

Chapter-4

A Comparative Study- Uma Parameswaran and Anita Rau Badami as Diasporic Writers

The present chapter begins with an objective to analyse the similarities and differences of the two female diasporic writers- Uma Parameswaran and Anita Rau Badami. Before comparing these two writers, it is essential to have a glimpse on their past life, academic achievements and social eminent position, they hold in Canadian society. This internal comparison would disclose the ways in which these writers treat their themes and characters

Among the exponents of Indo-Canadian diasporic writers, the name of Uma Parameshwaram is always listed foremost because of her major contribution to the emerging field of South Asian Canadian Literature with her tremendous achievement in the works like *Trishanku*, *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees*, *What Was Always hers and Sons Must Die*. She has been living in Winnipeg since 1966 and working as a professor of English at the University of Winnipeg. She is also involved in the Indo-Canadian and Women's communities. She is an author and editor of several books of poetry, fiction plays and criticism. Her work - *What Was Always Hers* is collection of short-stories. It is an enlightened, compassionate and humorous fiction and she has won '1999 New Muse Award' and the 2000 Canadian Author's Association 'Jubilee Award' for it. Her creative writing explores the challenges of Indian Diaspora in coping with ambiguous identity and their struggle between the two cultures. She deals with the issues of assimilation, racial discrimination and some common problems of immigrants in her novels, short-stories, poems and plays.

Anita Rao badami was born in 1961 in Rourkela, Orissa, India. As an Indo-Canadian novelist, she has authored four extraordinary novels. Her first novel *Tamarind Mem* made her achieve the position of the newest writers in the vibrant field of Indian diasporic literature. Her debut work, *Tamarind Mem*, received critical acclaim for its truthful depiction of Indian families and bold, strong-minded women characters. Badami's father was a mechanical engineer on the railroads, so her family moved every two or three years from one station to another. She attended Catholic schools in India, because twenty-thirty years back, nun's schools were considered the best schools for English-medium education.

Badami got her Bachelor's Degree in English at the University of Madras. Then, she studied journalism in Sophia College in Bombay. After her schooling, she had various job options in hand. She worked as a copywriter for advertising agencies in Bombay, Bangalore and Madras and she also wrote for many well known newspapers and magazines for seventeen years, before she actually opted for a full-fledged writer. She also gave her service in writing many stories for children's magazines. She got married in 1984 and later, when her son was born, her family moved to Calgary in 1991. Now, Ms. Badami lives in Vancouver with her family.

After discussing the issues of ambivalence and nostalgia of the past in the previous chapters, this chapter shall deal with a comparative study in the writings of both the women writers of the Indian diaspora in Canada. Diasporic literature emerges not simply from the fact of geographical displacement and dislocation but also from memories and nostalgia of the forgotten pasts which continue to shape the present. Diasporic writers pay vital role in it by deliberately visiting to their homeland through memories to draw their source of writing from it. Actually, these writers are considered to be very sentimental because they are emotionally attached to

both the worlds and want to enjoy the best of the both but often end up enjoying neither of them.

Besides being a writer, Uma Parameswari is also a poet and playwright and she has also written a few critical essays. It has almost been forty years in Canada and she is very well aware of dilemma that an expatriate faces on an alien land. In the essay, "Ganga in the Assiniboine; A Reading of poems from Trishanku" which is contained in the book *Writing the Diaspora : Essays On Culture and Identity*, she talks about her experience as an immigrant, which makes her feel that she is surrounded by the beautiful landscape of cedar and pine. Simultaneously, she also feels the sights and sounds of her memories of home-land. She can feel the monsoon rains, blossom of mango flowers and soothing sound of temple bells in her landscape of memories. In her another essay, "Dispelling the Spells of Memory :Another Approach to Reading Our Yesterdays" she expresses that the people who leave their home-land and settle down in host land with some positive hopes, they always occupy a liminality, uneasy pull between the two lands and two different cultures. She calls this pull as Trishanku curse, a king in Indian mythology, who was denied by both heaven and earth in his mortal form and later, the sage Vishwamitra created his own heaven, complete with a constellation of stars - So that Trishanku's heart's desire was fulfilled, but he remained suspended in the centre of a triangle formed by the three worlds. Uma gives her own example that as a Canadian she believes in borders but as an expatriate she thinks differently and believes that the real strength lies in erasing of borders. As a Canadian, she becomes a part of the oppressor group which dominates the rest of the world by Coca-Cola, McDonalds, multinational companies and Malls etc. Simultaneously, she also feels trapped and victimised being a Canadian because there is always a fear or a sort of threat to Canadian Sovereignty by the United States

for encroaching its industries, cultural properties and natural resources. It seems that the history of her native land is being repeated in her new homeland. But when she takes herself as a writer who expresses the sentiments of people of Indian Diaspora, she actually feels a strong bond with them. She connects with her fellow Indian friends who share the same culture and nation. She celebrates this common feeling in her works. Many writers, publishers and editors are also giving them contribution in order to make this bond stronger by fulfilling the social and emotional needs of the people. But it also results into ghettonization which presents people going outside the ethnocentric community. As far as Uma Parameswaram is concerned, ghettonization is an unhealthy element and a big hindrance for the success of multicultural society like Canada. It does not allow the immigrants to integrate with the host society and so they remain isolated from them. Furthermore, she encourages other diasporic writers and critics of Indian origin to shift their focus of their writing from homeland to host land. She suggests them to write about the country in which they presently reside without any fear and threat. She also emphasis on some historical events like Komogata Maru incident of 1914 and Air India tragedy of Kanishka (1985) and suggests writers to introduce, establish archetypes and cultural illusions out of these unforgettable historical events. On the other hand, Anita Rau Badami has also started her novel *Can You Hear The Nightbirds call?* with the events like Komagata Maru incident and ended her story with tragic explosion in Air India Flight 182 off the coast of Ireland in 1985. In an interview, she said that the biggest challenge in writing *Nightbird*, was to keep the history in backdrop and not letting it eat up the story. It explained the importance of actual historical and political events which are intermingled with the work of fiction. Badami has dedicated the book to the memory of the man stood on the bridge in Modinagar and the victims of Air India Flight 182.

During the Sikh riots, Badami with her husband was travelling back to Delhi after honeymoon. From the bus window, she saw a Sikh man was set on fire and then thrown over a bridge. This traumatic incident sowed the seeds of *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call*. But she didn't start writing right away and took many years to connect this innocent killing of Sikhs with the disastrous incident of Air India Flight. She took six years to work on it. After completing her novel, she achieves her intention, linking the lives of three women characters whose fates are entangled by love, chance and finally, the series of violence. These fictional characters live and breathe in the background of some major historical events and their lives are affected by them. The novel revolves around the three female protagonist Bibiji (Sharan), Nimmo (Bibiji's niece) and Leela (Bibiji's friend and neighbour in Canada. The story begins with the shattered dreams of Harjot Singh, father of Bibiji (Sharanjeet) He was an disillusioned man from Punjab who was on board the komagata Maru but he, along with other fellow passengers, was denied entry to Canada, the Land of his dreams. But such humiliation and unfulfillment of dream, dragged him into depression. He resigned himself to his cot all day and night without doing any constructive work. Finally, he abandoned his family and disappeared from the novel without any trace. But he and his ultimate dream of life always survived in the memories of his daughter Sharanjeet. She fulfilled her dream by betraying her sister and marrying the man who actually came for his sister Kanwar. The second incident is the partition of the country that again brutally affected Kanwar and her family. She and her husband were killed in the partition violence, leaving behind their only daughter Nimmo to bear the agony and sorrows throughout her life. During the partition, the acrimony between the two factions had taken roots in India. However, religion became an important aspect in everybody's life. In Canada also, there were fights between Hindus and Sikhs on the

