

Chapter-5

Conclusion

The thesis concludes with showing the different dimensions of the diasporic sensibilities in the selected novels under study. The method that the two woman novelists employs as resistance to that dominant sense of loss and dejection is the poetics of return incorporating excessive use of memories and nostalgia for original home and cultural heritage. However, the resulting experience as consequence of that poetics of return is not the soothing recovery of essential cultural identity but hybrid identities and 'diasporic intimacy' manifesting profound uncertainties and split-consciousness embodied with the diasporic space. The strategic edge of such situations can be traced within the double vision of the novelists representing the split-consciousness and arising out of the legacy of the past and the impression of the substantial things of the present context of living. The underlying tension between these two forces overpowered by the sense of loss and urge for creating new identities did not open up any resolution for them regarding the lost selfhood, identity and belonging; rather they make his diasporic sensibilities more reflective and prolific.

In contemporary world, 'think globally and act locally' is the universally accepted idea and the strategy to survive. With this expanding sphere of life multi-religion, multi- cultural, multi- societal, multi- lingual, multi- national and multi- political aspect has connected the life of every human being with each other. Life has become multicentric which oscillates from one centre to another. Such an identity was constructed historically, socially and culturally, and was ultimately affirmed personally. Encounter with the new culture renews the past, refigures it as a contingent "in-between" space, innovates and interrupts the performance of present.

The past-present becomes a part of the necessity of living, not just a nostalgia. Therefore, the poetic and creative tension arises from a powerful memory of the past sharpened by physical distance from his homeland. The themes in the works of these two novelists have their origin in recollected personal emotions. A diasporic writer maintains and ensures the survival of his past self that makes his 'Being' connected with his native land. This is possible only when he creates a space within the culture of the adopted country. But at the same time, there is no possibility of an easy return to the homeland either, whether psychologically or physically. Salman Rushdie also asserts that it may be that writers in his position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if they do look back, they must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that their physical alienation from India almost inevitable means that they will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that they will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but inevitable ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind.

This idea of Rushdie is very much pertinent in the context of the present study precisely because he tries to resolve his diasporic tension and represent homeland in figurative speech through archetypal symbols, rituals and myths. The novelists use these devices to recreate the homeland that is left behind.

The social, political, economical, cultural areas of life are encompassed in global perspective. Due to this development, the whole world has become, "Indra's Net"(106) as the author Anita Rau Badami mentions this symbol in her novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* The technological and scientific advancement has well connected every street and every corner of the world. The term Globalization expresses the cross border relations which indicate international interlinking,

interactions and interdependence. This concept emphasises on global thinking, universal culture and tradition, worldwide brotherhood, humanity and world peace. In the present time of globalization, there is interlinking in trade, society, culture, language, transport, nationality, migration and ethnicity. All the fields are so minutely interlinked with each other, that the minor adverse change in any of the fields affects the other consequently. It has also created ideological, social and cultural interaction not only in urban societies but also in remote communities. The social, economic and political activities are important aspect of culture and the slightest change in these activities directly affects the human life, its mind and society. It means the globalized world of today has more need of literature than ever before because it encompasses problems and issues of the people whose horizons are now international and global. Diaspora literature works in this context. In this globalized world, literature serves its purpose by dealing with issues and problems related to humanism, migration, terrorism and violence in the present world's horizon. The themes and subjects of literature suggest the readers about the nature of society in a particular period and it also motivates them to make a better future. It is the means for cultivation of motivational and inspirational thoughts for better human life. Uma Parameswaran and Anita Rau Badami are the kind of writers who have created their outstanding identity through their selection of unique, pervasive and humanitarian themes for their fiction. Their works covers a huge canvas portraying various characters and themes. The authors have Indian origin and now settled in Canada. Their first hand experience of Indian and Canadian socio-political and cultural life has shaped their diasporic writing. Their fiction depicts the life of Diaspora, and the role of Diaspora community in the host country and their connection with other world. In works of both the

writers, the portrayal of Diaspora community and its relationship with host and native countries have similarities and resemblance.

The works of both the writers have been examined with various thematic aspects which they have weaved with diverse Diaspora and Indian characters as protagonists. They have depicted various issues like dual identity crises, political dissatisfaction, present world's terror issues, and ambivalence, assimilation and discrimination problems. The detailed investigative study of the fiction shows that the authors have done a tremendous job of research on their idea of every work. They have studied history in detail for their history based fiction. The study of both the female diasporic writers brings to notice that they write about Indo- Canadian experience of immigrants, their socio- political status, their relationship with and response to world politics in Diaspora circle. These universal themes are applicable to both global and local readers at the same time. The authors have given expressions to the pervasive emotions of the world, which are racism, nostalgia and mortal fears. Moreover, they also indicate that these problems are not recently generated problems, but were always present in the society and but now these have turned into the burning issues of the present global world.

