

**EXPLORING CULTURAL NARRATIVES IN SELECT NOVELS OF
ANITA RAU BADAMI**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)**

By

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DECLARATION

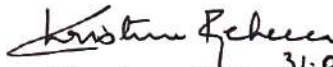
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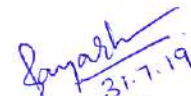
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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**EXPLORING CULTURAL NARRTIVES IN SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA RAU BADAMI**” submitted for the degree of **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)** by **Ms. Kavipriya. S** is the record of research work carried out by her during the period from **August 2018 to July 2019** under my guidance and supervision, and this work has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, other Titles in this University or any other University or other similar institution of Higher Learning.


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Signature of the Supervisor 31.7.19

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NOTE ON THE TEXT

The abbreviations which are used for primary sources are:

TM: TAMARIND MEM

THW: THE HERO'S WALK

CYHNC: CAN YOU HEAR THE NIGHTBIRD CALL?

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Chapter - 1

Introduction

Literature is a mirror of life which expresses the truth and beauty that lies in the world. It interprets life by what people have seen, experienced, thought and felt. It strongly explores the emotions and thoughts of people. The most significant element of literature is its artistic value and its quality. It appeals to primarily the writers' feeling, sense and imagination rather than intelligence. The writers through their writings provide aesthetic satisfaction to the readers in addition to imparting knowledge.

Literature is defined as an expression of culture and society which appears in different times and places. It is an ocean which contains different kinds of emotions like love and hate; hope and despair; joy and sorrow. Girija Kumar in *The Book on Trial: Fundamentalism and Censorship in India* discusses about Salman Rushdie's introspective, where he says, "Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest places in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the tales, of the imagination and of the heart" (234). People are interested in listening to the stories of men and women, their lives, motives, aspiration and relationships which deal with the great drama of human life and experience. It is a medium which can express the aspects of society through various forms like fiction, poetry, prose and drama. Among all these forms, fiction stands as a powerful medium to express the life of a person as an individual and society and it aims at reality by reshaping the elements that the writers procure from their lives and experience.

In modern times, South Asian diaspora is one of the most populous and flourishing ethnic groups in the country. It refers to the formations of literary people

from the Indian subcontinent and its diaspora. The South Asian diasporic novels and short stories reached its peak only in the mid-nineteenth century. Among its subdivision, Indo-Canadian diasporic literature is relatively a new phenomenon which throws light on the diaspora, to delve into the dispersion of people who migrate to Canada away from their homelands. It suggests a bond of location, culture and collective memory which frames their experiences and sense of identity through their multi-nationality. It is an important medium for exploring questions of individuality, belonging and their roots. The Indo-Canadian community reflects different diaspora identities because of their response to both the homeland (India) and host land (Canada). So, most of them question themselves as to who they are in their quest to assert their individual identity.

The works of diaspora were recognised in the early 19th century but it became popular in 21st century. Indian diasporic writers in Canada delineate their values and position through their literary works where they concentrate mainly on immigrant sensibility and cultural adaptability. Indo-Canadian diasporic literature reveals a poignant feeling of home and the homeland, so it clearly shows they want to connect back to their homeland despite being settled in new land.

India is a country which bestows importance to family, traditional values and their cultures. A lot of importance is attached to tradition and custom. Meanwhile, they want to break the barriers to lead their life independently. On the contrary, the Canadian people are secular in their ethos and from the beginning they have led an independent life. Through the works of South Asian diasporic writers, the concept of diaspora and culture has become popular all over the world, where the writers depict the immigrant lives of people and their search for identity. In many Indo-Canadian

novels, migration, diaspora, displacement, the home or the root and searching for individuality when sandwiched between two cultures are the common issues.

Contemporary writers of South Asian diasporic literature stimulate interest in developing new position in literature for them. They concentrate on the topics like complexities of family life, love, relationship between mother and daughter, marriage, war, tradition versus western life and cultural encounters. It is undeniable to accept the fact that the books of these writers are popular not only because of people's interest in abroad or South Asia; but of the quality and excellence in the works of South Asian Canadian diasporic writers. Writers usually draw from their own personal experiences to lend their novels a unique, unparalleled touch.

Indo-Canadian diasporic novels reveal significantly about human relationships and ordinary lives in contemporary times, it reflects not only the reality but also shapes the complex ways in which men and women mastermind themselves, their personal relationships and their perception of cultural difference. Arnold Harrichand Itwari comments in his *The Invention of Canada: Literary Text and The Immigrant Imaginary*:

The immigrant writer is not merely the author who speaks about the immigrant experience, but one who has lived it, one whose response is an eruption of words, images, metaphors, one who is familiar with some of the inner as well as the outer working of these particular contexts. (146)

Aside from these, another uniqueness of this diaspora is the interesting encounter between cultural confusions, assimilation and emotional trauma.

The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek *diaspeirein* which means 'a dispersion or scattering'. It is amalgamation of *dia* which means 'about or across' and

speirein means ‘to spread’ or ‘to scatter’. Diaspora is an emerging term which is continuously growing as the modern trend. The attitude of the diaspora is recognised as the distinctive marker between the homeland and toward the migration. A diaspora is a large ethnic group of people with their own heritage and homeland who have since migrated to new places. They feel uprooted when they forcibly move out from their homeland into a new or foreign environment.

The diasporic writings imply the basic problem of migration and diasporic psyche: of feeling dislocated, of cultural displacement, feeling of not belonging, homelessness, being without roots and experiencing in- betweenness. It brings up the questions regarding the self-conception about who they are? or where do they belong? for which even today not many have got any answers. They remain as mystical questions. Rootlessness is a recurrent theme.

The main thrust of diaspora is expatriation which makes the immigrant people to confine in the cultural dilemmas and a sense of feeling strange in the new country. Viney Kirpal in his *The Third World Novel of Expatriation: A Study of Émigré Fiction by Indian, West African and Caribbean Writers* tells, “Revival of ethnicity makes bearable to some extent the marginal shadowy existence of these migrants in the new world” (165). The immigrant endures the marginal life in a new land because of fusion of cultures.

The people in diaspora seek to make themselves to adapt to the new tradition and culture in new land. As Arjun Appadurai says in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, “Diaspora is the order of things and settled ways of life are increasingly hard to find” (172). He speaks about the characteristic concern with home, place and identity and the difficulty to settle in new places. Indian diasporic writers reflect the changes in society and culture, which affect human lives and

individuals struggling to adjust to new land and pressures which arise in new land. Avtar Brah writes, “Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dislocation as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes” (242). The diaspora phenomenon holds a considerable impact on culture, economic and political scenario.

Canadian literature is being considered as the largest ethnic group as well as multi-cultural one. Presently, the people of India origin in Canada is a whopping 7,00,000 which marks a sharp increase from earlier days. According to statistics, in Canada, the number of immigrants from India grew 74% from 314, 690 in 2001 to 547,890 in 2011. Canada is home to 1,374,710 people of Indian origin. In 2016, Indo-Canadians were 4.0% of the total Canadian population. According to the 2016 census in “The Canadian Magazine of Immigration”, Indian immigrants (668,565) were the populous foreign-born group in Canada. From 2006 to 2015, entire total of 323,746 immigrants from India settled in Canada.

Examinations of this survey indicate that the Indo-Canadians are one of the fastest growing communities in Canada. The highest density of Indo-Canadians is found in various places such as Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond and Delta. As mentioned in “The Canadian Magazine of Immigration”, the maximum which is 55% immigrants from India were settled in Ontario in 2001 and 57% in 2011. In 2011, 26% of Indian-born immigrant lived in British Columbia. Recently, more Indians have been moving to other areas outside of Greater Vancouver. It is now used in the context of various communities that are dispersed outside their country.

