

# A Journey of Emotional Tumult Life of Surrogacy in Amulya Malladi's A House for Happy Mothers

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Received: April 6, 2022      Accepted: October 16, 2022      Online Published: October 20, 2022

doi:10.5430/wjel.v12n8p282

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n8p282>

## Abstract

The paper focuses on the theme of surrogacy, which has socially placed on a podium as a cultural construct over a women's psyche rather than a biotic disposition with special reference to the novel *A House for Happy Mothers* by Amulya Malladi. The dispute is on the cause of thriving fertility treatment and surrogacy clinics in India where reproduction is not a mere connatural biological activity but a commodity, a blooming business where concords has endorsed between parties. Poverty compelled the women to enter the exploitative work and highly reliant relationships with the doctor of surrogacy clinic and the hiring parents for example, the protagonist Asha decides to be a surrogate because of her son to have a better education whereas the other protagonist Priya wanted desperately to have her own child through surrogacy. The experiences of the intended mother and surrogate mother who yearned for their needs and their journey of self-discovery leads into heartache, loss and the happiness that comes with helping others and their bond to voyage a new life and rehabilitated optimism to each other into the world. In this context, the novelist proceeds with the polemical leitmotif of surrogacy through the lives of surrogate mother and hiring mother. The aim of the paper focuses on the emotional tumult life of surrogacy in a psychoanalytic standpoint of the characters in *A House for Happy Mothers* and the contribution that the characters were being determined in their own way and the anecdote that draws them together becomes a light of goodness and happiness.

**Keywords:** surrogacy, surrogate mother, intended mother, psychological, social construct

## 1. Introduction

Nature has presented the exquisite competence to propagate a life within women and every woman treasures this experience of motherhood. Having a child is the biggest dream for a woman. However, some couples encounter fertility issues, which obstruct them from being parents. The ache and misery of not satisfying the dream of parenthood is inestimable. Infertility treatment has moved ahead rapidly, and various treatments are suggested to eradicate this problem such as artificial insemination (AI) and in-vitro fertilization (IVF). In the contemporary situation, the impotency in women is alleviated through the process of surrogacy. Surrogacy is one of the abetted propagation methods by which a woman concurs to haul a pregnancy for another person. Through surrogacy, women come to an agreement to become pregnant, gestate a fetus "genetically unrelated to the surrogate." and then "relinquish their parental rights and responsibilities." (Robinson, 1994 pp. 205). The first traditional surrogacy denotes the child to be hereditarily allied to the surrogate mother by the process of Intracervical Insemination (ICI) or Via Intrauterine Insemination (IVI). Furthermore, the gestational or IVF surrogacy in which a zygote from commissioning parentages has hauled to the foster's womb. In gestational surrogacy, the mother who bears the fetus and relinquish new-born infant has no biological connection with the tot. In the scenario, where a gestational carrier is paid to bear a child in her womb and is referred as 'womb for rent', 'outsourcing pregnancies' or 'baby farms'. This unfettered surrogacy souk is deemed to be value \$2.3 billion (Deonandan et al., 2012). In 2016, the Regulation Bill states the mass media report the stories with regards to destitute and unparented surrogacy tots, disquiets concerning the destitute treatment of fosters, generated in the Indian government which enlisting a new proxy to forbid commercial surrogacy believing it to be exploitive. Hence, the bill was passed merely to altruistic surrogacy for infertile Indian couples. (Sibal, 2016).

In particular, it has been implied that the great revenue disparities and highest influence distinctions flanked by hiring parents and fosters (Dasgupta and DasGupta, 2014). In addition to the dearth of further options for fosters (Pande, 2009a) are formulated fosters in India susceptible to exploits. Furthermore, since women from lower-economic people in the emerging countries undergo from extreme of poignant hitches, mainly fetal and postpartum dejection, likened to women from higher-economic states, proxy in India may take a chance for psychological problems (WHO, 2017). These feelings of women are led to a certain level of substantial discomfort regarding surrogate's psychological welfare; nevertheless, the prospective emotional concern undergone by fosters has not probed in the Global south. (Crockin, 2013; Söderström-Anttila et al., 2016).