one hand and Muslims on the other hand. Later, the first war of 1965 between the two newly formed nations reached to the Delhi Junction as well. The seating maps changed, and Hafeez and Alibhai separated their chairs from Indian groups. When India and Pakistan were at war with each other, the split consciousness that was fired with the partition travelled all the way to Canada and divide the space of the people which they used to occupy together. But as soon as the war ended, the antagonism is forgotten and both sides share the same camaraderie again. Another historical event which affected large number of people both in India and Canada, was the Khalistan Movement. Sikhs believed themselves as a unique people and demanded a separate independent state. Dr Raghbir Randhawa is the supporter of Khalistan. The politics of this movement was the commencement of the rift between Sikhs and Hindus. His fundamentalist ideas had gained the support of Sikhs living in Canada. Jasbeer, the adopted son Bibi-ji, had become a staunch supporter of the militancy of Dr. Randhawa. He was completely brainwashed by his hero Randhawa and it led him to get involved in Air India fight incident. Due to so much political and religious upheaval in the country led to the heinous incident – The Operation Bluestar, which ruined the faith of every religious man living in India as well as in abroad. Sant Bhindranwale, pretentiously a priest and a holy man but actually was deeply involved in the politics of the Khalistan movement and he had built up stocks of weapons in the holy Golden Temple. As subsequent events proves that even the holiest place is not safe. Paji ends up his life for having so much faith in God and temple. It was the matter of revenge that resulted the next episode, that of the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the then prime minister of India. This incident took place in the year 1985. The novel ends with the sabotage of an Air India fight that causes the death of Leela, the Hindu and very close friend of Bibi-ji. She and her family were very well aware of

the plans but it was an act of revenge for anti-Sikh riots. Both events –one real and a historical fact, the other fictional and an imaginary incident happen at the same time and are related by the writer in the same instance. The real and fictional world merges so much with each other that it makes the action more concrete and real. The readers are able to connect themselves with each imaginary character and every real event. It makes the fiction more real and believable. So it is found that both the writers have same thoughts and emotions while dealing with past events.

In her famous essay "Ganga in Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo - Canadian Literature" Uma expresses her utmost desire in which she intends to see the confluence of Ganga and Assiniboine rivers. According to Hindu religion, the river Ganga is the most pious and sacred river which is worshipped as Goddess Ganga. And it is believed that it purifies all the misdeeds and sins of the people with its pure water. It is the symbol of Indian culture. On the other hand Assiniboine river also represents Canadian culture and its richness. In Hindu ethos, the confluence of any two rivers is supposed to be one of the most sacred mergers of enrichment. Uma Parameswaram has also the same perception and wants these two sacred rivers of different nations merge into each other and emerge with a new source of enrichment. Thus, she is looking forward for the time when Indian expatriates see their holy river Ganga in the beautiful Canadian landscape and every citizen of Canada would be able to recognize its importance, emotional and religious attachment of his neighbours to this river. In a nutshell, she wants to see the combination of two distinct cultures which would lead to an establishment of a new enriched culture.

Furthermore, Uma Parameswaram identifies four phases of immigrant experience on an alien land. In the first or the primary phase, one is conscious about the Canadian Landscape which is so vast and harsh at first sight. At the initial stage,

the expatriate feels so wondered and curious at the sight of new environment. The immigrant seems to be nostalgic, lonely and wants to go back to his homeland and moreover, he starts loving his own culture. In the second phase the immigrant tries to overcome his nostalgia and struggles hard to merge himself in the society by slowly following the new way of life and set of values. In the poem *Trishanku : A Cycle of Voices* which is compiled in the famous work of Uma Parameswaram *Trishanku and other Writings*, Tara's mother-in-law, expresses such feeling of initial experience, which is full of joy as well as pain to see her son settled in Canada but so far away from his homeland. She expresses her ambivalent feeling of attraction and repulsion at the same time. Seeing her son settled in Canada owns his own car, a lovely house and a good job makes her feel so proud and elated. But simultaneously, she finds it so strange in this new culture where her daughter-in-law holds hands of other men and his son enjoys the company of other men's wives.

The third phase emphasis on the second generation immigrant Canadians who live on meat, burgers and mingle within ethnocentric community. They often make mental inner and outer journeys of their idealized homeland. But when they feel discriminated and not treated equally by the host society, they vent out their frustration and anger. As Vithal becomes the voice of this generation and outrages his anger in the above mentioned poem. He favours ghettonization to strengthen their community and wants to be isolated from the Canadian community, which is not ready, to accept them as their own. He raises his voice with his friends to make a promise that they would build their temples at the bank of Assiniboine river. They would surely bring their God and goddess and especially their culture to this land.

Finally, in the fourth phase the immigrant starts taking active participation in the larger political and social field of the country. He finds a place to call home and

feels comfortable in assimilating into the new culture. Our Indo-Canadian writer, Uma Parameswaram firmly believes that most of the immigrants reach the fourth phase of this experience. Her famous work, "The Door I shut Behind Me" was published in 1967 and the name itself is suggestive that the door which has been shut behind is the door to the home country where the immigrants can no longer go back. The protagonist of the story is V.R. Chander, a twenty five year old young unmarried Tamil with a Ph.D degree from Madras University and a two year research fellowship with the University of Manitoba. In short, he is a bright young educated Indian who just wants to grab some good work experience for few years and go back home. But for people like Agrawal the Green Card is a treasure of all happiness, wealth and health in Canada throughout life. In the initial stage, Chander finds it very strange to see the people of his own country who do not want to hear the pathetic condition of their own country which has been left by them. They just want listen about the happy days and golden period of their life which was free from every tension and worry. They want to relive their boyhood days. But this is all imagination and a dream that they never want to fulfil because of their fascination towards Canadian culture. It is not that they are really blind and deaf to the current situation of their country, but they think that they are doing something for it by organizing charity shows and fund raising dinners. In fact, the first generation in works of Uma Parameswaran depicts an accurate picture of the Indian diasporic community, proud parents of children who speak fluent English and have satisfactorily forgotten their mother tongues, people don't feel shy of getting married a Canadian woman, idle talks and promises of returning to motherland floating in the air all the time- all these constitute the Indian community abroad. This depiction of diaspora is more or less similar to Bharti Mukherjee's *wife*. But she is more focused on the superficiality and negative aspects

of the nostalgic diasporic Indian community in America, while Parameswaran tries to give a reason behind the never to be fulfilled dream of returning to the homeland one day. As another character in the story, Harish Bahl says, "When we leave our country we shut many doors behind ourselves though we are not aware of it at the time "(105). It provides a reason of migration for middle-class Indian diaspora. Their migration is always a pull factor for better job opportunities, for financial reasons and definitely for good life-style. Once they get used to the life in the foreign country, it becomes very difficult for them to return. Chander feels disgusted to see the psychology of the people who are neither Indians any more nor able to become Canadians completely. They have constructed an imaginary homeland, almost like utopia, whose existence they themselves are not sure about. They just want to wish the golden period of their life and want to romanticise old memories of their motherland and refuse to register any change in that image. But Chander is not able to describe those beautiful days of their land , which were like an escape route for them from harshness of alien land. Moreover, if they want to return, their children find it unacceptable. They cannot give up their western habits in order to get adjusted in India. Hence, the first generation migrants after assumes the role of "Trishanku", this term was introduced by Uma Parameswaran in her short story "The door I shut Behind Me". Later this concept got popularized in her long narrative collection of poem "Trishanku". According to Uma Parameswaran, the Indian Diaspora in Canada is in the state of Trishanku, Canada is their heaven, the desired place where they can never belong to; at the same time, their return to motherland too is impossible. It means that many doors have been firmly shut by themselves and by their desires. Most of the critics and psychiatrist oppose and disagree with her, as complete assimilation for the first generation is quite impossible. They might acquire a relative adjustment that is acculturation but not

