

## **Chapter-2**

### **Locating the Notion of ‘Ambivalence’**

The present chapter attempts to locate the notion of ambivalence in the works of Indo- Canadian female diasporic writers Uma Parameswaran and Anita Rau Badami. Before going into the thick of the things, it is important to discuss the notion of ambivalence itself. It was Homi K Bhabha, who brought and used this term in relation to colonialism. He has adopted this term in order to understand the complex mix of love and hate relationship between oppressors and oppressed.

Being a prominent writer in postcolonial studies, Bhabha has given his ideas about nationality, ethnicity and politics with theories of identity and indeterminacy. He has extended the works of Said and Spivak and deconstructs the dichotomies of the West and the East, the Centre and the periphery, White and Black, civilized and uncivilized, the coloniser and the colonised, the oppressor and the oppressed. He is very much impressed by Derrida and his analysis that how binary opposition structures Western thoughts. Bhabha rejects traditional ideas of nationality and colonial subject and revises them as a dialogic, indeterminate and hybrid construction. In order to emphasis on the terms nationality and identity, Bhabha gives some terms like dialogic, translation, in-betweenness, cross-cultural and ambivalence. He is impressed by Bakhtin and borrows his concept of dialogue to focus on colonialism. He states that colonialism is not a one-way process but it is an interaction between oppressor and the oppressed. However, apart from his several ideas and his remarkable contribution in the field of postcolonial theory, Bhabha’s commendable contribution in giving and analysing the terms like, Ambivalence, Mimicry and Hybridity is beyond words. These terms are related to each other. He explains how

these postcolonial conditions and concepts disturb the hegemonic nature of colonial rule.

The term 'Ambivalence' was first used and developed in psychoanalysis to explain a continual fluctuation of love and hate feelings or between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite at the same time. In other words, it is referred to a simultaneous attraction towards and repulsion from a thing, person or action. Bhabha has adapted this term into colonialism to understand the complex mixture of attraction and repulsion that defines the intricate relationship between coloniser and colonised. This relationship is ambivalent in nature because the 'Other' or the colonised is never completely opposed to the 'Self' or the coloniser. This term also characterises the way or the modes through which colonial authority relates to colonial subjects. It may be both exploitative and nurturing. Bhabha's theory of 'Ambivalence' ruins the authority of colonial power because it disrupts the simple relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. In his book *Of Mimicry and Man* Bhabha exposes the structure of colonial authority in which he explains that colonial administrators wanted to convert India into Christianity at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. But they did not want their colonial subjects to be too Christian or too English. They just wanted a colonised mimic, the same copy of colonist but not too quiet of them. So, mimicry of Indian colonised subjects almost blurred the gap or space between rulers and ruled and it was intolerable by colonial authority. Therefore, mimicry is also a state of ambivalence. So, it can be said that ambivalence state of the colonised was not so welcomed by colonisers because they wanted to produce subjects who reproduced their ideas, habits, manners and values. In fact they wanted them to mimic their masters but they produced ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is like mockery. Actually, it was not disempowering for the colonial subjects but it was seen to be ambivalent or two

powered. The effect of this ambivalence is disruption of the authority of imperialism. According to Bhabha, this colonial relationship is always ambivalent and it leads to its destruction. It also means that colonial authority is going to be ruined without any sort of resistance or rebellion from colonised subjects. Bhabha gives his opinion that this colonial discourse is forced to be ambivalent because it never wants the colonial subjects to become exact replicas of their authority or rulers. This would be too threatening for their authority. Finally, this ambivalent situation will lead the imperialism towards its doom and downfall. Moreover, Bhabha says that both coloniser and colonised subjects are involved in this ambivalence of colonial discourse. He further elaborates it by connecting it to hybridity. He believes that as ambivalence 'decentres' the authority from its centre position. And their authority also become hybridised. Hence, Bhabha claims that the hybridity can be seen as a feature of ambivalence.

Bhabha draws the concept of identity from Fanon's psychological model of colonialism and Lacan's concept of 'Mimicry'. Bhabha argues that in the process of communication between coloniser and colonised, there is always a lack, a gap between what is said and what is heard. The purpose can never be achieved perfectly. So, in the same way, the process of replication is never complete or perfect because the original can never be exactly replicated and reproduced. Therefore, Bhabha says that the colonial authority is also 'hybrid' and 'Ambivalent' when it is imitated or reproduced. Now this situation opens a space for colonised subject to destroy the authority of the master. Bhabha states that this process of mimicry is a way to subvert the control of rulers. He argues that the colonial subject is not able to imitate exactly so, he/she is compelled to produce an "excess" cultural imitation. And

this mimicry produces a new hybrid identity for the subject. Therefore, Bhabha suggests that this mimicry itself undermines colonial hegemony or authority.

The concept of 'hybridity' is also another very important contribution of Bhabha in postcolonial studies. The theory of hybridity refers to the intergration, mixing or mingling of cultural signs and practices from coloniser and colonised cultures. He explains that the assimilation and adaptation of different cultures practices, the cross- fertilization of cultures, is always positive, assertive, enriching and dynamic. According to Bhabha, this concept of hybridity is very useful to break down the false notion that colonised cultures are fixed and they do not have changing features. He even claims that the holy Bible is hybridized in the process, when it is narrated to natives. Moreover, he claims that there is always mixedness, and impurities of cultures. There is no culture which is really pure.

Diasporic writing focuses mainly on issues of amalgamation or disintegration of distinct cultures. In contemporary world of globalization, people belonging to different nations and cultures come together that has resulted in the flowering of a multicultural country like Canada. Among the new immigrants from different parts of the world, the South Asian group has emerged as the major ethno-cultural group in this country. The people of this ethnic minority group always face the problems like alienation, questioning of identity, and status which frequently takes them to their past and the country of their origin. Uma Parameswaran and Anita Rau Badami, the prominent South Asian Canadian diasporic writers voices the anguish, marginal status, feeling of ambivalence and anxiety of these people in their writings.

Uma Parameswaran's first novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* is an authentic piece of work to study Indo-Canadian Diaspora. The novel is set in

Winnipeg, during the flood crises in the year 1997. The primary focus of the novel revolves around the two families, who have left their country years ago to gain economic pursuits. The displacement and relocation brings a saga of pain and sufferings in the life of both families and through this work, it can be seen how immigrants straddle between two cultures, two national entities, and two homes but neither of them belongs to them. The major problems of diasporic communities like alienation, racial discrimination, cultural conflicts, and feeling of ambivalence are very much embedded in the present novel. Furthermore, it also provides the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters, enriched with Indian mythology, poetic colloquial and other metaphors.

The Bhave family- Sharad, his wife Savitri and their children Jyoti, Jayant and Krish, has left a comfortable life in Pune seven years ago and came to Winnipeg, Canada for better economic and luxurious life. Sharad sacrificed his career as nuclear scientist and here working as a real estate salesman. On the other hand, there is the Moghe family. Veejala moghe(Sharad's sister), her husband Anant moghe and their children, Vithal and Priti, have been living in Canada longer than Sharad's family. However, the narrative is told from the different perspective of the family members.

The older generation comes across many diasporic problems and they feel more alienated than the younger generation. Savitri is a forty two years old woman with marble smooth skin and petite figure. She tries to keep a balance between her family and professional life by devoting equal time. She feels delighted to see the young crowd gathered in her home every weekend. She finds utmost pleasure in cooking Indian food for them and it takes her to her childhood days spent with lots of siblings in India. She had lost her mother very early but there were many

Aunts, sisters and mothers around her to fill the gap of her mother. The love and affection had made her an emotional human being and whenever any boy or girl comes to her home from India, she finds a kind of attachment with that person. Though it has been many years in Canada, she is not able to merge herself with western culture. She finds it really bad when her daughter Jyoti mingles with her white boyfriend, Pierre and goes to the extent of physical relations with him before marriage. Savitri is still an Indian from heart, caring and an understanding mother, so she does not scold Jyoti but wants her to use her car instead of her father's Volvo car. She does not take Pierre as an outsider of her community because for her love is all important.

Savitri knows that they have left their home back in India and now it is their destiny to face the problems of cultural change, racial discrimination and ambivalence throughout their life in Canada. But she does not feel the same way as Vithal and his friends firmly believes in. Vithal proclaims that they would build temple on the river Assiniboine by being united in Diaspora. On the other hand Savitri says that they have already built the temples of their country on this land because Indians carry their gods within and with them wherever they go. It means that she has carried her cultural values and tradition with her in Canada and it would not change with the change of the place. Having heard about aunt Veejala's luxurious life Jyoti feels that it is her mother who has a bad deal, she could have lived in India, being the mistress of granddad's enormous property. But she left everything and chooses to do three full-time jobs, teaching in school, house and doing some volunteering services. As far as Savitri is concerned, she thinks that her hands would survive but she is afraid of losing her Indian spirit in this country. In the earlier statement Savitri shows her strong trust and faith in her old values which would never be abandoned with the

change of place. But the above mentioned statement is an expression of her fear living on an alien land. Moreover, she is afraid of losing her god, culture, heritage and values which present inside her in the form of spirit and make her a true Indian. She herself is aware of the inconsistencies with which she has been living in Canada. She has expressed her mental trauma and entangled life in which she is afraid to answer, the most sought after questions. That is the reason that she keeps herself busy all the time doing all these tasks so that she might not get enough time to think over it. She says that the life of these people seems very easy and smooth from far but actually they are suppressed, nostalgic and live most of their time in memories of their past. They live in present and past simultaneously. Savitri remembers a powerful poem of Kamala Das, in which she expresses the deep love of a mother for her son. She can overcome all the hurdles and sufferings to meet her child. In other words, it can be said that Savitri is feeling so depressed like a patient in the foreign country that she just want to go back to her home where her son is waiting. She is so deeply attached to her homeland that even after death she would go there in spirit form.

