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Research Article

Reshaping Identities: Female Agency in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*

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Abstract

In the Western diaspora, the female immigrants from South Asia face a different cultural and social milieu compared to the patriarchal contexts of their native countries. The negotiation with Western values and practices becomes pivotal in shaping their self-perception and exercise of agency. This paper examines Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* to explore the cultural negotiation and subsequent transformation of Ashima, a South Asian female immigrant in the United States. Utilizing Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, which emphasizes removing cultural, financial, and social barriers to human empowerment, alongside Albert Bandura's theory of human agency, which highlights the influence of external environments on individual decision-making capabilities, this study analyzes Ashima's transformed self-perception and behaviour. When Ashima adapts to the Western cultural values, she overcomes cultural barriers that restrict her from exercising her agency. Similarly, her engagement in income-generating activities reduces her financial dependency on her husband. The process of acculturation and financial independence transform her from a submissive wife into an independent woman capable of making critical life decisions. The findings underscore the importance of removing cultural barriers and reducing financial dependency to enhance the decision-making capabilities of female immigrants.

Keywords: Diaspora, female immigrants, female agency, cultural negotiation

Introduction

South Asian female immigrants face different cultural expectations and roles compared to males in the diaspora. They negotiate patriarchal power dynamics at home while also managing foreign cultural values and labour market demands. Their negotiations in these areas are essential to understanding their decision-making capabilities; that is the working of their agency. The diasporic narratives often depict their cultural negotiations in connection with the working of their agency. South Asian female diasporic writer Jhumpa's *The Namesake* (2006) critically examines the cultural negotiation of female immigrants in the diaspora. The novel focuses on the experience of a female immigrant Ashima who undertakes her diasporic journey through her marriage

with an Indian immigrant Ashoke. Her husband Ashoke having obtained an American university degree teaches at an American university whereas she spends almost all her time inside her home like a typical Indian woman. In this period, she often feels homesick and attempts to reconnect with her homeland by observing native rituals, cooking Indian food, wearing Indian dress, and encouraging her children to learn native rituals and language. During this period, she relies on her husband to make decisions on domestic and public matters.

However, her perception and manner gradually transform when she starts working in a city library. She begins to interact with American friends, go shopping with them and even invite them at her home. With her interaction with American people, she gradually learns their cultural values and lifestyle. She begins to go shopping alone and learn to drive. Her transformation, marked by her shift from a preoccupation with her native culture to adopting Western cultural values and engaging in income generation, necessitates an examination of the relationship between cultural negotiation and her decision-making capabilities. In this context, it is crucial to examine why Ashima relies on her husband when she is preoccupied with her native culture, and what enables her to lead an independent life after becoming involved in income generation and adopting Western values. This paper examines Ashima's timidity and apprehension during her initial preoccupation with her native culture and her gradual transformation into an independent woman capable of making crucial decisions. This transformation is analyzed within the critical frameworks of Amartya Sen's capabilities theory and Albert Bandura's concept of human agency, highlighting her acculturation into Western culture and financial independence. This analysis of female immigrants retains significance as the previous studies of the diaspora including Lahiri's *The Namesake* have not paid adequate attention to examine the connection between cultural negotiation and decision-making capacities of South Asian female immigrants.

Review of Literature

The experiences of South Asian female immigrants in the diaspora have often been overshadowed by male-centric narratives of migration. Historically, diaspora studies have neglected the unique experience faced by women, homogenizing it within androcentric frameworks. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into diaspora studies. Scholars have begun to deconstruct the notion of a homogeneous diaspora, examining internal diversities and power dynamics, particularly regarding gender. This study contributes to this evolving field by exploring the transformation of female agency among South Asian immigrants through cultural negotiation in Lahiri's *The Namesake*. The critical appraisals of Lahiri's narrative, which have extensively examined various facets of diasporic existence, have not given adequate attention to the transformation of female agency.

Historically, the concept of diaspora has been associated with male-centric activities of dispersal and procreation in new territories (Mehta 16). Female experiences, by contrast, are often homogenized within "androcentric images...and patrilinear descent" (Kosnick 123). Additionally, gender has generally been ignored in diaspora studies (Mehta 16). However, "the conditions driving the migration of women, their experiences during migration, and their subsequent efforts at adaptation and settlement have always been distinct, unique, and specific to them" (Pande 1). This underscores the necessity of examining female immigrants' experiences separately.

