards their men.

The same happens with Dimple who too becomes submissive to Amit. She cannot imagine her life different from that of Amit. She accepts everything that Amit desires from her. She shapes herself in accordance with her husband. In this regard Simon-de-Beauvoir (1997:484) says “---‘a wife is what her husband makes her.” Dimple forgets even her own life. Bharati Mukharjee says:

To please her husband, Dimple took to wearing bright colour: red, oranges, purples. She wore her hair up in a huge bun and let a long wispy curl dangle behind each ear, like Mrs Ghose. She even tried to imitate the way Mrs. Ghose laughed and left sentences half- finished. She gave up eating her favorite hot green chilies. (22)
Thus, Dimple becomes submissive to please her husband. She adopts and adapts so many things that her husband likes. Once, Amit reveals the truth regarding his assertion of a wife. He says that he likes his wife to be tall and fluent in English conversation. Dimple gets surprised by his talk because she notices that she is exactly opposite to his desired wife. She cannot do anything about her height but she embarks to use English in her conversation with others. Bharati Mukharjee says:

“Dimple turned to magazines in English, taking them to bed with her during siesta hour, spending hours each afternoon on letters to the editor. Everyone seemed wiser than she, more aware of great issues, more in touch. (26)

The Indian social structure idealizes the submissiveness of women by applying legend of Sita and Savitri. So, Indian social structure (inclusive of women) expects women to be submissive. Dimple lives the life according to her husband’s desire. She aspires to do job in USA offered by Vinod Khanna. But Amit does not like women to go out and do a job. So, before Dimple could say he denies the offer of job. Dimple bears this and remains silent. Later, she too wants to enjoy the candidness of American culture. But Amit prohibits her to do so. He does not like his wife to be an Americanized Indian. Because of Amit, she suppresses her feeling of wearing modern dresses, tasting liquor. Amit wants her to be like an Indian typecast so she strives to be so. Amit hates Inna Mullick; an Indian American friend so she also tries to avoid her. Thus, Dimple suppresses her feelings and mingle with her husband. She appears to become the symbol of submissiveness throughout her life. This submissiveness drags her to her debacle.

2.1.5 Cultural Marginalization:

Culture is the characteristic customary conduct of particular group of people. The features of culture emerge from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Later, it becomes the way of living. It is the process and development that cultivates the mind of people. The Indian culture has its own remarkable features whereas western culture has its own. The culture of United States emerges from such immigrants. There are tremendous differences between American culture and Indian culture. This cultural encounter is reflected in this novel. Dimple being an immigrant becomes the victim of cross-cultural encounter in USA. American communalism goes beyond Dimple’s understanding. She becomes surprised by noticing the
treatment of marginalization to Indian people in America. In India, she could purchase anything from any vendor but Americans have a different kind of law regarding selling. Dimple witnesses an awkward incident at the very begging of her entrance in USA. Bharati Mukherjee depicts the encounter:

She asked, “Excuse me, please. I wish to purchase five hundred grams of cheesecake. Do you have it?” The air stank of beef blood. The shop man and the fat man seemed to be staring at her. (59)

Dimple notices some mistake committed by her from the body language of shop keeper. But she does not realize any kind of sign on shop before placing order. So she continues:

“I mean one pound of cheesecake,” (59)

The shopkeeper becomes angry and reminds her of laws. Dimple utters:

“No---I didn’t know the law,” she said. (59)

Then shopkeeper says:

“My laws. Gods law.” He presented a blood smudged sign in a language she had never seen. “If I wanted to break God’s law, I’d sell you cheesecake. But you see that sign in the window, right under ‘Schwartz’s? Look at it good, lady and don’t ever come into a shop like it and ask for cheesecake.’ His face was red, and the blood smudged card was shaking under her nose. (59, 60)

