

Diasporic sensibility-Representation of Indian diaspora in fictional works of Anita Rau Badami

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Abstract:

The main purpose of the research is to investigate in detail about diasporic sensibility with specific reference to Indian diaspora in fictional works of Anita Rau Badami. Anita Rau Badami's novel *The Hero's Walk* Badami has been specifically considered for this review. This novel is a perfect evidence for the diaspora written by Anita Rau Badami. In this novel she categorizes the cross cultural and traditional conflicts and expresses the consciousness of diaspora of the women characters very well. Further this novel deals with the issue of Emigration very well since it shows the insecurity of the migrants in both the sides. The author has shown the diaspora in this novel through the typical narration of the life of the character Sripathi. This paper systematically reviews the opinion of various authors' towards how Anita Rau Badami handles the issue in *The Hero's Walk*

Key words: diasporic sensibility, fictional works, Diaspora and emigration, *The Hero's Walk*, Anita Rau Badami

1. Introduction:

¹The novel “The Hero’s Walk” written by Anita Rau Badami is about Sripathi’s typical and traditional life with his mother, wife and his children. This is an Indian drama. In this novel the writer expresses the emotional tensions that present in the South Asian diaspora. Badami explained many things in this novel and it is about heroism of the protagonist of the play. This novel is with the unexpected things, difficulties and disasters in the life of the protagonist. ²The story is about a Canadian –raised orphan Nandhana return to her grandparents who lives in a village called Torturpuram. The young girl Nandhana faced many problems in a very new place of her grandparents. Her grandparents disowned her mother, when she got married with a white man. At the young age of seven Nandhana has lost her parents. Maya refused the arranged marriage and she ran away from her home. And she settled in Vancouver, Canada. Then she and her husband met with an automobile accident. After their death Sripathi has to take care of his granddaughter. Nandhana is troubled by adjusting to the Indian culture and customs³.

⁴With this Sripathi has to undergo with some family problems. He is trying to make his forty year old sister to be married with someone. His son also gives him a very tough time. And his wife is still angry at him for her daughter’s death. Now Nandhana began to open up with all the things and accept her mother’s parents as her grandparents. But Maya’s parents are very much worried about their daughter’s death. She is no more. She is not going to come back again. The main thing is that they have think about their granddaughter’s future. Her future is in their hands now. This is the story set up and the author tried to put the diaspora of Southern Asia. She included her own life experiences in this novel.

¹Indersingh.M (2007), Contemporary Diasporic Literature Writing History, Culture, Self, Pencraft International, Delhi

²Khanna,DevikaNarula, South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blossoms in Winter Gardens, Creative Book Publishers, New Delhi

³Karthikkumar.S (2015), Female Heroism in a Anita Rau Badami’s Novels, Retrieved on: 25th Aug 2015, Retrieved from: http://anubooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/14.FEMALE-HEROISM-IN-ANITA-RAU-BADAMI_S-NOVELS.pdf

⁴Chennareddy.G et al (2013), A Critical Study of Family in the novels of Anita Rau Badami, International Journal of Arts Commerce and Literature

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Research:

Aim of the research is to investigate in detail about women sensibility-representation of Indian diaspora in fictional works of Anita Rau Badami

Objectives of the research are as follows:

- i. To explore the significance of fiction in Indian literature
- ii. To investigate the contribution of diasporic writers and how they feel about issues related to mother land
- iii. To determine how Anitha Rau Badami brought out the themes of guilt of consciousness related to parent-child conflict
- iv. To investigate the women sensibility the ultimate success of the (protagonist of the play) women at the end of the fiction “THE HEROS WALK”

1.3 Limitations of the Research:

Limitations of the research are as follows:

- i. This research is restricted to fiction in Indian literature
- ii. This research focuses on the fictional works of Anita Rau Badami
- iii. Findings of the research exclusively considers about women sensibility-representation of Indian diaspora in fictional works of Anita Rau Badami

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Significance of fiction in Indian literature:

A fiction is any descriptive or narrative content which is obtained from imagination and in addition to the history or fact. It is a form of art and with the knowledge of the individual can imagine any events and pen it into a novel or fiction. A very good story teller must keep some points in mind he/she is going to narrate a fiction⁵. They are the characters, both main and secondary ones and character traits, setting, conflict and the plot or story form.

