

Executive Summary of Minor Research Project

Title : “Black Female Survival : Maya Angelou’s I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings in Focus”.

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The African American woman Maya Angelou (1928-2014) was one of the multifaceted personality, has lived facing the adverse circumstances in her life and becoming the **World Phenomenal Woman** in the end. Today she stands for the model of a woman for the black women, who survived through all odds, overcoming the obstacles in her life. The calamities in her life are recorded in her autobiographies. She has written a series of autobiographies, about seven memoirs. The researcher here has undertaken the study of Maya Angelou’s first memoir *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* to learn about the survival skills Maya used in her life.

She was originally very sensitive about the issues of the time, at the same time, she used the courage within and the time to time guidance of the motherly figures around her to go ahead. She has proved by her example what a Human Being

should be. What are the capacities of a human being and what a human being can do. She has set an example of a strong woman.

It is hoped that reading of Maya Angelou will teach the present generation, teachers as well as students a lot. It would strengthen the researcher to overcome the obstacles in her way. It would also provide wider opportunity for understanding the concerns of African-American literature, Negro resistance and feminist writing. In addition, the study will initiate readers to know more about Black female experience in America, and at least to think for a moment about combating abuses against women in their respective settings.

The general objective of the study is to explore the life of Black women, with special reference to Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

The period, 1930's is famous for the turmoil between Blacks and Whites. The whites, who were holding power hated blacks because they were black and poor. The Blacks were not looking beautiful. They were ugly looking fellows. They were using black people only as a labour force and black women as sexual objects. The blacks were not allowed to be literate, so that they will be aware of their human rights. The blacks were considered slaves of white people. Maya Angelou, is also one of the black woman or t whose pioneering step into the world of autobiography brought a change in the society and literature. Maya

Angelou faced many ups and downs, though she established herself as a universal figure and a literary artist. As an African American woman writer, her amazingly high contribution at moral, social and political levels is remarkable. However, Maya Angelou became successful in digging into her past memories and selecting the significant episodes in her life, to present them as instructive. She has taken into consideration the oppression, and suppression of African American women because she was one of them, and she wanted to bring some changes in the society. So Maya Angelou is working through her autobiographies as a voice of the Black Women.

This journey of Maya has been best recounted in the early pages of her book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which brought her great fame, published in 1970 when Angelou was forty-two. It covers her life from the age of three to the age of sixteen. *Caged Bird* is the first of seven autobiographies depicting the life of this amazing African American woman of letters. She was not sure to write creative story of her life. Her friends challenged her to write literary autobiography. Maya fulfilled the challenge.

The autobiography by Maya Angelou is a specimen of resistance literature. The exploration of experiences throughout the novel enabled the researcher to discover the experiences of resistance and courage in the face of adversity. Racial prejudice occurs to Maya at her Grade eight graduation by the white guest, sexual

abuse happens to Maya by her mother's Black boyfriend, and economical problems come about to Maya all the way through her young life in the segregated Arkansas. The book directly or indirectly deals with the power of women to survive and shape their own future despite hardships. The lesson gained out of the current study is that failure is inevitable but it is quite necessary to lift oneself up again.

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