In Canada, people who belong to Punjab region started arriving in the late nineteenth century for various reasons. A minority of Sikh people migrated and settled in Canada. Later the growing strength of Indians in Canada inflamed concerns

from government officials and the Canadian community as fear arose that Indians would take over all the positions. They stopped Indian diaspora in Canada and started political activism within the Indo-Canadian community. This affected the development of diaspora in various ways. For example, major political changes in South Asia such as the Partition in 1947, the formation of Bangladesh in 1971, Indo-Pak war and Komagata Maru and many others have affected the Indian diaspora around the world.

Horrible events like Operation Bluestar, the assassination of the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi by two Sikh bodyguards in October 1984, separatist movement – Khalistan movement, and State of Emergency in India (1975-77) had far-reaching implications in the socio-cultural fabric of the nation. People died numerously, thousands of innocent people were killed, mostly in Punjab and Delhi. The bombing of Air India Flight in 1985 was another sinister political activity that unsettled the country. During the period of early settlement, Indo-Canadians' community experienced various problems of marginalisation in the host country. Later, South Asian literature concentrated on themes such as Komagata Maru, Anti-Sikh riots, Partition of India and more.

In Indian diaspora, people migrate mostly for a number of reasons: for living a luxurious and healthy life, for their children's education, another one is where the second-generation children migrate abroad for their higher studies or jobs. Both carry their cultural baggage with themselves and remain rootless. Devika Khanna Narula states:

They are split into a complex space between two worlds and two cultures; they can neither forget the world/culture they have come out of and which would be different if they returned to it now; nor can they

fully assimilate into and be acculturated by the world/culture they have adopted because they cannot subvert their own identities totally. (35)

According to Devika Khanna Narula, the Indian diaspora has been split into two prominent groups: the first group has spent their part of the life in their original homeland after which they have migrated to a new land. They still remember their motherland. The other group encompasses of those who have been brought up outside India from childhood. They have had a vision of their country only from the outside and thus displacement occurs. When they feel alienated, they try to get back to their past through memory. Immigrants have different rationales for the migration when they glance into their past.

The diaspora discourse has often been subject to assumptions by the diasporic writers who express the pain that is undergone by the immigrants of leaving the homeland. They illuminate the message that departing the home is not preferable because they are unable to disentangle themselves from the conflict between who they are and who they are supposed to be. Vijay Mishra quotes E. J. Hobabawn's words in his *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary*, "Wherever we live in an urbanized society, we encounter strangers: uprooted men and women who remind us of the fragility or the drying up of our own families' roots" (qtd. in Mishra 6). Diaspora gives a feeling of detachment from the motherland so that immigrant experiences strangeness in a new land.

The distinctiveness of the diaspora situation becomes important, specifically in the case of the immigrant generation in whose collective cultural memory lived the tradition, cultural past, history of the homeland. The immigrants feel marooned when they try to abandon the old culture and live in a new world with new identity. Culture is one of the central preoccupations in all diaspora which explores how immigrants

adapt to two cultures, their transformation and development across the national borders. In contemporary times, culture is considered significant state-of-the-art point of deliberation in the study of diaspora. Indian society is bound by culture since olden days.

Culture is a way of life which differs from place to place and country to country. The lifestyle, the food, the clothes, the language and God are facets of culture. Contemporary Indian culture is complex because it has changed so rapidly in each generation, with the amalgamation of tradition and modernity. As Brah says that, “the word diaspora often invokes the imagery of traumas of separation and dislocation which is certainly a very important aspect of the migratory experiences” (190). The themes of separation and dislocation is seen in many of the diasporic writings.

Emphasizing on culture every human society has its particular structure, its particular purposes, its particular meaning as Raymonds Williams conveys through his essay “Culture is Ordinary”. Johann Gottfried Herder was the first to use the word culture in the sense of cultural identity, a way of living, which formed the home of people. In most of the diaspora writings, a reader can observe that the search for home remains a central concern in literature.

In Surya Nath Pandey's *Contemporary poets in English*, he observes that T. S. Eliot examines Nissim Ezekiel's views on culture. Eliot thinks that culture is a creation of religion; thus, there is a close association between the two. Moreover, he states that culture is “*essentially* the incarnation of the religion of a people” (2) he emphasizes on religion as the essential outcome of cultural ethos. He clarifies again that “antagonistic religion must mean antagonistic culture” (2). Finally, he conjoins the two. This indicates that he sees religion as a core aspect which is necessary for the flourishing culture.

As he comments, religion is not an element of culture, but it is framed that culture is incarnated from religion. He observes:

So, while we believe that the same religion may inform a variety of cultures, we may ask whether any culture could come into being, or maintain itself, without a religious basis. We may go further and ask whether what we call the culture, and what we call the religion, of a people are not different aspects of the same thing: the culture being, essentially, the incarnation (so to speak) of the religion people. (28)

Therefore, religion provides the framework for culture. He asserts that religion and culture contribute to the same function in society. He expresses his views about the connection of culture with religion.

In other words, culture is both humankind and individual, also it lies in the universe and in people's mind. When India encountered western culture, conflict started, and the process of change was initiated. In course of time, the alien culture either destroys their traditional culture or assimilates into it. The migrants have undergone the pain and wounds about leaving their people, own places and their original identity which leads to existential questions about oneself and one's life. Their only concern is to maintain their original culture and identity, even though they face different cultural surrounding outside of their homeland.

As Homi Bhabha says immigrants begin to imagine their homelands through some fragment of the memories. He called this condition of imagination as 'third space' which brings a sense of hybridity and identity of a person in order to escape from the two different cultures. In Jonathan Rutherford's *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Bhabha discusses the notion of hybridity, ". . . the importance of hybridity is not able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity

to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (211). He argues that a mix of two cultures is the result of hybridity. Further he adds when people leave their own countries for various reasons and travel to foreign countries, they get imprisoned between two different cultures.

Immigrants have trouble in finding their position in new place and adjust to a different culture. When someone leaves a culture because of migration, the ties to that culture are generally sustained. British literary theorist, Terry Eagleton opines:

A culture would be ill-advised to try to suppress the kind of needs we have by virtue of what the young Marx calls our ‘species being’ needs such as food, sleep, shelter, warmth, physical integrity, companionship, sexual fulfilment, a degree of personal dignity and security, freedom from pain, suffering and oppression, a modest amount of self-determination and the like. (99-100)

He suggests culture is a complex word which is something one exists for. It is sometimes defined as the attributes of a specific group of a people, represented by things like communication, values, beliefs and social habits.

As it is expressed, animals learn the things but only humans learn a culture which relies on symbols. Symbol signifies particular meaning and tradition of people within the same culture. People encounter experience, memories, custom, beliefs and values because of cultural differences. Anthropologist Edward B. Taylor has presented a clear idea in his work *Primitive Culture: Researches into the development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion language, Art and Custom*. He states that culture is, “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (1) Thus, culture merges with people's mind and with their lives. So, if

people migrate to a new land, the individual is caught in a dilemma with a pool of collective memories.