There are many factors that specifically may produce emotional mischief to fosters, also persevere with predominantly uncharted. Some

surrogate critics dispute that women make an intense connection with the foetus child and that it is psychologically harrowing them to relinquish the child that has fostered in her womb. (Warnock Report, 1985, British Medical Association, 1996). However, Van den Akker (2007) encountered that fosters were deeply with a lesser amount of anxious about their physical condition and welfare of the unborn infant and a smaller amount of hopeful about the infant than the biological mothers. Surrogate mothers are contented with their encounters. The prevalence of post-natal slump to be diminutive. (Jadva et al., 2003). Söderström-Anttila et al., asserts that “Important factors that determine the surrogate mother’s satisfaction after the birth of the baby is related to the quality of the relationship with the intended couple, especially the intended mother, and circumstances to do with the relinquishment of the child.” (Söderström-Anttila et al., 2016). In relation to this Edelmann states that “surrogates clearly is a simple ‘business’ arrangement which will terminate once the baby has been delivered to the commissioning couple[.] the relationship between surrogate and commissioning couple is also not a commonplace friendship but a relationship which is closely inter-related with their views about the welfare of the surrogate child.” (Edelmann, 2000, pp. 129). In *A House of Happy Mothers* most of the surrogates recognize the veracity existence of surrogacy, Asha states that “We’re like coolies, carrying someone else’s load for a while” ... “Once we’re done, we handover the baggage and it’s over” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 228). Malladi’s novel manifests the psychological bond of Indian surrogates which is purely an arrangement entailed for business concerns. It is supposed to be carried until the postpartum, this epitomise the subsistence experience of surrogacy life.

## 2. Review of Literature

In India the study exemplifies mainly interesting spot while it is the first emerging country with a thriving trade in nation-wide and transnational commercial surrogacy. As for the reason that ethical and moral opacity encircling proxy, loads of republics take account of France, Germany, China, Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Italy, Spain, and some US states forbid surrogacy. Some countries have inflicted partisan debar, such as UK, South Africa, Brazil, Hongkong, Australia. Amidst the latter group of countries, Israel, Canada, UK and the Greece consent to IVF proxy, matter to regulations. Then there are other countries without regulations for instance India, Finland, and Belgium (Teman, 2010). In India, surrogates have mostly hired by agents through the word from articulation. Pande depict “surrogates as ‘docile, selfless and nurturing’ women who were instructed to be flawless’ worker-mothers’.” (Pande, 2010a). Surrogates often live in a surrogate house which is group quarters situated near fertility clinics, during their prenatal period. Whilst existing in the surrogate house allowing them to be underneath a ‘continual Surveillance’ by hospice staff it has also been state to keep the surrogates with a vibe of sisterhood (Pande, 2011; Vora, 2014). Indian surrogates obtained a large amount of money as income. They are improbable to stumble upon the commissioning couple after the postnatal period while, the surrogates are often positive for a perpetual bond expecting a deed of mutual benefit and munificence from the hiring couples (Pande, 2011).

Malladi’s novel *A House for Happy Mothers* attempts to provoke the theme of surrogacy through the experiences of an American duo, Priya and Madhu who were entrained on the voyage of paternity through surrogacy in India. Some literary critics allude to Malladi’s proficiency “examines India’s surrogacy industry with honesty and grace” (Hill, 2016). The novel has been praised as “a sensitive exploration of the emotional terrain of motherhood and the socio-economic complexities of our global world” (Gowda, 2016), while others ponder it as “a thought provoking, modern-day family saga set amidst the backdrop of traditional Indian and American maternal expectations.” (Nathan 2016), which “shines as an unblinking light on the business of surrogacy in India, and the emotional fallout” (Thomson, 2016). Furthermore, Malladi’s novel analyse it from diverse perspective: from the live encounter of the foster mother to that of the commissioning couples, from the moral and monetary account of the doctor who intricate the procedure and it also deals with the responses of kinship and friends. In this practice, Malladi’s novel *A House for Happy Mothers* proceeds with the polemical leitmotif of surrogacy through the lives of surrogate mother and hiring mother. The novelist has come a long way from depicting and extoling the idols of mothering to concede and accept them as an individual entity.

## 3. Methodology

This paper encompassed psychoanalytic theory to critically analyse the concept of attachment the novel *A House for a Happy Mothers* by Amulya Malladi. Within the wider term, John Bowlby’s theory of probing literature with the light of psychoanalysis had been employed by the researcher. This is a study on the journey of emotional tumult life of surrogacy via textual analysis.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Mental State of Surrogate Mother