In India, she could purchase anything anywhere from any vendor. But American culture does not allow such kind of practices. Unaware of the discipline of American culture; Dimple feels to be undignified and receives inferior treatment there. She gets afraid of quick responses of violence of Americans as she comes to know from their friends in USA. From this incident, she becomes apprehensive about American culture. She experiences America communalism that marginalizes her indirectly. Dimple notices marginalization not only from Americans but also from Indian immigrants settled earlier in USA. These Indian immigrants sideline newly arrived Indians in USA. Dimple too becomes a victim of such kind of attitude. Once, Dimple joins the gathering of Indian people in America. All men and women engross in talking with each other. Their talk centers on side-lining other culture and its habits. They talk with only those people who have

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been living in USA since long. Here, Dimple feels marginalized within her own culture by these NRIs in USA. All women show little interest in talking to Dimple after noticing her recent arrival in USA and ignore her. Although, Mukherjee depicts this incident:

She found an armchair in one corner and spoke only when people came up to her and addressed her so directly that she couldn’t pretend they were talking to others behind her. “When did you arrive?” or “Have you been in New York long?” or worse still,” What does your husband do?” But when she said, “Two days; I’ve been here two days,” they stopped listing to her, as if her opinions didn’t matter. (62)

Thus, Dimple feels marginalized herself within her own culture. She fails to associate with her own people in America. Naturally, the culture of USA makes her uncomfortable and imposes loneliness on her life. These people want to share the happenings, problems and experiences being Indian Americans. So, these people show less interest in talking with Dimple.

The novel Wife points out the cross- culture encounter in Dimple’s life in America. The reluctant attitude of Amit and Dimple’s inability to communicate with others compel her to become merely a housewife. Amit senses her loneliness and suggests her to go beyond mere domestic work. But he likes her mingling with Indian cultured women only and not with Americanized Indians or Americans. Basically, he tries to offer Dimple wings to dart but holds reins in his hand. He says:

“Why don’t you take a leg for a change?” Amit asked. “Do you think American wives always eat wings and necks like you?” Then he added that she ought to go out more often, make friends with the other women in the building- they had noticed four Indian names on the lobby register- invite them for coffee or go shopping. (111)

Thus, Amit aspires that Dimple should establish friendship with other Indian women only in the apartment. But he never likes American culture and its freedom in case of Dimple only. Dimple faces cultural marginalization after arriving at USA. The expectations of Amit from her getting recognized as Indian American, shatters her dream as well as breaks her mind. The Indian culture usually appreciates those women who engross in domestic duties. Women clinging to domestic duties are always addressed as ‘virtuous’ women. The upbringing of girls in the Indian atmosphere also imbibes some patriarchal favorable issues on Dimple that secludes her from
American culture. The cross-cultural encounter results into a dilemma of quest for identity in her mind. The domestic social attitudes are appreciated in Indian culture but the same perceptions seem marginalized in liberal Americanized atmosphere. When Ina Mullick; an Americanized Indian arrives in Dimple’s apartment with all her American friends.

All the time, Dimple behaves consciously under the apprehension of her husband even in his absence also. Bharati Mukherjee depicts one incident when Ina approaches Dimple’s apartment along with her American to make fun. As they start to smoke cigar, Dimple becomes restless because of their behavior. She becomes afraid of the would-be reaction of Amit related to this issue. Bharati Mukherjee says:

---(Dimple worried that Amit would discover the stray tobacco strands between the sofa cushions and accuse her of entertaining men in the apartment, she was sure she could not explain the presence of women who could roll cigarettes with one hand while still gesturing with the other)---

(146)

Dimple needs somebody to share her feelings but Ina, Leni or any other person shows no interest in her feeling. So, naturally she gets cut-off from others and feels culturally sidelined as a conservative woman. The Indian culture bestows women with lot of domestic duties. They get imposed with various works and get engrossed in these. Their world centers on these duties. But American culture makes such women free birds. Indian culture always marginalizes American culture for allowing freedom to women to enjoy the life. On the contrary, women can not look at them but stick to families justifying mythological idols for everyone and to be worthy of the praise. But the same American culture sidelines the other culture that swallows the freedom, individuality of human being. The same happens with Dimple who always gets busy with housework and hospitality. But she does not receive any appreciation from other American friends regarding her domestic work. Moreover, they marginalize her full-hearted work. Consequently, a rift is created between her and others. When Ina arrives with her American friends, Dimple says:

“I’m sure I make the best tea in Manhattan,” she said. The women seemed not to hear her. They sat on the rug, sobbing and hugging, and discarding butts in the broken ashtray. (152)
The whole hearted devotion of hospitality of Indian culture gets sidelined in front of freedom and individuality of American culture. When Leni enters the Dimple’s apartment, she feels awesome about Dimple’s behavior who right from the earliest appears devoted to attend the guests. The following conversation between Dimple and Ina throws light on it. Bharati Mukherjee says:

“I think that girl didn’t like my name,” Dimple said as she took the bag from Ina. “She was laughing at me from the beginning.” “Its not your fault,” Ina said, “We didn’t choose our names. I am sure I wouldn’t be Ina Mullick if I had had anything to do with it.” “I am very attached to my name,” Dimple said. “That girl had no right to laugh.” (154)

The sharing of thoughts becomes a tough task for Dimple because of the differences in the cultures. Because of marginalization and patriarchal effect of Indian culture; she becomes secluded from American atmosphere and is engulfed with loneliness. The craving for freedom and being trapped in Indian culture, makes Dimple sense this disorder in her mentality. Her rejection to wear panties gifted by Ina proves the same thing.

To remain dedicated to her husband, Dimple remains away from the American culture. She marginalizes American culture and its freedom but enjoys false pride in getting admired for sticking to the Indian culture. She does all these things to make her husband satisfied. But in this twisting tremor, she becomes alone in USA. In this regard, Chanda Mohanty (2008:27) says “Nostalgia, loss, betrayal and duly are the foundations of new homes as diasporic. Indian protagonists adjust to new countries. In adjusting to new homes abroad issues of acculturation and/or assimilation become the focal point as immigrants---.”

The cross-cultural encounter makes Dimple marginalized and it brings mental disorder to her personality. This morbid nature carries her to the path of catastrophes.

2.1.6 Loneliness:

Loneliness is the state of mind that can have positive as well as negative effects. The negative effect of loneliness emerges from the feeling of marginalization. It brings the person on the verge of loss of self-esteem and brings the depression. Sometimes, failure in some issues becomes the cause of loneliness. Sometimes an unsuccessful attempt to live the dream life can become the
cause for loneliness or sometimes continuous suppression of feelings also appears to be the major cause. Many times, occasions like divorce, graduation, the end of romantic relationship, failure in getting a good friend and moving to new place can bring immense loneliness on the mind of human being. In other words, the strong feelings of marginalization become the factor responsible for the loneliness of any human being.

The same goes with Dimple who becomes the prey of loneliness that destroys her life career. Right from the beginning Dimple strives for marriage. Marriage becomes the career of her life. She pursues her education to acquire a good husband. Nothing goes beyond the thought of marriage in her life. She applies so many cosmetics to her face to look charming. She feels awkward of her personality and tries to make it beautiful. Delay in marriage makes her more disturbed and distressed. Her mother soothes her by her convincing words but she inwardly feels subordinated about everything. The central character in the novel Dimple becomes the victim at multiple levels. She is engulfed by her loneliness, to the world of illusion because of her marginalization. She becomes the victim of strict Indian mothering that makes her a follower of patriarchal norms laid by the social structure. She grows up with the idea of happy marriage life where career and other features go at marginalized level. So, she becomes the representative of a typical Indian girl whose life centers on her marriage. She dreams a lot about happy married life.

Like the poetess Kamala Das, Dimple pines for love, a love that can understand her, soothe her and feel depth for her from the core of heart. She grows up with the idea of looking elegant only. She simply wants to become beautiful, a tool to attract bride-groom. So, with the help of her mother she attempts to apply various cosmetics applications to look elite.