Culture is a way to experience the world and traverse one's place within. In such a situation the individual's sense of being culturally or psychologically estranged in new environment, shows their in-between space where they are straddled between two cultures. Amar Nath Prasad has quoted in his book *Indian Writing in English: Critical Exploration* about Neil Bissoondath's interview with Bruce Meyer, Bissoondath has conveyed his own experiences concerning the conflict of two cultures:

I grew up in a culture that restricted me, a culture that imposed its values in me and that had little regard for my personal feelings and desires. From this point of view, I identify with that Japanese girl (in "The Cage") very closely --- the girl can't escape her past. When I left Trinidad, I knew I was leaving for good --- the girl in this story was incapable of saying that. (280)

Many immigrant writers expose in their works about their longings and feelings towards their homeland when they are relocated to a new land and caught between two cultures.

In the contemporary world which is always in a flux, most women writers are focused on issues like women's quest for identity, making choice for alternative relationship, breaking the barriers, trying to construct their independent voice. They highlight the burden of two cultures and try to maintain strong connection with the homeland. Immigrants possess their own images as Homi Bhabha addressed of "the twilight existence of the aesthetics of images" (15). Women writers project their

characters as problematic states of being difficult, which is a result of dislocation and culture.

The two dimensions of the characters' persona are highlighted. One is the pursuit of the individual desires to live a fulfilled life and the other is to sustain in the cultural roots in spite of being rooted in new land. Avtar Brah says correctly, "the concept of diaspora places the discourse of 'home' and 'dispersion' in creative tension, inscribing a homing desire while simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins" (189). The characters find out the difficulty of comprehending another's culture which is new, so it creates tension to find a way to adapt the strangeness of new culture in an alien land.

It further examines the problem of identity, home, and creating an own space in another country. It focuses on themes such as first and second-generation immigrants, cross-cultural conflicts, collision, fractured relationships and the feeling of being alienated. The diasporic writing engages with the characters' quest for 'home' and deals with the issues of collective memories presenting a glimpse of history. Brah notes: "contested cultural and political terrain where individual and collective memories, collide, reassemble and reconfigure" (190). By linking a culture, border, memory, and individual; it offers a deep insight of social, political and cultural formation.

Indian diaspora in Canada expresses the feelings of Indian immigrants, who are struggling to grapple with the meaning of home and belonging and searching for their identity. It clearly shows the insecurity of the migrants in both the sides, especially women. Mainly, gender inequality in India is still accompanied by age old traditions and customs which affect an individual's life and society. Indian families follow that men are the head of the family who act as the sole provider of the family

in patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society man holds all the powers; so, women are subordinate to men. Obviously, men control the women in all the possibilities such as education, physical, emotional, social and even in political ways.

Writers connect both diasporas and nations historically to bring out the Indianness. Writers project the struggles and the plight of the immigrants, thereby giving a voice for the diaspora. Similar to the views of Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall, home is a key to understand the diaspora and culture. Diasporic subjects mainly concentrate on the past memories of homeland, kinship relations, a feeling of estrangement and amalgamating the practical framework of homeland and Hostland. Peter Mandaville says in his *Reimagining Islam in Diaspora: The Politics of Mediated Community*:

The estrangement of a community in diaspora – its separation from the ‘natural’ setting of the homeland – often leads to a particularly intense search for and negotiation of identity: gone are many traditional anchor points of culture; conventional hierarchies of authority can fragment. In that, the condition of diaspora is one in which the multiplicity of identity and community is a key Dynamic. Debates about the meanings and boundaries of affiliation are hence a defining characteristic of the diaspora community. (172)

Cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall have incorporated new ideas about ‘new ethnicities’ that dismiss ideas of essential black and white identity. Diaspora theorists such as Avtar Brah and Robin Cohen bring out the idea of ‘home’, a place of craving and belonging to one’s own which provide the frame of diaspora. Postcolonial theorists like Homi Bhabha have explored cultural differences, in-betweenness and hybrid nature of identity that cut across national borders. Robert Cohen writes,

“diaspora works as an insightful way of many aspects of migration” (70). He further remarks that it plays a role as an “important trajectory of social identity construction, one marked by incomplete subordination to a single national identity” (71). Diasporic fiction is the only way to understand the lives of immigrants. It is one of the trajectories to construct social identity, sometimes at the expense of an incomplete own identity.

South Asian Canadian writings have emerged as a powerful and creative force in a vibrant field. In South Asian writings a new literacy space has now given to the prolific writers such as Rohinton Mistry, M. G. Vassanji, Shyam Selvadurai, Bharathi Mukherjee, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Ven Begamudre, Michael Ondaatje, Arjun Appadurai, Kiran Desai and V. S. Naipaul. The diasporic writers like Stephen Gill, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri and Salman Rushdie through their writings, share their experiences such as a feeling of insecurity, compromise, adjustment, and how they grapple between two cultures.

In their writings, the roots of diaspora escalating from time to time have been epitomised. Through their creative works, writers blend their memories and the experience of cultural encounter by the immigrants. Almost all the diasporic Indian writers in Canada have observed some aspect of ‘home’ while exploring the questions of identity, home, memory, belongingness, nation, assimilation and acculturation. The writings reflect the sense of alienation, distancing, separation, confusion, perplexity and emotions of anger. The writers reflect they are being different from the host land because of their own perception and also of the outside world. Diasporic writers have also been pushed to choose between their identities, especially women.

Writers, mainly South Asian immigrant Canadian writers have produced creative works like volumes of poetry, fictions, autobiographies which explore the

writers' experience when they leave their homeland for whatever reason and find their foothold in a new land. They later try their best to adapt to the foreign country and get located there.

Rohinton Mistry is considered to be one of the most popular contemporary writers of Indo- Canadian literature. He is a Parsi, born in Bombay in 1952. Throughout his formative years of childhood and adolescence, he had many opportunities to observe and incorporate the life of Parsis into his creative realm. His debut novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and won various other awards. His enthralling novels mostly speak about the Parsi community. As a Parsi writer, he depicts the outlook of Parsi life through an in-depth exploring of the Parsi way of life. The all-pervasive alienation, and a haunting memory of an illustrious past, pervading most narratives of Rohinton Mistry, are also associated to issues of nationality and belonging. The second novel *A Fine Balance* (1996) exposes the change in Indian Society from Independence to the emergency during the time of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. *Family matters* (2002) tells the story of an elderly Parsi widower living with his step children in Bombay.

Shauna Singh Baldwin has particularly tried to capture the political scenario, and unravels the pain and plight suffered by women. She is the award-winning author of three novels. Her first work of fiction *English lessons and other stories* won the 1996 Friends of American Writers Award. In this work, Baldwin gives a powerful voice to women. She was born in Canada but grew up in India. She emphasises the importance of family, their own culture and the familial roles of Indian women in present times. She is the co-author of *A Foreign Visitor's Survival Guide to America*. Her best-selling work is *What the Body Remembers*, which won the Commonwealth

Writer's Prize (Canada and Caribbean). *The Tiger Claw* (2004) was the finalist for the Giller Prize now known as the Scotiabank Giller Prize.

Salman Rushdie remains one of the most celebrated living novelists. He was brought up as a Muslim in a Hindu country and was sent to an English public school when he was fourteen. This scenario provided the fodder for rich insights into political, historical perspective and philosophical arenas. *Midnight's Children* reflects different cultural, socio-political and linguistic backgrounds. He uses the technique of magical realism in all his works. The book won the Booker Prize in 1981. He uses different dynamics of diasporic identity in his literary creation. The actual experiences in the life of Salman Rushdie add substantial amount of fidelity and real diasporic feeling of longing for a loved past of their homeland throughout his works.