In recent years, diaspora studies have begun to incorporate a gender perspective to explore how immigrants negotiate their cultural identity. Various studies, including

those by Gillian Bottomley (1992), Anastasia Christou (2011), Rebecca Elmhirst (2000), Keya Ganguly (1992), and Koen Leurs (2015), have dismantled the notion of diaspora as a homogeneous group, examining the internal diversities among immigrants, particularly about gender. These studies and theories have contested the representation of diaspora as homogenous. Concurrently, researchers like Rahila Gupta (1988) and Nirmal Puwar and Parvati Raghuram (2003) have started critical investigations into women's roles, status, and experiences within diasporic communities. These studies have highlighted differences, inequalities, and the power dynamics between male and female immigrants (Campt and Thomas 6). Historically, the incorporation of female-related topics into diaspora studies can be divided into three distinct phases.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s migration and diaspora studies initially framed females in binary opposition to males. However, by the mid to late 1980s, the field shifted towards Feminist Standpoint Theory, emphasizing gender analysis over mere equality. Rooted in radical feminism, this theory highlighted female experiences, challenging the earlier binary framework and underscoring the importance of gender in diaspora research (Pande 4). During the 1990s, the second phase of feminist scholarship in diaspora studies expanded its focus to include factors such as poverty, class, ethnicity, and race, alongside gender (Pande 5). This phase recognized that these factors were equally important, if not more so, in understanding human experiences.

In the third phase of feminist diaspora scholarship, gender is seen as a crucial element shaping the experiences and outcomes of female migrants. It is fundamental to individual identity formation and influences various aspects of life during migration and settlement. Intersectional analysis, which considers gender along with race, ethnicity, and class, is vital for comprehending the complex experiences of female immigrants (Boyd and Grieco 4). Within this theoretical framework, a significant area of study in diaspora scholarship has focused on South Asian female immigrants in First World countries. These immigrants face distinct gender dynamics, family relationships, and access to resources compared to their male counterparts in their countries of origin. Patriarchal cultural traditions in South Asian societies often marginalize women, giving them fewer privileges and secondary roles. Unlike their Western counterparts, these women encounter various societal and cultural constraints. They have not been given much focus in diaspora studies, usually being homogenized under "Asian" category and portrayed as passive victims. Likewise, the critical studies on Lahiri's *The Namesake*, have not given much attention on the gender perspectives.

Lahiri's *The Namesake* has been examined from multiple perspectives connecting her experiences as part of the diaspora as a recurring motif in her writings. According to Kumar Karunesh, Lahiri frequently draws on her personal experiences as well as those of her family, friends, acquaintances, and fellow members of the Bengali community. Jagdish Barta investigates the cross-cultural dilemmas and identity crises present in Lahiri's narratives. Sugata Samanta links themes of alienation, depression, and nostalgia to the rich context of multiculturalism and hybridity in her work. Similarly, Judith Caesar analyzes how Lahiri transcends traditional mainstream American and hyphenated American fiction, suggesting that Lahiri perceives her bicultural identity as a blessing, distinguishing her from many other minority American writers. From this perspective, bicultural identity can inspire creative and critical writing. Additionally, Lahiri's writing is seen as depicting the evolving notion of Indian masculinities in a diasporic context. Anjali Tripathy explores the representation and shaping of masculinities in *The Namesake*, noting that the diaspora experience has made Indian males more adaptable, tolerant, and open-minded, making them less authoritative and imposing.

Critics such as Noelle Brada-Williams, Michiko Kakutani, and Lavina Dhingra and Floyd Cheung have noted that Jhumpa Lahiri's writing addresses universal aspects of the human experience and the conditions faced by individuals in the contemporary world. Kakutani remarks that her novel explores father-son and parent-child dynamics in a Chekhovian style, touching on themes of what immigrants and their descendants gain and sacrifice in their pursuit of the American Dream. Brada-Williams further highlights Lahiri's examination of crises in human relationships in the modern context, frequently addressing themes like the barriers to and opportunities for human communication, various forms of community including marital, extramarital, and parent-child relationships, and the dichotomy of care and neglect (458). The context of the diaspora allows Lahiri to explore the diverse dynamics and inherent problems of human relationships. The issues discussed in her writings are not confined to the Indian diaspora in America but are universally experienced by people around the world.