The study of works of both the writers acknowledges that the first generation immigrants feel alienated and suspended between two cultures in *Trishanku* phase. The characters like sharad, savitri, Veejala, Biji, Khushwant Singh- Paji, Leela Bhat and her mother's experience of loneliness and detachment represent this in-betweenness syndrome. The same is portrayed in case of Veera, who migrates from India to Canada after marriage with Niranjana and faces cultural isolation and social dejection. Veejala experiences gender and racial discrimination in her department due to her Indian origin. Both the authors are portraying characters and their ordinary lives

which are very much affected by politics and history and consequently destroyed by the same forces. These kinds of tragedies are happening all over the world and affecting the innocent people in large. The selected works under study verbalize world's most widely spoken language of silence, suppressed feelings of Diaspora and universal agonies of female world which has always been ignored and remain unheard. The female protagonist Bibiji, her niece Nimmo, Leela Bhat, Saroja, Kamini, Nirmala, Putti, Savitri and Jyoti are truly representative who verbalize the pain of silently suffering of ignored, exploited female world.

Both the writers have tried their hands and excelled in almost all the genres of literature. They have won accolades and awards of national and international repute for their effective works in Diaspora literature. They have devoted their writings to the issues of Diaspora, specifically, women's lives in different country. They express and glorify the different roles of women as mothers, daughters, wives, beloveds and many more. Badami's novels, like *Tamarind Mem*, *Can You Hear the Nightbird's Call?* are basically women-centric. Similarly, Parameswaran's central characters are mostly occupied by the women and males seek marginal roles in her stories. In her works like *What Was Always Her?*, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, she gives voice to the plight and poignancy of issues concerning to their marital status. It can be observed that the intricacies and complexities of married life always find its theme in their writings.

Though these female writers cannot be called as hard-core feminist, their works manifest the injustice done to the women through all these ages in a patriarchal society. These women oriented stories shows their inability to oppose on revolt against the excess done to them. But it is also observed the incredible courage shown by these women against patriarchal norms of the rigid society at the time of need.

Through the writings of both the writers, we come to conclude that the biggest enemy of women in most of cases is their own endless tolerance. Though dejected and discriminated in the male-dominated society the women characters like, Saroja, Maya, Bibi-Ji, Neela, Jyoti and Veejala exhibit strength, self-reliance, confidence and dynamism.

Both the writers dare to touch the themes which were considered to be taboo in the past society. They discuss men-women relationship, single mothers, extra-marital affairs, pre-marriage sex are some of the oft-written subjects by them. In this sense, they are the modern women writers who emphasis on the issues of new women in their writings.

These writers use different fictional narrative techniques as per the demand of the story. For the realistic portrayal of characters and situation in the stories, they use the technique, stream of consciousness technique, interior, monologue, symbolism, power-packed vocabulary, contrasting characters, use of Hindi, Marathi and slangs as per requirement. They have also investigated into the psyche of the characters and used dream sequences. In a nutshell, they are the real stalwarts in literary innovative field. Their creative writing comes to them as naturally as leaves to the trees and it is the only key to their mastery in narration and plot-building.

Apart from the typical nature of Diaspora on feminist writing, these writers do not forget to infuse the dosage of humour and mild satire in the narration of gloom and loss. The characters like Bihari, Tara's-mother-law, in *Trishanku*, Agrawal in "The Door I shut Behind Me" and the characters of Maru's Boss in *What Was Always Hers* by Uma Parameswaran are perfect examples to provide hint of humour and satire. On the other hand Badami has also depicted characters like Laloo in *Can You*

Hear the Nightbird Call, and Ammaya, Putti, Gopala and Nanny in *The Hero's Walk* and *Tamarind Mem* respectively contribute to lighten up the gloomy and grave issues in the novels. Through portrayal of these characters, the readers are given the comic relief at the regular intervals in some sorrowful stories.