Another writer worth mentioning is Bharathi Mukherjee. She expresses her transition from India to USA to Canada and then back to America and its inevitable changes which had a strong impact in her life. Most of her works reflect the anxiety of the immigrants who have gone through the difficulties of diaspora and dislocation, chiefly women characters. In her works like *Wife* (1976) and *Jasmine* (1990), she highlights the realistic portrayal of an Indian woman's pain and hardship in a patriarchal society. She has written a dual autobiography, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* (1977) which stresses the different points of view as insider and outsider.

Most writers write experiences in diaspora, but some thrive on the stories they hear from others. These writers are now recognised in Canada as equal to the mainstream writers. Interestingly, these writer's works seek to analyse the manifestation of Indian thought and Indians. India and Canada not only have different geographical areas but also have different histories, cultures, and traditions. The

writers bring out the general experiences of diaspora, such as acclimatisation, adaptation, identity crisis, racial favoritism, hybridity, alienation and nostalgia.

Such a transforming vision is indeed seen in Anita Rau Badami who is an Indo- Canadian writer. She is one of the newest writers of South Asian Diaspora Literature. Indian- born Anita Rau Badami was born in the small town of Rourkela in Orissa, India in 1961. Her father worked as a mechanical engineer, so the family had to relocate frequently. During her childhood, she travelled tremendously within India and this adds a distinctive flavour to her literary writings.

Badami did her bachelor's degree in the University of Madras, after which she studied journalism in Sophia College, Bombay. She has worked as a copywriter for advertising agencies in Bombay, Bangalore and Madras and freelanced for popular Indian newspapers for several years. She has also published stories in children magazine. In 1991, she left Bangalore with her husband to Calgary, where he wanted to pursue his Masters in Environmental Science and then to Vancouver for a Ph.D. degree. She got her Master's degree in English literature in University of Calgary. She began taking innovative courses and her first novel *Tamarind Mem* was created as her master's thesis at the University of Calgary. She quickly became a best-selling talented new Canadian writer. She won national and international acclaim for her literary creation for the depiction of family life in Canada and India.

Badami is a prominent writer in the Modern Indian Diaspora with a strong voice for diaspora. She expresses her expatriate feeling and the difficulties which she has faced when she has migrated from India to Canada. She tries to find a sense of belonging in the cultures she is associated to. Her novels *Tamarind Mem* (1996), *The Hero's Walk* (2000), *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call* (2006) and *Tell It to the Trees* (2011) reflect a poignant feeling to connect the homeland and diaspora. She depicts

the complexities of Indian family, disparate culture, the cross-country cultural effect when Indians move to the west. She depicts the status of women in the traditional Indian family.

Her debut novel, *Tamarind Mem* (1996) met with great critical acclaim. Jyoti Patil comments about Jaya Banerjee words: “The book is a sincere fiction, written astutely and perceptively, looking back in time to analyze the relationships in a complex family. At its core lies the eternal conflict between mother and daughter” (n. p.). The novel is divided into two halves. The first half extends a narrative by a daughter, Kamini, depicting the events in her life, from her childhood to her present. She tries to reconnect her relationship with her mother through the help of memories.

In describing her life, she mentions about the past memories, relationship with her mother, storytelling and travelling, trains and railway colonies, telephone and postcards. Saroja begins her story in the second half, revisiting her life through the past memories. She attempts to reflect her life and longs to be in the company of her spouse. Badami depicts that the characters are locked by tradition, rules and expectation when they shift from one place to another. The narrative technique unfolds the realistic attitude of both mother and daughter for realising their aspirations. Finally, they cherish the memories and embrace them.

Her second novel, *The Hero's Walk* is a novel that describes the strong characters living simple, believable lives. This fiction only confirms her highly status. The novel is set in the fictional town of Toturpuram and the reader is instantly drawn into a world filled with the sight, smell, feel and taste of Indian ethos. The question arises about who is the hero of *The Hero's Walk*? Even in the book, the character Nirmala teaches children of the neighborhood about a hero's walk and a villain's walk.

A Canadian-raised orphan Nandana returns to her grandfather living in India. She loses her parents in a car accident, so she must go with her grandparents. Her mother Maya got married to white man named Alan Baker in Canada. Badami expresses the loss and the alienation of Nandana in the strange land. Whereas, Sripathi is a tragic hero who denies the pleasures of a simple life, living for her mother's worries and repentance and his father's non- success. Badami successfully fortifies the remorseful life of Indian women who are enslaved to the male dominated society of Indian husbands.

Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? is a historical novel because the story moves between East and West in 1947. Badami conveys the shattered lives, dreams and disappointments, of the individual and community. The novel reveals the intersecting lives of characters who are leading a complex life between the personal and the political, the individual and the national, and communities. The story is narrated through three female characters: Saran, the beautiful, and settled in Vancouver; Leela Bhat, 'a half-caste', who struggles to get her own identity and then she marries and follows her husband to Vancouver; and Nimmo, the lower-middle class daughter of Satan's sister, who lives in India. Badami uses the important events like the Komagata Maru of 1914, the bombing of Air India Flight 182 that smashed the coast of Ireland on June 23, 1985 to shape the narrative.

In *Tell It to the Trees (2011)* Badami's psychological perception highlights each scene and breathes real life into her characters. She narrates the story of an Indo-European Canadian Dharma family and lives in an alienated home at Northern British Columbia. Badami shows how the loneliness and secrets could join to clutch a family together and break them apart. The story begins with the frozen body of Anu in the backyard who died of hypothermia. Badami uses secret and complex theme variations

in this novel. She shows the issues which arise due to the fluctuating culture in a modern world.

Badami explores overlapping culture with the instinctive technique in her works. She emphasises the state of in-betweenness of the Indian diaspora in Canada. For affected individuals, diaspora can be an essential requirement or an option. She characterises diasporic unpredictability that happens due to a fusion of social, cultural and historical factors. She successfully brings out a realistic representation of both cultures through the portrayal of the landscapes, ordinary lives, routine and actions of each and every character. She conveys the fact that the immigrants have two minds – they show themselves as if they are adjusted well in new land and walking in divide makes them to experience unwanted trauma like insecurity, anger, rootlessness and not belonging to anywhere.

The characters recollect their past in different perspective due to cultural clash. Writers give in detail picture of the lives of immigrants through the lens of memory. They try to get their identity by connecting with the bygone past. The phenomenon of migration from the East to the West is not that unproblematic. Everywhere people inherently carry their feelings of uprootedness and isolation, adapt to the new land and derive a sense of belongingness. Some may even forget their roots and culture of the new land; they are hanging in the trope of nostalgic memories. As Uma Parameswaran defines:

. . . first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves ethno-cultural issues. The fourth is when they have

“arrived” and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues. (165)

She focuses on a realistic representation of both cultures in the form of physical as well as an emotional assimilation of immigrants.

Badami covers her novel with different recollections and memories of the same past. The conflicts arise when two generations encounter a changing culture between modernisation and traditional values. With her technique, she explores the in-between state that critics and theorists refer to ‘liminality’ meaning threshold, which refers to in betweenness. Her novels incorporate both the individual’s relationship with himself and others in foreign land- individual who is placed at the crossroads of multiple conflicts between the inner and outer world.

Badami highlights that the first-generation diaspora maintains their bond with homeland and never gives up the traditional values and customs of their own culture which they think as their identity. The second-generation diaspora tries to adapt to a new culture: they feel like straddling between two cultures, but they are closely connected with their parents’ homeland through their parents. Femke Stock comments, “The act of remembering is always contextual, a continuous process of recalling, interpreting and reconstructing the past in terms of the present and in the light of an anticipated future” (24). The past memories connect both the generation through storytelling and recollecting the past in different perspectives.