Savitri's husband Sharad Bhave is an important character to deal with older generation immigrants. Seven years ago, he made a decision to give up his job as a nuclear scientist and moved to Canada to work as a real estate broker. He might have thought that his family would find better opportunities in a much advanced and developed country like Canada. His children would be able to fulfil their dreams without any sort of social, political and economical obstacles. But after these awful years, he comes to realise that he is still a stranger in this country. He feels so difficult to cope up with this culture which is completely different to his own culture. He gradually comes to a conclusion that everything is unstable in this culture. It seems he feels isolated among the white people and does not want to feel awkward when he is

asked about his identity. Sharad is not able to make a connection with new way of Canadian liberalism and just wants to live in the memories of his past days. His lecture on trust, responsibility and good moral background shows his contempt of Canadian culture. His son lives like a Canadian and does not want to be connected with Indian culture any more. Unlike his son, Sharad firmly believes that roots are important for survival of any living being and wants to grow them in the Canadian soil where he lives for his survival. He gives an example of very pious tree that is plantain tree, which always leaves a young sapling behind, before it actually dries up. This pious tree symbolizes continuity and usefulness in Indian culture. But this tree of Indian soil cannot survive on Canadian soil. It would grow and bloom where it belongs. Just like an Ontario poplar, that cannot survive in Manitoba soil because it is a foreigner, not native to the land of Manitoba. The situation of Sharad is more or less the same like these two trees. His cultural roots and values do not find soil for survival on alien land and dries up in the similar way as the Ontario popular does.

Sharad knows many mythological and historical stories and whenever he gets a chance, he tells to Krish and Preeti. He just wants his kids to be in touch with Indian culture which remains their source of origin. In this way, he pays visit to past to make his present alive. But his sister Veejala, has different views about it. She works as an assistant Professor of Astronomy in a prestigious university of Canada. Being a career oriented woman, she hardly cares about cooking, and taking care of children and family. There always has been communication gap between her and children. Vithal has already dropped his university degree without completing it. It seems she has thrown down her Indianness completely in order to adopt Canada as new home. She believes that there can only be one home at a time. She has been



living in Canada so it is her home now. She hates living with past culture and heritage that is like a burden for her and makes her handicap.

Veejala disagrees with Sharad's way of living and comments that only those people who fear to cope with the present life, they love to live in past and keep romanticizing that golden period of their life. But later in the novel, the same Veejala decides to go back to her homeland because she herself is got tired of carrying around that crutch of the past and her struggle to get rooted in Canadian culture has lost her own identity. It may be because that she is also swinging between the two cultures like Sharad and Savitri. Like every older generation immigrants, Veejala is also sandwiched between two culture and nations. She herself is fed up of being a victim of dual identity and the feeling of ambivalence. Finally, she decides to quit her job and Canada which does not accept her as a part of it. When she becomes the victim of racial and gender discrimination, she decides to waste rest of her life in her own native place than these backwoods of Canada. Her views are similar to Mrs Khanna, who expresses her pity after seeing the deplorable living conditions of Indian women at Jackson Heights and Queen's in New York. She feels glad that she is living in India not in America or Canada because the views from inside are far different from outside.

In the present novel, the second generation immigrants are Jayant, Jyoti, Vithal and their friends who were born in India and spent their early childhood in India and now they have been in Canada for many years to make this country as their home. Jayant wants to shed away his Indianness in order to merge into Canadian culture. Even Jayant does not like to be called 'bhau' by his younger brother Krish, which is used for elder brother in Marathi. But he forbids his brother for calling or giving such respect to him, he just wants to shake off the language that is not

prevalent in this country. Even a single word that connects him to India makes him uneasy. His road trip with his white Canadian friends symbolizes his eagerness to merge into an alien culture by moving away from his own. When Jyoti argues with him about their real identity as Indian and they would always remain foreigners on this land. But Jayant rejects all these moral Hindu values call them as crap. His father has been teachings about these values for the past seven years but now he has lost all interest in it and he can no longer accomplice his own unfulfilled dreams. He directly attacks on his father's decision of leaving India and abandoning his career as a nuclear scientist where he could have become a director of an Indian Institute of Technology or some national lab by now. He strikes that if his father had been so much in love with India he shouldn't have left it and come here to adopt the profession of a real estate broker. But Jyoti defends her father, says that he wanted to give us a better environment to grow in a much advanced country like Canada and that is reason he left his ancestral property back in India. This argument between brother and sister brings out their awareness as different, 'other' to which they are destined to be marginalized on a foreign land. But as the novel proceeds, Jayant deep knowledge about his heritage and Indian culture and his close connection with it, is known by his past days spent in his grandmother's house in India. Each and every minute detail of his ancestral house is still intact in his mind, like his grandmother used to sit under a *Parijata* (42) tree in the courtyard with her violin. The courtyard had many trees like, *bakul, neem* (104) bushes of jasmine, *raat- ki -rani*(104) and few bunches of banana trees. The *tulsi*(113) plant was also there at the centre of the courtyard where grandmother used to sit. Once she had promised him that she would leave her violin for him after her death as symbol of inheritance. But now he feels betrayed and treachery plays the role in his life. He does not know if she has left the violin or not

for him. His father took a wrong decision to leave his ancestral home and came to Canada and now his sister Jyoti with whom he is so close, is moving away from him with her white Canadian boy friend, Pierre. But he also knows that this brother and sister love relationship is inviolable. He has intense knowledge of rituals of a *rajputwedding*. The wedding decoration, *shehnai*(112) music, strings of flowers, the dressed up mare and all other rituals have always fascinated him and feels very close to his heritage all the time. One day he would accept Pierre also as a part of the family because Jyoti loves him and it is all important. Then, Jayant remembers the electric wires that run along the zillion miles railway track, vibrating and making a humming sound which is generally not heard by anyone but they keep moving up and down from the centre as connected by separated and distanced poles. These vibrated wires can be compared with the dangling condition of the diasporic community.

In this novel, Jyoti's relationship with her Canadian boy friend and her attachment towards Sridhar, is also a prominent issue to discuss. She wants to get married to Pierre who does not belong to their community and nation. But her parents who are first generation immigrants, they feel their children should find someone in their own community instead of going into inter- cultural marriages. Though jyoti's parents are not authoritarian, they just want her happiness. She chants Pierre's name all the time like a mantra but does not feel to be happy in his company. She feels insecure and unprotected in this relationship. Somewhere, Pierre also seems an authoritarian boyfriend and does not give her as much space as she needs. He represents colonial power that undermines and suppresses her by taking her lives decision without consulting her. On the other hand, her Indian heart belongs to Sridhar, he is like a shield covering and protecting her from all problems. Even she feels so open and

happy in his company. So, she also seems to be in dilemma between the two men in her life, two cultures and two nations.

Every weekend, Savitri's kitchen becomes a hub for young Indian friends, who come and enjoy Indian food and discuss various major issues related to their community. The young crowd talks about interracial dating and racial discrimination that has become big hindrance in assimilation in the present culture. There is a new boy Danesh from India, he has not got accustomed with the Canadian culture so much, so suggest to make every effort to merge since this is their country now. After Danesh's remarks, there starts a heated discussion on Canadian multiculturalism and Vithal bursts out his rage against racial discrimination that they have to face because of their colour. They want to accept Canadian culture and its values but always feel segregated by these white people. They do not want them to assimilate into their soil. Vithal favours ghettonisation and calls his friends and family to make this communal solidarity strong by living united and together. The author presents him as an angry young man who is aggressive, good orator and does not bows before any kind of discrimination

This outburst and frustration of Vithal is the mouthpiece of suppressed diasporic community all ages. The people like Danesh, who come to the host land living their own homeland with a hope that they would soon merge into this new culture, find themselves victimized for being non-whites. Instead of assimilation, they start staying together in their own community with their own people. In a multicultural country like Canada, humiliation and racial abuse has been spreading very fast and immigrants find ghettonisation as their only surviving way on this land. As Vithal seems to be very aggressive and advocates ghettonistion in which their unity could thrive. This young generation of immigrants declares the emptiness and hollowness of

Canadian multiculturalism and they raise their voice for ghettos to strengthen their voice. Racism has always been a prominent issue in the course of Diaspora situation. Every year such cases arise in large number and outsiders become victims of their skin colour and its impact has been so grave that it is grabbing the whole world into its filthiness. Jyoti encounters racism when she goes to Romona's house to pick her cousin Priti. The two teenage white boys ring the bell and ask for some collection for school band, but Romona whose parents are out, replies that nobody is at home. One of the boys mimics and abuses her using *paki* (125) word. It is Jyoti's first encounter with overt racism. The word "paki" is an expression of extremely racial abuse that is used for foreigner or outsiders by the natives. Such incidents destroy all hopes of diasporic community to assimilate into the host land. As a result, segregation and ghettonisation comes naturally in them.