assimilation into the stream of host culture. Acculturation is just the adaptation of changes in external or outer behaviour for a smoother acceptance by the host land. It is quite different from assimilation. The meaning of assimilation is the ability of the immigrant to react instinctively and emotionally to a culture. In the process of acculturation and assimilation, every expatriate has to follow the way of new culture of the society in which he/she resides, with minimization of the rules of their own culture. This process of new learning seems to be difficult for the older generation whereas the younger or the second generation actively participates in it because they are not so deeply rooted to their past culture and heritage. All these plights, dilemma of identity crises and various stages of acculturation and assimilation are clearly portrayed by Uma Parameswaran in her works.

The same thoughts are carried forward in her next famous novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*. The Central characters are members of Bhave and Moghe family, living in Canada for past seven to eight years. This shows the entire Indian community in its various stages of adaptation and acculturation. It covers almost three generations of expatriates who deal with the dilemma of being in diaspora. The parents Sharad-Savitri Bhave and Anant-Veejala Moghe represent the first generation, which migrates to Canada for better future perspective. Their elder children Jayant-Jyoti and Vithal Moghe belong to the second generation. They are actually in tug of war between two cultures and nations. The third generation includes the younger siblings Krish Bhave and Priti Moghe, their connection with India is very far away, to distant and vague. Sharad Bhave gave up his job as an atomic energy scientist in Tromby and now he has been working as a real-estate agent in Winnipeg. However, his Canadian dream has not been able to drive India away from his heart as it is obvious from his son's reaction over his Hindu values and morals. Jayant, a rebellious young

man of nineteen years old screams to his sister Jyoti: "Don't you come at me with all that crap about morals and Hindu values and the whole Hogwash. I've had an earful from Dad all these seven fucking years. Him and pipe dreams about India"(14). He directly attacks on his father's decision of leaving India, his birthplace. The fact is that the first generation is not able to accept their children's western life style which prompt the children to raise this question of migration time and again. Sharad is conscious of his identity for being a foreigner and does not want to feel awkward to be among the white crowd which frowns and asks many questions of his existence on this alien land. He says, "All those alien faces staring at or through you. It makes me wonder, makes me ask myself, 'what am I doing here? Who are these faceless people among whom my life is oozing away' each of them is so self-contained, looking at me as though I shouldn't be there"(30). Sharad is not able to make a connection between his heritage and new ways of Canadian liberalism. He still draws his roots from Indian soil, which is very essential for his survival. He gives an example of "Plantain Tree" which symbolizes continuity and usefulness. It is used in every occasion to strap on the wedding *Shamiana* or the doors of houses. His vast knowledge of Indian culture and heritage can be seen by his each minor detail of his explanation. He tells that the plantain tree leaves "a young sapling before it dries up"(31). In addition to it, each and every part of this tree is useful whether it is flower, leave and trunk. But the fact is that this tree of Indian soil cannot survive on Canadian soil. It would grow and bloom where it belongs just like "an Ontario poplar can't survive in Manitoba soil"(31) because it is a foreigner, not a native tree to the land of Manitoba. The situation of Sharad is more or less like these two trees. The plantain tree symbolises his cultural roots and values but unfortunately, it does not find suitable soil for its survival on alien land and dries up in the similar way as the Ontario poplar does.

Sharad's wife Savitri is also in the same dilemma of two cultures. She is accustomed with Canadian cultures yet she is still an Indian from the core of her heart. She is aware of her daughter's physical relations with her white Canadian boyfriend, Pierre. But she is helpless to do anything since, it is the way of western culture. For her, love is all important whether you are legally married or not. Being an emotional and responsible mother, she balances between her family and professional life. She loves cooking Indian food not only for her own children but also for the young crowd that gathers at her home every weekend. At one point, she says that she has carried her God within her heart and wherever she goes, the cultural values and ways would remain with her. But there is inconsistency in her views, because she has been living in Canada with a fear of losing her God, heritage and ancient values which are present in the form of spirits inside her. She realizes that the diasporas do not fit and can hardly survive in this country due to the distinct identities. Like other expatriates, she is also living with a mental trauma and entangled life in which they are afraid to seek answers of their questions of identity. Deliberately, she does not want to figure out things and prefers to live in inconsistencies.

Sharad frequently visit his past to make his present alive and whenever he gets an opportunity he starts narrating some historical or mythological stories to his children in order to keep them in touch their culture and roots. In contrast of her brother, Veejala believes that the burden of past culture and heritage makes them handicap and creates many hindrances in moving ahead in their present life in Canada. She contradicts her brother and says that those people who can't cope with the present life, they always try to escape and take shelter in the past. She refers past as a crutch and toxic which makes difficult for them to assimilate, into the host

society. But later in the novel, it is the same Veejala, who decides to escape from the harsh reality of hostland because she is herself is tired of carrying around that crutch of the past. She is also swinging between the two cultures like Sharad and Savitri. Having experienced, racial and gender discrimination she decides "... wasting her life in her native country than in these backwoods.... it could be I am the wrong colour as well" (138).

In the present novel *Mangoes On the Maple Tree*, the second generation includes, Jayant, Jyoti, Vithal and their young friends. They have spent most of their childhood days in India and now have been living in Canada for past seven years. So the memories of their childhood connect them to their homeland. This generation has to face the complexities of the inter-racial relationships, painful realities of racial discrimination, of feeling of rootlessness and conflicting values. For Jayant, Canada is his home and he eagerly wants to merge into its culture. He hates even a single word ' Bhau' (11), which connects him with Indian culture. He wants to shed away of his Indianness completely. He also ridicules Indian values and morals which are just crap for him. But inspite of his overwhelming Canandiannes, Jyoti bursts out her angers saying that, "I sure hope it gets into that thick skull of yours that we're different, and no matter what we do, we are never going to fit in here."(13). In spite of his outer fascination for western culture, he is a true Indian from heart. He has an intimate relationship with its heritage, which is reflected through his past memories and deep knowledge of Indian culture. Each and every small detail of the ancestral house is still intact in his memories even after so many years. He still remembers his grandmother sitting on the mat under the *Parijata* tree and playing her violin. He reproaches his father for being so impatient to leave his ancestral home and property in order to become a real estate broker. The sacred relationship between brother and

sister is well understood by him. But it seems betrayal and treachery play vital roles in his life. He feels betrayed by his grandmother who didn't fulfil her promise by leaving her violin for him. Then, his father left India and his ancestral place to live in this foreign country and now, his sister Jyoti has chosen Pierre as her life partner who is a white Canadian. So, all these people who have always been so close to him, are going far away from him. Jyoti's relationship with Pierre is also an important issue to discuss. From the beginning of the novel it is indicated that she chants his name like a mantra all the time but does not feel protected and secured in this relationship. He just dominates over her mind and does not consult her in taking some crucial decisions of their life. He takes her away from her family, friends and culture, which is very close to her. She is more inclined towards her heritage, family, culture and roots. And her Indian heart belongs to Sridhar not to Pierre. Sridhar is like a protective shield covering her from all kinds of problems and keeps her in touch with India.