Fiction has form and every single word in the fiction that is written would be the part of the pattern. The author is responsible for what happens in the fiction to assign. Women fiction writers play a vital role in Indian literature today. They tend to have an insightful and thoughtful voice. The authors used to reflect their own experiences in the fiction. The fiction written by the women writers tackles the issues of the family, money, love, motherhood and

⁵RajkumariShanker. (1997) “Women in Sikhism”, In Sharma, Arvind (ed), *Religion and Women*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, pp183-210.

all other issues. The characters in the fiction must be the female protagonists. And those characters have the complex relationships with the other characters in the novel⁶.

The setting of the novel can be of anywhere- rural or urban. And there is a love interest in all the women's fictions. They will have a happy ending at the end of the fiction. The family relationships are more important than love and romance. The woman in India is always protected. The status of women in India has not improved much. It remains same as it was in the past. The woman is still considered to be subordinate to man. So many women fiction writers try to bring out the status of women in their motherland. And the woman is not entitled to live her own life. She is not expected to have any individuality of her own. In her childhood, she is protected by her father. After marriage, she is protected by her husband. In her old age, she lives under the protection of her son. She has no right to guide her own life.⁷ This is the status of women in India. And many women writers use the female characters as the main protagonists in their novels. Many fiction writers are there in India to fight against the illtreatment of women. And with their writings they expose their thoughts and views in the novels.

⁸Rabindranath Tagore, Khushwant Singh, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, ShashiDeshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Arundhadi Roy, NargisDalal, R.K. Narayan, Anita Rau Badami are some of the famous writers who presented their novels by concentrating on the depiction of the women's freedom and social reality of all the times. Many diaspora writers are in particular to emerge the cultural mix of times impacted by the globalization and the growth of many fields. Some writers are there like Karan Desai, V.S.Naipaul, HariKunjru, Anita Desai used to write about the problems faced by the people in their nation,

⁶Dipak K. Gupta. (2008) "Understanding Terrorism and Political Violence, The Life Cycle of Birth, Growth, Transformation and Demise", London and New York, Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group

⁷AparnaRayaprol. (1997) "Negotiating Identities: Women in the Indian Diaspora", New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁸Ajaya Kumar Sahoo. (ed) (1996) "Sociology of Diaspora, A Reader", Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

home and native. These writers contest the difference between the culture in both east and west.

2.2 Contribution of Diasporic writers towards motherland:

⁹Diasporic writing lifts the questions regarding the meanings of 'home' and 'nation'. These are the preoccupations of the diasporic writers as they seek to make themselves in the new traditions and cultures. It is important for the writers relate the nature of the relationship to the literatures of their country of their origin. They have to examine the different strategies they go into and to negotiate the cultural gap of the countries of the adoption. The creative writers such as Uma Parameswaran and Ashis Gupta used to write from their own life experiences of their migration. The maximum number of their writings will be fictions, poetry and drama. Most of the writers used to write about their feelings towards their motherland. The contribution of the diasporic writers towards their motherland is many and their writings will speak about their traditions and cultures and how they feel about their motherland.

¹⁰In the earlier works of Mukherjee, she deals with the cultural encounters of both the Indians and the U.S.A but after that, all her works take the focus to some other things like multicultural encounters in which the tale place of the United States. The Tiger's Daughter is her first novel and it has the strong autobiographical overtones. It tells the story of Tara, who got married to an American and came back to India, but finds that she is not able to make herself to be connected with the motherland. She has failed to adjust to all the things in her motherland. Once she loved her country but she feels like a strange person in her city Calcutta. She returns to the adopted country U.S.A later on.