Marriage becomes the number one priority in Dimple’s life. Her pining for marriage drops her in the world of illusion. Her world remains away from the practical world. Bharati Mukherjee depicts:

“In Dimple’s dream, she became Sita, the ideal wife of Hindu legends, who had walked through fire at her husband’s request. Such pain, such loyalty, seemed reserved for married women. (6)
The usual power cut in the house enhances her illusive world where she starts to imagine various other things. For her, education becomes merely a ladder for securing a good husband. Her delay in marriage happenings, rejection from various people, postponement of marriage drags her to the path of distress. She wants to share her inward mental distress so she chooses to write a letter to an imaginary woman ‘problemwala’ to feel soothed from her. Naturally, her habit develops day by and makes her lonely and isolates her from everyone. She shares everything with her friend Pixie. She nurtures the grand things about marriage. She gets fascinated by the thought of marriage. So, she keeps on waiting for marriage. Her dream shatters right from the marriage. At first, she becomes disillusioned after witnessing the Amit’s apartment. Dimple says:

The apartment is h-o-r-r-i-d. (18)

She enters with splendid thought of marriage in the Amit’s house. But the infrastructure of apartment makes her distressed. The dream of her marriage scatters in front of her. The suppression of feelings and her own desire twist her in and give rise to her double personality, a psychological disorder. She starts to live in loneliness where her existence, her desires get at upper level. Whatever she expects from husband, she tries to get it in her illusion. Bharati Mukherjee remarks:

She( Dimple) tried to speak their filmy language when Amit was not at home: “Arre Year, this Mitu is such a yummy lovely-dovey pie,”— (23)

But in reality the viscera situation occurs where she receives very casual talk from Amit. Her illusion becomes a tool to fulfill all her disatisfied events into satisfied objects. After noticing the pregnancy, she becomes nervous. She says bitterly:

---that no one had consulted her before depositing it in her body. Or was it her fault? She was probably more fertile than others. (31,32)

She does not like to be pregnant but fails to convey this in a straightforward manner to Amit. It is so because; he appears for her a solid and a decisive man. Her inner trauma regarding pregnancy is displayed in various incidents. But her grumpy mind fails to share with Amit. But again this suppression results into her dream where:
---, neuro surgeons gave way to sinister abortionists, men with broken teeth and dirty fingers, who dug into her body in a dark, suburban garage. She was obsessed by those imaginary men. Their features were borrowed from men she knew, from the faces of strangers. She saw below her as sat on the balcony. There were games she played with these strangers: She threw bits of newspapers, hair balls, nail clippings, down onto the heads below to make them jerk upward in anger. From those trapped, angry faces she borrowed noses, warts, eyebrows, to be assembled in fantasy in endless combination of dread. (33)

Thus, she starts to enjoy this game of feeling of satisfaction in loneliness where she receives prominent place. Her loneliness is the result of marginalization. She accentuates it for herself. Consequently, she begins to live this second life in her illusion where everything appears goody-goody. Gradually, she becomes habituated to this game. Bharati Mukherjee words:

“--- As she got better at these games, she concentrated on her husband’s face rather than on strangers.” (34)

Thus, she executes everything in her illusion whatever she feels of her own for Amit. The feeling of marginalization shapes her in a duel personality. One personality in which she lives in the actual world, full of suppression and second where she her “self” remains in illusion. Amit’s ignorance day by day brings her to the path of her debacle. The life in Amit’s house shatters her. It makes her to live in an illusory world. Earlier, she had a fantastic dream of conjugal life. But the entrance in Amit’s house makes her felt down. Undesired compromises in various issues in Amit’s house make her sad. An escape from this house to USA cankers her mind. Amit too appears to be a patriarchal kind of person who wants his wife to be dedicated to him like images that are larger than life in mythology. Dimple becomes subdued in pleasing her husband through every small deed. She looks at her husband as God, as savior. In this regard, the statement of Simon-de-Beauvoir is very significant. She (1997:480) says about the attitude of women towards their husbands “He is a demigod endued with virile prestige and destined to replace her father: protector, provider, teacher, guide, the wife’s existence is to unfold in his shadow; he is the custodian of values, the sponsor of truth, the ethical vindication of the couple.”

