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## *Preface*

In the Post Modern times, Diaspora writings have gained a momentum and several South Asian Writers have distinguished themselves not only in regional languages but also in English language. These South Asian writers have contributed significantly to the evolution of English in World Literature. Undoubtedly, the male pioneers of South Asian Literature have also made huge contributions to the development of this young branch of literature, but South Asian women are in the unique position of having been “doubly colonized”.

A number of Indian women novelists made their debut in the 1990s, producing novels which revealed the true state of Indian society and landscape. Their work is marked by an impressive feel for the language, and an authentic presentation of contemporary India, with all its regional variations. Diasporic women writers have portrayed the cultural dilemmas, the generational differences, and transformation of their identities during displacement. These writers are deeply attached to their centrifugal homeland and in their aim at self-definition and the expression of their expatriate experiences, women from 1970s onwards chose literature to pour out their passions. The Indian diasporic women writers such as Bharati Mukherjee ,Anita Rau Badami, Uma Parmeswaran, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Chitra Banerjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, kiran Desai and many more have unveiled the complexities of discrimination, assimilation, social and demographic change.

In contemporary literature, the term Diasporic writing has come to be associated with works produced by globally dispersed minority communities that have common ancestral homelands. In 1970s Canada became the preferred destination of Indian immigrants because of its multicultural policy. These three women writers selected by me here for doctoral research, Anita Rau Badami, Uma Parmeswaran, Shauna Singh Baldwin have been living and creating in Canada since 1960s. These all are the recipients of a number of prestigious awards which reveals the wide acclamation of their ‘voice’.The experiences of Indo Canadian Diaspora are uniquely expressed in their works. A gender perspective is also provided to the

whole discourse by these women writers. They belong to the generation which has liberated itself from the burden of history.

Present study focuses the fact that how diaspora signals an engagement with a matrix of diversity of cultures languages, histories, people, places, times. Because diaspora is a complex phenomenon, what distinguishes diaspora from some other types of travel is its centripetal dimension. It does not only mean that people are dispersed in different places but that they congregate in other places forming new communities. This research will look into the ways in which Indian women, creating in Canada, handles these issues in literature.

Through their writings Indian women diaspora in Canada has certainly by reinterpreted India for not only themselves but for larger readers all around the world. Diasporic writers have revisited sub continental history, as each ethnic, immigrant and second generation group has done for their 'Old countries'. They have offered Canadians contemporary and historical comparisons between the two post colonial societies. And the works of these writers create grounds for further negotiations in various diverse fields. We are living in the decade of globalization and multiculturalism, so it gets more weight age when we talk of or study such diverse literatures. And as a large number of Indians are living in Canada, its relevant to study how they are assimilating and acculturating to the adopted county and the how they feel about the country and culture that they have left behind.

The present research work is a humble but organized endeavour to evaluate, analysis and investigate different dimensions of diasporic negotiations, experiences presented in the novels of these three women writers.

**First chapter** of this thesis “**Introduction: An overview of Indian Diasporic Writers in Canada: Historical and Political Perspectives**” discusses the very nuances of diaspora, its historical, social, cultural cartographies and various complications attached to this term which have been much used as well as abused in the recent times. Indian migration to Canada has been a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon and Indo-Canadian community has covered a long way out there. Canadian

Multiculturalism has paved the way for literary, cultural and social liberties. Women writers divulge into various themes in their works and sail across borders.

**Second chapter entitled “Sense of Dislocation”** discusses with in-depth textual analysis of the select novels of these women writers, how migration imparts a sense of dislocation, homelessness and alienation. The decision of an individual or a family to leave its ‘homeland’ and go to foreign land and then to settle down there, is influenced by many push and pull factors. An analysis of these factors is important as they determine whether a given stream of emigration was voluntary or involuntary. Dislocation has become indispensable in modern times and works on many levels-physical, geographical, social and psychological.

**Third chapter entitled “Negotiating the Hyphenated Self”** discusses with a theoretical base, the particular context of these three writers and their novels, how a hyphen stands for both separation and connection at a time. For diasporics, there is often an element of trauma in the new life, caused by the disruption and destruction of leaving all that was familiar behind in the home country. A particular kind of articulation of a hyphenated phenomenon among a certain class of diasporic Indo-Canadians is seen. It also reflects a very specific vision of insider/outsider that can be called a sense of ‘twoness’, blessing and cursing them simultaneously.

Some times diasporic people face a sense of hyphenated identity while returning back to the homeland also and find it hard to connect again literally to the homeland though ‘imaginary homeland’ has always been their ‘longing’ but real one might have disillusioned them. Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin and Uma Parmeswaran all have talked about this in their works. This double process of ‘scattering and gathering’ is evaluated here.

**Fourth chapter entitled “Assimilation and Acculturation”** discusses the theory of assimilation and acculturation along with textual analysis. Assimilation can be defined in general as an ability of an ethnic majority to take in and to form into its own image another community of different culture (and language) living in the same area and having a minority status. This process can be described with three