Apart from Jyoti's and Jayant's perspectives, Uma Paramerswarn has also presented the rebellious aspect of second generation. Vithal strongly criticize Canadian multiculturalism called it a farce. He vents out his anger in the passage:

"Assimilate my ass... They-white Canadians-don't want us to assimilate. They want us out. We'll be squashed like bugs soon... All these years they led us to believe the isolation was coming from us, that we were communal, parochial, closed within our cultural exclusiveness, etc., etc., but now that we are trying to merge, their real feelings are coming out."(81)

Vithal's outburst illustrates the dilapidated condition of diaspora of all ages. The hostland does not accept them as their part and generally, they have to face hostility,

violence, suppression which makes them feel different and segregated from the white people. Due to frequent humiliation and racism, he advocates ghettonization in order to live in unity. He rhetorically claims that Indian community should stay united for their survival on this land.

As far as, Krish and Priti are concerned, they represent the third generation of Indians who are protected from the trauma of cultural conflicts between the two cultures. They are younger in age and have lived only with Canadian values. Though their parents try to acquaint them with their enriched Indian culture through Indian food, family bonding and mythological stories of *Sita*, *Draupaddi* and *Gopala* yet they are only familiar with these fascinating stories, not using them in practice of their day to day life. They are brought up in English culture completely. They speak English fluently and do not utter a single word of Marathi or Hindi. Moreover, this generation is not worried about that they are losing their native language because they are not aware of it, actually. Uma Parameswaran, like every diasporic writer attempts to grab the best of two worlds in her works by presenting the Canadian sensibility with Indian historic past. Most of her works are enriched with Indian past, mythology, legends, the gods and goddesses. Even she herself has admitted that her writings have references to Indian culture and heritage in abundance because she has always been involved in promoting India and India's culture in Canada. Such feelings prove that a child can be taken out of the country but it is impossible to take the country out of the child. Indeed, Parameswaran's target revolves around Indian community from where she draws her themes and aspiration and the members of which can identify themselves in her works. In *Trishanku - A cycle of voices*, Parameswaran adds a number of characters ranging from the school going little boy Dilip to the aged mother-in-law of Tara. They all are representative of Indian

community in Canada. *Trishanku* is indeed the epic of the Indian diasporic community. She has not elaborated the idea but its metaphor is truly applied to the polarized condition of expatriates. Like the tradition of epics, she begins her poem with an invocation. The protagonist of the poem is not an individual but the community which includes many characters. It is a dramatic monologue spoken by different voices. It encompasses a wide range of diasporic experience from Chandrika's conjugal life, to Usha's pangs of still born child, to the impoverished Bihari's culture, to the innocent wish of little Dilip to become as white as his classmates. Parameswaran has presented different characters migrated from different parts of India but their sufferings and pains remain the same. As the first woman character Usha is introduced, who is a victim of a still born child and this unbearable pain is a universal pain, common to all women of the world. Her negative thoughts and pessimism re-echoes throughout the poem. Another woman voice is that of Savitri, who keeps herself busy all the time by running a school for toddlers in the hostland. She does so much hard work in order to avoid her feelings of alienation and lostness in the new culture of Canada. It is ironical that she tries to give love and affection to the tear shedding white children who always seek caress of their parents. Savitri has her own three children yet she considers all these twenty-four children of her class as her own kids. So, her motherhood love is also universal. Parameswaran has portrayed two mothers who represent universal motherhood sufferings and love. Furthermore, Chandrika, another woman character, feels so depressed and faces psychological crises in the host country that it leads to numbness of heart. She finds no companion to share her feelings, tensions and sorrows. She also describes the setting of Indian household in Canada. They keep the holy Ganga water sealed in copper pots, above the fridge since there is no other place in the small house in

Canada. There is no small temple or any particular corner only made for idols and Gods.

Tara and her mother-in-law present the voice of those women who come from little less educated class. Tara accepts frankly that her English is not fluent and this lack of knowledge regarding the language is seen through her broken English. On the other hand, the lamentation of Tara's mother-in-law evokes both laughter and pity. She does not like confined houses with closed doors and windows, especially in morning hours. As it is considered as the time of goddess '*Lakshmi*' enter your house with bright sunshine in order to shower her blessings on the family. Although she feels happy and proud to see her son's achievements yet does not like western ways of living. Even the canned and ice-cupboard food is disliked by her. The narration of thoughts and problems of varied people, whose age, vocation and perception of Canada is different from each other, draws towards a feeling that Uma Parameswaran actually wants the community to come to terms with the Canadian way of life. For poetess like Parameswaran, family is all important, which is a source of strength and support for everyone. It is the mainstay of Indian diaspora of all generations. She believes that the western influence on traditional Indian culture will not destroy it but this combination shall lead to make a strong family bonding which will help the diaspora to sustain itself in the hostland. The poetess herself is as nostalgia - stricken like the rest of the characters in the poem. There is no doubt that she has gone back to her native roots again and again throughout her career but she also believes in assimilation in new culture of alien land. According to her opinion, it is fine to romanticize one's native land and past memories so long as it does not paralyze one's capacity to assimilate and to make new bonds within one's adopted homeland. The

author wants to see the beautiful confluence of the Ganga and the Assiniboine rivers on this land.

Throughout the long narrative of her works, 'Trishanku' diaspora is always accompanied by Hindu Gods, myths and particularly references have been drawn from the two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Parameswaran uses these references from her heritage and culture, with which the Indian communities can identify itself easily and also the same community can be identified easily by the Canadian readers. She wants to show case and highlight Indian culture and customs before a greater Canadian readership. *Deer Deedi, My Sister* (1990) combines nostalgia and displacement together. For the first time, Parameswaran expands the diaspora community from Indo-Canadian to the larger immigrant community in Canada whose members have been migrated from various parts of the world yet they identify with each other due to their minority status in the alien land. The central theme of the play is nostalgia for the home that has been left behind. The protagonist is an Indian bride Sapna who moves to Canada after marriage and is not able to settle down there. The reason behind it is that she had always been surrounded by the beautiful fragrance of mango blossoms, monsoon rains and soothing sound of temple bells. But now in foreign land, she finds herself surrounded by cedar and fir. There are other immigrants like Cho Chan from Hong Kong, Mariella from Nicaragua, Wahamu from Kenya and Ilago from Philippines. This play was written during the period in which Parameswaran was actively working on women's issues and even served on Board of Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba. In this piece of her work, she depicts the experience of married women who are forced to accompany their husbands to foreign land after marriage. Here, Sapna spends her whole day remembering about her people back in homeland and corresponding with her sister. The mailman's daily

visit was the only lifeline for her. There is an indication of imminent sisterhood among the women of these varied immigrant communities. They have a fellow-feeling towards each other because they all are in the same boat. However, the play ends with Sapna's craving for Gangajal and ultimately, she realizes that she must bring her holy Ganga into the Assiniboine in order to survive in hostland. Through the character of Sapna, Parameswaran wants to convey her message that living in Canada is possible for Indian diaspora only when it is successful in transplanting its culture in Canadian soil.