The verdict to use a surrogate mother forms a consequent relationship with the foetus. But the act of surrogacy brings a benefit to both the surrogate and the intended mother though both parties are slightly harmed, the result prevails over those harms. Additionally, the surrogate mother acts as a saviour of her family to meet the financial crisis in giving up the emotional pain that is attached with the foetus and the expectancy of giving up results in hormonally-based emotions of pregnancy. Malladi’s novel express the extreme state of surrogate feelings where the surrogate life is whether a ‘boon’ or ‘bane’. In *A House for Happy Mothers* the surrogate Revati shows her deep emotion about the bane of surrogacy. She states that “Good thing for Whom? The white people and the rich people? [...] “you have to sell your body and have a baby. I understand it’s a gift you give to a barren couple, ...it helps you live a better life, but.... they get a baby, what do you get? Hemorrhoids and a sagging stomach ...Oh, you get the money,.. But it’s not going to change your life, it is? That’s why women keep coming back here. They have one, two, three children like this to make more money while their no-good husbands sit at home, doing nothing.” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 227). It clearly states that economic status is not adequate for their lives so that they repeatedly do surrogacy without any concern of exploiting their own body. Even though the relationships incline to be optimistic, some hitches may ascend after the surrogacy

procedure that ought to be interpreted by mentors. In the case that Asha who tries to maintain a relationship with Priya may accomplish as a constant reminder that she is bearing a foetus for others, that lead her into psychological distress. After the postpartum Priya expresses that “You have given us the greatest joy imaginable”, “I can’t thank you enough for your courage and your generosity.” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 299). Eventually, Asha comprehends Priya’s desperation for the child and imagines her pain of infertility which is stated that “She knew women who couldn’t keep their pregnancies and some who could never even get pregnant. They are treated poorly by their husbands, their own families, everyone around them. A woman has to get pregnant, has to give birth – it is a part of being a woman, as natural as having breast and a womb. A woman who never become a mother was incomplete. (Malladi, 2016, pp. 299-300). In the end both the parties have come to an understanding, the relationships of “hope” made them to trust each other. Malladi illustrates that “Asha has given them a gift that they couldn’t get themselves, a gift they pined for, but they had given Asha an even bigger gift – a future for her son.” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 301). Hence, it deliberately discloses that though surrogates come across the psychological distress and exploitation of the health but surrogates make a right decision without distorting the other hope. The one decision making changed the life of surrogate and the intended parents for the rest of their better lives.

#### 4.2 Mothers Clinic

Lamba, Jadva et al., 2018 highlights “most of the surrogates reported feeling positive about living in the surrogate house. Staying there might have made them feel more supported and less burdened by the pressures of maintaining a secret from those around them and feel free of the everyday life stress. Additionally, surrogates’ satisfaction with the payment they received for surrogacy did not facilitate their psychological well-being”. (Lamba, 2018, pp. 651). In *A House for Happy Mothers* most of the surrogate have bequeathed their children with relatives and shifted into the house for Happy Mothers. Though they were missing their families and children, the needs of their lives and the travail obligatory to steer it make the unhappy house alluring by comparison. The author of the novel highlights the surrogate mother who live in a place arranged by the hospital called as ‘Happy Mothers’. She portrays this house to be comfier than the surrogate homes. All the mothers there waiting to deliver other babies while missing their own children like Asha who did the same. In this novel the protagonist, Asha detects her life exhausting and intricate gestures and waits in a house imbued with women doing the same thing as their daily routine. She said: “Even though they had all the creature comforts they could dream of, none of the women in the Happy Mother’s House was happy. Asha saw it everywhere. The frustration of being away from their families, the humiliation of living to everyone about their pregnancy, the conflict of having a baby inside of them they mustn’t bond with—these were definitely not Happy Mothers” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 154). The novelist Meera Syal “*The House of Hidden Mothers*” comprise a segment with the hype tactics handled by clinic which add a notable account of the publicity audio-visual for the health centre:

“This is life-changing experience for everyone involved: for the couples who long for a baby, and for the women who carry the child for them. The fees that our surrogate mothers receive enable them to transform their lives: to buy their own homes, educate their children... it gives them financial independence they could not get any other way... As for the couples, who visit us from all over the world, because India is now the world centre for ART, they do not only get the gift of a longed-for child, but also they know that their money is going to help the woman who has given a new life to them.” (Syal, 2015, pp. 92).