As far as Krish and Priti are concerned, they represent the third generation of immigrants who do not know about their language, culture and heritage. From the childhood, they are following western ways of living and believe themselves to be a part of Canadian culture. Their parents have tried to acquaint them with their enriched Indian culture through food, family bonding and mythological stories of Sita, Draupaddi and Gopala. These stories fascinate them but they hardly use them in their day to day life. They always speak in English, and do not know a single word of Marathi. So it can be said that this generation is not bothered about losing or missing their native culture and its language. This reminds us the story "The Door I Shut Behind Me" of Uma Parameswaran in which Chander and Agrawal meet in an Indian gathering where people are talking about kids who do not speak a word of their native language. One of the lady says that her baby uttered his first word in Marathi like "Aai, dada"(99) but as soon as he goes to park, he has started calling them Mommy-

Daddy. Now he hardly understands Marathi any more. A man from the crowd says, “just you wait a few years and he’ll be correcting your English. My daughter is on tenterhooks whenever her friends drop in; she is afraid we’ll say or do something wrong” (99). The home for this generation is the home, where they have been residing and even the language they use is their own language. So, they are not in-between state, not in ambivalent situation. The small boy Dilip in *Trishanku: A Cycle of Voices* expresses his joy and wonder of Canadian culture. The little boy likes his school where he has so much to enjoy in the company of his friends but he wants his mother to change his Indian name which makes him feel different from his classmates. The young generation live in the present and do not spend their time in memorizing the past because they have never been to their homeland which the above two generations have experienced. Although they have merged into Canadian way of living yet their skin colour makes them the victims of racialism. But they are helpless because they are not completely aware of the situation in which they are living in. *What Was Always Hers*, is a collection of short- stories and winner of the 1999, New Muse Award and the Canadian Author’s Association 2000 Jubilee Award for best short stories. It is Uma’s latest work of fiction. It contains the stories of mainly female protagonist living in Canada. The name of the stories are *What Was Always Hers*, *Maru and the M.M. Syndrome*, *Darkest Before Dawn*, *How We Won Olympic Gold*, and *The Icicle*. The title story *What Was Always Hers* deals with life of the protagonist Veera, who has an Indian background and cultural traditions which does not go with modern trends of Canadian cultures. The theme of the story is all about loss, death, betrayal and love, a powerful package of Western and Eastern cultures. The story starts with an Indian immigrant Niranjana, an activist for agricultural Indians working in the British Columbia fruit belt, decides to marry Veeru. She is a simple

and naive young woman of seventeen from India. Niranjan comes from a well to do family, his parents live in *Safdarjang* Enclave, Delhi. Born in a business men family Niranjan was the black sheep of the family. All his brothers and brother-in-law were running their business but he decided to pursue his career as a professor in college. He was a man of his own principles, very intense and argumentative in nature and totally inept about the pragmatic realities of life. There was no dearth of marriage proposal from high families and convent educated beautiful Delhi girls but he was completely dedicated to village uplift work. So he preferred to get married to a village girl like Veeru, with simple thoughts and normal living style. Niranjan made her aware of his future plans that he had already taken a vow of service to the community and he would not be able to guarantee anything except his devotion to her and children. She compared him with Vinobaji and it impressed him so much that he decided marry the young village girl from Punjab who is intelligent enough to know about Vinobaji at this young age.

Thus Niranjan and Veeru got married and she proved lucky charm for him because he had not only been selected for graduate study in University of British Columbia but had also been offered a fellowship. After six months he went to Canada and Veeru remained in India till his elder son Vikram was two years old. Niranjan arranged for Veeru to visit him in Canada and she stayed with him for four months. Everything was new, wonderful and strange for her on this new land. She enjoyed each and every single moment of her life with her husband. Jitin and Demmi were the first people that Veeru met when she entered her apartment with Niranjan. They cared and helped her in adjusting in the new environment. They taught her how to make tea and food in the kitchen. Veeru was so happy and overwhelmed to get the love and care shown by Jitin and Demmi. Veeru respected Jitin and addressed her as deedi.

Niranjan was an activist of communist party and the leader of Indians working in the British Columbia fruit belt. Due to his hectic schedule in political meetings and rallies, he could not draw sufficient time for Veeru. She and other women were always busy making tea for visitors. Veeru was very much attached with Jitin, she was the kind of modern woman who could order the people in meetings as well as could manage the kitchen chores simultaneously. Initially, she appreciated Jitin for everything she did but gradually this turned into a feminine apprehension because she was too close to Niranjan and used to accompany him every place whether home or any public meeting. Veeru discussed her apprehension regarding Jitin with other elderly women but they assured her that it was nothing wrong to hold hands and touching shoulder of a woman in Canada. It did not suggest any relationship between them, other than that of mere friends. Here the contrast and conflicts between Indian and Canadian culture and values has been highlighted. But later in the story, Veeru's apprehension proves real. Their relationship was so intimate and more like husband and wife. The crises in her life came during the abortion of her third child. She already had two sons and Niranjan did not want third child in the family. So he insisted her for abortion. For a village girl like Veeru, the abortion caused mental and physical agony. But the real crises in her life came with the revelation that Jitin was not only a party worker but also Niranjan's second wife. Veeru was shocked to know that Jitin was pregnant by Niranjan and he allowed her to have her baby because she had the right to do so. Now, the attitude of Veeru changed drastically towards Jitin. From a docile and simple girl turned into a rebellious woman. The Indian village girl, Veeru would not allow the westernised girl Jitin to share her husband.

Niranjan wanted divorce from Veeru in order to get married with Jitin so their relationship would become valid in the society. He was ready to give everything to



Veeru for the sake of his liberty. Every morning before living for office, he requested her for his and Jitin's freedom. Veeru wanted to scream and cry loudly but she could not do anything instead of accepting their relationship. Here Uma Parameswaran shows another feature of Veeru's character that she was not selfish enough to keep Niranjana for herself. She was ready to share her husband with Jitin, to whom she has accepted as her sister. But Niranjana insisted for divorce and it meant that she would not be able to have any claim on her husband in future.

But Veeru had become a mature and awakened lady from an innocent Indian girl. She had realised her rights and duties, she no more wants to live a hypocritical life. She could not see her husband with any other girl and being an intruder, Jitin ruined her family life. Gradually she started hating Niranjana for his betrayal and never giving her proper place in his life. She could not fulfil his desire by giving him divorce. She would remain his legal wife and could not give up her claim on him.

At the end, Veeru agreed for the divorce as she could not see Niranjana worried all the time. Moreover, he gave her all his property and showered his affection upon his kids as father whenever they needed. After divorce, Jitin became her legal wife and Veeru lost Niranjana forever. But this separation from husband made Veeru a strong and bold woman. She became an independent single woman of Canada who earned her living and supported her children without husband. Her drastic transformation is quite unbelievable. She became the centre of attraction in the office and Gerald was one of them. He took much interest in her but Veeru did not pay so much attention to him because she could not allow any man come closer to her after Niranjana. It was her Indian values which resist her from such acts.

The serious catastrophe came in her life when Niranjana died in a fatal road accident. Although he had divorced her already and living with Jitin, she was assured that the father of his sons was always there to help whenever they needed him. But now she was left alone in a foreign country. It was the real test for her boldness. Niranjana's parents called her from India to attend his last funeral rites because they were still unaware about the divorce between them. They requested her to let Vikram, the elder son to perform funeral rites as per the Hindu rituals. But Vikram hated his father and refused to attend it. The younger son Adarsh had a great intimacy with his father and Veeru somehow managed to persuade both of them to go.

Niranjana was the leader of the migrants' Indian living in Canada and large number of people gathered to pay homage to their hero. They chanted holy mantras and slogans in his honour and Vikram sprinkled Gangajal on his dead body. The hall was filled to the capacity. Jitin also came in the hall with a white *dupatta* draped over her head. She had a baby in her arms. Veeru wanted to hold and embrace Jitin but could not do so due to crowd. According to the will of Niranjana, his daughter by Jitin would be the beneficiary of his insurance policy and Veeru was given the right to be the sole inheritor of all other assets. Jitin had joined an office and started living with her daughter in a small flat but Veeru always felt that injustice had done to Jitin in distribution of property. Both of them lost their husband and had the same sufferings in life. One day she decided to visit Jitin. She was found Katie, the babysitter of Nira, Jitin's daughter. She hadn't returned from office. Veeru was just looking around the small closed room and felt pity for such situation of destitution. She looked at Nira and started talking to her. Originally she was named Ranjana after her father's death she was called Niranjana and Nira was her short name. After a few moments, Jitin came in and felt delighted to see Veeru. Both of them embraced each other, forgetting

their past sorrows and sufferings which life gave them. It was the happiest moment of their life and vowed not to separate from each other. They decided to live together and share their sorrows and happiness with each other. Thus the story ends with a happy note of reunion of two women Veeru and Jitin who represent Indian culture and western culture respectively.