JhumpaLahiri was born to Indian parents in London in 1967 and her parents moved to U.S.A. she won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for her collection of the short stories Interpreter of Maladies. It is a nine stories' collection set in India and U.S.A. An interpreter of the emotions has assumed by the author. She has undergone the living of two lives-one in the United States

⁹AlokBhalla. (1999). "Memory, History and Fictional Representations of the Partition", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 44: 3119-3128. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4408572>. Accessed 19 May, 2011.

¹⁰ George Bryjak. (1986) "Collective Violence in India", *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 2: 35-55. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30171906>. Accessed 19 May, 2011.

and other in India as an experience, as a child of the immigrants. She has written many stories of different themes in her novels. And Lahiri suggests that assimilation is the solution for the survival in a foreign land¹¹.

Another diasporic writer named Anita Rau Badami was born in 1964 in Orissa. In 1991, she moved herself to Canada. Tamarind Mem is her first novel and it is based on her own life experience. It portrays the individual desire and cultural affiliation. The Hero's Walk is her second novel and it became the popular winning literacy prizes. In this novel, the author shows the emotional tensions that lie in the South Asian diaspora. For her, Canada is her home and is muted presence in her works which shows both the possibility and freedom¹².

¹³Kamila Samsie was born in Karachi, Pakistan in 1973. All her works are of prose fiction. Her novels deal only with political unrest and violence in Pakistan. She used to address the issues of South Asian Diasporas reality.

2.3 Reviews on Anita Rau Badami's parent-child conflict in THE HERO'S WALK:

¹⁴Anita's dazzling literary follow-up after the novel Tamarind Mem is The Hero's Walk. It is a novel teeming with wreckage and folly of normal lives. The Hero's Walk uncover the terrain of family and the excuse through the lives. In this novel Anita Rau Badami explained so many things like disappointment, loss, circumstances of the life by not losing the dignity set in all of us. It is simply about heroism that is needed to have all the unexpected things, disasters and difficulties of life.

Dr. Bolla Mallikharjuna Rao and Bolla Krishna have explained that the conflict between the parent and child is portrayed in the novel The Hero's Walk written by Anita Rau Badami and this is the best illustration of all her novels. This story is about a Canadian – raised orphan

¹¹Paranjpe, Makrand. "Valedictory Address: Interrogating Diasporic Creativity: The Patan Initiative." *Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora*. Eds. Kavita A. Sharma, Adesh Pal, and Tapas Chakrabarti. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2004.p.42-73.

¹²Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press and Women's Press, 2000. Print.

¹³Veena Das. (1996) "Time, Self and Community: Features of the Sikh Militant Discourse" in Jayaram, N., Saberwal, Satish (eds). *Social Conflict*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Anita Rau Badami. *The Heros Walk*. Bloomsbury, 2001.

came back to her grand parents who were living in a remote village named Toturpuram. There the child faces many problems. The seven-year old Nandana, lost her parents in an accident. She has to go with her grandparents who were disowned her mother, when she married a white. At a tender age of seven, she needed her mother's love and obviously she lost her warmth. There Nandhana struggles hard to have a balance between the east and the west. The life with her grandparents is entirely different with the life she had previously. Little Nandhana finds difficult to face the problems in Indian life style with her grandparents. With no doubt, the characters in this novel find heroism in some gestures and in their age old traditions significantly winning the own regrets.

Dr.Chennareddy portrayed Sripathi's typical life with age old traditions in India. He gives respect to his Indian tradition. Sripathi worried about his daughter and his son-in law's death in a car accident. He feels very guilt about behaviour towards his daughter's marriage because she got married with a white man. After that he refused to have contact with Maya. But she is no more. Sripathi has to take care of the seven year old granddaughter now. Nandhana was brought up in Canada and now she has to lead a life in India with a traditional family background. Nandhana thinking that her parents will come back one day. This novel projects the compromises and the understanding of healthy relations in a family. In this novel, Badami shows the parent-child conflicts. The family lost Maya and she is not going to come back again. The child's future is very important now and Sripathi has to take the whole responsibility of her¹⁵.