The objective of the research is to bring out the in- depth study of the Indo-Canadian diasporic literature which gives an exposure of cross-cultural conflicts and the diasporic experiences. The focus throughout this thesis is to implicitly highlight an aesthetic analysis of the novels of Anita Rau Badami. While exploring Anita Rau Badami’s novels, the study helps to understand the influence of culture and its impact

as portrayed in the novels. Also, it depicts the new world of immigrants, and examines the associated challenges as represented in the novels. The study also explores the contrasting worlds between tradition and modernity as seen in the novels. This reading further forges a better understanding towards a more tolerant and smooth assimilation of different cultures.

A review of some of the published research papers and articles are as follows. Anita Caroline in her post graduate research *'Family' as depicted in the select novels of Anita Rau Badami*, focuses on the family and its values, elucidations of ceremonies, bonding with their relatives, humorous scene about husband and wife. The sense of belonging somewhere or nowhere in new land forces the immigrant to reminisce about his own native culture.

In a review titled "In an age of heroes", Mithu C. Banerji talks about Anita Rau Badami and her journey between the West and the East. She observes her life, career in India as well as in Canada. The Indian family life, their tradition and customs, class and caste system are the focus of *The Hero's Walk*. He elucidates the character Canadian-born Nandana who lost her mother and feels a 'stranger' in India. He observes that the characters are portrayed as rebellious and strong against their family and the rule-bound society.

Another article "The Razor's Edge" by Jaya Banerji praises the novel *Tamarind Mem* as an 'evocative novel' which portrays the relationship between a mother and a daughter, combined "by those intangible bonds of birth which stretch but rarely snap, just lose their elasticity" (40). It also makes them connected by nostalgic memories but are still feeling alienated. Subhadra Sengupta opines about the novel *Tamarind Mem* in her article "Not sour enough" as:

Rau Badami possesses great facility with the language and she uses it with a malleable elegance which is a pleasure to read. Her recall of detail and the ability to blend it into characters is remarkable. What would make her future books worth reading is if she took some risks in her narrative. (18)

The characters are confined by rules and tradition in a rule bound world and strive to escape from the patriarchal society. The memories of a mother and daughter are appealingly showcased and form an integral part of the narrative.

South Asian review mentions that the novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* traces the despair and hopelessness of immigrants while being caught in the communal violence and political turmoil which started since the partition of India in 1947. Badami highlights the importance of events like Komagata Maru incident in 1914, Air India Flight crash on the coast of Ireland in June 23, 1985 and so on. The novel encapsulates the historical period from 1928 – 1986 by using the historical events which bring out the technique of narrative beautifully.

The second chapter titled, ‘Memory as an engraved mirror’, is an analysis of the three novels which are connected by one narrative technique, memory. Nostalgic memories are an obtained feeling which bridges up the connection of loneliness and longing in the life of immigrants. Badami clarifies her characters’ plight of being restricted within the customs of Indian Society and cultural values. Although the characters feel traumatic, also under the pressure of cultural conflicts, memories of their homeland provide heart-warming moments. As they reach the core of nostalgia, the characters find that simple things in life seem more meaningful.

The three novels covered by collective memories hit at the root of culture conflict. The lives of immigrants in an unfamiliar land begins with cultural shock and

they have to fight the unhappiness of a new life in an uninvited place along with the memories that pull them towards their motherland. Memories are represented as a cultural trope and a cause for emotional succour giving the way to new understanding, acceptance and self-realization.

The third chapter titled, 'Crossroads of Tradition and Modernity' is an evaluation of two concepts that is tradition and modernity. The three novels reflect the conflict which arises between India and Canada. Badami's characters undergo tormenting lives in the furtherance of these traditional values in Indian society. She vividly shows their connection towards motherland and their own culture. She highlights tradition in Indian society, education, caste, marriage, and slavery versus freedom. In her three novels, the immigrant characters in Canada lead a luxurious and healthy life but they are not ready to give up on their own culture.

The conflict between tradition and modernity is reflected on three different generations from different perspectives. Badami brings out tradition and modernity in its own angle and discusses tradition of Indian society and modernity in Canada. She depicts that the characters are struggling with the balance between tradition and modernity. She explains the factors responsible for modernity in her three select works. The three generations of women caught amidst tradition and modernity are interlocked between the East and West because of the two different cultures. She represents tradition and the older generation; modernity and the new generation. The cross-cultural entity is explored in three novels of Badami, such as *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird call?* The fundamental issue of conflict between tradition and modernity is border and migration issues; thus, only way to escape from this conflict between tradition and modernity is a recognition of global citizen values and spirit of tolerance.

The fourth chapter titled, 'The search of individualism in hybridity' discusses the concept of Hybridity. Badami provides an illuminating analysis of the notions of hybridity and diaspora in the multi-ethnic society in her three novels. She describes a cultural mixture where the immigrants meet in the host land and seek their identity. They are not ready to abandon their old tradition and identity but enter into new culture as they struggle to get their identity.

Bhabha applies 'hybridity' as an in-between term to mention 'third space'. Finally, in the process of adopting a new culture of the host land, they become hybrid identities. Badami shows that the cultural encounter and norms overlap and then different nationalities have an influence on each other. She depicts how characters struggle to get their identity; and also, she shows finding one's own identity has become harder than surviving in the host land.

The final chapter summarises the observations of the study. The three novels *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* unfolds the new world of immigrants who are walking at the divide. Badami shows that different values, different traditions, different religions and different ways of life can lead to the cross-culture conflict. She represents cultural conflicts etching them with innumerable memories, seeking a path out of the maze of challenges for the global citizen.

Chapter - 2

Memory as an Engraved Mirror

Memories play an important part in every one's life. It reconstructs the past in the present to form a new way of life. Memories have their own way of healing the pain of human beings. It warms up the heart from the inside. The sufferings which people have undergone can be alleviated by reminiscing the past in the present. The scar of the wound fades away only by holding onto the memories of the past. It also helps an individual to understand who they are. Such memories are just one factor which ensures one's own identity.

In literature, memory proves to be a tool which connects the people and thoughts. Memory reflects the past which is rooted in human beings' life, and vibrantly reflects the society. The memories in literature as carved by Badami, is not only the haunted memories of the past but also thoughts that guide and help people to live in tranquility. Badami is a prolific writer who invests her novel with deep insights of life. In the article "In an age of heroes", Mithu C Banerji says:

The writings of various writers like Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Devakaruni, Namita Gokhale, and Badami have the common engagement of cultural displacement, nostalgia, and contemplation of writers' own lives results not so much from the emergence of an essentiality Indian sensibility but perhaps from a privileged hybridity of the East and West. (6)

Badami expresses the difficulty in diaspora, tradition and customs, cultural clash through the tool of memory. The writers like Shashi Despande, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Rohinton Mistry, Uma Parmeshwaran, Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukharjee, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Meena Alexander, Ameena

Meer, Lakshmi Gill and Jhumpa Lahiri use memory as a tool to express the longing for home and the feeling of being exiled.

Memories which one holds dear to heart are precious and delightful in one's life. It gives meaning and purpose to life. It clearly reveals one's own position and where they stand in the world. However, there is a basic difference between the role of identity and the role played by memory. A key role of memory is to build an identity. It takes the person back into childhood and throws light on the formative years of one's life. Memory is a common tool which is explored in literary texts of diaspora. The writers of diaspora use a vehicle of memory which reframe the past and renovate the present.