Critics have different responses to Lahiri's narrative, with some relating to the autobiographical elements, as Lahiri herself is a South Asian immigrant living in the First World. Many critics focus on the immigrant experience, such as cultural dissonance, alienation, nostalgia, and uprootedness, and analyze personal responses to these conditions. However, the issue of gender, particularly the role of female agency, has not received much attention. Utilizing Sen's capabilities approach and Bandura's concept of human agency, this paper specifically examines Lahiri's *The Namesake*. It aims to shed light on how South Asian women's engagement with cultural negotiation and economic participation influences their decision-making capacities, thus filling a critical gap in existing literature.

Human Agency Theory: A Theoretical Perspective

Human agency, defined as an individual's capacity to make decisions and influence their circumstances, plays a pivotal role in shaping lives within diasporic contexts. Scholars like Amartya Sen emphasize agency as the freedom to pursue one's goals and values, highlighting its critical role in personal and societal development (Sen, "Well-being" 203). Sen's capability approach expands traditional measures of development to include opportunities for personal fulfillment beyond economic indicators, advocating for the removal of barriers that hinder individual agency. In parallel, Albert Bandura underscores the interplay between internal capacities and external factors in shaping human agency, emphasizing the impact of social and cultural environments on individual choices and behaviors.

Human agency refers to an individual's capacity to make decisions and act on them, thereby shaping their lives and impacting the world around them (Eteläpelto et al. 45-55). Similarly, scholars like Michael J. Shanahan, E. Hood Kay, Mark Schlosser, Nicholas Bunnin, and Yu Jiyuan define human agency as the power to actively influence situations and effect change in human lives. In the same vein, Amartya Sen emphasizes this idea of human agency, describing it as "what a person is free to do and achieve … whatever goals or values he or she regards as important" (Sen, "Well-being" 203). For Sen, human agency involves an individual's ability to make choices and act independently to accomplish their goals and lead their lives. The concept of agency broadly centers on the potential for people to live the lives they aspire to (Sen, *Commodities* 94). In his capability approach to development and welfare, Sen emphasizes the importance of freedom and the role of the individual in shaping their own lives.

Sen proposes a novel approach to evaluating development by considering people's opportunities and capabilities to lead meaningful lives, in addition to material

indicators like income or Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He argues that enhancing human agency is a vital component of development, which involves addressing various social, cultural, familial, economic, and political barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. These barriers include a lack of personal freedom and limited access to education, employment, and participation in social and cultural activities. According to Sen, empowering individuals requires the removal of these obstacles, thereby expanding their capabilities to lead meaningful lives and improving their personal and social well-being.

In essence, Sen highlights the importance of individual freedom and the ability to make life choices as key elements of human agency. These factors are crucial for the development and well-being of society. By emphasizing the enhancement of human agency, Sen adopts a holistic view of development that extends beyond economic indicators in his capability approach. This perspective is particularly useful for assessing the agency of women in various socio-cultural contexts, including the diaspora. South Asian female immigrants, for example, must negotiate different social and cultural practices that shape their agency: the capability of making decisions.

Human agency is closely connected to social, economic, and cultural factors that continuously influence its operation. Bandura points out the importance of external factors alongside the internal aspects of human agency. Therefore, human agency should be understood in the context of the social and material world. Social and cultural environments impact individual choices and actions, and changes in these factors in the lives of South Asian immigrants affect their decisions and behaviors in the diaspora. This paper explores how these theoretical frameworks apply to South Asian female immigrants, focusing on the transformation of agency amidst cultural adaptation and access to economic opportunities in diasporic settings. Specifically, it examines the narrative of Ashima, a character in Lahiri's *The Namesake*, to illustrate the dynamics of agency within the context of diaspora and cultural negotiation.