According to Andrew Elliot Apong, in the novel *The Hero's Walk*, Badami focused the affective attachment of Sripathi, Maya's father and his daughter who got married with a white man. The conflict between the parent and the child portrayed here in this novel with Sripathi and Maya. Her father refused to communicate with her after the marriage with a white. Badami positions his life with the women and children in his family with different character follies. Badami positions towards his journey he takes in his life and how the sense of beauty worked in the world.

¹⁵ M.G. Vassanji. (2008) "A Place Within: Rediscovering India", New Delhi: Penguin Books India.

2.4 Reviews on guilt of consciousness in The Hero's Walk:

¹⁶The second novel of Anita raubadami, the hero's walk, is an intimate, big book of the typical life of Sripathirao, a middle-aged family man. He was an advertising copywriter. His life is already in a position of disrepair, as it opens. Dr.ChetanTrivedi explained in detail about the characters in the novel the hero's walk. Sripathi's mother, is a tyrant, domineering woman. She wants her only daughter to be with her till the end of her life. And sripathi's children, however, who always create the biggest problems: his son, Arun, is connected in political activism, dangerously, and his daughter Maya, in order to marry a white man, she broke off the engagement to a local man arranged by her father. She got married to a white and she settled in Canada for a long period of time. Sripathi refused to talk to her after her marriage. When he heard that his daughter and her husband are killed in a car accident, he is very much troubled. They left a seven year-old daughter in Canada. Sripathi is now in a position to bring his granddaughter, Nandhana to India from Canada. Sripathi travels from India to Canada to bring his granddaughter home. Sripathi was guilt-ridden for being refused to contact with his daughter Maya because she insulted him by marrying a white Canadian. This guilt of consciousness kills him often. Sripathi is mute now. He is not able to express his grief and he is longing for the love of his dead daughter.

¹⁷According to Heike Harting, this novel represents the sum of diasporic identities and it is shaped by many changes with empowering process. Anita Rau Badami narrates the impoverished Brahmin family story. Sripathi, the novel's protagonist and the head of the family, has to face with the death of his loving daughter, Maya, and the return of his granddaughter, Nandhana from Canada. This novel is not concerned with Maya, who used to live in Vancouver, Canada with her family. Maya is considered as the most conventional diasporic thing in this novel.

In the paper of Ballantine Reader's Circle, SripathiRao struggles as the head of the family and as a copywriter in order to keep the family in a floated position. With his family

¹⁶Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.

¹⁷Basu, Amrita. "Hindu Women's Activism in India and the Questions it Raises." *Appropriating Gender: Women's Activism and Politicized Religion in South Asia*. Eds. Patricia Jeffrey and Amrita Basu. New York: Routledge, 1998. 167–84. Print.

relations, he led a typical life. A phone call brings the tragic mood in the family: Maya and her husband had met with in an automobile accident. They left Sripathi as their daughter's guardian. Maya's daughter Nandhana had not spoken a word since the death of her parents. Sripathi travels to Vancouver and brings Nandhana back to his home. She is very much terrified to go with her grandfather because she is new to their culture and tradition. Sripathi is unable to express his feelings for his loveable daughter's death.¹⁸ He is guilt-ridden. Filled with guilt, he brings his granddaughter back home. Everything in Sripathi's life is falling apart. But his world slowly finds new hope by the arrival of Nandhana. And Nandhana is now in the position to cope with the age old traditions in their family.

2.5 Reviews on the diasporic sensibility in THE HERO'S WALK:

¹⁹Canadian literature is now being considered as a multi-cultural one. The diasporic writers have been increased in number by giving the cultural forms and traditions in their diasporic writings. Through their writings, we could see the choice of aspirations, hopes and the frustrations with authenticity and empathy in people. This kind of women writers tries to bring the rich baggage of racial, cultural, traditional, linguistic and religious diversity. Through their writings these writers try to bring out the culture of women in particular.²⁰ According to Dr. Karthik Kumar, Anita Rau Badami is the very good example for this type of writings. She used to characterize the cross cultural conflicts. She admits to explore the nuances of the consciousness of the diaspora of portrayal of all the women characters in her novels. All her writings suggest the diasporic identity which is not needed to bind the transnational crossings. A radical change has been put over the women's fiction, as it does reflect cultural, social and political theme. The main thing which has to be considered in their writings is to define and redefine the woman's personality. They are likely concentrating

¹⁸Grewal, Mandeep. "Mass Media and the Reconfiguration of Gender Identities: The *BharatiyaNari* in the United States." *Gender, Technology and Development* 7.1 (2003): 53-73. Print.

