

Anita Rou Badami's *The Hero's Walk*: A Diasporic Cultural Mosaic Content

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Abstract

The idea of Cultural Mosaic is intended to suggest a form of multiculturalism. Cultural Mosaic is a term derived from French term (La mosaïque culturelle) which means the coexistence of distinguished cultures, languages and ethnic groups under the same roof. This term describes a society in which cultural groups live and work together maintains their unique heritage while being included in the larger society. This paper empirically examines the cultural mosaic as a characteristic of diasporic literature in Anita Rao Badami's novel *The Hero's Walk*. This paper depicts the shifting of small girl from modern culture to orthodox and also explores complete Indian culture by showing Sripathi's emotional mother, typical unmarried sister, orthodox family, rituals and many more. This paper aims to evaluate different behaviour, manners, rituals, thoughts and many more fused with each other and create a design like mosaic in *The Hero's Walk* through gradual growth of the characters- Nandana, Sripathi, Maya and Nirmala.

Keywords: Diasporic, Cultural Mosaic, Multiculturalism, Heritage

Introduction:

Anita Rou 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. 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. Diaspora has become one of the 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. In her novel *The Hero's Walk* (2001) Anita Rou Badami depicts the emotional tensions that present the South Asian Diaspora . The novel reflects

Canadian culture and society. Narrates the Indian society patriarchal setup, socio-religious rituals, colonial setup etc. Anita Rou 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. The issue of settlement of Nandana- a foreigner in Indian tradition, Sripathi's harrowing loss of his daughter and his journey to Canada make them as cultural mosaic Diasporic characters. In this novel observation of different characters and their experiences throw light on their cultural mosaic element which is one of the Diasporic tools.

Culture Mosaic and Sripathi:-

A middle aged father of two and grandfather of one, Sripathi Rao has fought his entire life for his social standing and for his respect. Indian families follow a stereotypical patriarchal system with father as the head of the family in most cases acts as the sole bread earner of the family. The character of the Sripathi reflects the stereotypical patriarchal system of Indian culture. Sripathi is a middle class press reporter; he is fifty seven living with his widow mother Aamma, unmarried sister Putti, wife Nirmala, and son. His daughter Maya goes to Canada and marries Alan. Both die in an accident leaving their eight years old daughter Nandana. In Indian families arranged marriages and the events that followed are very important ceremony. The elders decide and the young one expected to accept it whole heartily without any grudges. In this novel in Canada Maya loves Alan and asks her parents to break her engagement with Prakash in India. Sripathi's reaction and objection reflects the typical Indian cultural thoughts on love-marriage.

On the contrary Sripathi's traumatic loss of his daughter Maya and his journey to Canada that compel him to remember and rebuild the past. In that way he represents the diasporic cultural mosaic character.

Culture Mosaic and Ammayya:-

Badami makes her readers aware about cultural mosaic 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.

When Karim, a muslim mechanic comes to drop Nandana who went away without informing anyone he does not enter the house as Ammayya may throw bucket of Ganga water on him to purify the house in the character reflects beliefs in superstition and Indian myths which were inherent in Indian culture and tradition. Though modernity and advancement have challenged it, it cannot be totally removed from the mindset of the people.

Cultural Mosaic and Nirmala:-

Initially portrayed as a stereotypical, submissive house wife, Nirmala gains mental autonomy throughout *The Hero's Walk*. 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 storry 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 creates a design of culture like mosaic.

Cultural Mosaic and Maya:-

This novel projects 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 Rao'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 bring cultural mosaic in Maya's character.

Cultural Mosaic and Nandana:-

In *The Hero's Walk* it was 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 .Nanadan'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 a had to adjust in a local and conventional ambiance. Nandan's first dislike is her own grandfather who has legally adopted her as she heard during the parents conversation that Sripathi Rao 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 celebration of festivals as she was aware about Halloween whereas here Raos celebrate Diwali even Nandana finds the difference between the squirrels of Canada and India. Nadana 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 Rao's family members. Thus in the character of Nandana a perfect cultural mosaic reflects.

Conclusion:-

Indian born Canadian author Anita Rao Badami's novel *The Hero's Walk* deals with cross culture with family life, the similarities the differences and such factors that bind its members together and help them to stay intact and forge on with life . The Indian culture and the Canadian culture

are different from each other. As a writer of diasporic Badami makes her readers familiar about both the cultures. The characters in the novel use their memories to reach a final consensus of searching for their identity in relation to their separate but intertwined world. In this novel Badami thematized the ways where two different cultures came together with their own cultural identities which reflects one of the diasporic tools, Cultural Mosaic beautifully.

Work Cited:

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