The passage above states that the surrogacy is a life challenging condition and the metamorphosis entailed in the experience of surrogate mother. In *A House for Happy Mothers* Dr. Swati has chosen some surrogates for the clinic welfare to attend the T.V. program and promote Happy Mothers clinic. This arrangement makes the surrogate to feel unpleasant on the account of telecasting their face would lead into humiliation for the family. Dr. Swati being familiar with the background of all the surrogates particularly Asha who dreams of acquiring her son, Manoj into a great school so the doctor promised to get him into the school. With the hope of Dr. Swati’s words Asha decides to be a part of the program and states that “This was a bazaar, a marketplace. First, she had to sell her womb to get money. Now she had to sell her honesty to get Manoj into a good school” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 158). For Indian women existing in remote areas consenting to be surrogate mothers become a life-changing events. Though surrogates exploit such as; physical, emotional, and economic conditions due to the money that they have obtained from the commissioning couples, they are cared, received in clinics during pregnancy and the ‘respect’ of their spouse distinguish them as worthwhile breadwinners. In terms of relinquishment, study in the UK and USA has recurrently exhibited that most fosters were able to part with the infant they carries. (Ragon 1994; Jadva et al., 2003, 2012; Van de Akker 2003; Imrie and Jadva, 2014).

#### 4.3 Maternal Bonding

Surrogates create a bond with the infant since the parental bonding upsurges certainly out of the embodied experiences of parturientcy. The maternal rapport as a feeling of bond urges a surrogate mother to rejoiner the foetus appositely. The most significant factor determines that the surrogates who have relinquished the babies had bonded with them which lead into psychological problems and depression for the surrogate mothers. In the novel, ‘A House for Happy Mothers’ most of the surrogates who involved in the process of pregnancy has shown no significant different in their psychological traits. This may outcome from fundamental and societal traits of Indian surrogacy where the lifestyle of an Indian foster exists in a surrogacy house requires one intention, that is to tend the foetus and abdicate it. The concept of “‘worker-mother’ dualism, whereas fosters curb their remit as a ‘mother’ by not attaching psychologically with the baby but prudently stay on their role as a ‘worker’ by being thoughtful in relation to the wishes of the unborn baby”. (Pande, 2010a). In *A House for Happy Mothers* Asha being a first surrogate strives to be emotionally distant with the baby growing within her. But she struggled with her feelings of attachment to “their” baby throughout the pregnancy. It has been evolving that fosters construct a determined exertion to deem of surrogacy

as a trade and do not consider the child as their own. (Snowdon 1994; Baslington, 2002). In commercial surrogacy is also believing to be a part of the cause in producing a psychological aloofness between foster and the unborn baby. (Baslington, 2002). Further hitches, surrogates have come across for instance language barrier and gap may embark on the bond with intended parents, and surrogates encounter societal chagrin and reproach from kinsfolks and the public (Karandikar et al., 2014). These experiences may adversely indicate the surrogate's psychological turmoil. Lamba states in the following:

“For those who decide to hide their surrogacy, the visible baby makes it impossible for them to meet family and friends during the pregnancy, resulting in social isolation and a lack of social support. Moreover, unlike western countries, not only is the detailed screening for psychopathology in surrogates typically omitted, psychological counselling and support are also not readily available to surrogates in India, potentially making them more vulnerable to psychological problems.” (Lamba, 2018, pp. 648).

In *A House for Happy Mothers* Asha struggled to hide her position as all the surrogate mothers in the present society. She interprets that “Society has its rules and even though many women were carrying other people's children in their wombs, it was all hush-hush, hidden, a dirty secret” (Malladi, 2016, pp. 22). She feels it not to be reasonable that she gets more attention to carry someone else's child while her own children have divested of the same.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, Malladi instigates a window into the lives of different characters delineated from reality and portrays the conditions of their real life and expectations. Her characters are deliberately significant as they expand the sophistication of surrogacy. When Asha had a small emergency, Priya moves to India for the rest of the pregnancy, fearing the worst. They come to understand each other that disperse the distrust and anger as well as the feeling of guilt. She depicts the character that has a great deal of inner strength. Most of the situation, her characters were being determined in their own way and the anecdote that draws them together becomes a light of goodness and happiness. Although the surrogate is from India, the hiring couple is also from India and socially from the same Indian culture they are marked different as they are from a different social and economic cultures. Therefore, the novelist exhibits that a person of their own ethnic culture can exploit a surrogate. However, it should also be comprehending that surrogacy is a blessing for childless couples, so rather than seeing them as a 'rent a womb' and instead it should be viewed as a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship to fulfil each other people's hope and dreams. Overall, Malladi highlights the looming ought to dwell on surrogacy as a polygonal and multifarious substance when fleeting judgement on this form of maternity. Pande (2011) suggests that “Surrogacy becomes God's gift to needy mothers and an opportunity for them to fulfil their familial duties. Such a portrayal reinforces the image of women as dutiful mothers rather than wage-earning workers, whose primary role is to serve the family.” (Pande, 2011, pp. 624).

## Acknowledgments

The authors have declared no financial aid for the study, authorship, and /or publication of this research.

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