The second chapter is entitled *Memory as an engraved mirror*, keeping in mind how memory carves and engraves the past deeply in one's present life. It is something engraved in mind, or heart so it is not easily forgotten. It reflects like a mirror and is therefore inescapable. The engraved memory of the past imprints in the present life which reflects as a mirror. The life is a mirror which reflects the past and present but it depends on what one must prefer to see. Memory inscribes in one's mind, thoughts which cannot erase, it remains throughout the life. Eventually memories are engraved in the people's life which reflects both the past and present in order to realize one's purpose of life. Taking stock of one's past and being aware of the present is a definitive step in designing the future of one's choice.

In *History and Memory*, French Historian Jacques Le Goff implies memory as, "the capacity for conserving certain information or a group of psychic functions that allow us to actualize past impressions or information that we represent to ourselves as past" (51). By clinging to the memory, people try to attach to their past life. Even though their thoughts and memory lie in the past, it revives reality in the present. The

ebb and flow of memories function as a resultant of self-realisation. Anh Hua has mentioned about memory and remembrance in his *Diaspora and Cultural Memory*:

The struggle for memory can help to create spaces where one is able to redeem and reclaim the past, legacies of pain, suffering and triumph in ways that transform reality. Remembrance is not simply to document but to construct the new, to move us into a different mode of articulation. (147)

The past chases the present which then moves towards a better future. In an effort to ameliorate the future, one will travel with their past memories which ignites to chase one's aspirations and dreams. Memories assist to re-live the life and thus help to boost the willpower to survive. Memory and Nostalgia are the two emotive threads which connect both identity and experience. Vijay Agnew's views on memory in his *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home* is that:

Memories ignite our imaginations and enable us to vividly recreate our recollections of home as a haven filled with nostalgia, longing and desire . . . Memories can be nostalgically evocative . . . as an antidote to the struggles of the present. Others who had wounds of memory . . . may travels to the past an involuntary, albeit necessary, journey to come to terms with the present selves. (10)

In most of the diasporic writings, the writers picturise the characters who have displaced to a new place. They relive and rebuild the past with the help of memories to reconstruct their life in a new place. It helps either through positive memories which is resultant in self-realisation or provides a contrast between the past and the present which affect the present life.

One of the prominent trends in Diaspora literature, is the longing of the characters to reconnect to their homeland through the nostalgic memories. Nostalgia for the homeland plays a fundamental role in the arena of diaspora. According to the Etymology Dictionary, the term nostalgia is a composite word, consisting of ‘nostos’ which signifies return or homecoming and ‘-algos’ meaning pain. In literature, nostalgia is the most celebrated facet, specifically in diasporic fiction. It evokes a feeling from the impressions of the past. Nostalgia is a culturally obtained feeling that bridges up the connection of loneliness and longingness. At the core of nostalgia, it appears to be interweaved with collective memory and cultural lives of the people.

Svetlana Boym in her book *The Future of Nostalgia*:

At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into a private or collective mythology, to revisit time like this space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition. (15)

Boym emphasises that nostalgia is the space which connects the homeland with collective memories of the past. He stresses that the past determines the needs of the present which have a close contact on the certainties of the future.

The term nostalgia is first used by a 17th century Swiss Physician Johannes Hofer in 1688. He uses the Greek term *heimweh* which indicates the pain of a person who longs for the native land, or not belonging to the homeland, or fears to never return to it over again. The person indulges in nostalgic recollections of their original

homeland and longs to escape the stranglehold of an alien land, even as they crave to lead a wealthy and luxurious life. Nostalgia is not new to the narrative in diaspora and every diasporic fiction has a room for nostalgic reminiscing to confess their homesickness and desire to return. In modern context, nostalgia and diaspora are interconnected concepts.

Nostalgia conveys a sense of belonging and home when the characters fail to adopt a culture of new land. In the book *Long-Distance Nationalism: Diasporas, Homelands and Identities*, Zlatko Skrbis states nostalgia as, “A painful condition related to the homeland” (41). A person suffers in excruciating pain when he leaves his homeland because his roots have been strongly affixed to the place where he is born and brought up. The sense of longingness is always traced when the roots are misplaced. In contradiction to the nostalgia, Fred Davis, an American Sociologist, argues positively in *Yearning for Yesterday: Sociology of Nostalgia* that:

The nostalgic experience is infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love . . . nostalgic feeling is almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative, for example, unhappiness, despair, frustration, hate, shame, and abuse. (18)

Fred Davis reveals that nostalgia is a combination of both negative and positive experiences and emotions. On the one hand, nostalgia involves positive thoughts which imbue with a happy emotion such as the feelings of ‘home’, comfort, increased social connectedness and relating the past experiences to the present life so as to get a meaning in life. When countering unpleasant situations, negative emotions are triggered by nostalgia which includes insecurity, fear of losing a family, loneliness

and the split identity. David supports nostalgia as, “A positively toned evocation of a lived past” (18) it provides the meaning and the purpose of life.

In adjusting to new world, nostalgia attempts to balance the hyphenated identities of both the homeland and the hostland. So, it remains a considerable factor which are generally used in the writings of diaspora. The writers reframe the past from the perspective of the characters who are embedded in culture and tradition. The characters reminisce their past because it helps them to comprehend what they are today, and it rebuilds the lost home. Nostalgia is a medicine which cures the inner pain, and also provides solace in an alien land. With this fragmentation of nostalgic feelings, a person tries to construct new identity in his new land where he feels a double identification with the homeland and the alien land.

The sense of belongingness of the home in an alien land is only through the memories which are recollected by the characters. The characters are taking different trajectories of exploration such as a balance between the east and the west, tradition and modernity, dependent and independent, individual and society. Nostalgia makes them feel warmth at some point and help them to re-locate their identities. It is the amalgamation of culture and nostalgia which gives individual heritage.

One such writer is Anita Rau Badami, who attempts to extrapolate the concept of ‘nostalgia’ in her novels. She portrays the memories of homeland and different life in a new country exploring the characters’ dilemma in terms of explaining their dual identity and adapting into a new space as well. The idea of nostalgia to some extent is used to show their struggle to re connect with their homeland and also give strength to convey their emotion and feeling.

Badami explicitly conveys that the problem of adjustment is not a simple one, predominantly they have been caught between two cultures and also their inner

conflicts never allows them to survive in a new land. She also highlights that the immigrants face individual struggle to attain their real identity, which is based on their own experiences, cultural or collective memories which incorporates in every individual in many generations. She brings this point that the writers face these kinds of struggle while migrating to new countries. They convey their struggles through their writings by connecting memory, identity, a sense of belonging and individuality.

Badami has produced insights into the changes which are occurring in society and how individuals befall into the social system and get caught in tradition, modernity and cultural conflicts. Through the characters in her three novels, Badami has shown a good grasp of Indian thoughts, emotion and culture viz-a-viz western thoughts and culture. She represents the endurance of her characters between tradition and modern life, individual and society, west-east relationship, religious faith of Indians and materialistic way of life in the west.

Badami's debut novel *Tamarind Mem* is preoccupied with the elements of nostalgia, as the characters try to find their identity; also attempt to maintain the culture of homeland and at the same time adopt the cultural space of new land. The novel is about the bond between mother and daughter whose relationship is renewed through the nostalgic memories. She speaks about the changing relationship amongst the family or dilemmas due to changing culture in modernising world. Through her fictional characters, she has incorporated her autobiographical elements. She combines her experiences with fictional characters which she has borrowed from her life.