Another piece of work *Meera* was written in 1971, with the same purity that was to celebrate Indian art and tradition and most importantly to educate the world about our culture. This is a story of Lord Krishna, the Hindu god, and Meera, the Queen of Chittore. Parameswaran's *Meera: A Dance Dramashowcases* the birth of Lord Krishna, killing of his maternal uncle *Kangsha* and bantering with the *gopinis* of *Vrindavan*. Meera's unconditional love for the Lord Krishna, forms the basis of Bhakti philosophy and Meera's bhajans. Finally, Krishna as a counsellor of *Pandavas* in *Mahabharata* is depicted in the play. After ten years of *Meera*, Parameswaran took the characters from the *Ramayana* and wrote *Sita's Promise*. This time characters shift from Krishna to Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. However, the slight difference is that the role of being representative of the Indian community is played by Sita. Parameswaran feels that even the well-settled diaspora needs help of its myths, legends and epic characters in order to come out from the shadow of past. She has used large numbers of mythical and epical reference to showcase Hindu Indian culture. It is important to note here is that she has used the Krishna myth in abundance and Muslim or Christian myths are rarely seen in her works. But it would be wrong to suppose that she has altogether neglected the other minority religions of

India. Her earliest works like *Sons Must Die*, which was written in 1962, before she left India, is basically set in Kashmir to delineate the horrors of Indo-Pak war of 1947-48. The *Canjeevaram* -clad Hindu, Meenakshi, the salawar-clad Muslim Zohra Begum and the Nun with the rosary, all come to Kashmir in search of their lost sons. While Meenakshi and Zohra have lost their biological sons in the war and the nun symbolises the universal motherhood. All these mothers and their maternal sensibilities question the reason and logic behind wars and violence. This long narrative poem illustrates India's diversity in terms of religion and culture.

The best works of Parameswaran which are widely published and acclaimed are her *Trishanku*, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, *Rootloss but Green are the boulevard Tree*, *the Door I shut behind me*, *Meera* etc. but few have read her *Maru* stories. The reason is simply that it is a series of short stories in which Maru, the protagonist, plays the role of an Indian immigrant in Canada. These stories deal with the adventurous life of this Indian woman in Canada where she is neither discriminated nor alienated. These stories are witty and full of humour which is generally not seen in Indian Diaspora works.

At this point of discussion and comparative study of both writers, it is imperative now, to study the reigning queen of Indo-Canadian diasporic fiction, Anita Rao Badami, she is currently one of the most popular and widely read authors of the Indian Diaspora. As it has been discussed in earlier chapters, it is the homeland that occupies the central importance in her works. She writes about homeland by paying frequent visits to it through her troupe of nostalgia. By her own admission, after her marriage, she followed her husband to Canada. Initially, she intended to write an autobiography but then she realized, it was not the time to write a story about her, so she ended up writing *Tamarind Mem* (1997). But *TamarindMem* has some

similarities with her own life. Her father had a transferrable job as a mechanical engineer in railways, so they had to move from one place to another after every two-three years.

Being an immigrant in Canada, she claims, "I was 29 years in India and 10 years here, so I have one foot in India and a couple of toes here."(Paranjape,161). Hence, it is obvious that the debut novel of such an author will be based on her homeland India. She expressed her sentiments as a Canadian writer of Indian origin at the time of launching of her novel *The Hero's Walk*. Badami's own resolution of the crises of being diasporic is eloquently expressed in her affirmation of the blessings of double vision:"We are both doomed and blessed, to be suspended between two words, always looking back, but with two gorgeous places to inhabit, in our imaginations or our heart."(Paranjape,161)

Badami claims to belong to Canada and be just part of the general Canadian society but her characters depicted in most of her works fail to be a part of the general Canadian society and this very quality makes them essentially diasporic in nature. The narrative of *Tamarind Mem* swings between Calgary and India, between the memories of its two women protagonists, Kamini and Saroja. They have different perception to see the past and with which they try to reconstruct it from vastly contradictory recollection. These recollections show that time and space changes the relationship between a mother and a daughter or between two sisters. Badami has inculcated the theme of memory and isolation as the basis of most of her works.

The narrator's voice alternates from Canada (Kamini) to India (Saroja) and vice-versa. It covers a span of forty years because both mother and daughter are reminiscing their respective pasts. In the novel, *Tamarind Mem*"Saroja is known as

Tamarind Mem, bitter or acidic tongue and this name of hers is borne out of the frustration, loneliness and particularly the kind of sacrifices that life has extracted from her. The very nagging and argumentative nature of Saroja is revealed through her telephonic conversation with Kamini, in the opening of the novel. And still, after so many years, she does not want to change and wants to win every small argument. It shows her frustration and disappointment with life. Her sour tongue towards her own daughter Kamini, is just to compensate her longing for a companion in her life.

Kamini lives in Canada and pursuing her doctorate research in chemical Engineering. She lives independently and whenever, she gets time from her busy schedule, she pays her visit to her homeland through her childhood memories and dreams. She is supposed to be free and emancipated but actually trapped in her memories of past. Each and every small detail of her childhood is so clearly intact and etched in her memory that her little sister jokingly says, "you of course have a memory as precise as the part in your hair."(73)

It is because of this precise memory which prohibits Kamini to get detached from her homeland mentally. She has inhabited a different India of her childhood days. Her childhood is different from her sister Roopa's childhood because she has always been very observant of minor things happening around her. She has observed, experienced and retained from those observations and experience. But Roopa has never been like her. She accuses Roopa, by saying, "you never remember things the way they were, just the way you want them to be."(73)

Roopa is happy with her husband and does not allow past stories and memories as invaders in her life. She wants to live in present not in flashback like Kamini. But Kamini holds the same accusation against Roopa as well as her mother Saroja, who

probably never saw or felt the things the way they were because for them the things were not the same as they were for Kamini. Here, Badami emphasizes that memory and nostalgia are extremely personal and they vary from one person to another differently. In other words, it can be said that past is reconstructed by every individual in his/her own way. Her governess Linda used to tell her many stories of ghost and she still remembers them. She remembers the story about a man who looked over his shoulder at ghosts. Kamini is indulging in that nostalgia where she is intentionally dragging herself into the world of shadows. She knows that every individual has a past, a ghost, but the problem begins when he/she starts to inhabit in that ghost. The very title of the novel *Tamarind Mem* draws attention not just because the tamarind fruit is extremely sour and Saroja's bitter tongue earned her this name. It also reminds us an Indian myth that tamarind tree is the home of spirits and ghosts, which is referred to in this novel again and again. Similarly, this ghost of past does not allow Kamini to live in peace. In a way, she herself is a tamarind mem, an abode of spirits. She tries to explain herself by saying "It's just nostalgia really something to do when I am not working on stupid lab experiments."(73) It seems like some quality past time away from her busy schedule to live in past. She remembers the most memorable days of her life when she spent in her maternal grandparents' house. During this short period of three months, she observes her mother as a different person. She had so many sisters, brothers, aunts and cousins to pamper her. Saroja received much love and affection, especially instructions from her mother, what to eat and what not eat during the pregnancy and post delivery of the child. But after crucial period of three month of past delivery, her mother told her to go to her husband's house because it is against the social norms to keep a married daughter in her parental house. Even being a child Kamini noticed partial behaviour against her by her grandmother and very

firmly Ajjiacknowledges it. Kamini could not help feeling a little piqued by her nature.