Dimple desires to shift to USA as early as possible to enjoy the free life ahead. She looks to the migration as a means to escape from the restrictions of life. Meantime, she attempts to mingle with her husband to conquer his mind. Amit assumes Dimple as mere a wife; an object to obey
his orders and not a companion. This perception kills the Dimple’s mind and the thought of loneliness starts to occupy her mind. Amit never senses the tremors caused to Dimple’s mind. She is eager to shift to USA to release herself from suffocating situation of Amit’s house. When Dimple senses that the fetus can intimidate her shifting she even aborts it to fulfill her desire. Such violent activities create psyche disorder in her personality that pulls her from others. After a long procedure, she along with Amit, arrives in the States and becomes mesmerized by the way the states appears in front of her as a treasury of happiness, freedom, love and serene of life. The sophisticated lifestyle makes her aware of lack of her language incompetency to communicate with others. It again drags her to the path of loneliness. As the days pass, Dimple’s confidence becomes less and less about the job opportunities for Amit. She realizes Amit’s lack of confidence. She gets trapped in distress. Dimple possess of dream of having own apartment in Queens or Manhattan and queen-size bed. She is damn sure that America will fulfill her desire. He feels her dream shattered because Amit fails to secure a good job. She does not trust him about providing her desired life.

Thus, Dimple senses the Amit’s lack of confidence and she becomes gloomy. She witnesses the fall of cards of dream in front of her eyes. She arrives to the states to dart through the wings of her husband, to taste the happy life in the states. She becomes unhappy and feels to cut-off from everyone and remains alone. In the conversation with Ina Mullick and Meena Sen, she feels sandwiched between approvals and silence of her personality. Thus, she starts to detach from all these things.

She imagines all those things that were not possible in real word. Thus, she develops her own world of imagination, where she could behave modern like Ina Mullick and taste the freedom of U.S.A. Right from beginning, she aspires to have her own apartment but Amit’s small salary does not permit her to do so. So, they live in the vacant apartment of Marsha and Prodosh Mookarjee for the time-being. The Dimple’s trauma enhances when she says:

---“It’s such a nice apartment, I’m afraid I might break something or forget to water the plants.” (109)

She remains under the unknown burden of being cautiousness in the same apartment. The States has promised her to offer a treasury of happiness but in fact she is trapped in an exact opposite
situation. Their stay in Manhattan makes Dimple gloomier. She feels loneliness from the core of her heart. Amit fails to recognize her perplexed mind. She feels ignored by Amit. So, she bursts into the following words:

“I feel sort of dead inside and all you can do is read the paper and talk to me about food. You never listen; you’ve never listened to me. You hate me. Don’t defy it; I know you do. You hate me because I’m not fat and fair.” (110)

She marginalizes herself by all means and traps into her own web of solitariness. Amit ignores her harassment and turmoil. Her life, in the apartment goes with mere eating and sleeping. She becomes nervously inertly as:

Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small maternal comforts. In bitter moments she ranked husband, blender, Color TV, Cassette tope recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience. (113)

The cultural marginalization makes her more apprehensive while continuing the life in USA. Her marginalization enhances as Bharati Mukherjee describes:

“But she (Dimple) had not expected her mind to be strained like this, beyond endurance. She had not anticipated inertia, exhaustion, endless indecisiveness. If, in those early days in Queens, the man selling cheese-cake had not trapped her, she might have been free—she would not be in bed in a sunless room worrying herself sick over footsteps in the hall and glass eyes in keyholes. Instead she would be strong and sane. (115)

