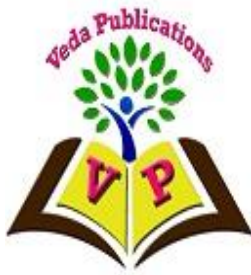


**DISCOVERING 'SELF' IN SREEMOYEE PIU KUNDU'S 'FARAWAY MUSIC'**

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**ABSTRACT**

The postmodern Indian woman has started searching for new opportunities, where she could enjoy much autonomy and freedom. Now-a-days, women have emerged as employees supporting their families in India. Globalization has opened new prospects of employment for women, which are different from traditional ones. Though the educated women have respect in the institution of marriage, they assert themselves over the male-dominated globe besides fulfilling familial duties. They wish to be self-sufficient and intensely ambitious not only in domestic issues but also in the professional world.

Sreemoyee Piu Kundu tries to create identity among the galaxy of Indian writers in English. She deals with love, feminism and emotional drama in her works. Sreemoyee Piu Kundu's '*Faraway Music*' deals with the journey of a woman in the Indian families. She tells the story of an educated Indian woman who chooses a profession of her own amidst marital disturbance. She takes autonomous decisions when she fails to find a suitable man as a companion in her life. Kundu delineates the emotions a woman undergo while adjusting herself to the situation in the institution of marriage. The novel vividly explains the search for 'self' where a woman lives a life of her own satisfying her options in her chosen field.

**Keywords:** *Postmodern, Globalization, Identity, Self, Autonomous*

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Since the last two centuries, the development of science and technology has changed the definition of life. Modern education and political consciousness among the women have created new trends due to various activities, social laws and current professional responsibilities for women. The conventional principles of marriage have been alternated with a new set in which matrimony is no longer a societal or a family concern. She feels it entirely a personal affair where a man and a woman seek social, psychological and economic joy having their own liberty.

Sreemoyee Piu Kundu portrays modern, educated, career-oriented affluent women who have resistance towards inevitable changes that occur at regular intervals in every age. Her women have knowledge about cultural deficiencies to which they are subjected to in this patriarchal society. They revolt against their men in search of substantial identity and boundless freedom. They are caught in a clash between personal ambitions and social obligations. Her women do not accept to be branded as entity of pleasure. They rebel against their victimization and find a relief defining their own self as per the trends in the society. Their idea of freedom is adopted from the west because the urban woman in India nowadays is equal to the western woman in many ways. They reject to become a shadow behind the curtains under the supervision of men. They want to create a significant identity in the world where everybody should show attention towards them.

Sreemoyee Piu Kundu, an ex-journalist, wrote the novel, *Faraway Music* in 2013 which is partially biographical. *Faraway Music* is the tale of celebrated writer, Piya Choudhury who is loved and coddled by her mother and grandparents, but disturbed by the puzzling absence of her father. Piya grows up in Kolkata, an impulsive child who pursues her studies having the same zeal as she maintains her few early crushes, until a savage encounter makes her disgusted. Piya is a girl from Kolkata who neglects the opportunity to study at Harvard in order to become a journalist in Mumbai.

The novel begins with men characters like Sumaya Atif, a Pakistani journalist who accompanies

her during her journey from New York to India, and to whom Piya narrates her story. Piya has started her journey from the by-lanes of Kolkata, enjoying the beautiful rains of Mumbai, to the unkind winters of Delhi, and finally to the lush penthouses of New York. *Faraway Music* is the story of an international bestselling author, Piya Choudhary. She has gone through the ups and downs of her life, searching for and losing love, family and friends. Piya takes the readers through an enchanting journey of her life while revealing it to a journalist on a flight from New York to Delhi. She shifts to Mumbai having a desire to become a journalist.

Piya, creates a sensation as a young journalist at a newspaper when she continues an affair with an ascetic music director who was proposed for Grammy's. On tasting success here, she moves to a good platform where she meets and associates with her editor. Abir, an important character, is her Editor with whom she falls in love with. But a controversial story obstructed her career. It is a news story on drugs compiled by Piya and her friend and another important character loitering in the book TT, which is objected by the boyfriend editor, Abir after he is influenced by the newspaper owners because it endangers his association with the famous advertisers. She is in confusion in giving priority whether to continue her love affair with the man and her individual talent. She leaves him and the industry and enters PR where she meets an artist and marries him. After some years, she has gone to New York and settled there. Then, she is married to a well-known Australian artist, David Cicconi who respects her creativity and her talent and encourages her to realize her 'self' when she writes short stories and then a novel which becomes a success. It is observed that human relations undergo fluctuation. When the relation between Piya and David begin to float, her mother advises to give their house to an NGO which helps Piya return to Kolkata after a long time. It seems that the story seems to be narrated in a realistic manner.