When Saroja comes to her husband's house with her two daughters, her happiness and shining of her face seems faded and dull. Kamini has been observing this changing nature of her mother since her childhood. She notices that the behaviour of her mother has always been furious and infuriating towards her. Many a times, she does not understand why her mother keeps herself busy all the time cutting cloths for her daughters, when Dadda stays home. She never pays attention towards him. But as soon as he goes out for his railway tours, she again starts enjoying her life to the fullest. As a young child, Kamini does not understand her dual personality and compares her with the *Ramleela* drama woman with a good and bad mask on the face. She transforms her personality from *Sita* to *Soorpanakha* in a single moment. In Kamini's recollections, her Dadda has always been her beloved and loving father. He always returns from his official trip with a baggage of new fascinating stories and gifts for his daughters. Both the sisters adorn him for his gentleness and more importantly, his concern and willingness to listen to his kids. But Saroja treats him with complete disinterest and always talks with sour and sharp tongue. The main reason behind this estranged relationship between husband and wife is their lack of time to communicate and there is hardly any mutual understanding. Dadda is the kind of man who considers himself a railway officer first and a husband later. He constantly travels from one place to another due to the requirement of his job. He never takes Saroja and kids along with him. They are left behind to keep waiting for his return.

When Kamini was a child, she came to know about the secret of her mother that she had an extra marital affair with Paul-da-Costa, the motor mechanic. He used

to come every Sunday to check her father's car. Many a times Kamini complained to her father about her mother's outings with her friends which generally led to another family conflict between them. Dadda used to scold her for negligence and not taking proper care of his daughters. Unlike Kamini, Roopa never poked her nose in her mother's affair and remained silent all the time. She always maintained a secret within her. And probably, she never tried to observe the things the way Kamini did. That might be the reason that Saroja showed more love towards Roopa than Kamini. Due to this partial behaviour from her mother, Kamini felt neglected and depressed. But Saroja tried to convince her that she loved her both girls equally. After Dadda's death, Saroja had to bring up her children all alone. She wanted to fulfil her own desires and dreams through her children by making them successful in life. So, being the elder daughter, Kamini had to bear the pressure from her mother, who used to force her to get good marks and stand first in the class. But Roopa never took interest in studies and never was given any sort of pressure to score well in exams. Later in life, Roopa chose her life partner from a low caste and left her mother as well as her home country to settle down in U.S.A. After few months, Kamini also left her mother and decided to go to Canada for her higher studies. Now, Saroja was left alone in her house with no one to talk and scold. This selfish attitude of daughters towards their mother reveals a sort of riftness in their relationship.

The second part of the novel is narrated by Saroja to her fellow passengers in a train. Her views and perception for her past life are completely different. Her story has much significance than Kamini's because she gives solutions and answers to all those curious questions of Kamini. Here, the author tells us about Saroja's life, which was caught in the traditional shackles of orthodox society, because of that she was never able to achieve her dreams. She wanted to be a doctor but family prohibited

her to study further and got her married off to a railway Engineer, who was fifteen years older to her. She never liked the duty of housekeeping, which was imposed on her by her husband Moorthy. The conjugal relationship between them had always been cold; it was probably because of frequent displacement of Moorthy due to his job. He was not able to devote ample amount of time with his family and kids. Due to lack of communication, the gap between the two increased day by day and made Saroja, a frustrated and nagging woman. Even the love affair with the mechanic Paul-de-Costa was an outcome of her anger and frustration with her husband. Earlier her parents had put restrictions on her education and never allowed her to live life in her own way. After marriage her husband had always been very indifferent towards her and remained aloof. And later her responsibilities towards her daughters prevented her from pursuing a happy life with Paul. It hurt him so much that Paul committed suicide and Moorthy too had died after few years. The whole responsibility of upbringing her daughters came to her. When her daughters grew up and decided to settle down in abroad, she was again left all alone with no one to take care of her. But instead of killing rest of her life in her abode. She decided to travel all those places which she always wanted to go but Moorthy never took her along with him. So, she became a travelling woman and told her story to the unknown fellow female passengers through her recollection of past life with her parents and husband.

The common memories bind the mother-daughter duo and the most prominent in the list is the ghost-like presence of Moorthy in their lives. Kamini's life had been altogether different from her mother's. She grew up in world and specifically, in a family, which was different and had much more liberty than Saroja's world.

The second novel of Badami *The Hero's Walk* too contains nostalgia as a covert theme. The novel is set in India, in a fictional South Indian village named

Toturpuram. The author has described a very realistic picture of Indian village with some realistic characters who have mundane lives and petty ambitions. But Canada has been described as the other or foreign nation which Maya chooses as her home. This country has a strong presence in the novel which has taken her away from her roots, culture and family. And lastly, it claims her life also. Maya's marriage with Alan Baker a white foreigner, has led to an alienation from her family who did not accept their marriage. Maya never came back to her birthplace even when she was alive and remained a memory before and after death. It was only after her death when her daughter Nandana was migrated from Canada to India, to stay with her grandparents, who were her only close relatives alive. But the family found it very difficult to cope with the little ghost of their daughter Maya who has strong western ways. Though she was their closest relative, she was as strange to them as any foreigner. The novel is a study of Sripathi's memories from his own disturbed childhood to Nandana's childhood. Sripathi recollects his past memories of his childhood and young age living in his native village where as in case of Nandana, she reminisces her happy memories of Canada in India where she feels like a foreigner. Generally, a immigrant reminisces the past and feels nostalgic about his/her homeland. In the present text, Canada, is homeland and India is a hostland for Nandana. And she keeps remembering her life in Canada with her parents. Badami does not focus on Maya, who is a conventional diasporic subject to deal with. She leaves her homeland and settles down in Canada but the author hardly mentions any issues related to alienation, identity crises and racism which Maya faces being in a foreign country. Though she keeps herself in touch with her family through letters and phone calls, there is no mention of dreams, indulgence in past memories and nostalgia.

Nandana tries to reconstruct her present life in India by reminiscing the unforgettable happy memories with her parents and thinks that they would come back and take her ' home '. She still considers Canada as her home where she enjoys her life to the fullest. It is only at the end of the novel she tries to reconcile with her present, and keep aside memories of Canada to accept India as her home.

Badami depicts India in microcosm through life in a small fictitious town Toturpuram near Madras. It reveals the ordinary impoverished Brahmin family though extraordinary times of political and social upheavals in power in Southern India. Sripathi Rao is fifty seven years old man, working as a press reporter, living in his ancestral home with his widow mother Ammayya, unmarried sister putti, his wife Nirmala and social activist son Arun.

After Six miscarriages, Sripathi is the seventh child and only surviving son of Ammaya. In his childhood, he got much attention and affection from all the members of the family. His father Narasimha Rao emphasised on his studies and brought an entire encyclopaedia Britannica for him. He wanted him to read and learn it by heart. Later on his father became irresponsible for his family obligations and had an illicit relation with another woman. He betrayed his wife and left his two kids. After his death, the family had to face financial crises and sought help from relatives. Ammaya always wanted her son, Sripathi to be a doctor but in contrast to her wishes, he never took interest in this field. On her demand, he took admission in medicine but didn't like to work on dead bodies. He had a very disgusting feeling and believed that even the hostel food was polluted by human blood. Being a fragile Brahmin, he could not continue his medical studies further and left his degree in middle. Later in his life, he got a job as a reporter in a small press and the financial condition of the family improved.

When he got married with Nirmala, his life experienced the most beautiful phase by having blessed with two kids, Maya and Arun. After few years of his marriage, he also got an opportunity to work as a reporter in Delhi but he refused that golden chance of his life due to family restrictions.