The brooding over various issues makes her lonelier. The lack of considerable reply from Amit makes her more depressed. The suppression of feelings gives birth to violent thoughts in her mind. It is seen that whenever she tries to suppress her feelings regarding certain issues, it bursts into another action of violence in her world of illusion. This practice makes her habituated to dwell in two worlds. Though, she subdues in real life but inertly feels much traumatic to succumb to the situation. So, she starts to extract all ideas of surrender in her illusion. Her trauma is displayed in the following words:

Friendship was impossible through letters. Conveying New York, Ina Mullick, her nightmares, the “phase” (as Amit called it) she was going through—all impossible to talk about, let alone describe in English or Bengali. There were no words she’d ever learned to describe her daily feelings. She would have to give up
trying to write. She would give up trying to preserve old friendships. Because there was nothing to describe and nothing to preserve. (120)

This severe depression brings her on the path of loneliness. It makes her marginalized at multiple levels and allots her with loneliness only. Her first encounter in America while purchasing cheese in one of the shops creates apprehension in her mind about the mentality and violent attitude of Americans. This incident cuts her off from the quick assimilation with the Americans. During this phase, she fails to maintain healthy relationship with Amit, her husband also. Dimple becomes alone day by day. But being a typical Indian husband, Amit never attempts to peep into the mind of his wife. However, he keeps on restricting her to adopt American culture. She adopts silence to subsist in life. In this regard, Chanda Mohanty (2008:147) says “Dimple accepts the tool of silence as a moment of self-betrayal, she feels helpless as if she has no other choice.”

Such silence enhances her loneliness. She wants to make friendship with Bengalis only who could understand her better. Ina Mullick and her other friends arrive at apartment but Dimple feels afraid of all of them. Their boldness, their liberal culture fascinates Dimple but restrictions of her husband make her maintain safe distance from all these people. Dimple wants such a friend who could get at her level and soothe her mind. Instead, Ina Mullick with all her American friends comes and goes without establishing any heart to heart relation. Ina and her friends simply create annoyance by their behavior. It later becomes the cause for Amit to burst on Dimple. Their behavior makes her act with double standards. Initially, she wants to be an Americanized Indian but her husband’s objections prohibit her to do so. Dimple wants somebody to share her feelings, emotions. But she fails to establish relations with anyone and remains alone.

This cross-cultural dilemma again brings her on the path of psychological disorder. Day by day, she cuts herself from others to avoid temptations of American culture. She feels dilapidated day by day for the failure of sharing her growing thoughts. She starts to enjoy the freedom in her own designed illusion. This illusive perception makes her more alone and alone. In such a deserted life, she realizes the Milt Glasser to be Oasis who treats her as the queen of USA. She feels privileged and begins to spend much more time with him. He shares a number of issues which are her favorites. So, Dimple starts to relive her life with Milt. Earlier, she spends more time in watching continuous TV serial but friendship with Milt offers
her confidence and promise of good life ahead. But, Amit instead of appreciating Dimple
nags her. He says:

“ You used to be a lot of fun; you used to pester me to take you out and
get a pizza or a gaucho pie; you know, do things. But now you just want
to stay at home and you don’t even watch television. What’s wrong, for
God’s sake?” (176)

He keeps on teasing her behavior. Thus, instead of appreciating her efforts he irritates her by his
rude words. He never tries to understand the tenderness of her mind. It becomes Dimple’s
journey towards her solitariness. Bharati Mukharjee further comments:

Dimple said that there was nothing wrong. But Amit would not believe her. He
said, “I know there’s something wrong. What do you take me for, a goddamn
fool or something? I can tell something’s happened to you; you’ve changed
in the last few months. You even look different.” She walked over to the
television and turned it on and then went back to the sofa and held her
head between her palms and asked, “Is that better? Do I look more usual
now?” And Amit said,” You’re trying to pick a quarrel. God-damn it, I try to be
nice; I try to act concerned after a hard day’s work and what happens- you
want to nag and quarrel. I don’t have to put up with all this, you know.”
(176)

Amit takes Dimple in a wrong way. He fails to understand her mind, her longings. But in such
traumatic situation unfortunately Amit’s patriarchal mindset does not permit her to be happy
without him. It seems to be the tendency of Indian husbands who do not expect their wives
enjoying the life without their support. She enjoys her life in the company of Milt who
tries to understand the tenderness of her mind. She even gets afraid to write the diary about
her unhappiness.