Sreemoyee's narration reflects her passion and it comprises touching prose. Most characters are extremely depicted in the novel. The book rightly captures the dynamics of contemporary



relationships, and Piya's efforts to find love and more importantly stay in love. *Faraway Music* is a story of family, friendship, fame, love and loss in which other elements of the story are fabricated around them. Life seems to be a confusion for Piya till her past comes knocking at her door, questioning her own integrity.

Sreemoyee Piu Kundu has narrated the character Piya who is a mixture of considerable strengths and weaknesses. *Faraway Music* is the story which depicts her life while she is attempting to explore her 'self' amidst many challenges. The writing is warm and lyrical. The author has inserted her encounters as a journalist and a PR head while sketching the character of Piya. The way of narrating the protagonist and other minor characters in the story is laudable but there are some deficiencies in the texture of the story. It is observed that the story lacks some of the elements that is needed to create interest among the readers. The characters are simple, real, and are people with whom I could relate to.

The postmodern woman does not want to be a docile and obedient personality. She wishes to express her voice shouldering the socio-economic responsibility equally along with her male counterparts. The women characters in the novel does not want to conceal their original nature. Piya continues her journey undergoing many obstacles in her path in the process of realizing her identity in the ridiculous world. She frankly refuses the existing customs that have shackled her freedom. It is futile exercise for her to seek out a meaning in the outer world because she fail to identify their inner world of emotion. In this journey, she is frustrated with her existing life pattern when she urges to prove her individual talent. At this juncture, she searches for prospects that can make her life significant and meaningful.

Most of Sreemoyee's women go against the customs that exist in the patriarchal society as they consider their life worthless and hollow. In this pursuit, they want to prove themselves as strong individuals having an opinion that unfettering from the shackles is a means of liberation for themselves

Their agony in life makes them feel that all human bonds are just nonsense. Piya rebels against the society when her desire to continue her professional career.

Sreemoyee's keen observation of woman's situation in the post-modern world investigates the disorder of women's psyche while she is struggling with identity problems. She observes that the notion of educated urban woman in India undergoes changes towards family and society. This lead to clash with the external world because the terms are dictated by man which causes internal and outer conflicts where she undergoes moral predicament that affects her psychic state. She wishes to jump over the cultural hurdles that controls her choices to lead a life of her own. In this situation, she feels her voice is not respected in the name of wedlock so that she is ready to confront against male domination in the society without any inhibition.

Sreemoyee's has depicted today's woman an admixture of determination and individuality with feminine qualities who are integrating pleasure, career and marriage in their life. She does not want to undergo meaningless pain which is a barricade while they are defining the life. It is a matter of fact that women can manipulate the strong field of man showering her beautiful charm. In the wake of protecting her self-respect, she challenges male chauvinism prevalent since ages with her astute tactics. It is observed now in the glamour world and in some professions where she is occupying considerable space in current days.

In the case of many women, the general observation holds good. Generally, in the field of arts and public life, women are given second place though they prove their mettle and superiority indisputably. Piya decides to leave her job when her honest attempts are not respected in journalism. Naturally, one cannot act beyond cultural traditions. But the new woman dares to surpass the limitations designed by patriarchal society when she faces unavoidable conditions. In this regard, she is ready to face problems that arise in marital discard because of disloyalty of husband. Thus, today's woman tries to



construct a platform where she can enjoy her own life without any restrictions.

The postmodern woman like Piya wishes to enjoy unrestricted autonomy breaking the existing cultural boundaries. Elizabeth Wright in her book, *Lacan and postfeminism* declares: "Becoming a woman does not imply an opposition of sex and gender, but is the way a woman uses her freedom" (Wright, 54). In the present day world, there is a broad scope for women to attain economic freedom entering the new vistas of employment in the field of Cyber world. In the event of protecting her own 'self', the woman of today accepts to remain a single parent and get divorced, when the harmony is lost in her marital life.

Though many a women try to attain much autonomy in the Indian context, the patriarchal society is not ready to acknowledge the strong gestures of woman's identity. Although the woman is highly educated, she has to fulfill the daily chores like the rural woman. The patriarchal dominance visible in the rural space is carried over into the urban sphere as well. In the novel, Piya has shifted her place to foreign land to enjoy much autonomy. Still, she has to make a long journey in order to establish her own stance as the existing culture becomes an obstruction to become an individual. Preeti Zacharia mentions Sreemoyee Piu Kundu's words in an article, 'Destiny's Child': "My childhood is very similar to Piya's, my career path is like hers, characters like Karim Bhai and Tarun are based on real people," (1). It shows that there is an autobiographical element in the novel.

Piya Choudhary experiences complex childhood and adolescence who has gone through so many crushes and infatuations of youth. Piya is a rebellious character who takes control of her own life. There are shades of Mumbai's life but too many shortcut spoils the book of depth. The writer creates a sense of glitziness of plot which is similar to Mumbai life. Being a journalist herself, Sreemoyee describes the world of journalism and happenings in the profession. The author delineates casual office politics and personal involvements. The novel ends with positive moments like a routine Telugu movie.

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