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Family Issues in Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House

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Abstract :- On the stage of invention and criticism, Indian English literature is a vital emerging subject. Indian women writers have given Indian English literature a fresh perspective. Woman novelists have united the prominent female representation in their works, which has influenced the socio-cultural patterns of Indian literature. Women novelists began to write in English in the middle of the nineteenth century. Indian women novelists highlight the most critical problems relating to women. Typical male writers represent women as stereotyped characters. Women are depicted as strong and vibrant after the advent of female novelists. They believe that women, like men, are equally capable of presenting society's condition. Santha Rama Rau attempts to describe the different social and family problems women face in India. Her novels are about women trying to find out who they are, their past, their responsibilities, their roles in society, and, most importantly, their family relations with each other. The female characters in Rama Rau's work have internal problems and search for identification.

The purpose of this research paper is to look into Baba's (Indira) many family issues and other family relationships in Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House*. Baba is the novel's female protagonist. She believes that family difficulties cause her pain, so she wants to leave them aside. At the climax of the story, Baba realizes that she has affected her grandmother, husband, children, and everyone with her behavior. She applies this perspective to notice, begin, and maintain her importance and value. Baba is also capable of reasonable and intelligent thought. She believes she must accept all of her family's connections in their current state.

Keywords : Family Issues, Relationships, Cultural conflicts, Quest for identity, Tradition, and Modernity.

In Indian culture, family is essential. Marriage is usually regarded as the holiest organization in a family, where the source of comfort nurtures the people who live there. In several different ways, social positions influence the impact of family issues. *Remember the House*, a renowned novel by Santha Rama Rau, depicts the complex patterns of subjugation and gender discrimination at work within the family system and male-dominated Indian society.

In a patriarchal society, male dominance in women's lives is a natural phenomenon. The subsequent elevation of women to a subordinate position inspired Indian women authors to stand up for women's rights. Santha Rama Rau's novel *Remember the House* focuses on the cultural conflicts, frustrations, and dissatisfactions of women who exercise social and cultural compulsion in a male-dominated culture. It focuses on women's suffering and pain in a male-dominated and tradition-bound society. They highlight the irrationality of customs and traditions that support establishing the male dominance myth. This demonstrates how a woman can grow from self-surrender to establish her identity through some newly formed identity. In her writings, Santha Rama Rau has portrayed a variety of family, social, and economic difficulties. The theme of family concerns is focused on various family interactions, including grandmother-daughter relationships, mother-daughter relationship issues, husband-wife relationship issues, and extramarital relationship issues.

There is no close relationship between grandmother and daughter in *Remember the*

House, unlike in Indian society. A grandmother is an important figure in her daughter's life. A daughter's early relationships are typical with her father and grandmother. Here is the novel's first scene, in which the extraordinary bond between the grandmother and her daughter Baba (Indira) is revealed. She returned to her grandparents' house after a fifteen-year absence; her grandmother was unprepared to see her and was uninterested in learning about her life and family. This elaborates the lack of affection between the grandmother and her daughter. Her grandmother showed no interest in learning anything about her, her family, or her children. Her grandmother had never showered her with love or expressed her displeasure since the protagonist Baba spent her childhood in her grandparents' home in the south Indian village of Jalnabad, but changed her mind about Indian culture after returning from England.

Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the house* is an autobiographical novel. She has described the various social issues, family issues, and relationships through the character of Baba. Baba acts as Santha Rama Rau's mouthpiece in this novel. When Baba returns from England to India after her schooling, her attitude towards Indian people and society has changed. She likes the company of a snobbish and westernized family in Bombay. She says:

"I too was caught up these days with all my fine friends who had learnt in wicked foreign lands these habits of drinking and dancing all night... of course, it was useless to talk to me these days, I thought only of my pleasure". (Rau 28)

Due to such habits, Baba's relationship with the family members was not good. She wants that all the family members accept the westernized attitude toward life. Baba disagrees with Shalini's concept of the Perfect Hindu Wife and the responsibilities to shoulder in the husband's family.

In Indian society, a married woman cannot return to her maternal house without her

husband. They are supposed to stay in her husband's house till the last day of judgment. In this novel, widowhood of Shalini is the leading cause of the stay in the house. She wants to correct the westernized attitudes toward Baba. Baba could not bear the traditional perspective of her grandmother, so that she couldn't express her feelings of pain to her. As we know from Shalini, she was not worried about the problems of her family members.

The novelist skillfully depicts the father-daughter connection's plight, issues, difficulties, and sufferings. In this novel, the grandmother-daughter relationship is essential. The mother-daughter relationship is necessary to understand this novel, *Remember the House*, which typically depicted conflict mainly between Baba's grandmother and her husband, Hari Joshi. Baba's husband is a pure Indian man and believes in traditional values; when a woman's role shifts from domestic to socially established professional, the male or husband finds it difficult to adjust to his new role.

The novel is full of cultural conflicts, hatred, antagonism, and sorrow. In this novel, a mother who is often a holy figure for her family is an opponent of her daughter. There is not a single instance where mother and daughter had appreciated together. Through the character of Baba's mother, Rau represents "a woman who renounces the rich household and lives like a recluse and seeks pleasure in music." (Rau 9)

In this novel, marital problems are a significant theme. Marriage is a sincere acknowledgment of man and woman's inherent equality. Both man and woman must share the joys and obligations of a joint effort. There is no other relationship as profoundly intimate and equally pleasant as a man and woman's relationship. On the other hand, Baba does not believe in such an idea of marriage. Baba wants to be self-sufficient, but she also fantasizes about a great dominating male who can provide her with the purpose of existence. In the first two meetings, Baba is fascinated by G.R.Krishnan, a school

teacher in Chennur. When Baba declares, "I am in love with Krishnan," (Rau 193) Her grandmother becomes very angry. She does not like the western romantic idea of love. According to her, such a love affair before marriage is not acceptable in traditional Indian society. Baba's grandmother says:

"Any woman feels ashamed. How else should she be modest? When you are married, it is all different. The if you speak of love, you will know what you are talking about." (Rau 193)

Baba's family is interested in Hari Joshi. He is an appropriate match for Baba, but Baba refuses to marry Hari Joshi. Krishnan remained her hero for years even though she never had the opportunity to speak with him. She wants to marry Krishnan, but her parents oppose her marriage. Baba has different ideas about marriage. Western education and staying in the west might have changed the opinions about Baba. When Hari Joshi proposes to her, she discards his proposal saying that:

"Why should we get married? Hari says, "One has to get married". Has to?" "surely there should be something else." (Rau 127)

Baba had the opportunity to reflect on her background, thoughts, and position in the family and society. When she recognizes herself, she accepts to face the challenges. Baba agrees to marry Hari, even though she does not love him. She is unable to justify her decision to marry Hari. She is also unable to communicate her feelings to her family.

Remember the House, a novel by Santha Rama Rau, similarly deals with the problems of the young heroine, Baba, who is caught between reality and fantasy. One side of the conflict is represented by Baba's American friends, Alix and Nicoll, who make happiness their life's objective. Baba's family members, on the other hand, are the actual representation of traditional beliefs. Baba's marriage to Hari, an undemonstrative, steady old friend who is accepted by Baba's household,

illustrates the victory of conventional family values over the allure of the west at the end of the novel.

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