Lahiri's *The Namesake*: Critical Analysis

Ashima's Cultural Negotiation

Raised within a traditional South Asian cultural environment, Ashima moves to the U.S. with her husband Ashoke, an Indian residing in the U.S. after her marriage. Her cultural negotiation involves the interaction between her native South Asian customs and the American practices she encounters in the diaspora. According to Stuart Hall's theory, her identity is shaped by her shared cultural and historical experiences (her being) and her current interactions in the diaspora (her becoming), which are in a constant state of negotiation. This ongoing negotiation forms her cultural identity and influences her agency as a South Asian female immigrant. The subsequent analysis highlights the transformation of her agency as she transitions from the traditional South Asian cultural context of her homeland to the Western cultural practices of her host country.

Preoccupation with Native Culture and Apprehension

In her native country, Ashima is brought up under the traditional Bengali custom where parents make significant decisions about their children's lives, particularly their daughters. Her marriage is arranged by her parents, whom she dutifully obeys. She learns about her marriage only when she meets her prospective husband. Her mother instructs her to "go straight to the bedroom and prepare herself; a man was waiting to see her" (Lahiri 14). At nineteen, while pursuing her university degree and not facing any immediate pressure to marry, Ashima dutifully "untangled and rebraided her hair, wiped away the kohl that had smudged below her eyes, patted some Cuticura powder from a

velvet puff onto her skin" to comply with her parents' decision (Lahiri 14). She is unable to voice her personal opinion about the "suitable man" chosen by her parents. In traditional Bengali culture, a girl "is expected to marry a suitable man chosen by her parents" (Lahiri-Roy 3). Additionally, her mother highlights Ashima's skills to the guests: "She is fond of cooking, and she can knit extremely well. Within a week she finished this cardigan I am wearing" (Lahiri 14). In traditional South Asian culture, the criteria for a girl's marriage eligibility include "cooking, sewing, knitting and having extracurricular activities like singing, recitation" (Chattopadhyay 45). Therefore, Ashima's marriage to Ashoke, an Indian living in the United States, is arranged within these cultural constraints, leaving Ashima unable to make decisions about her own life in her native country.

In the early years of her life in the diaspora, Ashima adheres to traditional gender roles for a South Asian married woman, managing household chores while her husband works outside. During this time, she feels both physically and emotionally disconnected from her father's comforting home. She frequently experiences sadness and homesickness, often sulking alone in their three-room apartment. She "faces an emotional uprootedness which in turn creates a deep sense of alienation forcing her to experience loneliness" (Nair 140). As a result, she spends much of her time lost in memories of her homeland. To maintain a connection with her homeland, she busies herself with reading and rereading stories, poems, and articles from Bengali magazines she brought with her. She also "keeps her ears trained, between the hours of twelve and two, for the sound of the postman's footsteps on the porch, followed by the soft click of the mail slot in the door" (Lahiri 36), eagerly awaiting letters from her parents. She collects these letters in her white bag and reads them frequently.

During these years, Ashima makes various efforts to reconnect with her homeland. She observes traditional rituals to maintain her cultural ties. For instance, she celebrates her children's *Annaprashan* (rice feeding ceremony). During Gogol's rice ceremony, she asks her friend Dilip Nandi to play the role of her brother, who holds the child and feeds him rice in the customary Bengali manner for the first time. She also imparts her native culture to her children, who are raised in a foreign cultural environment. She takes them to *Kathakali* dance performances, *Sitar* recitals at Memorial Hall, and the worship of *Durga* and *Saraswati*. As Lahiri describes:

> "during pujos, scheduled for convenience on two Saturdays a year, Gogol and Sonia are dragged off to a high school or a Knights of Columbus hall overtaken by Bengalis, where they are required to throw marigold petals at a cardboard effigy of a goddess and eat bland vegetarian food" (64).

Her children are made to participate in Indian rituals, wearing traditional Indian attire. Additionally, she sends them to Bengali language and culture lessons twice a month. Furthermore, she and her husband socialize with other Indian expatriates, organizing gatherings of Bengalis at their home to celebrate various rituals. This creates a network of fellow Indians that "substitutes for her family, the people she longs for in a home country" (Lahiri-Roy 4). With such a focus on her native cultural space, Ashima exhibits timidity and apprehension in dealing with the challenges of her new diaspora context.

