

MIGRATION AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE LOWLAND*

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Abstract

This paper is mainly focus on the Immigration experience and Quest toward Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* protagonist Subhash always depend on his young brother Udayan. Subhash there is no sign of itself so he decided to move on to U.S to create his own Identity. To Gauri became widowed within two years of marrying Subhash younger brother Udayan. Gauri's husband Udayan died by the Naxalite movement, then Subhash decided to get married considering Gauri's security, and she accepted it as an opportunity for a new life and freedom for him, he got married and immigrated to America. In this article you can see how they struggle for their own identity and way of life and how they adopt a new culture and the pain Exile.

Migration and Quest for Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*, explores first generation immigration experience, the way of living their life in host land quest towards finding Identity. It portrays the character Subhash and Gauri who has been facing the struggles of immigration and how they adopting new culture. *The Lowland* is about two Inseparable brother's born in middle class Bengali family in Calcutta and although this novel contains another character Gauri and her daughter Bela from the perspective of diaspora disclose. This paper aim is Migration experience and Quest for Identity.

Jhumpa Lahiri's the novel *The Lowland* is about first generation migration. Subhash and Udayan Inseparable brothers belongs family and were born into a Calcutta family. Two brothers who closed to each other in their young age, Subhash always depending on his younger brother Udayan. Because of this Although Subhash is older than Udayan, they both attend the same class at the school. Subhash would not have done anything without Udayan.

Subhash often gets into trouble with his brother Udayan. When the boys enter their college season they both enroll in separate local universities. They begin to separate for the time in their lives still Subhash cannot make decision without Udayan's approval. That period changed both ideology and way of thinking, but both are similar height, way of speaking. Similar them is more evident in the words of Gauri as:
The same height a similar build, counterparts, companions, though she'd never seen them together, Subhash. Subhash was a milder version. Compared to Udayan's, his face was like the slightly flawed impression the man at Immigration had just stamped into her passport, indicating her arrival, stamped over a second time for emphasis. Almost the exact pitch and manner of speaking, this was the deepest and most startling proof of their fraternity. (148)

In that time they were hearing about Naxalbari movement in radio. Udayan joins in with a group of radical associates with Communist party of the Maexist-Leninist. But Subhash has a different ideology, he wants to become a better man in the society, about his family and then he wants to create his own identity without Udayan.

After completing their Master's degree Udayan remained in India, but, Subhash migration into America. He went abroad because of his desire to have a successful career and his own identity in the society. Subhash's dream of doing a PhD in the United States came true when he received a scholarship to settle on Rhode Island for his research. "He thus steps out of Tollygunge as he had stepped so many morning out of dream, its reality and its particular logic render meaningless in the light of day".(33)

He breathed a sigh of relief because, unlike the days in Tollygunge. After migration life stopped attacking him, but after emigrating, Subhash and Udayan miss each other and nostalgia. So, they both shared feelings along the way of the letter. Meanwhile, Udayan informed in his last letter that he was married a girl Gauri, who holds a degree in philosophy during his presidency, who live with her brother Manash and send Gauri's photo. "Not only had Udayan married before Subhash, he'd married a woman of his choosing".(47). Subhash is alone in free the Rhode Island most of time he feels lonely, restlessness and isolated. He is alone for two years in a student

boardinghouse, he learns to live without the voice of his family and soon he learns to live America then life goes easily.

That time he met a woman named Holly who already married and had a baby boy. Subhash has had sexual relationship with Holly, he know that is not his Culture. He like Holly so much but after some days Holly stopped her illicit affair with Subhash because her husband had returned to him. Again he went to depression and he feels isolated. After migration to America his life goes easily till he hear the news about his brother Udayan died because of Naxalbari movement police encounter him.

Subhash back to Calcutta, he expects grand welcome but his family are depressed and sad so that's not happen. He enquired about Udayan's death but no one give proper answer. He meet Udayan's wife Gauri. Who was isolated in house due to Indian tradition, just after two years of marriage she became widow. According to Indian norm widow not allowed to eat meat, fish and only wear white saree, not allowed to done with other family members.