The story “How We Won Olympic Gold” from the same book *What Was Always Hers* describes the glory and the shame experienced by the Canadians during the Seoul Olympic Games which were held in the 1998. Ben Johnson, an athlete of Canada won the Gold Medal in the 100- metre race in the game and made a world record with 9:79 seconds. It was a proud moment for whole Canada. As it is known that the author Uma Parameswaran is a professor of English in the University of Winnipeg and her husband is a mathematician. In this story also, we have protagonist Maru, she is narrating the story. She has been living in Canada with her husband Sivaraman for past many years. They both have got their Canadian citizenship but their relationship with their homeland, India is still very strong. They frequently pay their visit to the place time and again in order to keep in touch with their own people. Maru narrates her experience during one of her visits to India along with her little child Bunto. It is decided that Siv would stay in Canada and would make a telephone call every Wednesday and Sunday mornings in India in order to keep in touch with her wife and child.

The narrator has come to India after a long interval and thus she becomes the centre of attraction for the whole family. All family and friends come in her house and talk to her about life in Canada. There was no telephone in the house so she has to go to neighbourhood in order to talk to her husband. Sometimes it becomes very difficult

for her to talk to her husband on phone so openly because there are so many people hovering around her.

It was nice time spent in India for the writer with her old friends and relatives. One day, it was a telephone call from Siv and he very jubilantly exclaimed with joy that they had won the gold. A boy named Nari heard their talk and misunderstood that India won the gold in Olympic Games. He spread this news in the whole neighbourhood. The family members thought that it must be P.T.Usha who made the country proud. But later Siv told that P.T.Usha could not win the preliminary round. Actually it was an athlete of Canada named Ben Johnson who had won the gold. Since both husband and wife had become the citizen of Canada and Ben belonged to their country, this news made them happy and they really felt proud of him.

After her pleasant stay in India, Maru reached Canada with her son. Siv had come to receive them at airport. He had grown beard and looked very sad and calm. Maru guessed that something was wrong with him and she hesitantly asked him about his sadness. Later, on the way to home, he told Maru that his uncle, who lived in Chicago, had died and he had to go there to attend his last funeral rites. When Siv brought in the suitcases from the car, very shocking news came in headlines that the gold medal had been taken away from Ben because he had been proved positive in drug test. The first runner up named Carl Levies had been declared the winner. Thus, it was a national shame for whole Canada. This incident suggests that the common sorrow removed the personal sorrow of the writer and her husband

The short story “The Icicle” describes the life of a couple Ranjit and Deepa living in Canada. They have to face many problems while adjusting with new culture and environment. Deepa is frustrated and craving for freedom and her own identity. A

large number of people migrate to developed countries for better future prospects economically as well as socially. But a period of time they start forgetting their roots and the traditional values in order to merge into western culture. They adopt western values blindly and invite conflicts and discords in their life. Ranjit and Deepa is one such couple, whose happy married life has disturbed due to westernisation. Ranjit works at Manipeg while her wife Deepa is doing her Ph.D in a University at Saskatoon. Their daughter named Anji lives with her mother.

The conflict in the family becomes apparent when Maru goes to borrow a tripod for her camera from Ranjit. He lives all alone. He loves his daughter very much which is evident through his room which is full of toys. Every weekend, he pays his visit to his daughter with a new toy every time. He waits for the weekend impatiently and never misses to celebrate it with his family. In fact, he is like a Santa Claus for his daughter.

Besides that, Ranjit has always been a supporting husband. He wants to see his wife Deepa happy and contented. He remembers when they came to Canada from India, his wife wanted to be an independent working woman. But her Indian degrees were not accepted in Canada and now she has to do the same course in Canada to fulfil her dreams. This is a clear evidence of racialism faced by the Indians.

On one weekend, Maru also comes along with Ranjit to meet Deepa and Anji. This time Ranjit is carrying a panda toy for his daughter and he has named him – *Panduranga*(137). Maru is meeting Deepa after a long time. Her last meeting with her was when Anji was about due. The first thing that strikes Maru is the glow of Deepa's face and this kind of glow comes naturally from within.

Deepa is looking confident, bold and beautiful. She seems to enjoy her liberty and freedom. But her attitude towards her husband is really very shocking. The earlier

warmth and care for her husband is completely invisible in her conversation. She does not want to pay her visits to Manipeg. Moreover, she does not like the way Ranjit is spoiling her daughter with so many toys every time. Here, Maru cannot control herself and states that love is the only commodity which never spoils. Further Deepa justifies her grudges against Ranjit by pointing towards the room which is stuffed with so many toys. At the end of the story, she suggests her future plans of becoming an independent single mother and working woman.

Here, the author, Uma Parameswaran suggests that the immigrants forget their culture and values of their homeland and try to cling to the new values of the hostland where they have settled. The husband Ranjit is still in touch with his Indian values but his wife Deepa is fully detached from it and adopts Canadian way of living. She wants to distance from her husband in order to enjoy her independent life. The title 'Icicle' is symbolic of external beauty of Canada which is in complete contrast with the inner hollowness of the relationship between husband and wife.

The most works of Uma Parameswaran contain the highest degree of cultural sensitivity of expatriates. The story, "The Door I Shut Behind Me" has been taken from the work *Trishanku and other Writings* written in 1967, is a very good example of a powerful work which embodies the feeling of ambivalence and a struggle for life. The author explores the mindset of first time immigrants to an alien land through the characters Chander and Kishen Agrawal.

The protagonist of the story, Chander is an introvert, sophisticated and unmarried young man of twenty five years old. He has got his doctorate degree from Madras University and now heading to Canada for two years contract with University of M. As soon as, he makes himself comfortable in the plane, someone introduces

himself in a loud voice as Mr.Kishen Agrawal. The perfumed hair oil and loud voice of this man indicates that he is from some rural area, where people have rustic manners in speaking. But Chander does not like so much friendliness and closeness with the strangers at the first meeting. It is really very annoying to tolerate him but he has to be submissive by revealing his academic as well as his purpose of going to Canada. As their conversation session goes on with the same loudness of Agrawal's voice, Chander feels resented and becomes conscious each time any passenger or air – hostess passes by their seat. When the air –hostess comes over their seat to pull out Chander's lunch table, Agrawal passes lewd comment in Hindi. It shows his middle class rough manners where people are not used to such modern young women. Moreover, he is wondered and excited like Bihari in *Trishanku: A Cycle of Voices*, who is overjoyed at the first sight of Canada. He is so astonished to see short dresses of women which reveal their bare body. For him they are almost naked as gods and he compares the size of their dresses with his underwear which has more cloth.

After few minutes, Agrawal becomes conscious of using his tableware while having his meals in western style. Later, his lack of using westernized toilets surprises Chander and he tells his irritating neighbour to use them in correct way. When he returns from the toilet, he again starts with his annoying behaviour and prefers his Indian way of using toilets which are cleaner and more hygienic. He keeps on criticizing the western ways of toilets, their culinary arts and passes adverse comments on their culture. On the other hand, Chander is already fed up of this man and now everything about him gives a feeling of disgust. He hates his shining rayon suit, ornate watchstrap, plastered hair with fragranced oil, his loud noise, his egoism and his boasting about his achievements and shallow generalizations. These two characters, Chander and Agrawal are in contrast to each other. The commonality

between the two is that they belong to the same homeland and going to the same hostland. In the hotel room in Canada, Agrawal wants to celebrate his arrival in a new nation and wants to go to a dinner party. He insists Chander that they are in Canada and should behave like Canadians. His immigrant visa is like a “magic wand” (96) for him, without asking permission, Agrawal takes out his visa from the briefcase and declares that it is licence to enjoy good health and wealth. Agrawal does not know the difference between green card and immigrant visa and for him both the cards are same. The green card is officially a popular name for a United State Permanent Resident Card that gives its holder permission to live and work in the United States. Chander points out his mistake but he does not bother to listen to him. But Chander gets so exhausted with this guy that he starts questioning his own patience whether it is his tolerating power or weakness that is refraining him from rebuking Agrawal. He contemplates that whether it has been tolerance or weakness of India to suffer cultural and political invasion of Britishers. In these thoughts, Chander shows the negative side of India where people generally praise their tolerance of injustice but actually it is their cowardice that allows others to dominate over you. And he himself is doing the same mistake by tolerating this man and he bursts out his anger towards him. Chander also describes a filthy picture of Indian society where gossipy women grow in elephantine size even at an age of thirty, men waste their time around shops, chewing betel leaves and spitting tobacco here and there on the pavement of the shop. Having heard all these things, Agrawal feels so disappointed that he starts crying like a little child. He bursts into sobbing and says that he is a son of a shopkeeper. His mother is a big gossip, and his wife is very fat. Moreover, his children play in streets with snotty noses all the time but he loves them and wants his family. He would love to lie on his rope strung cot. Having heard these words, Agrawal feels offended and vents out that



his father is a shopkeeper, his mother is a gossip, his wife is fat and his children play in streets yet he loves them and it is the place where he belongs to. He feels homesick and really misses his people. In *Trishanku: A Cycle of Voices*, the author Uma Parameswaran has depicted the same feelings through the words of small boy, Suri. He asks his father why he cannot do toilet in open fields, on side of the road, and behind the Appletree, like he used to do back in India.

