

Quest for Selfhood of Female Characters in Anita Rau Badami's *The Hero's Walk*

Anisha Roy

Research Scholar, Dept. of English,
T.M Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur.

Abstract:

The present paper aims to focus on the study of quest for self identity of female characters presented by Anita Rau Badami in the novel *The Hero's Walk*. The quest for identity is one of the most highlighted features of diaspora. Diaspora has become one of the most important tools into literature to study of various nations and their culture of the societies of the developing countries and of the developed countries. Diasporic writings are constructed not only the principal of harmony but also on the principles of simultantly. This paper not only depict shifting of a small girl from modern culture to orthodox in fact explore self quest by showing emotional mother, typical unmarried sister, orthodox family ritual and many more. This research paper deals to evaluate on the basis of diasporic quest for identity which is represented through gradual growth of the female characters Ammayya, Nirmala, Maya and Nandana in *The Hero's Walk*.

Key Words:

Diaspora, Self Identity, Harmony, Orthodox, Culture.

Introduction:

Migration may be permanent or temporary, voluntary or involuntary, even in ancient scripture like *Bible*, *Mahabarata*, *Ramayan* issues of immigrations and adjustment an alien land are narrated through various characters. Diaspora is all about the creation of new identities, space for growth resolution of conflict and new culture either composite or plural. Anita Rau Badami who settled in Canada is a writer of Indo-Canadian Diaspora. In the era of globalization, migration has become inevitable. Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another for various reasons. The novel reflects Canadian culture

and society. Narrates the Indian society patriarchal setup, socio-religious rituals, colonial setup etc. Anita Rau Badami makes her readers aware about both the culture and especially the Indian culture. The novel describes the Indian society in the climate of Toturpuram, celebration of festival political condition, casteism issue of education, belief in religious and social rituals in Indian culture and tradition.

In this paper Anita Rau Badami portraits female quest for identity through the life in a small fictitious town Toturpuram. In this novel observation of different female characters and their experiences through light on their quest for selfhood which is one of the diasporic elements.

Quest for Selfhood of Ammayya

Badami makes her readers aware about self quest in the different woman, and one such powerful portrayal was that Ammayya who was uproarious character, everything about her was amusing, her habit of using chemical formulates for water, her accusatorial latin terms and she proves her might through her display of knowledge. Which she gained while helping Sripathi to learn the encyclopedia Britannica by heart through his father insistence. On the contrary she wears all her gold chains and bangles. The sensitive portrayal of ordinary life in and old culture with old traditions and values brings to the life with the creation of the characters like Ammayya. Brahmin feelings of superiority, even at old age shine through in the old orthodox Ammayya. Ammayas's bitterness is sadly justified simply because she was brought up in a society that taught her to follow similar perspectives and judge the faults of others. Ammayya is so bitter that she think Sripathi deserve the loss of his daughter because she broke tradition caste and religious consciousness has remained part of Indian identity since ages.

Nirmala's Quest for Selfhood:

Nirmal has lived under the iron first of Ammayya since her marriage to Sripathi like in many homes in India for everything that goes wrong Sripathi scolds Nirmala and even hold her responsible for Maya's love for a foreigners. He says that being a mother she should have known that something was not right with her daughter. She was the one person whom Sripathi could always take for granted, even she has hardly been able to express herself or pursue her own ambition since their marriage. Even her dance classes to the youth other area are bobareded with Ammayya's jeers .In an argument with Sripathui early in the novel, Nirmala exclaims frustration,

- "I am tired of behaving myself". Thought *The Hero's Walk* Nirmala learns to take responsibilities through the guardianship of Nandana . It was listening only to the society and to the demands of other people that led to Nirmala's lackluster life. As she learns through the novel. Woman in Indian society are expected to stay indoors, their sole purpose being cooking for the family and bringing up children.

It could be said that Nirmala moves away from “behaving herself” by the end of the story she is no longer the submissive house wife without opinions, instead she has become an independent married woman in charge of her priorities and aspirations. Thus the detail examining of the character Nirmala presents her quest for selfhood throughout the novel as stereotypical, submissive housewife.

Self Quest for Identity in Maya:

This novel presents the issue of Maya with foreigners. Maya acts as a symbol for her namesake- with the death of Maya, the illusion brought upon by society that affects the lives. She was the perfect one. Before going to Canada for higher studies Maya was engaged to Prakash. Maya left for university in Vancouver, Canada, refusing an arranged marriage and further disgracing her already socially hurt family her father cuts off relation with her. This is example of social pressures affection family life of the Rau's their Indian culture expected arranged, formal marriages society will judge Sripathi as a father.

On the contrary Maya has been exposed to a society where marriage is based solely on attraction the starkly different orthodox. This shows the shift of Maya into another culture which was chosen by her. Her change from marriage arrangement to Prakash to her marriage to Alan was justified by the terms of modern society. But she meant little to her parents who expected Maya to follow their tradition. The plot of novel informing about incidences in India and Canada. It complex traces the lives ordinary Brahmin people through extraordinary times of political and social transformation in power structure in southern India, and the result shifts in individual values, expectation and life style which brings self quest in the character of Maya.

The Quest for Self Identity in Nandana:

Nandana a Canadian girl has to migrate to India. Nandana, a girl with Indian name and roots, was not aware about the traditions of Indian families. Nandana's mother Maya lost all her contacts with home land gradually after her marriage with Alan whereas as second generation the one who is born and brought up up to seven year in Canadian style has been move to typical Indian village. Shift of Nandana from Vancouver to Toturpuram was not chosen but imposed after the accident of Maya and Alan. Nandana who has been cultivated in a global environment and has to adjust in a local and conventional ambience. Nandan's first dislike is her own grandfather who has legally adopted her as she heard during the parents conversation that Sripathi Rau did not get agree to their love marriage. When Maya shows photos of her home to her daughter Nandana then Nandana used to ask that weather ghost live there. When she comes to the station she finds it much crowded then in Vancouver. Nandana finds the difference between celebrations of festivals as she was aware about Halloween whereas here Raus celebrate Diwali even Nandana finds the difference between the squirrels of Canada and India. Nandana not only brings her culture to this locality but ideologies and thoughts too in Rao family as Putti got courage to go

against the Indian orthodox Brahmin family to marry a dalit man, supported by modern culture thoughts of Nandana. It was only through Nandana sripathi got regret for not having "known's his daughter's inner life". As Nandana brings foreignness in her, it is obvious difference from the rest Rau's family members. Nandana a perfect character who presents the quest for self identity in *The Hero's Walk*.

Conclusion:

Anita Rau Badami is an Indo-Canadian diasporic writer. Badami's novel *The Hero's Walk* deals with cross-culture in family life. The quest for the self of female characters in hero's walk enables to know about the difference between the culture of India and Canada. The novel under study portraits issue of identity through memory of different female characters .Badami as diasporic author puts the self quest issues of female characters as diasporic essence in the novel *The Hero's Walk*.

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