The story is about two characters who are trying to make sense of their past in two different points of view. Badami narrates the story through two different characters, Kamini (daughter) and Saroja (mother) and portrays the deep divide

between the East (India) and the West (Canada) due to cultural restrictions. The novel is fragmented into two halves, one, the recollections of Kamini, and the second, the recollections of Saroja. The two main characters never come face-to-face, but only through memory. She uses a first-person narrative to explore the reality of the characters and their different perspective of the same past.

The novel is set in the railway colonies of India keeping in touch with Badami's own life experiences. She uses a storytelling technique to display the intense bond between mother and daughter relationship. She depicts how people have different perspectives about the same past by splitting the book into two segments. She decorates her novels with memories of the past via fictional stories. Kamini's father Vishwa Moorthy, a mechanical engineer, has to keep moving frequently along with his family due to his job. Kamini likes to listen to stories particularly when they move to various strange places due to her father's job. Kamini collects the stories from her father, "My father came home from his long trips with bags full of stories. I liked to think that the stories were for me alone. Besides, I was the only one who would listen to them. Roopa fidgeted and yawned through Dadda's tales and after a while ran away to play" (*TM* 41). It indicates how memory plays a crucial role in this novel.

Badami projects the dilemmas of the two characters when they try to maintain cultural connections between homeland and hostland. When the novel begins, Kamini who resides in Canada, and reflects about her alienation in new land, "I called my mother every Sunday from the silence of my basement apartment, reluctant to tell her how I yearned to get away from this freezing cold city where even the traffic sounds were muffled by the snow" (*TM* 1). She feels isolated and narrates the story with the vehicle of memory.

Kamini often recalls about her mother's polarised nature of behaving differently in her father's house and in her grandmother's house. "Ma was a different person here, giggling with her sisters, allowing her aunts and cousins to pamper her. I wished we could live in that house forever" (*TM* 5). When Roopa is born, Kamini sees a different person in her mother. She laughs loudly and speaks sweetly to her. Her curiosity gets increased in her grandmother's home when her aunts and grandmother share their past with her mother. But her grandmother never says any stories to her. Kamini says, "She never told me stories, like Chinna, nor did she pamper me with sweets and toys" (*TM* 8). This shows that Kamini loves to listen stories.

She depicts that the characters use memory to connect with their family like parents-children relationship and siblings. After Kamini moves to Canada, she feels detached from her mother Saroja, but she depends on memory to recreate the past in the present. She recollects:

My mother, who had seemed unchanging as the Dhura star through my childhood, looked so different in my memory now when viewed from the distance that separated us. Her hair once abundant, was a pathetic clump of white, her this finger no longer smooth and sue in their myriad tasks . . . The same eyes had softened and glowed when she was pleased or proud of us. (*TM* 15)

She floats on a sea of memories along with the thoughts of her mother. Her desire for a return and reconnection with her mother is projected through the collective memories of her. Memory gives shape to their identity and influences them to struggle to get over the present. With the help of nostalgic memories, the characters understand where they are today and what they are because it connects both the past

and the present. Both the characters Kamini and Saroja share their own nostalgic memories which shape their individual identity.

As an immigrant in an alien land, she feels burdened profoundly by her nostalgia but she still frequently feels wrapped by her mother's memories through the recollection of the celebrated past. She understands how Saroja tries to protect her from all sorts of fears and insecurities. Kamini remembers Saroja's anger, frustration and love throughout her life and finally realises the cultural and social restriction that Saroja has faced. Kamini says, "I couldn't decide on whose side I wanted to be. I adored my father for his gentleness, for his willingness to listen to me, to tell me those wonderful stories when he was home. And yet I hated him for making Ma so angry all the time" (*TM* 45). Kamini realises that what made Saroja to become a sour tongue as people nicknamed her as 'Tamarind Mem', is because Kamini's father shows no love and concern towards her.

As a child, Kamini cannot understand her mother's situation but after she has grown up, she understands the injustices in her mother's life. She says, "My mother, who had seemed unchanging as the Dhruva star through my childhood, looked so different in my memory now when viewed from the distance that separated us" (*TM* 15). While recalling a moment from the past, Kamini feels alienated in new land. She tries to get rid of the loneliness, she calls her mother through telephone and tells, "I waited for her to interpret the silences between my words, to sense my loneliness, to say, "Why don't you just come back home, I need you, I am getting old." I would drop my work and catch the next flight back" (*TM* 15). Badami uses a memory to muster up the courage of the characters to relive the life which help them to cope better with the present and future consideration of life.

The novel *Tamarind Mem* is considered as a “tale of bittersweet of nostalgia” (n.p.), the characters are locked in the two different places and cultures. Only memory balances them and helps to reassert their individual identities. The characters Kamini, Roopa and Saroja finally disseminate in different corner of the orb in pursuit of their dreams. Kamini likes to listen to different sorts of stories and float on the memories whereas Roopa is not interested in memories. Roopa says, “Let the past sleep. Why should you poke here and there looking for memories? After you find them, dust off all the cobwebs, you see that they are ugly and sad. I prefer living in today not in flashback, baba!” (*TM* 72). Roopa does not want memories to conquer her life but lives in reality. Kamini feels that a tranquility holds her by looking at memories of the past.

Kamini clings to the past which keeps moving backward and forward about her homeland India. She reminiscences about the memories of the railway colonies, her grandmother’s home, at the time of Roopa’s birth, stories of her aunt Ajji, Chinna and Linda Ayah. Kamini carries the memories of them which helps her to learn how to grapple with loneliness, cultural clashes and alienation. Badami builds this novel deftly with past memories with plentiful stories.

Another part is the narration of Saroja who plays a typical role of a woman such as caretaker, cleaner, a wife and a mother. Badami conveys the family life of Indian woman who has to encounter the conflicts with her family, her husband and her children. Badami depicts the life of Saroja as confined within the four walls. She does not even break it because she loves her family. In every stage of her life, there are a new set of rules and tradition to be followed, as a result of which she feels crushed in customs and culture. She attempts to come out of the rule-bound world and spreads her wings freely without any restrictions.

In the beginning of the novel, Saroja thinks memory is such a waste of time, she says, “Memories were like ghosts, shivery, uncertain, nothing guaranteed, totally not-for-sure” (*TM* 73). She replies, “Why only memory? Nothing in the world is for certain” (*TM* 73). Saroja considers it as a fading image which is not even beneficial for life. Saroja uses her sour tongue to defend herself in patriarchal society, especially towards her husband:

With my tamarind tongue, never yielding a moment, I use my grandmother’s strategy of words to ward off the pain of rejection. His aloof, merciless cool, my defensive anger. I will not beg for the affection that is due to me, his wife. Why, even a cat demands a caress, a gentle word. Deprive it of attention and it will wander to another home. (*TM* 216)

Badami shows that family life of women is defenseless and inescapable in this patriarchal society but later she turns out her characters as the strong individual. In general, the power of vulnerability is evident through her female characters. When Saroja’s husband ignores her presence, she recalls what her mother says, “A woman is her husband’s shadow . . . she follows him wherever he goes” (*TM* 214). Saroja replies:

A shadow follows its body around, yes. But I am an individual who makes my own shadow. Sometimes this shadow stretches out longer than my body; sometimes it pools like an ink about my feet. It changes, dances along behind the body, beneath its feet, in front and beside it, eccentric, erratic, moved by light. (*TM* 214)

Saroja tries to build her individuality and free herself from traditional roles so that she can create her own shadow. Badami uses memory as a cultural tool which is the first

choice for the most of the diasporic writers. She has clubbed memory and culture throughout her works.