It is indicated that both the writers love to provide number of allusions in their works. There are descriptions of Indian epics *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, Meera and Gopala's stories, *Sehnai*, sacred thread, *parijata* tree, *Tulsi* plant and many more. Although, both the Diaspora writers write as outsiders, they do not forget to focus on rituals and life-style of small villages in India. Parameswaran's "Darkness before Dawn" illustrates typical life of Brahmin family in their ancestral house. Badami also writes more about the simple rustic characters from Amritsar, Punjab & Delhi. Her more emphasis is on Indian way life style of small villages rather than of Canadian life-style. Both the writers are more interested in writing about the misfit and displaced middle class female characters and gives minor importance to the issues of higher strata of the society in their works. After going through their works, we find that there are stories within stories in their narration. The protagonist female character narrates the story of her youth and by doing so, there are multiple tales of various generations are interwoven into one thread and makes it a complex mix. The narration of Saroja in *Tamarind Mem* is truly a good example of it.

Besides concentrating on the local themes and common people, these writers also talk about globalization. Some of the situations and characters are global in their writings. The ladies like Savitri, Veejala, Kamini, Maya, Bibi-Ji are self-made professionals and earn their own living. They fulfil all their household responsibilities and also give their contribution in financially raising the family. It reduces the burden of their male counterparts and stand by them in every need.

In contemporary world, it is a fallacy to think that alienation, dejection and discrimination are typical traits of only Diaspora. But the fact is that modern life has become so complicated and complex that man feels alienated and lonely in his own home. The stories of both the writers present the hollowness, isolation, sheer loneliness in one's life and these complexities have become intrinsic part of modern life, whether it is homeland or host land.

Generally, racial discrimination on the grounds of colour, gender and religion is considered to be an important trait in Diaspora writings. But after readings, Uma Parameswarn and Anita Rao Badami, it is realized that women from the day and of their life have always been discriminated. It does not matter where they live. They are always treated biologically and psychologically weaker than their male counterparts. Wifhood and motherhood are their two full time and permanent jobs without salary and no leave ever for a day. The female character like Saroja of Tamarind Mem is the representative of such suppressed women who vents out her frustration through her bitter tongue. Such characters are always in search for their identity and self-respect.

As it can be observed that apart from diasporic traits, feminist approach is very much prominent in the writings of both the writers. These women novelist have touched various themes regarding women's life and position in society. With the help of themes like gender inequality, psychological commotion, agony and exploitation, mother-daughter relationship, disharmony in marital life etc, these writers have created images of Indian women.

The above points prove that there is striking resemblances between two Diaspora writers. They have many similarities in theme, plots, feelings, and

problems. As life gives similar pattern of disappointment and delight, pain and pleasure, acceptance and rejection, and agony and ecstasy and the treatment of these themes hardly changes in Diaspora literature. So during the process of analysis and interpretation of both the writers, many similarities are found in their writings.

Even the emigrated status of women does not change much in patriarchal society. She feels diasporic, alienated and discriminated even in her own country. The female writers selected in this research study are settled in Canada for many years but they have roots in India also become a major source of their writings. The geographical distance from their country does not make their themes different and dissimilar. They deal with the issues and predicament of women through women protagonist in their works.

In Indian families girls are mostly brought up, to be submissive docile and obedient from the early childhood. Females in their different roles of the daughter, sister, wife, mother and daughter-in-law are supposed to sacrifice their happiness and find delight in the achievement of their male counterparts. They are trained since the childhood not to have dreams and ambitions other than those of their husbands. But the detailed analysis of the selected works of both the writers bring to the forefront, the process of immigration from their conservative native place to an advanced developed place, there is increase in the confidence level, change in life-style, economic status and consciousness of women. Generally, in Indian subcontinent, they live the life of inferior significance compared to males. But the life of a woman is completely different in western country because it does not follow much rigidity and control. It is because both male and female are mostly financially independent and their living gives them confidence to thrive and flourish without orthodox societal bondages. After extensive reading of these texts, we can conclude that women in the

foreign land are given more luxury, independence, less family responsibilities, privacy, decision-power and assertiveness in whatever they do. Hence, there are examples of some female characters like Maya, Kamini, Veejala in the present Diaspora texts where they take some bold decisions of their life which seems to be contrary of their conventional role of a home maker.

Anita Rao Badami's works reflect that alienation and frustration have nothing to do with the geographical distance. Her migrated characters are not so alienated and sad than the characters living in their home land. In modern era, frustrations and loneliness are in the air which we breathe. It is a herculean task to find a truly happy, satisfied human being on this earth. A person whether living in India or abroad, always has to experience these feelings and it is very hard to escape from loneliness, dejection and depression.

