

Recipe and Representation: A Psychosocial Reading of Women in the novel *The Mango Season* by Amulya Malladi.

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Abstract: *Depiction of food in fiction plays a key role in the contemporary writing interconnecting humans' bond with food, emotion, culture and tradition. Food culture and tradition have their importance tracing down the history of humans and their relation with food culture according to the community or the society they belong. Affliction of Culture, Tradition, and Memory can be a major element in understanding of the contemporary fiction, food as a metaphor in describing the conjunction a person holds on to while being born into a conservative family. Food culture as a plot device, Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season* has a divergent meaning connection with that of food, memory, and tradition. Illustration of the characters, family setting through the chapters, seasonal tradition of the family highlighting the plot sequences that revolve around food, culture and the family tradition. The intersection of cultural and tradition of a particular community, its central concern of exploring the human tendency and emotion they hold on to the food tradition which occurs in a particular season that brings in the family members together. Understanding the major concern for gender equality, family structure, patriarchy culture, are explored through the chapters in the fiction.*

Key Words: *Food, Tradition, Psychology, Culture, Family, Memory.*

Contemporary Indian writing have explored various topic interconnected with women and it mainly focused on their emotional and mental health in understanding their behavioural concern that largely influenced by the external part. The cultural conflict, personal growth, identity crisis, society and family pressure play a vital role in the life of women. Psychology and societal relationship develop the notion of understanding women irrespective of her individuality but highly focused on the family, culture, tradition and the community she belongs clearly has a important concern in women's mental and physical health. Psychological concern can be analysed through the women characters in the fiction *The Mango Season*. The novel has constructed the identity of women as a objectification of the family, culture and traditional one belongs and the differences exists in the form of different culture and society. Food elements plays a prominent role in understanding the setting of the novel where it is set during the Mango Season and which it connects with the main character Priya Rao's memory and her present day. She faces dilemma between finding herself as a daughter belonging to a conservative Baramin Family or as a independent women who has returned from abroad. Psychosocial influences can be observed throughout the novel giving a vivid picture of the recipes that are connected with the memory, culture and tradition in the novel. The chapters start with the recipe Avakai (South Indian Raw pickle) and the memories inclined with the main character.

I remembered stealing mangoes from the neighbour's tree and biting into them with the relish of a theft well done. I remembered sneaking into the kitchen at night to eat the mangoes Ma was saving for something or other. I remembered sitting with Nate and eating raw mangoes with salt and chili powder,

our lips burning and our tongues smacking because of the tartness. Now I couldn't imagine putting that piece of white and green fruit inside my mouth. It was not about taste; it was about hygiene, and suddenly everything everybody had warned me about India came true.⁹

The women characters are taking their roles in the constructed society without having any opinion on their individuality. The novel explores the influences that taken major concern in the life of women and their decision. The characteristic of the female character is the result of having influence by society and family. The generational differences can be differentiated Amamma and Thata being the reflection of their generational standard as a men and women, giving more importance to the society, culture and tradition. The family structure is arranged in a manner to have a deep-rooted ideology to carry forward with the family's reputations. The female character in the novel is designed to showcase the highly dominated constructed society and family. Female characters like Lata, Neelima, Sowmya dealing with the societal pressure and cultural conflict of being influenced by them to live a acceptable life in the society. The psychosocial influence drawn towards the characters, being pregnant again to give birth to a boy child, marriage that happened of love without family support, being an unmarried woman in the house can result in our understanding of the cultural and tradition concern drawn towards building the female characters in the novel.

My Grandmother was a strange creature. She came from a generation where women were treated like doormats, yet she had manage to stay out of the kitchen for most of her life. Earlier in her marriage, her mother-in-law did all the cooking, and by the time she passed away, my mother had been old enough to do the cooking. 38

If you have a son, you will have them kissing the floor you walk on they will have their heir then," I joked, but I also knew it was true. My grandfather was obsessed with perpetuating the line of Somayajulas. He wanted a son's son, and that was why Nate, the only grandson, was not qualified to be heir. 47