Of mourning and seclusion inside the house. The vermillion was washed clean from her hair, the iron bangle removed from her waist. The absence of those ornaments markets her as a widow. She was twenty three years old.....after eleven days a priest came from the final rites a cook to prepare the ceremonial meal. Inside the house, Udayan's portrait was propped against. The wall in a frame, behind glass, wreathed with tuberose... (129)

After death of Udayan only she knows, she is pregnant but her mother-in-law is deliberately treating badly her with the intension of evicting her and police also disturb her. Because of this Subhash decided to save her from a unhappy life so he decided marry Gauri and take her out of the place of injustices. Gauri also accepted his proposal because she thinks this is an opportunity to make her life meaningful and successful in her career. She married Subhash and he brings back to Rhode Island. Both are lives their life husband and wife without love. In her pregnancy period at host land Gauri longing for her mother's love and also, she missed Udayan lot but migration makes her to forget her past life and agony of her husband being dragged and shot dead in front of her eyes.

Migration gave her freedom and she considered it a good opportunity to fulfill her goal. So she enrolled in the Philosophy department at the University of the U.S. It is interesting *The Namesake* novel character Ashima is completely different compared to Gauri here. Because Ashima is a homesick character who loves Indian tradition and culture, so she wants to live her life in India, but unfortunately she migrated to America. In remembrance of Indian culture after emigration, Ashima prepares Indian food with host country groceries and she always think about Bengali family members.

Gauri spent most of her time studying and she went to college library to read books. That's gave her to stress relief. She is trying to mix with American culture. She enjoys attending Narasimha and Kate's party with some other women too. After birth of Bela, Subhash considers Bela as his own daughter and being as a good father for Bela. He spent day and night with Bela but her not a dearest daughter for Gauri because after birth of Bela, Gauri become restlessness, depressed because of that her study period also decreased. Gauri like to wear western outfit so any time she see a western women hairstyle, dressing one day Gauri too cut her hair and wearing western clothes, but Subhash dis not like it.

Why did you cut off your hair?

I was tired of it.

And your clothes?

I was tired of those, too.

...just putting away the new clothes she'd bought, then throwing the old things into garbage bags. (169)

Suddenly Subhash received letter from him mother regarding his father's death, so return for Subhash father's funeral. That was a six-week trip, and they stayed there in India she realized that motherhood was not for her, that her role was not comfortable for her, so she wanted to continue her education. After six-week stay, Gauri moved to California because of her studies and she wants to stand her own feet and live her life freely. Also she wrote a letter for her daughter too. Subhash and Bela returned to Rhode Island. After reaching Rhode Island, Subhash reveals that Gauri didn't come with them and he gave that letter to Bela. After hear that news she becomes upset, feeling depressed and longing for her mother's love.

Meanwhile, Gauri felt loneliness and isolated in California, lives with memories of Udayan and Bela, even though she is in depressed she got successful life. The interest of studies Gauri becomes restlessness but she didn't consider it's an obstacle to achieve her goal. She joined teaching profession in California. After her first job she moved to Santa Cruz, than she moved in San Francisco, often that she didn't return back. When she is forty years old, she becomes a visiting scholar at Heidelberg University.

Subhash becomes a leading professor in US. He has to idea to go back India, he settled down in Rhode Island. He accepted that western culture, tradition and lifestyle, he don't want to remember past, at sixty he divorce

Gauri and he found women Elise Silva at his friend funeral love her and married. Gauri haircut symbolized her individuality and her acceptance of western culture and created her own identity too. Gauri is a more prominent figure of quest for identity because she is the one had more struggle to get her own identity. First she live her life without parents, next married a men who is in Naxalbari movement and died she becomes widow at the age of twenty, again she married her brother-in-law and then exile to California for a job finally she become a visiting professor in Heidelberg University.

Thus, first generation migration of Subhash and Gauri. How they solve difficulty of immigration, new culture and tradition. Gauri became a good Professor at an American University, settled in abroad permanently and she successfully established a new identity in the United States Gauri haircut symbolized her acceptance of western culture. Subhash, Bela used to it without Gauri's present, so they live smoothly there. He became a successful scientific researcher in America and also settled permanently in the United States as he did not want to return to India. They two have different intention but in the end both have successful careers and life because they sacrificed more for their own identity and succeeded.

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www.researchgate.net/publication/333560563_Wives_and_Widows_in_the_Fiction_of_Jhumpa_Lahiri_A_Comparative_Study_of_The_Namesake_and_The_Lowland. Accessed 3 Mar. 2022.