¹⁹Preeti Gill. (ed) (2010) "The Peripheral Centre, Voices from India's Northeast", New Delhi: Zuban, an imprint of Kali for Women.

²⁰Vertovec, Steven. "Religion and Diaspora." Conference. *New Landscapes of Religion in the West*. Oxford: New Landscapes, 2002. 1-45. Web. 5 July 2011.

only on the cultural conflicts and their part in emerging the female identity in various situations. ²¹Anita Rau Badami is a famous diasporic writer in the literature. Her famous novels are Tamarind woman and The Hero's Walk. She used to cover the two geographical and cultural ethos. Her uniqueness lies in bringing out the diasporic identity. The theme of all her novels implies the emigration, the concepts of motherland and transnational mobility is the main subject in all her novels.

Anita raubadami broke the barriers of sentimental feminism, which expressed the feelings of the Indian immigrants, those who are struggling with the nationalism and internationalism²². All those migrants are trying to have their life over there in all the corners of the world. They have the insecurity in both the sides. They perceive the phenomenon of the migration and the immigration of the culturalism and the personal relationships. More importantly Badami narrates the consciousness of the women's identity. And moreover the most of the characters in her novels are the women protagonists. The feminists always want to be equal with the men and they want to have the equal opportunities. They just want to have the chance to make the decisions in their life.

²³In Asian American writings, Anita Rau Badami's novel The Hero's Walk is portrayed in such a way that the writer narrates her novel about a seven year-old Asian Canadian girl's return to India her mother's native place needs to be considered. In this novel the young girl feels that her West as her abode and now she has to accept the life in the East. She likes to have the lifestyle in the West and not in the East. But she lost her parents and no other way for her to be there to continue the western culture. She has to go with her grandfather to India to lead a typical and traditional life set up there. This shows a sense of belongings over her life.

²¹Singh, Pritam. "The Political Economy of the Cycles of Violence and Non-Violence in the Sikh Struggle for Identity and Political Power." *Third World Quarterly* 28.3 (2007): 555-570. Print.

²²ArchanaGoyal. (1990) "Terrorism Causes and Cosequences", Bikaner: Institute of Environment.

²³ V.S. Naipaul. (1990) "India A Million Mutinies Now", London: Vintage.

3. Conclusion:

The diasporic writers are increased by giving the customs and cultural forms in their diasporic writings. The readers can see choice of aspirations and hopes through their writings. This shows the frustrations and empathy of people. The writers try to show the culture of women in their motherland. In this novel *The Hero's Walk* Badami categorized the cross cultural and traditional conflicts. She expresses the consciousness of diaspora of the women characters in all her novels. The diasporic identity is showed in all her novels. Badami is a diasporic writer and her famous novels are *The Hero's Walk* and *Tamarind woman*. Emigration is the only theme in her novels. This novel shows the insecurity of the migrants in both the sides. Here in this novel, Nandhana feels West as her abode and she like it or not she is in a position to accept the lifestyle in the East. In this novel Maya's opinion is not took into consideration. Sripathi forces her to get married with the local man. But she refused. She would frown on, if she didn't get married. She would have lived if her father didn't force her marriage. She could be alive if Sripathi didn't cut all the connections and contacts with her. This kind of gender inequality is still here in India with the age old traditions. Leading a peaceful life is really hard for women. The female children are lucky if they are likely to be allowed to go and get the education in schools. This novel is a perfect evidence for the diaspora written by Anita Rau Badami. She is famous diasporic writer and her novels got popular among the readers all over the world. This novel won the literacy prizes. The author showed the diaspora in this novel and the typical life of Sripathi.