Both the selected women writers use a variety of techniques in their narration, characterization, dialogues and using different languages from expressing their diasporic sensibility. One of the pioneering scholars in Diaspora field is William Safran. In his theory, he described and classified Diaspora groups. According to him there are mainly six standard points for identification of Diaspora groups and these six points are considered as authentic as Bible. So, no Diaspora researcher can complete his/her research without studying this theory of Diaspora by Safran. There are some examples from the works of the selected two Diaspora female writers in support of Safran's six points.

According to Safran, the Diaspora people or their ancestors, disperse from a specific original "centre" to the foreign regions. Likewise, most of the characters of Uma Parameswaran's *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, *Trishanku* and "Door I shut behind

Me", are dispersed from India. In the novel, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, Sharad, Savitri, Veejala and her husband Anant migrated to Canada many years ago. Their children were born and brought up there in that liberated culture. Agarwal and Chander in "The Door I Shut behind Me" decided to leave India for better career and future prospects.

The characters of Anita Rao Badami share the similar trait. Maya in the novel *The Hero's Walk* came down to Canada for her studies but settled down there forever. Kamini of *Tamarind Mem* also decided to go to Canada for her higher studies, leaving her mother all alone behind in India. Another important and influential work of Anita, *Can You Hear the Nightbird's Call?*, has so many characters, who migrate from their homeland to hostland. There are some of the important character like Bibi-Ji and Paji, Neela and her husband, Lallu and Jasbeer. They came to Canada for escaping the hustle-bustle of family bondage in India and to get a better future.

Another important point to discuss is that the Diaspora community retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their past native homeland. They keep thinking about its physical location, history and achievement in order to survive on an alien land. The characters of both the writers become nostalgic about their golden days in their native place. They have used long passages of narration of their home in India. Jayant in "Darkest Before Dawn" finds peace and solace only when he gets himself observed in the memory of his grandmother, Aji, cow-dung plastered courtyard, storerooms, *Tulsi* plant and *Parijata* tree in his ancestral house. Throughout the story, he does not come out of his imaginative world of past as he does not find better things in a foreign land than the memory of his past native place. Badami's character Kamini also finds her solace, when she pays imaginative visits to her past life from her hectic schedule of studies. Whenever, she gets enough time she

goes to the virtual world of her past memories. Even the characters like Nimmo in *Can You Hear the Nightbird's Call?*, who lives in India but her horrible past hunts her all the time. Throughout the novel, she is struck in the dark and gloomy world of her past. Other characters like Bibi-Ji, Paji, Neela, Jasbeer and many others, they show attachment or nostalgia for geographical structures which has been left behind. They become nostalgic for native place, relationship, love of people and cultural activities. Safran states that these Diaspora communities regard their ancestral homeland as their true home or ideal home and as the place to draw their real identity. Even after spending so many years in a foreign country, they and their descendents would eventually think of returning back to their homeland whenever they would find the situations are in their favour. Having observed, the readings of the two selected writers that the characters in Diaspora stories, they always think of going back to their original place. They never get cut off from it. Like the modern character of Veejala in *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* decides to go back to her native place rather than spending rest of her life in harsh and cruel environment of Canada. In *What was Always Hers*, Maru in the story, "Maru and M.M. Syndrome" favours regular visits to India as it is their birth place. Although it is very expensive and can spend their entire savings she wants to go back. Bibi-Ji pays frequent visits to India in search of her lost closed relative Nimmo. Later she returns to Amritsar with her husband to visit to the Golden temple where Paji becomes the victim of firing done by the extremists in the campus. He takes his last breath in the pious-religious place-the Golden Temple. Even, Neela has been trying to go to her homeland for past eighteen year but finally, when she goes, never returns. Her flight is hijacked and she is killed by the hijackers along with fellow passengers.

The fifth important point of Safran towards Diaspora is that they have a collective commitment to the maintenances or restoration of their native land. They feel safe, secure and find prosperity in their original homeland. It has mostly been observed that an Indian living in England or Australia, would be happier when India wins the match played against England or Australia. This is all because, they are still Indians by heart. The same is the case with the Diaspora characters in the present texts. In the story "The Icicle", Parameswaran depicts Maru's husband Siv, he is a scientist by profession in Canada. He sponsors the bright, intelligent and deserving students from India. He helps and footholds them into the country. He calls them as their own people, even though his life outside India has been more than days spent in Canada. But his subconscious mind is still Indian and would always remain an Indian for the rest of his life. Same is the case with Paji in *Can You Hear the Nightbird's Call?*. He has been living in Canada for past forty years, yet his true feelings find solace in India. He follows his religious customs as a Sikh and always praises his *Satgurus* for sacrificing their lives for the sake of their country. His 'Delhi Junction Cafe' symbolises brotherhood, where Indians and Pakistanis find their true heart. They come to this cafe as real brothers and share the same table for meals. Apart from this, Bibi-Ji and Paji help immigrants from India to Canada. It is not only financial help but they also provide shelter to them until they find their permanent house in host-land and a secured job. Even the younger generation in *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* favours togetherness and ghettos for their betterment. Vithal, Jayant, Sridhar and their other Indian friends enjoy their company and friendship, as they seem that it is the only way to strengthen the bond of same native land. They claim ghettos is the only way to fight against any kind of discrimination.