Chander neither feels any sort of yearning for his homeland nor any fascination for the new culture. But Agrawal is ambivalent at this moment. He loves the new country as well as hates to get separated from his homeland. Language plays an important role in this situation because if immigrant does not know the language of the new country it becomes a major problem to cope up. Many people like Agrawal realize that there is nobody around them to talk and communicate in their own mother tongue. Chander realizes that it is not his family that he is missing but he wants to speak in his own mother tongue with someone from his own community. It is very crucial issue that two men from same nation, salute the same national flag, and worship the same god and goddess yet they are so different in sentiments. Chander ponders over a question that it is only a language that unites the people and separate them from each other. He raises this point and thinks that whether it is possible for different language speaking people to live together in harmony with peace.

At Mundras's party, Agrawal greets this Indian gathering with great enthusiasm, he carries some Indian songs record albums and a packet of *paan- beetas*(98) to serve them. On the other hand, Chander as usual shrinks away from meeting the people and shows his unemotional and insensitive nature towards the people who belong to his own community. Agrawal easily becomes a part of the gathering and speaks to them in English, he hardly uses a word of Hindi in between. It is very surprising that he has

been so craving to talk in his own mother tongue but now he does not bother to utter a single word in it. As they all come from different part of the country so they speak in English, even their kids hardly know a word in Hindi. Moreover, they feel ashamed to communicate in their mother tongue in front of their white friends and become conscious when their parents use it abruptly. After observing these people, Chander believes that they are together not because of their nationality but they all have common problems, anxieties and cultural issues which brings them together in unison. While in India, the same people demand different state or nation according to their own religion and language and want to build walls between themselves with the slogans like “My people, my language (99)” but here in Canada, they don’t take so much pain in raising their voice for such things. They just want a social gathering every weekend to vent out their anger and want somebody to hear them. When Chander is asked about the conditions in India, he reflects the pathetic condition of it and mentions some major problems like drought and flood in some part of the country, long queues for grain, milk, fuel and medicine everywhere around the nation. All these people seem to sympathize with him as if he is narrating his own personal grief but they are not concerned about problems of the country which have been left by them. These issues are just a matter of social bash for them; otherwise they don’t want to listen to the sufferings of the people of their native land and very politely the topic is changed. Chander wants to sensitize them by portraying the devastating picture of Indian society but his efforts seems fruitless because they start dispersing in groups for their own conversation. He really feels offended that they just want to see the positive aspect of India in order to get refreshed from their routine life and moreover they only want to feel proud of being a part of such a vibrant culture which is so diverse in nature but still it is united.

Agrawal has brought some latest record albums with him from India but the people around him are more interesting in listening to the old classical records of Pankaj Mullick which is not found in his collection. A young man finds the Saigal's album and starts it. This background music takes everyone to their past and deep nostalgia prevails in the air. They start romanticizing the sweet memories of their past days in India. The strange thing is that they remember and talk about not the present India or the India they left but they rejuvenate themselves with their boyhood days and even earlier of that time. Some remember the old trams of Madras, some anti-British slogans and some rejoice themselves with the great event in cricket history when Lala Amarnath scored a double century against Don Bradman's team. All this shows that either they have some nostalgic idealism in which they go in pleasant past with no negative aspect of their ideal home or it is just a kind of an escape route from their state of inbetweenness but the fact is that they find their happiness in it. When Agrawal serves them his *paan-beedas*, most of them refuse to take and it vividly reflects their ambivalent feelings for their situation because they refuse to enjoy the same happiness even if chances are given to them. They just want to enjoy this happiness only in their dreams or in memories but not in real life. Though betel roll packets reminisces them to betel-areca shops at the street corner where they used to gather as Romeos for eyeing on college girls. Having observed, Chanders feels disgusting and doubts on their identity and he thinks that these people are very well aware of their ambivalent situation. They love Canadian culture but find difficult to assimilate into it completely but simultaneously they also don't want to distance away from their own culture and heritage. They feel happy to meet people of their origin but remain indifferent towards the problems of their own country. They don't have any close affinity with Canadian culture but want to live here throughout their lives along with Indian tradition. Here,

women prefer to wear their traditional dresses on occasions than any western dress. As far as the food habits are concerned, they seem to be purely Indian but shy away from the talk of return to their nation and enjoying the same old days. They neither want to go back nor integrate into the new culture of their choice but remain “hanging” between two cultures. This ambiguous situation of these people makes Chander a little bit confused and he compares them with the mythological king, Trishanku, who remained suspended between earth and heaven, unable to enter either of them, and made a world of his own. He thinks that they neither belong to India nor to Canada but live in their own world which is a mixture of the two. Now Chander feels alone and isolated because he is not able to connect himself with the crowd of his own people and he moves away from them but his head is heavy with weight or burden which gives him much pain. In fact the actual weight is in his heart that makes him feel lost and nostalgic. This weight gives an “inexplicable sense of loss, anger, contempt” (102) to Chander. He sits quite and silent for some time on his chair. Then, a pale short man named Hari Bahl joins him and makes fun of Agrawal who got Saigal’s album by mistake. Initially, Chander seems a bit impressed by this man but soon when he comes to know that he is married to a Canadian woman, again the weight in his heart curses him and makes him feel disgusted and anguished. He really doesn’t like this connection with western culture.

The sense of exile and abandoning the country, culture and its heritage becomes so strong in him that he burst out his frustration in saying that “I don’t expect to be here that long. I just want to pick up some experience and go back home” (104). He doesn’t want to be a part of this community and intends to go back to his native place. But Hari Bahl says that initially every person who leaves his home for the first time has the same nostalgic feelings but gradually they all become “brain- drain casualty”

(104). Chander feels accused that he is also contributing to the brain- drain and abandoning his poor nation when it utterly requires him. But very soon, he overcome his depressing and nostalgic feelings and thinks rationally that “This is the age of individualism, not of abstract ideologies of patriotism and nation- building” (104). He realizes that in contemporary world, individualism is all important and one must follow ones dreams and desires without thinking about these abstract ideologies of patriotism. He feels a pull towards the new culture and country where he is standing. At the end of the story, Hari Bahl says, “When we leave our country we shut many doors behind ourselves though we are not aware of it at the time” (105). To this Chander replies, “There are many doors ahead of us. (105)”

Thus, the story “The Door I Shut Behind Me” ends with a modern notion. As a Diasporic text it says that modern generation is not confined to the motherland but they consider the entire world as their single home. Parameswaran has delineated a wonderful picture of an immigrant experience.

Past is always considered as dead and it is stated in general that there is no use to cry over the split milk but still these diasporas keep contemplating about it in order to draw their happiness. Uma Parameswaran’s work *Trishanku and other Writing*, which was published in 1988, deals with this contemporary issue in which Diaspora people perpetually keep pondering about their past. This text provides the base to know about the first set of immigrants as well as a link to learn about the condition of current immigrants. This work has themes like nostalgia, alienation, ambivalence and assimilation. Uma has broken all the boundaries by compiling poems, short stories, and excerpt from the novel and presented this unique collection to us who is worth reading and deserves kudos as it appeals to heart and soul.

To focus on *Trishanku and other writings* in particular, it is “A Cycle of Voices” not of a single person but it is a record of various voices, thoughts and their notions. It covers twenty years, spoken by various voices and depicts an encounter of different generations with the host culture. Despite different voices, the collection is not a fragment but it seems connected with a common string while it is carefully read. Uma begins her poem with an invocation and brings out the liminal space in which she struggle to thrive. Trishanku, was a legendary king of Suryavanshi clan, who had a very strange wish to ascend to the heavens in his mortal form but instead of fulfilling his desire guru Vashist turned him into a monster. When the sage Vishwamitra saw him in this situation, he promised him to help and achieving his dream. With all his powers and prayers, he ascended him to the portals of heaven in his monstrous *Chandaala* form but the gods together pushed him out and sent him spinning back to earth. Vishwamitra not only prevented Trishanku from falling into the earth but also created another heaven especially for him and there he remained suspended upside down. The word Trishanku means a triangle. In fact he got suspended in the centre of a triangle formed by the three worlds, the heaven, the earth and the underworld. Hanging in between these three worlds, in the alien form that was thrust on him, he became the king of a new world, not the one he aspired for, but the one that was created for him. (Vinoda, Shailaja, 36)

Uma Parameswaran has taken Trishanku as the title of her collection of poems, though she has not elaborated the idea but Trishanku metaphor is well be applied to the condition of expatriates. She has used this character both in her title as well as in the invocation of her poem. She points out to her third space through the lines,

And What?