He promises her to have a trip to Calcutta to overcome her depression. Dimple’s loneliness
elevates at such a level where she faces a severe psychological disorder. She lives and sees the
replica of real life on the road also. The melodramatic scenes begin to linger on her mind
throughout the day and overnight also like a nightmare. She notices this psychological disorder
right from the incident of cultural get-together organized by Vinod Khanna. At the time of
return, Dimple informs Amit of witnessing men’s fight on the road. But Amit clarifies it as her
illusion. Bharati Mukharjee states:
Dimple had to agree that she was losing touch with what she saw and what she thought. She saw because she had seen it before on television. (185)

This incident marks the beginning of the psychic debacle of Dimple. Because of marginalization and twisting of brain, Dimple is trapped in utter loneliness. Dilemmas begin in her mind throwing her into severe headache and insomnia. She suffers from mental penury because of the utter loneliness of mind. In India, she could interact to various people around her as a stress buster. But in USA she nearly cuts off herself from various people. The severity of her solitariness is displayed in words:

The after dream returned. Only this time her head was like a Lucite paper weight. She could see her brain, pinkish and Plump, pressing against the sides, trying to escape. She panicked; the image was in tolerable, indecent. Well-brought up girls did not indulge in such excesses. But there it was, and the more she concentrated, the clearer the image became, until the pink blob she had taken to be her train turned out to be an animal instead, a miniature animal, perfectly and fully developed with its own digestive and respiratory systems; in fact, a fetal rhinoceros trapped in a decorative paper weight. (205)

Her friends like Meena Sen or any other person do not attempt to read her trauma or even Dimple cannot build pool of communication between all of them. Her marginalization makes realize her mismatch of herself with the world around her. Everyone is engrossed in their busy world and Dimple remains alone with her issues. The conversation between Meena Sen and Dimple highlights this with intensity. Bharati Mukherjee illustrates:

Meena Sen called again, and Dimple broke down and told her she was suffering from insomnia and headaches. It’s home sickness,” Meena Sen said. “If you were in Queens, you wouldn’t feel so lost. You could drop in for tea anytime at my place or Mrs. Roy’s. She is a nice woman.” “May be we could move when the Mookerjee’s come back.” “But how do you like the name Nandini?” Meena asked. “I” call you back when I feel better. May be later tonight, “Dimple said and hung up.” (205)

The intensity of her loneliness is displayed in these words that carry the whole poignancy of her life. So, she clings to TV that appears the stress buster to her mind. Consequently, Dimple’s illusion goes parallel with the TV Serial. She dislikes being friends with Ina and Meena. Later her friendship with Milt Glasser offers her some kind of mental peace. Both possess similar
characteristics like listening music and all. But the feeling of attainment cankers her mind. She becomes nervous day by day. An invisible rift starts between her and Amit. Thus, the ways of dealing outside world for comfort cut her and she faces loneliness and depression. It results into hysteria in the fit of which she murders Amit. The attempt of murder is the symbol of her escape from turmoil of life. Thus, marginalization traps her in loneliness and it leads to the destruction of her life.

Thus, Dimple faces marginalization in various forms in her life. This marginalization nearly creates psyche disorder in her brain that never gets healed. Instead it brings her on the path of debacle where there is ‘no retake’ of life or ‘no more chances’ to relive. Her life journey is like psychological thriller which is invisible but burns her body and soul and makes her violent. It happens with many women who adopt silence but fail to cope with surrounding. Dimple is one of them who fail to assimilate with ‘silence’ and it receives wrong consequences in her life.