The emerging society have taken a drastic shift from ignoring the basic understanding of women to giving them equal space everywhere the influences of the ground level understating of the societal framework of being a women can be focused through the characters. The tradition followed in the family, a ritual in the particular session, following the societal stand to attain higher level of being born the society and following it no matter the individual's idea of life. The conversation of the characters is exposed to the level of influence the society have built in their mind. The novel is constructed in a unique way to take the chapters forwards with that of given recipes that are delicious, relating with a greatness of tradition and bring the memory attached with the tradition. Corelating with the significance change happening in the society have a great impact through the family structure that are built with following the same root. Priya Rao being born into the conservative family; the story takes down through the set back of the society and cultural system that needs to be equalised. The representation on women having influence of varies aspect in the society, culture and religion takes the lower side in giving importance to women. In the novel the psychosocial aspects that conveyed through the recipes shows the essence of the food culture as well as setting of the family events. India is a place for bright and vibrant festivals and it is equally given important for each tradition a family continuous to do through the year. Brahmin culture and tradition are linked with the higher societal structure and setting higher standards for women to follow the rules and regulation in the family. The season for mangoes and family drama to be continued when Priya arrived at her house in India, starting with the mango pickle, beef curry, and mango pappu the representation of emotion and delicious food will take over the chapters titled Chopping Mangoes and Ego, Swimming in Peanut oil and Apologies, You can't make mango pickle with tomatoes.

Being competitive by nature and having the need to prove to the world around me that I was not only a good database programmer but also a god mango chopper, I wielded the knife one more time .44

I had known even then that it wouldn't make any difference whatsoever to Thatha's mind-set regarding what he thought were lowly jobs for those of a higher caste, and I hadn't bothered to convince him otherwise. But now I felt compelled to talk him out of his beliefs about black and white people, Americans, love marriages, and compulsory heirs. 81

The characters are influenced by the family values and expectation which are based on their community. Psychosocial concern through the novel is more evident through the characters, Priya's choice of marrying a foreigner, her uncle who married a woman from a different state have a different treatment in the family as they have no norms to the family value. She also feels guilty of the things that are against her family's rule and cannot aspect their old tradition. The characters are shaped by the cultural and personal experiences, not used to the old tradition in the family, losing the familiarity in her own house and country gives her a different perspective of her own identity. The dual identity with the understanding of two different culture will lead her to take wise decision in her life. The sense of identity and belonging are the two main positive change she experiences on her trip back to hometown. The characters are determined by their patriarchal and hierarchical society they live in and tries to fit in the boundaries the family and society have drawn towards women. The women characters in the novel are dealing with different problems in their life and their influences are from the society and men in the family. The manipulation of being a good woman is doing all the needed role constructed by the society and formation of dealing with the structured rule of that leads women to live in the boundary.

This was unusual, but then it wasn't every day his favourite daughter not only broke his dreams but walked all over them with pointed shoes as well. Even though this was my life, and I knew in my head that I had to live it the way I wanted to, I couldn't shrug the guilt away. It was there, rock solid, without give. And there was another form of guilt, the guilt for feeling guilty in the first place. 145

Just seven years, and all this seemed alien. This browbeating and digging into personal lives seemed alien. But inside me, I knew that this was the Indian way. I could turn my nose up at it and think it was uncouth, but this was how I raised. This was how things were. It was bloody high time I accepted it and did what needed to be done.180

Psychosocial is the major understanding the interrelation factors that influence the character, thought process, understanding capability, physical and mental concern that deals with the development of women living in the society. The personality trait is clearly developed during the course of living in a particular family culture and societal structure, through the women character we could analysis the factors that are developed among the family member and their pattern of doing household chores, developing a good relationship with the in laws, paying attention to the duty that are constrained only if you're the women in the family. The contribution of female characters are the main ingredients used to bring in the spice in the food they produce. The recipe giving in the novel takes shift in understanding the nostalgic feeling of being in a family tradition in the particular season to connect with the family member which believed to maintain and follow the customs to keep their family standards high according to the culture and the society. The conditions that are made for being a woman in concern with two culture and tradition takes a drastic shift in understanding the perspective of dealing with cultural and societal factors that has a strong hold in their behavioural and thinking patterns. Amulya Malladi has crafted this novel with unique aspect of giving the seasonal recipe, relating with cultural and societal aspect which plays a significant role in the development of human being. The major importance

is giving through the food and the process of making the seasonal dish and the conversation the family holds play a vital role in Baramin family, author here constructed the novel exploring the relationship with food, tradition, culture and society and this paper analysis the work through the lens of psychosociology to explore the dimension of the understating the changes and influence of human behaviour in terms with culture and society.

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