Shall I hang myself in the sky

As Trishanku did of old? (15)

Homi Bhabha talks about the third space that can be created by displacement from one place to another. In this context, it is formed both within and outside of an individual due to the migration from homeland to a distant hostland. Even the birds know the season of their migration and they are very much aware that it is their nest or home and they have to come back to it but the situation of human beings is completely different. Once they leave their home, it becomes very difficult to return. As far as this text is concerned, it is very important to study the psychological and biological stress experienced by the individual based on gender. The experience of man is different from the experience of woman. There are some universal pain and sufferings which every woman has to bear whether she lives on her home land or another land of her choice. Uma does not fail to present inner voice of these women who have undergone a change in location but their sufferings and pains remain the same. The first woman character introduced in '*Trishanku*' is Usha. As her name signifies the dawn of the day which is considered as the most auspicious time in Indian culture but in contrast to that her life is full of sorrows, sufferings and pessimism. She could not become a mother of a child makes her life so miserable, this is her pain which re- echoes throughout her thought process. This unbearable pain of losing her child in the womb is expressed in her agonised voice. Her thought of her unborn son being dropped in the white lid jar brings many horrible things in her mind. She imagines her unborn child and this encounter or experience is common to any mother universally who loses her child in her womb. She expresses her agonising pain of losing her child. The same idea of her loss is again captured in the pages forty and forty one, where she recollects the way how her child has been lost. Her son did not

give her a chance to rock him the cradle. She even could not make small promises to take him shopping, walking with him through Christmas store in Canada where he could point out or cry for toys. Neither could she make big promises to offer him the heritage of the solar kings nor did her eternal and infinite love move him to stay with her. She is left only with soundless womb with gurgles of pain.

Another voice is of Savitri, who also expresses a sense of loneliness in her thoughts. She runs a school for toddlers but there is always a feeling of alienation in this host land and she also wonders her identity in this different world. The new culture surprises her with its openness and flexibility. It shocks her all the time because she is not able to cope up with it and simultaneously she feels jealous of Chandrika, former one side lover of her husband. Her dressing sense, her appearance and the way she talks, makes her feel jealous and envious. Savitri seems lost and suppressive in this land. It is ironical to see a lost soul like Savitri trying to become a support for tear shedding children.

Usha and Savitri narrate their experience of outer world and that is completely different from each other. On the one hand, Usha seems to be a mother who lost her child in her womb and now she has been longing for the presence of her lost child throughout her life. Her repeated miscarriages make her life more painful and fruitless. While on the other hand, Savitri presents the loneliness of children of the settled land who always crave for the cares of their parent's love and affection. The poet Uma Parameswaran very beautifully contradicts the parenting mode of two different backgrounds through these two women characters. Savitri is a mother of three children but being a teacher she considers herself as mother of twenty four students of her class and they are all nine years old. Every year children pass on to another class but she will always be the mother of these little ones incessantly.



Another female voice that is heard by the readers is the voice of Chandrika. She is a strong voice to express the sense of a soul detached from the native land. Her thoughts depict the feelings of first generation immigrants. The setting of Indian household in Canada is brought out by Chandrika. They have holy Ganga water sealed in copper pots and place them above the fridge. Since there is no other place to keep the Gods, so they are placed above the fridge. When her father demands for Ganga water he can take it from there. When he leaves he wishes his daughter and it is a blessing to woman's husband to have a long and healthy life. This wish is carried in the new land. Now this blessing can also be considered as a sign of marginalisation in which a woman is supposed to carry the fortune of her husband's good and healthy life but in contrast to it, the husband is not at all responsible for his wife's health and life. So it can be said in a way that wedding bond is not a mutual bond. It shows the hierarchy system where the husband is given the first place and the wife always comes at the second. This experience of Chandrika on host land suggests that no matter where the woman lives, the cultural and social bond would always pester her. The poet Uma Parameswaran rightly captures the spirit where woman becomes the brand ambassador to protect the culture and tradition of native land. She is supposed to carry those rituals and customs along with her no matter where she lives and in many cases she really feels happy to do so in dislocated land.'

The other minor characters are Poornima, Tara and Tara's mother-in-law. Tara and her mother-in-law present the voice of those women who come from different social strata where women are little less educated and they speak in broken English. These women are literally shocked to see the new land with completely different culture from their own. Their English has more Indianness. When Tara goes with her Italian neighbour to stores, she is shocked to see the flesh of animals hanging like

bananas. She frankly accepts her lack of English language which is evident in the lines “But behn, is hard for me to ispeak Ingleesh.” (54)

The lamentation of Tara’s mother- in-law evokes both laughter and pity. She is not able to cope herself up with the new environment. She does not like closed doors and windows of the house and she misses the *rangoli* (61) on the porch steps to welcome goddess *Lakshmi* (61). According to Indian rituals open doors and windows brings freshness and positive energy in the house and *rangoli* symbolizes that goddess lakshmi pours blessings of richness on the human beings. But here in western country, Tara’s mother- in –law is worried about the entry of goddess into home. She does not like that way they keep their food stored in cans and ice- cupboard and questions her son that how the goddess will bless the three days old food. She openly declare that she does not like her daughter- in –law holding hands with some other man and her son holding hands of some other woman. Although she hates this new culture, yet feels happy with her son who has a settled life in this country. She feels so proud to see him with his own car, home and a good salaried job but she cannot bear the smell of previous day cooked food. According to her, the cooking smell should be filled with leaping aromas of turmeric and green coriander and mustard seeds popped in the hot oil. She is shrewd enough to accept this uprootedness because of better financial conditions but she hates to be confined in home rather wants to enjoy the beauty of nature. She wants to hear the sweet voice of birds, soothing sound of rain instead of the loud noise of washing machine. She seems frustrated with new settlement and longs for the dust, hot air and flies.

The female psyche is nurtured well through family support, spirituality and a collective consciousness which help them to transcend from alienation to global perspective. But the characters like Vithal and Jayanth represent the male psyche in

which it seems difficult to assimilate. Vithal, the angry young man is bursting his anger when he is encountered with racial discrimination and wants to hit back. He asks the immigrants to show their strength against them because they also have the right to live on this land. This stage marks an important phase in the formation of identity in the life of a migrant. But Jayanth is soft spoken and well adjusted to the immigrant situation and he does not feel as an 'other' at all. He is fully assured that expatriates have a place in the geographical as well as the cultural environment of Canada. These two speakers depict the two facets of the poet's personality, which shows a transition from aggressiveness to calm elevation. In the first phase of this migration, the stranger expatriate shows a kind of wonderment, fear and curiosity about the new land. The deep rooted nostalgia for the lost home echoes these sentiments through the voices of Dilip, Suri, Sharad and Bihari in *Trishanku*. It is an urgent plea of Dilip to his mother to make his skin colour white like that of his white friends. Sharad laments over everything that is in contrast to his culture and norms. He says,

But here the sun rises South- east

And the planets are all a kilter,

And all my words questions. (33)

Sharad blames that everything is different here from his homeland. Suri's complaint reminds a natural but unhygienic practice by Indians and that is obeying nature's call in public.

In *The Hero's Walk* Anita Rao Badami presents India by depicting the scenario of a fictitious town Toturpuram near Madras. It is about typical and traditional life of

Sripathi Rao, the protagonist, his wife Nirmala and the families. She describes the hardships and difficulties of a poor Brahmin family in the times of socio-political unrest. Sripathi Rao is fifty-seven and he lives with his widow mother Ammaya, his unmarried sister Putti also lives with them, alongwith wife Nirmala, son Arun. His only daughter Maya goes to America for further studies and then she gets a good salaried job in Canada. She also finds her soul mate Alan Baker and informs her parents about her intention to get married with Alan by breaking up her engagement with Prakash. After eight years of their marriage Maya and her husband unfortunately dies in an accident, this incident leaves their eight years old daughter – Nandana alone and as an orphan.

As the purpose of this research work is to identify the elements of ambivalence in Badami's works, so we carry out an intensive analysis to study various parameters to understand the elements of Diaspora in the novel. Sripathi Rao's daughter Maya, who has always been academically intelligent, goes to America for further studies. She gets fellowship and migrates to an alien land. But before migration, her parents get her engage with Prakash, an engineer, so that in future both Maya and Prakash may get settled in America. Maya is a young girl of twenty years and it is her voluntary migration initially but later due to circumstances, she decides to leave India forever and settles down in Canada. The fascination for a foreign country can be seen through her migration, where her parents as well as her finance's father intend to send their children to abroad for studies. Moreover, they don't find any difficulty in accepting permanent settlement there if job opportunities arise. But they don't accept their marriage with any outsider; it is against the norms of their culture. Maya has to face the same kind of situation; she marries Alan and breaks her engagement with Prakash. Alan is a white Christian and Maya decides to settle in Vancouver, Canada.

After that Sripathi refuses to have any contact with Maya and decides to disown her. This novel is a perfect example to illustrate parent -- child conflicts and it depicts the collective experience of many immigrants.