Her intense preoccupation and longing for her homeland undermine her confidence and sense of security. For example, she expresses great distress at the thought of giving birth in a foreign land without the presence of her loved ones. She finds it agonizing to raise a child "in a country where she has no connections, where she knows very little, and where life feels uncertain and sparse" (Lahir 6). The idea of her child being born "without any grandparents, uncles, or aunts by their side" leaves her feeling sorrowful, as she perceives it as a deprivation (25). Following the birth of her son

Gogol, she empathizes with him, feeling he has been disadvantaged by being born in America (Watanabe 163). She urges her husband to return to Calcutta, expressing her reluctance to raise Gogol alone in a foreign country: "Not here. Not like this ... I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back" (Lahiri 33). However, she acquiesces when her husband insists on staying in the U.S., citing better future prospects for their child. She lacks the confidence to assess her situation and make decisions independently, conforming to the stereotype of a submissive South Asian woman, and agrees to raise her child in the diaspora.

Her lack of self-confidence leads to the feelings of uncertainty and fear about diasporic life, which she compares to the impending fear of her pregnancy. She perceives being a foreigner as a state of loss and exile, comparing it to a "lifelong pregnancy" characterized by constant anxiety and burden (Watanabe 164). She reflects:

> [B]eing a foreigner... is a sort of lifelong pregnancy- a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that previous life has vanished,… Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect. (Lahiri 49-50)

The metaphor of a "lifelong pregnancy" encapsulates her ongoing apprehension and unease about diasporic life. Her family members also anticipate discomfort in the foreign land, and whether she could live in the foreign country, she replies, "won't he be there?" (Lahiri 9) showing her dependency on her husband. Despite receiving his support, Ashima fails to develop the confidence needed to face the challenges of diaspora.

In the early stages of her diaspora experience, Ashima conforms to the traditional role expected of South Asian married women, primarily focusing on household duties. This period is marked by feelings of isolation and psychological distress stemming from her migration to the United States and her pregnancy. In an effort to alleviate her loneliness, she embraces customs from her homeland and instills them in her children, while seeking solace in the company of fellow immigrants to maintain ties with her culture. Despite her constant attachment to her native customs, she struggles with the traditional gender role and expresses apprehension, doubt, and a lack of confidence in her diasporic identity, comparing it to a "lifelong pregnancy." Her dedication to preserving her home culture initially hinders her ability to overcome cultural and economic barriers and assert her agency in her new environment. However, over time, she gradually gains confidence as she engages more with mainstream society and adopts Western cultural norms prevalent in her host country.

Embracing American Culture and Enhancing Self-confidence

Ashima's exposure to the American lifestyle particularly with her first job in the city library gradually reshapes her perspective. She begins welcoming non-Indian friends into her home, with some American women even becoming her companions for shopping. Additionally, she gains insight into the lives of divorced women living independently and dating in middle age. Unlike her previous reservation about her children's Americanization, culinary preferences for Indian cuisine, and objections about Gogol's relationship with an American girlfriend, she now participates in the celebration of American festivals, introduces American cuisine into her household, and displays a more positive outlook towards intercultural love affairs and marriages. This gradual shift underscores her increasing embrace of American culture.

Her integration into the American culture of individualism begins with her job at the city library, where she learns various American cultural practices from her

colleagues. Building friendships with her American coworkers, she occasionally hosts them for lunch at her home or accompanies them on shopping trips to outlet stores in Maine. Over time, she becomes more self-reliant, learning to drive, shop for groceries independently, and navigate daily tasks like pushing her stroller like other American mothers. These actions mark a significant departure that crosses "the limits of a typical Bengali housewife" who is supposed to "depend on her husband in almost everything" and creates an independent identity (Chattopadhyay 46). She realizes the need "to learn to live independently" in American society" (Poudyal 208). She gradually learns to live autonomously, finding pride in her newfound self-sufficiency. She takes joy in raising her child in America, confidently venturing out alone with her baby in the pram, engaging with passersby, and even meeting her husband on campus independently. Through her job and interactions with mainstream society, she breaks down cultural and economic barriers that previously hindered her agency, forging a deeper connection to her surroundings, such as Cambridge, in ways she hadn't previously imagined.