Badami narrates the story of Sripathi, whose daughter Maya migrated to America for higher studies on fellowship. But before leaving India, Maya was engaged with Prakash. In the first year of her displacement, she wrote long letters frequently but with the course of time, length and frequency of letters reduced and merged. The main reason behind all these negligence from Maya's side was Alan Baker, with whom she had fallen in love and wanted to marry him. When Maya disclosed her feelings for Alan before her family, it all came as a shock to them especially Sripathi was not able to tolerate this betrayal from his daughter. He took it as an insult to his as well as Prakash's family and disowned Maya with contempt. He never received her phone calls and never bothered to read her long letters. Here Badami gives a miserable condition of an Indian mother Nirmala who blames herself for Maya's decision. She doubts on her own upbringing which has made her daughter to behave like this. According to her, the temptation for western culture has lead her daughter astray, which become very difficult to resist for an Indian girl brought up in Indian Society. During her eight years stay in Vancouver, Maya wrote many letters to her mother and talked to her telephonically every week. But being so adamant in his decision, Sripathi never tried to communicate with Maya and always avoided her phone calls. Suddenly, it was Dr. Sunderraj, who informed him about Maya's and Alan's car accident and death. He told him about Nanadana's safety as she was not with them. Having heard this disastrous news, the whole family doomed in grief, especially Nirmala, being a mother, she was not able to control her emotions and

behaved like an insane. She blamed Sripathi for the catastrophe as he never accepted Maya's relationship with Alan. It was only because of his anger, she never came back home and then, they had lost her forever. As appointed legal guardian of Nandana, Sripathi moved to Vancouver to bring her to India, because they were the only close relatives to her in this world. Due to this devastation in her life, the little girl Nandana was portrayed as a bewildered child. She remained silent most of her time and believed that her parents would come back one day to take her home.

Maya's migration from homeland to hostland Canada was voluntary but her daughter's emigration from Canada to India was completely involuntary but she had no other option left and reluctantly followed her grandfather. After her arrival in India, she could not adjust with Indian food, environment and social surroundings. Through Nandana's Character, Badami has described the difficulty of adaptation of a foreign culture to an alien like Nandana. At the time of departure from her birthplace, she took her mother's red winter coat and her father's grey coat as a piece of memory. She felt so alone and alien in India that she didn't utter a single word ever after one month of her arrival. Nirmala took care of her more than anyone else and becomes a representative of strength and power of Indian women. She became so strong to say that past had gone and it was the time to move on in life. They could not help it with the past and they should stop worrying about it as Nandana's future was more important than past sorrows and pains. She expressed her grief that she would never be able to forget her lovely daughter Maya and would always miss her throughout life but to give good upbringing and healthy environment to her child, would be the only way to repent for their misconduct in the past. Being a religious Hindu Brahmin, Nirmala was worried about post-death rituals of Maya. She cried over her daughter's death who had gone like a beggar without any proper funeral rituals and in result of

that her soul would not rest in peace. It would float like a Trishanku between three worlds.

Nandana was admitted in a convent girl's school and there also, she found it difficult to mingle with her class-mates and remained isolated all the time. The atmosphere of Canadian school was completely different from Indian schools, which was a strange thing for her. She gradually started liking Arun's company and came closer to Nirmala due to her love and care. But her hatred for Sripathi didn't change a bit. She remembered Halloween festival which she used to celebrate it in Canada with her family and friends. But in India, no such festival is celebrated rather she became more acquainted with *Holi* and *Diwali* festivals. And she really enjoyed them. Her dislike for Indian fruits and food was revealed but gradually, she adapted herself with all these things to adjust in new country. She wondered to see electric water heater for the first time in her life.

Badami emphasized on Sripathi's multiple displacements and rerootings. The major part of novel depicts Nandana's reversed journey to the old nation, which her mother had left and never came back. The difference between hostland and homeland is depicted through the memories and comparison of the little child Nandana, who comes to India as an orphan. She is a representative of second generation immigrant, who has never seen her ancestral homeland.

Anita Rao Badami's third novel, *Can you hear the Nightbird Call?* deals with a series of violent events, starts before the partition of India and Pakistan and ends with the explosion of Air India flight 152 off the coast of Ireland in 1985. To give a Kaleidosopic picture of daily sights and events, past and present, culture and society of both India and Canada. These political and social events devastated the lives of

thousands of people and still they are not able to emerge from the agony of pain and sorrow.

Badami has combined the fictional world with real historical past and has presented a masterpiece before the readers. She has wisely integrated the past memories and present condition of the characters living in India and Canada. The plot of the novel focuses on the after effect of partition on the Sikh community in India and particularly, the Sikh diaspora in Canada. The indelible scar on the psyche of Sikh Community can be seen through the miserable lives of Nimmo and Bibiji. The struggle for identity and political unrest in the country leads to demand for khalistan-- a separate land for Sikh. The Sikh community is the earliest representative of the Indian Diaspora. Badami has taken the most horrific event in the history of the world, as the basic plot of her novel, which resulted into the bloody massacre of innocent people, rape and abduction of women; children became orphans in large numbers. It was completely an involuntarily and forced migration which led to uprootedness of mass exodus from India to Pakistan and vice-versa.

Unlike her father, Bibi-ji managed to change her destiny by using her beauty and feminine wiles in order to trap a rich groom from Canada, who had actually come for Kanwar, her elder sister. She was so desperate to fulfill her desire to go to Canada that she betrayed her elder sister and snatched away her fortune. On the other hand, Kanwar had no beauty and wealth to tempt any eligible bachelor, so she was forced to marry a widower. Later, she and her husband were brutally killed in violence of partition, leaving behind their only daughter Nimmo (Nirmaljeet Kaur) to bear the agony of sorrows throughout her life. Sharanjeet Kaur migrated to Canada with her

husband Khushwant Singh and lived a luxurious life with the course of time, they became Bibi-Ji and Paji for their people and received respect and so much love from them. But Bibi-Ji's misconduct and her past memories always haunted her and she herself considered it as the reason for her barrenness. She spent many years in search of her sister and any member of her family but found out that her whole village had vanished out of maps. The loss of her sister's family created a kind of hatred for the scent of lavender, which she always loved it. But when she found Nimmo, her niece and the only surviving member of her sister's family, she got a chance to repent for her misdeed of past by helping her financially and adopting her son Jasbeer.

Bibi-Ji and Paji opened a restaurant named "The Delhi Junction" which soon became very popular among the migrants from India. The couple calls their home "The Taj Mahal". It became an open house for those people who could not have any place to get shelter in the initial days in Canada. So, in this way Paji and Bibi-Ji were helping their own people and community. Throughout the novel, the narrative moves back and forth between Delhi and Vancouver, the two important places or homes, our protagonist Sharanjeet Kaur, now referred to as Bibi-Ji, is connected with. Both the countries occupy much importance in the novel because past seems to continue or run simultaneously with the present. It covers all the major historical incidents happened in India like the Sikh movement for a separate land, the invasion of the sacred Golden temple by the Indian army in 1984, which later led to assassination of the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi by her own Sikh bodyguards. The result of this blunder committed by two Sikh guards had been so adverse that it followed to massive violence, which was termed as revenge killings. The innocent Sikhs were butchered and killed mercilessly on the streets of India. In June, 1985 less than a year after this incident, Air India Flight 182 on route from Canada to India was exploded over the

Atlantic Ocean and it killed 329 people who were travelling by that Flight. Two Sikh Khalistani extremists were caught responsible for planning this blast and it ignited great hatred and social discrimination among Canadian against Indians particularly towards Sikhs and Punjabis. Racial discrimination was at its peak as a result of this catastrophe. As our author Anita Rao Badami is not much concerned about Canada's discriminatory rules and policies. But her major concern lies with far grave issues that have bothered India ever since her Independence.