In the novel, the plot develops with a horrible incident and that is the tragic death of Maya and Alan in a car accident. They are survived by an eight years old daughter Nandana. The story proceeds with the comeback of Canadian raised orphan to her grandparents, who are living in a remote village named Toturpuram. The child faces many problems. She struggles hard to make a balance between the east and the west. The kind of life with her grandparents is entirely different than the life she had previously in Canada. The little Nandhana finds difficult to manage in Indian life style with traditional family background. On the other hand, Sripathi, who has always given respect to his Indian tradition and only because of that he, could not accept his daughter's marriage with Alan. But, now after their death he feels guilty about the behaviour he showed towards them. For him, the only way to repent for his misbehaviour is to raise Nandhana, like his own child. The child represents Canadian culture in India because she has been brought up like a Canadian and Sripathi hates this western culture that snatched his daughter from him. But with the course of time, he has to compromise with it. His ambivalent feelings for western culture are vividly illustrated in this novel. The guilt of consciousness kills him from inside. Everything seems to be falling about in his life. Being a guilt ridden, he travels to Vancouver to bring her grandchild back home but Nandana is very much terrified to go with him because she has never met him in her life, he is a complete stranger for her. Only through pictures, memories and childhood stories of her mother, she is little acquainted with her maternal family. Otherwise she is meeting her grandfather for the first time in her life. For Sripathi, Nandana is the only hope to survive and to repent

for his attitude. He wants to give all that love and affection to Nandana which he could not give to Maya and her husband. At this point the journey of Nandana from a developed country Canada to a developing country India creates many issues of adjustment.

In the novel, the attitude of Diaspora community towards other immigrants from the homeland is not emphasized by the novelist. Maya's migration to America is after passing examination of GRE, IELTS AND TOEFL etc. But her problems on foreign land are not discussed in detail. Even after spending a long period of time on hostland, she keeps in contact with her parents through letters and phone calls. Initially, she keeps writing letters to her parents weekly but with the course of time, she is not able to write so much because of her academic burden. Later, when Alan comes in her life, she hardly draws time to write them back home. It can be said that when Alan, a foreigner comes in her life, she loses her contact with her own homeland. Her father, who has always been so close to her seems very far now. Her decision creates a great upheaval at the homes of Sripathi and Prakash. Badami conveys the miserable condition of an Indian mother, who doubts on her own upbringing, when Maya took such step against the family. She says, "Did we not bring her up properly ?Must be that foreign place. Their ways are different, all right for them perhaps, but for a girl brought up here, it must be difficult to resist temptation"(111). Sripathi feels offended because of her decision to marry Alan and breaking her engagements with Prakash. He is more concerned about his reputation than his daughter's happiness.

He threatens her that she should never dare to show her face in the house in future. He declares her to be dead for the family. Maya sends her wedding invitation card but no positive response comes from her family. She also posts a photograph of

her and Alan that she took just after marriage outside the registration office. After one year, when she becomes a mother of a beautiful girl child, she informs this good news to her parents and pleads her father to act as a legal guardian of her daughter Nandana because Alan has no family. Initially, Sripathi pays no heed to it but with the intervention of his friends Raju Mudaliar, he agrees to sign.

During her eight years of stay in Vancouver, Maya keeps in touch with her mother through letters and phone calls though her father dislikes it. Nandana stays with uncle Sunny and aunty Kiran's home when her parents go for work. Sripathi, one day receives a call from Dr. Sunderraj, who informs him about Maya and her husband Alan death that they died immediately after their car got crashed off on highway. Nandana is safe because she was not with them. She seems to be a bewildered child, who becomes silent after this incident and keeps thinking that her parents would return some day and take her home.

After hearing this terrible news, the whole family get shocked, especially Nirmala, who is not able to control herself and cries like a mad woman for her bereaved child. She blames Sripathi for her death for not on speaking terms for so many years. She says that it is his curse on Maya, which proved right. But soon, the whole family realize that they should forget about the past and concentrate on the future of Nandana's life. Badami clearly portrays Nirmala as a courageous woman in the following lines, when she says, "what is gone is gone. I will always miss my Maya, but tomorrow's meal still has to be cooked, no? The child's future is more important than past sorrows" (323)

It takes a month for Sripathi to seek permission from the Department of Social Services to take Nandana to India. The child has already heard about her

grandfather's stubborn nature and his disapproval for her parents' marriage, so she is unwilling to go with him, but she has no other option left. After her first arrival in India, she could not adjust with food, stay and social life. Though Nandana, it is depicted that how difficult it is to get adapted to a foreign culture for an alien like her. At first sight of Madras railway station, Nandana's experience is narrated with her great astonishment to see the crowd everywhere. Sripathi believes that the sound of vendors, coolies, beggars shouting of customers and crying of children for their parents must be very annoying for her. Because she has never seen such circus of humanity under one roof. She cannot bear the smell of fish, sweating of human being, diesel oil, frying food and all other disgusting smell of various things and places.

Nandana keeps her mother's red winter coat and Alan's grey coat as their precious memory. Even after a month in India, she feels so alien and does not utter a single word. Gradually, she likes her maternal uncle Arun and she even tries to adjust with Nirmala, who takes care of her. One day, she goes out of her home and a mechanic Karim brings her back. At school also, she feels isolated and alone because of different atmosphere than that of Vancouver. The novelist also depicts some issues of adjustment to a new environment which is narrated through her efforts to adjust in Indian education system. She mentions some weakness of our education system in the lines, "These teachers dump everything on them to do at home. I don't know why we have to pay such high school fees and do everything ourselves only "(288).

She also feels stranger to see so many festivals in India. She mentions of Halloween celebration in Canada but not celebrated in India like Deepawali. She does not like Indian fruits. She has seen electric water heater for the first time in her life. Her grandmother Nirmala uses it for heating bathing water for her. She also notices the difference between squirrel found in India and Canada. Badami narrates the



picture of hostland society but unlike other Diasporic writers, she focuses more on homeland. The present novel does not focus more on Maya, who lives in Canada. She is just a conventional diasporic subject. Its main emphasis is on Sripathi's multiple displacements and rerootings. The major part of the novel brings into foreground Nandana's detours to her ancestral world. Badami hardly mentions the major issues related to identity that Maya faces in a foreign land. She writes letters and gives calls to her mother but never mentions about the feelings of alienation, inbetweenness and ambivalence. Through Nirmala, Badami shows how the hostland is filled with problems for immigrants but it keeps them busy and they hardly get time to talk to their friends and relatives. On the other land, Nandana, who is born in Canada, feels alone and alien because after her parents death, she finds no one to talk with. The difference of hostland and homeland is narrated through her memories and comparison, who comes to India as an orphan. Nirmala is a religious woman and a true follower of Hindu customs and rituals. She asks Sripathi regarding post - death rituals of Maya because being a Hindu Brahmin, all her rituals of cremation should have been performed accordingly. She asks that if her eyes were closed with coins and put one in her mouth. She feels so sad that her daughter died like an orphan and he couldn't even perform her last rites. It is a belief that if ones death rituals are not performed according to one's religion, then, the soul of that person does not get peace and it floats like a Trishanku between worlds.

Apart from Maya's immigration to an alien land, Badami shows the migration of two sons of Raju Mudaliar who is also a friend of Sripathi Rao. The older son of Mudaliar is settled in California and the younger one is in Switzerland. They migrate to abroad for career and economic prospective. It is their voluntarily migration and after that they hardly come to India to meet his father and their abnormal sister. When

the novel opens, Sripati is shown to be an egocentric and scornful character. In his ego, he is unable to forgive his daughter for disrespecting him and dislikes his son's efforts as an environmental activist. It seems that he has isolated himself from wife and children and finds it easier to express his deepest thoughts and latent anger in the letters that he continuously keeps writing to the editors of various local newspapers. Interestingly, he writes these letters in the name of "Pro Bono Publico". He signs these letters as "On behalf of the people" (9). By doing this, he considers himself as brave hero of the world of letters, but the fact is that this is just an escapism which justifies his unfulfilled desire to become a writer.

Badami mentions the issues of Hindu and Muslims on homeland. The conflict between these two religions has become the point of discussion since ages. Every morning, Hindus worship their Gods by ringing a deafening sound of temple bells and Muslims make nasal call of Mullah by mega phones. It appears that both the communities try to make louder noise than each other to prove the superiority of their Gods respectively. This strife is a major issue among political parties and it plays a crucial role during the time of elections. The people of different religions have every right to worship their Gods and it makes our identity as a secular country. But the protagonist Sripathi does not like this ostentatious way to pray to God and really dislikes the deafening sound of temple bells every morning. Generally, in a Hindu Brahmin family, eating non-Vegetarian and allowing Muslim in the house is considered to be unholy and impious thing. When Nandana cannot adjust herself with Indian food, Miss Chintamani comments that foreigners usually eat meat of cow, pig and goat and this is the reason she does not like Indian food. She further says that they have to clean the whole house with holy water of Ganga after any foreigner leaves. In another incident, this religious consciousness can be seen, when Karim

who is a muslim by religion brings Nandana back home. He does not enter into the house due to Ammayya's anger, as she could pour a bucket of holy water on him in order to purify the house. In the novel, Badami has depicted cast and religions consciousness very well, as it has always been a part of Indian society since ages.

The Britishers colonized India, ruled over it for about three hundred years. They exploited the naive and innocent people of the country. Now, India is an independent nation but hatred towards foreigners is still intact in people's heart. There are these posters with slogans against foreigner "Foreign Ships Go Home ! Thieves and Robbers Go Home"(272).

Ammayya is a caste and religious woman. It is Ammayya, who mentions about the caste and roots of Alan and comments how she can marry an alien without knowing his roots. She has a kind of hatred for whites and she also compares her cultural and religious practices with Alan's. Thus, it can be said that Badami has emphasized on religious and social issues in homeland.