Ashima's resilience and assertiveness is evident when she faces her husband's sudden death. Rather than succumbing to despair, she faces her grief with calmness and a practical manner and adheres to the customs of her homeland during the mourning process. Despite the loss of her husband's support, she doesn't feel powerless or despondent about the uncertain path ahead. In Lahiri's depiction, Ashima's return to India following her husband's passing is a poignant moment of personal growth:

> For the first time since her flight to meet her husband in Cambridge … she will make the journey entirely on her own. The prospect no longer terrifies her. She has learned to do things on her own, and though she still wears saris, still puts her long hair in a bun, she is not the same Ashima who had once lived in Calcutta. She will return to India with an American passport. In her wallet will remain her Massachusetts driver's license, her social security card. (276).

This journey symbolizes not only her physical movement but also her journey into her future life. Her newfound confidence is evident in her demeanor; though she still retains elements of her Indian identity, she is not the same person who left Calcutta with her husband. Returning to India with an American passport and carrying documents of her life in Massachusetts, such as her driver's license and social security card, she embodies a complex identity that transcends simple categorizations of host and native cultures.

Unlike traditional South Asian women, she doesn't desire to return to her native country and live under the care of relatives. Nor does she feel a strong attachment to her host country. Instead, she chooses to divide her time between the two, embodying the meaning of her name by being "without borders, without a home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere" (Lahiri 275). Her "rootless and nomadic existence is … not as something alienating or empty" rather she exploits "an opportunity to enjoy both the life she long ago left behind and the one she strived to create. (Alfonso-Forero 857). Making a rational decision, she exercises her agency by dividing her remaining time between her relatives in her homeland and her children in the host country.

Ashima's cultural adaptation and involvement in economic activities shape her agency. Her job at the city library not only provides financial independence but also increases her socialization with mainstream American society. Through interactions with her American colleagues, she gradually adopts Western values and lifestyle. This cultural shift, coupled with her economic independence, empowers her to make significant life decisions independently, even after her husband's passing. Acculturation into American culture and her employment enable her to exercise her agency by overcoming cultural and economic barriers.

The evolution of Ashima from a traditionally submissive South Asian woman to an independent individual capable of making critical life decisions autonomously while negotiating in diaspora both differs from and resonates with findings from prior research. Contrary to scholars like Nirmal Kang, Prema Kurien, and Paramjit Judge, who argue that migration reinforces gender discrimination and various forms of exploitation for women, Ashima experiences a liberal cultural, social, and economic environment that allows her to exercise her agency freely. Her transformation aligns with the perspectives of Gina Buijs, Peggy Levitt, and Jaworsky Browning Nadya, who view migration as a liberating journey for women to assume stronger roles in new cultural settings. However, it is important to note that migration alone doesn't automatically grant females the autonomy to exercise their agency. Various barriers, including cultural, economic, social, and educational factors, can limit women's ability to assert themselves (Sen, *Capabilities* 85). In Ashima's case, she overcomes cultural barriers by embracing Western cultural practices in the diaspora, which afford women greater decision-making roles than her traditional South Asian upbringing, where parental authority often dictates a daughter's life choices. Additionally, her employment provides her with economic empowerment, reducing her financial reliance on her husband.

Conclusion

To conclude, the agency: the decision-making capabilities of South Asian female immigrants are deeply intertwined with their process of cultural negotiation. The character analysis of Ashima, a South Asian immigrant depicted in Lahiri's *The Namesake* serves as a poignant illustration of this phenomenon. Ashima undergoes a remarkable transformation from a submissive wife to an independent woman as she negotiates her way through the diaspora. Her acculturation into American cultural values and her attainment of economic independence are central to her transformation. This change liberates her from the patriarchal constraints rooted in her native culture, where women are often marginalized and deprived of decision-making roles. Embracing Western cultural norms empowers Ashima to assert greater autonomy over her own life, challenging the traditional gender roles that once confined her. Furthermore, Ashima's active involvement in income generation plays a pivotal role in diminishing her reliance on her husband, thereby further enhancing her decision-making capabilities. These dual factors; cultural adaptation and economic independence enable Ashima to exercise her agency independently. The study emphasizes the significance of addressing both cultural and economic barriers to promote the agency: decision making capability of South Asian female immigrants in the diaspora.

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