Like her other novels, Badami, in this novel, too, takes Canada as the place away from home. The only problem is that Bibi-Ji is not able to understand which place she should consider her home-India, Pakistan or Panjaur, the village that now belongs to no man's land. Thus, in her Delhi Junction cafe in Vancouver, Indians and Pakistani immigrants come together and sit on the same table and enjoy their gathering. They spend most of their time discussing their lives in times of peace. But the frequent wars between India and Pakistan, issues related to Kashmir or about Bangladesh, gradually became the topic of their conversation and soon these issues became the bone of contention among these people. They fight against each other in Vancouver. One of the immigrants, Dr. Majumdar exclaims, "Its about land, it is always about land,"(250). It is while living so far away from his parents that the foster son of Bibi-Ji, Jasbeer learns about the Sikh Separatist movement and shows his desire to join the religious school of "Damdami Taksal"(280) in order to be a true Sikh. The conflict between the two generations is increased by religious preachers like Dr. Randhawa. He is the representative of such extremist group which brain-washed young Sikh men like Jasbeer, to rebel against their parents and join extremist activities. Like Parameswaran's narratives, Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* is also not just about an individual but it is a huge canvas of characters. It is as

much the story of Sharanjeet's as Leela's as Nimmo's. On the other hand, Jasbeer who represent the young Indian blood plays a very crucial role. He rebels against his foster father Paji and supports Sikh religious groups. He returns to India in search of his biological mother Nimmo but gets imprisoned by the Indian government for involvement in exploding Air India Flight. In 1986, he writes back to Bibi-Ji in Canada that he is out of prison and returning 'home'. "Home? She thinks. Her heart flutters with hope for a moment. But which one?"(395). We can say that this novel is an effort to find out the most seeking answer of the question-which one shall Bibi-Ji and thousands like her, call the home. Thus the issues and the very concept of 'home' are challenged by a diasporic writer in the face of problems such as religious political and community violence.

This particular novel reveals the fact the diasporas wants to remain connected with both the worlds but they are not able to take up a stand in this matter and makes it a very difficult situation. In Pa-Ji's cafe, the community was discussing major issues of India, some of them criticizing Indira Gandhi, some are in support of Khalistan. When Harish Shah expressed his concern over India's increasing population. He was taunted that he himself has three children. On this he retorts, "But I am not living in India, am I... I am building Canada's population"(267). The Sikh seated at his next table interrupted in his slow and deep voice, "that is what I am saying. Not living in India but doing big- time jhabbar- jhabbar about it... I say, what is the use?"(267). This comment sums up the attitude of the diaspora towards its motherland as well as its hostland. The fact is that the diaspora cannot afford to psychologically separate itself from their homeland. They always remain connected to it through memories, dreams and nostalgia. These feelings prevent them from becoming immune and indifferent to the happenings and problems going on in their

own country. They even think that it is their duty and responsibility to have such kind of attachment and concern for their motherland. Even in this long distance, they do care about it and intend to help in whichever way possible. So far we have discussed about nostalgia and memory of displaced women by the works of displaced women writers.

However, in the course of rigorous analysis of theme, characters, language, symbols, and images in the works of both these Indo-Canadian writers, it has been observed that there are no significant differences in their creativity. The influence of their nationality and culture can be seen in their writings. Simultaneously, many Diaspora instances of dejection, loneliness and discrimination are very much present in their works.

Anita Rau Badami, Indo-Canadian writer treats her characters as representatives of Diaspora community rather than individual persons. Her characters are more alienated and nostalgic. They carry a burden of sustaining the legacy of being Indians. She tries to make the image of India and its values through her characters. There is so much happening in the lives of her lady characters, along with their interior monologues and description of thought process, which tells half of her stories. Badami's ladies are freedom lovers. Initially, they have to bear societal and family pressure while living in India. But after migrating to Canada, they take delight in new environment and enjoy their independence. Uma's heroines are more Indianized – submissive and sensitive. We take an example of Veera in the first title novella –*What Was Always Her*, she surrenders to her husband's every wish. After marriage, she leaves India and come to Canada with her husband. He orders to go back to India at the time of her second pregnancy or abortion when it is third time. She divorces him after his affair with Jitin is disclosed. Both the writers focus on the predicament of women in the new land

rather than revolving around the struggle of male counterparts in creating and maintaining identities. Both of them discuss about the transformation in the lives of her female protagonist characters once they are immigrated and how this displacement changes their identity. They both show strong thematic concern in the experience of immigrants, particularly South Asian, who have to have a bitter experience of racialism and adaptation. Most of the works of both the writers indicate bi-cultural experience. There are hardly any stories or work which deals with the location only in India or only in Canada. Their stories have multiple displacements, shifts from India to Canada and vice-versa. These dislocations are either in the form of dreams, memory and imaginations or in actual physical form.

Both the diasporic writers depict women characters, who have to struggle for their identity not only in their home land but also they invariably try to know their self in the cultural change. Both of them emphasis on some major issues like loss of culture, mother tongue and traditions. This is an irreparable loss and the characters of the writers spend their entire lives in search of suitable compensation of this unrecoverable loss. As far as the nostalgic memories of India is concerned, Badami's heroines remember the sorrowful memories of the past family life, dreadful and violent past of partition and other not so happy memories. But Uma's characters fondly remember the happy old days of childhood, lively family gatherings, festival celebrations and bonding with old friends and neighbours.

The narrative, settings and location of both the writers is realistic and poignant. Badami's narratives travel from Amritsar, Delhi, Toturpram to Canada. Uma's narratives pass through South India to Vancouver, Ottawa, Manitoba, Winnipeg and Saskatoon. Both the meritorious writers thread skilfully the two distinct cultures and prepare a superb fabric out of their narrative power. The language used by Badami is

basically of typical Diaspora community. Her ladies are bilingual. Formerly, English was an alien and strange language for them. Their mother tongues were the perfect medium for expressing their emotional and social needs. But after migration, they learn and master this global English language to fulfil their social and economic needs. Uma's characters are also bilingual but they do not lament so much for their lost language. They make a balance by using English as a language for profession and reserve their mother tongue for family and personal emotions.

Both the writers use a wide variety of symbols and images, which ranging from food, drinks, colors, dresses, cars and modern home appliance. Through these symbols, both the writers have expressed the feeling of nostalgia, alienation, and discrimination. The symbols which are used by Badami are vivid and open-minded but Uma's close kitted symbols are more poignant and instructive.

Both the writers are prestigious award winners and they have carved their niche in writing in Canada. They have expressed and narrated the immigration experience of expatriates in their best capacity as writers and professors. They both do lots of work for the welfare of their Indian community there and influence them through their creative writings.

Works Cited

Badami, Anita Rau. *Tamarind Mem*. Knopf Canada, 2004.

---. *The Hero's Walk*. Random House Publishing Group, 2002.

---. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*. Knopf Canada, 2006.

Parameswaran, Uma. *Mangoes On The Maple Tree*. Broken Jaw Press, 2002.

---. *Trishanku and Other Writings*. Prestige Books, 1998.

---. *What Was Always Hers*. Broken Jaw Press, 1999.

---. *Writing the Diaspora: Essays on Culture and Identity*. Rawat Publications, 2007.

Paranjape, Makarand. *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. ed. Indialog, 2001.