The third Novel of Anita Rai Badami *Can You Hear the Night Bird Call?* deals with the politics of belongingness. Badami has taken a bitter subject from history and turned it into a very thoughtful highly readable subject with her fantastic narrative style. Most of her works depicts the complexities of Indian family life and the cultural gap that arises when Indians move to the west. The present novel deals with the medley of series of events which centres around three Indian women, who become victims of some tumultuous scenes during unstable political scenario of partition. Women being extremely vulnerable become easy targets in these evil events and they are easily oppressed, humiliated and discriminated. The painful experience, the sexual trauma and humiliation and sufferings of women are conspicuously depicted in

partition literature. Many such works substantiate the fact the gender inequality is not a biological fact or a divine mandate but it is a cultural construct. The present novel narrates the traumatic experience of three women characters during partition as well as the trauma, anguish, pain and ambivalence of migration from India to Canada, that experience thereafter.

The three women protagonists are Bibiji, Leela and Nimmo. Sharanjeet Kaur better known as Bibiji, lives in Vancouver, Leela Bhat, her neighbour and friend from Bangalore, and Nimmo, Bibiji's niece lives in India. Nimmo had lost her parents at a very young age during the devastation of partition. Now, she is rebuilding her life in Delhi with her husband and three children.

The novel begins with an account of the past of Sharanjeet Kaur, an Indian immigrant to Canada. She was born into an impoverished family but she managed to change her destiny by using her beauty and feminine wiles in order to trap a rich groom, who had actually come for her plain looking elder sister, Kanwar. Her dream for a better life in a foreign country, especially in Canada, was primarily fuelled by her father, Harjot Singh. He himself wanted to go to Canada in order to earn lots of wealth. He was among the several passengers, boarded in the ship "Komagata Maru" in search for a good job. But they were retreated from the shores of Canada. Such humiliation and unfulfilled desire of Canada, dragged Harjot Singh into depression. Disappointed with life and luck, he resigned himself to his cot all day and night; finally he abandoned his family and disappeared without any trace. He was the kind of character, who lost his purpose of life because of one failed ambition. It was his family, which had to pay the price for his self-destructive violence. The silent plight of Kanwar, was very pitiable because she had to bear the pain of rejection from many men of marriageable age. It was because Kanwar had neither beauty nor wealth to

tempt any man. She had nothing to charm them and ultimately she was forced to marry a widower. Later, she and her husband were brutally murdered during the communal riots of partition and only her daughter Nirmaljeet Kaur(Nimmo) survived in violence.

Sharanjeet Kaur (Bibiji) migrated to Canada after her marriage with Paji. She fulfils her father's dream. She becomes a successful woman and lives a luxurious life. But even as she settles down in Canada with a loving and caring husband and good friends around her all the time. She feels nostalgic for her native land. The memories of her past haunt her all the time. She is not able to bear a child and blames herself as she snatched her sister's fortune. Throughout her life, she tries to manage a snap ties with her native land. She waits for long to receive any news from her family, but nothing comes out. She pays her visit to India in search of her sister and her family but finds out that her whole village vanishes out of maps. The loss of her sister's family creates hatred in her for the scent of lavender. The very fragrance of lavender is the one with which she fell in love as a little girl and for which she stole her sister's chance to go to that land, which offered her lavender soaps, perfumes and a rich luxurious life. The fragrance of lavender symbolizes desire, aspiration, wealth and an opportunity to go to Canada on the one hand and of devastation, death, violence and traumatic memory of the past on the other.

Bibiji and her husband open a restaurant named "The Delhi Junction"(120), where the Indian immigrants gather, eat and ask each other for advice. They also discuss the current matters of their country and keep themselves in touch with it. The couple calls their beautiful home "The Taj Mahal"(121) and it is like a haven for those new immigrants who don't find any shelter or accommodation during their initial days. So, they are allowed to stay with them till they find permanent house for them.

In this way, Paji and Bibi-ji still feel connected with their homeland by helping their own people. This way to show the sense of belongingness, the importance of the cultural lives, and experience of immigrants is like a response to the feelings of loss and hopelessness that effect many people who live away from their family and homeland. Hence, Bibi-Ji yearns for the sense of belongingness in foreign land that she inhabits. She repeatedly tries to seek her past and reshuffles the pieces to place them in her present. Finally, her struggle pays off when she finds Nimmo (Kanwar's daughter). She wants to clean her guilt by helping Nimmo and her family. After a lot of persuasion, she succeeds in being allowed to raise her elder son Jasbeer. This is the second mistake that she makes to her sister's family. For her repentance and unfulfilled desire to have a child, she takes Jasbeer away from his mother. In Canada, the eleven years old Jasbeer feels isolated and alienated in the new environment. A resentful and deeply sad Jasbeer finally vents out his anger by involving in the violent Sikh separatist movement. Nimmo reluctantly obliges her aunt in order to get the monetary help she receives from her. This move, however leads to a disastrous happening in everyone's life. Bibi-Ji willingly conceals Jasbeer's misbehaviour and misdeeds from his mother and family, so that they never ask her to return their child. On the other hand, Jasbeer, is angered over the uprootedness from his familial grounds and refuses to make a bond with his new family. Gradually, his mother loses all contacts with him and due to frustration; he himself declines every opportunity to communicate with them. Thus, this deep sense of alienation and uprootedness makes him wander aimlessly. He turns out to be a violent and aggressive young man who is easily seduced by the rhetoric voice of Dr. Raghubir Randhawa. And he incites him to join the Sikh's violent efforts to establish a new homeland called Khalistan.

The theme of racial discrimination is also prominent through author's depiction of interracial nuptials between a German woman named Rosa Schweers and Hari Shastri, who is a south Indian. Hari's family is deeply rooted in Hindu culture and believes that he has committed a blunder by marrying a casteless woman, who belongs to different religion and has no family background. They treat Rosa as an outsider and an alien in their family. Hari's mother always taunts and abuses her white daughter-in-law whenever she catches sight of her. Rosa becomes a victim of violence which is based on her colour, race, her religion and her way of living. Initially, she tries to fight back but ultimately admits her defeat due to the constant discrimination by her-in-laws. She had no support from her husband in any matter and so she starts living in her own world of misery and unhappiness. It is only in death that she finds freedom from all sorts of wretchedness that her-in-laws thrust on her. But all this does not stop here only, the same wretchedness, the same feeling of antagonism and hatred is transferred towards her daughter Leela, by the Shastri family.

Leela is a child of mixed social background, so she is always labelled by her grandmother as a "half and half"(82).The Child of mismatched parents. "Half and half" becomes her nick name which is quickly picked up by her cousins in order to tease her. Here the author depicts the violence that is attached to racial discrimination, which first taken away the life of Rosa, and then leaving the little girl, Leela completely vulnerable to her grandmother's tirade of abuses. Hence, religion is shown as a patriarchal institution which becomes an agent of violence and intolerance against the women who belong to different community. In the instance of Rosa, it is proved that the deep hatred and cruelty of this violence which leads her to commit suicide. In victimization of Leela on the other hand, shows that it is almost

impossible to erase the stigma of mixed breed throughout life. And, it also has adverse effect on the young child as it creates a deep sense of inferiority in her. Due to which she prematurely crosses the threshold of adulthood. In order to get rid of this feeling of inadequacy, she considers marriage to a prosperous groom to be the only way of extracting herself from marginalized situation. So, she ensnares Balu Bhat, who belongs to an illustrious South Indian family and cuts down all her relations with her maternal home. She feels so proud to be the daughter-in law of the well-known family of Kunjoor Bhats.

The status of marginalization is again highlighted when Leela thrust her own prejudiced notions on her future daughter-in-law. She refuses to accept the white girlfriend of his son with open arms. The scar of her marginalization and victimization reopens the old wounds and brings her back to the old depressing memories.

*Tamarind Mem* is also another selected novel of Badami, which deals with the sufferings and hardships of the people when they leave their native land in order to be rooted in an alien land. She also points out the various problems and hurdles which they undergo for their survival. It depicts estranged relationship between a mother and daughter who try to make sense of their past with different perspective. The novel is basically divided into two parts and has been described from two different viewpoints. The first part is narrated by Kamini, who is living in Canada for the purpose of her higher studies and job. The second half of the novel is narrated by Saroja, Kamini's mother. The interesting point is that both of them do not meet each other in the story. Everything they narrate is in flashback. Kamini is in Canada, away from her homeland and recalls her childhood days spent in the railway colonies in India. She rejoices those few months in grandparent's house at the birth of her younger sister and



finally her all-time efforts to understand her nagging mother. She does so by narrating her past memories to herself from her Calgary Apartment. On the other hand, Saroja delights her fellow passengers with her stories of life while travelling independently all through India by train. Her husband is no more and the two daughters of her have gone and got settled in abroad. She tells about the estranged relationship she had with her husband, who had hardly time for her. Being a wife of a railway officer, she had to bear the pain of displacement from one place to another due to frequent transfers of her husband. So, she never had close friends and family. Her dream of being a doctor had also been shattered by her parents. Finally, her relationship with mechanic Paul De-Costa also shows her estranged married life.

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