The sixth point of Safran is very important for discussion as they continue to relate to their lost homeland personally or vicariously in an ethnocommunal consciousness. Each incident of racial discrimination, isolation, loneliness makes them closer to their country. So they keep living in India through their imagination and dreams. These Diaspora writers use alternative narrative technique, which is an effective tool. They narrate one actual or present event happening in the host-land and then consequently, the character goes in flashback or any event happened in past back in India. In "Darkest Before Dawn", Jayant virtually lives in India because he goes in flashback or in the past day of his life living with Aji, his grandmother. So is the case with Badami's, *Can You Hear the Nightbird's Call?*, in which, most of the story is developed through these flashbacks and memories. Kamini and Saroja of *Tamarind Mem* also narrate their stories through flashbacks and it seems that they hardly live in the present but spend most of their life in remembering their past. So the Diaspora theory by Safran finds its full representation in the works of both the Diaspora writers.

In contemporary world, the modern man is dejected, lonely and dislocated even in his own homeland. But study proves that their degree of sentiments differs in hostland and homeland. It has been observed through selected works that sometimes the characters feel high degree Diasporic sensibilities and there are some instances where they undergo low Diasporic sensibilities. The double dejection of the character is always present in every Diaspora text. The dejection of existence is the kind of dejection which every human being tends to suffer. But the second dejection is the dejection and sadness of leaving the native place and settling down in the country of white strangers. Obviously, the characters of such texts experience high degree of Diasporic sensibilities.

In *What Was Always Hers* by Uma Parameswaran, the diasporic feeling of the protagonist, Veeru, is so high as to disturb her existence on host-land. After marriage, she came to Canada with her NRI husband Niranjana. Gradually, his extra-marital affair with his party-worker, named Jitin, came to her notice. She felt dejected, lonely and immensely depressed but continued to live with his sons in Canada. She divorced Niranjana and lived an independent living. Later, she was given the unfortunate news of Niranjana's death, she really felt sad. Although she did not have any personal grudges against Jitin, even she helped her financially and emotionally. The story presents many high diasporic instances in the life of Veeru. The focal point to investigate the issues of women in marital or social set up, is that they remain the same, whether in India or abroad. Countries may differ but sufferings of women remain the same.

The female portrayed characters of the selected writers, belong to different backgrounds, periods and different social conditions, but they all are tied with a common thread of sufferings, dejection and subaltern treatment. The fiction embodies the sufferings of women, emerging from the state of subjugation and control and trying to establish their identity. In an interview, Anita Rao Badami answers that she does not identify herself with any one culture. She wants a complete break from India because she has left it behind otherwise, it is very difficult to deal constantly with these worlds. She claims that you become completely schizophrenic and it is really not a good state of mind to be in. So, she has decided to stick to Canada and be a part of general society. Canada is a multi-cultural society and she likes the mixture of communities. This study brings to notice that the author is flexible and progressive in nature. She tries to maintain harmony with new culture. Through her fiction, she proposes to build a peaceful, happy and healthy life in a

foreign land. Some of her characters reflect the conditions of nostalgic migrants who remain struck in the memories of homeland and there are others, who accept the new culture and adapt themselves as per the conditions of the society. The author depicts that the painful process of isolation from the past and then assimilation in new host society. It becomes bearable with strong emotional support of various relationships.

Both the authors aim to suggest the utmost necessity of a global movement to transform the individuals' compassion into globalised compassion. And it would lead to justice, equality freedom in every corner of the world. Recently, The Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2014, Kailash Satyarthi, has recited a mantra, which carries a potential to liberate humanity from all man-made crises, whether living on homeland or host-land. The meaning of his words is that we should all be together in pursuit of global progress. He proposes all human being from East to West, from South to North, to come together, share their ancestors experience and knowledge and create such an environment which will benefit all. He again proposes to move from darkness to light from morality to divinity and from violence to peace.

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