Unlike Kamini, Saroja blends the past with the present that makes her to come out from the hands of the patriarchal society. She wishes to become a doctor but her parents compel her to marry a stranger who is double her age. Saroja uses her sharp tongue to escape from anger and frustration caused by parents, husband and children. She sinks in the sea of memories and recalls how she met her husband:

My first meeting with the man I am to marry is almost like looking at a photograph. I learn nothing about him and that sense of being in the presence of a presence of a puzzle does not diminish all the years I spend with him. He should have been a hermit, so distant is he from the world we live in. But of course I don't know all that when we first meet. (*TM* 177)

Their relationship leaves her estranged and disgruntled. She constantly complains about her unhappy and empty life but her family blames her. Her father says, "He is a worthy man, your husband, we did the best we could for you" (*TM* 204). She has been raised in a very large family who are energetic so she finds herself immersed in silences in her husband's house. She discloses her silence, "I have held my tongue but the silence filling the house drives me insane. There is so much quiet that I can hear the spiders crawling across the ceiling, their spinnerets whirring" (*TM* 204). Saroja's nostalgic memories about her first child, "It fills the hollow spaces of my body, this child conceived in silence, it squeezes against my lungs, makes me breathless, sends sour belches searing up my throat" (*TM* 205).

Saroja agonisingly narrates her memories that elaborate on her difficulty to adapt to new places due to her husband's frequent transfer. The memories of both

Kamini and Saroja are considered to be a tool to tie their bond and make them to relive the past in their recollection. Kamini feels alienated but she likes to live in Canada. Kamini steps into the new world which is the symbol of modernity. Badami's female characters break their barriers in order to accomplish their dreams. Even Saroja moves away from the railway colonies and traditional role and travels independently with her train passengers.

In *Tamarind Mem*, Badami explicates that the two characters Saroja and Kamini are caught between two worlds and spaces i.e., Canada and India. She intends to display the issues that stem from cultural and social differences. She focuses on connecting these two differences through mother Saroja and daughter Kamini in different perspective. Through memories, Badami brilliantly portrays Saroja's sufferings and her attempt to come out of the rule-bound life. Kamini exemplifies the modern life. Saroja is a frustrated woman who is trapped in the claustrophobic confines of cultural restrictions. After her husband dies, she goes on a journey by train to various places that her husband had once denied. She detaches herself from family's burden and unchains from all responsibilities. She expresses:

I do not belong to anyone now. I have to cut loose and love only from a distance . . . In days of yore, aged parents left their worldly lives to retreat into the forest, where they shrugged off the manacles that bound them to their responsibilities and duties . . . They shuffled their memories like a pack of cards, smiled at the joyous ones, shed a tear or two at others. I too have reached that stage in my life where I only turn the pages of a book already written, I do not write. (*TM* 266)

Through the characters, Badami reflects the theme of cultural clash and diaspora. She also highlights the shifting boundaries, double identity, and also the feeling of

nostalgia in her novels. The two characters Kamini and Saroja shift to various places like railway colonies, Ratnapura, Guwahati, Lucknow, Calcutta whenever her father is transferred; along with these places their nostalgic memories change. Badami represents how Saroja and Kamini have extremely contrary views about their past.

Due to cultural restriction, Saroja has faced only disappointment by her parents. As a result of differing memories, they are forced to revisit the past and look into the intricacies of human relationships. Kamini's memories help her to realize Saroja's unhappiness and compromise every happiness to a family because of social norms and cultural expectations. Badami depicts the role of memories in two different views due to cultural clash. Finally, both characters come to a realisation that they want to be independent, in order to lead a peaceful and unconventional life. Saroja realises her own dreams and makes her own decision without any restrictions. She suggests her daughters to make their own memories:

These are *my* memories, I want to remind Kamini. Why should you worry about them? Why do you allow my history to affect yours? Why should it matter to you if your father made me happy or an Anglo mechanic? They are dead and gone. Yesyes, our stories touch and twine, but they are threads of different hues. Mine is almost at an end, but yours is still unwinding. Go, you silly girl, build your own memories. (*TM* 263)

Saroja gives a picture of real life and adds that one must understand the meaning of life by facing its unavoidable issues of social norms. Badami sketches the fact that memories give hope to face society and finally it leads towards the betterment of life.

Badami reveals that journeying into the past makes a person happier, and fulfills their desire to be independent. Not only the two characters Kamini and Saroja

have a collective memory, also Putti Aiji, Chinna and all female characters in *Tamarind Mem* have similar stories. It clears the way for women who are locked in the traditional roles of wife, mother, sister in the society. In the vast storehouse of memory, Badami restores the actuality of woman who is circumscribed by set of rules and expectations due to cultural collision. Badami portrays how women in Indian society break the barriers and make their own choices freely.

Badami exclaims that the confrontation of two cultures generate all these nostalgic feelings and memories. Badami offers an in-depth analysis of culture which is the common issues in migration, and it creates the complexities in identity and belonging. The memory foretells the predicament of future and also gives a hope for the same. Nostalgia creates an emotion that is slumbering somewhere in mind and gives a chance to rethink the past in order to live individualistically and build a better future.

The memory which is carried in the mind is tinged with nostalgia about the homeland's culture and family. Saroja strikes by a wave of nostalgia about Indian culture, a loveless arranged marriage and exasperating familial role. Badami uses memory to create a space for Saroja. Many women like Saroja still exist in an Indian society. She has delicately detached all twinge of suffering and vehemence through the memories. At the same time, the characters wish to create their own boundaries instead of being on the boundary of patriarchs in Indian culture. Memory is seen as the distinctive marker of their individuality. It makes the characters to build their own boundaries in spite of surviving in other's shadow.

Badami's second novel *The Hero's Walk* mainly focuses on the intricacies of an ordinary family life by describing their culture, festivals, and backgrounds of the place. In this novel, memory is the central point to connect the relationships.

Memories bind the characters together and help them to settle together at last. Memory oscillates back and forth, it shifts from one character to another, which causes cultural clash. The recollection of memories reveals how relationships change with time and space. The novel begins by describing the small town Toturpuram which is a fictional town of Badami, “The memory of those cool, wet mornings was so appealing that everyone forgot that December was also the beginning of the cyclone season when winds blew at 150 kilometers per hour, smashing everything that stood in their way” (*THW 2*). The memories of Toturpuram switch from page to page in the novel *The Hero's Walk*.

The novel picturises the members of the family of Sripathi Rao who is a middle-aged man, struggling to fulfill his social, economic and family obligations. He is a copywriter with a typical wife Nirmala, their son a social activist and daughter Maya who sent to pursue her higher studies in Canada. Maya marries Alan Baker who is a Canadian and has a daughter Nandana. Badami portrays the characters in a very realistic way, reminiscent of Indian ethos. The story revolves around the character of Nandana and Sripathi Rao. Maya wishes to pursue her higher studies in Canada, there she meets Alan Baker and marries him against her father's wishes, which in turn causes her alienation from her family. Bereft of no bond with her family, she and Alan live in Vancouver with their daughter Nandana.

Badami describes how cultures and customs mix, through Maya's life in Canada and Nandana's attempts to adapt to Indian culture. Sripathi's memories about Maya starts with the expectation of her phone call to:

The thought crossed his mind that the call might be from Maya . . . if it was, he didn't want to answer it. His eyes fell on a photograph of Maya, with her foreign husband and their child . . . and immediately

his mood became tinged with bitterness . . . But Maya phoned on Sunday mornings, he reminded himself. (*THW* 4)

He reluctantly takes the call of Maya, his mind plunged into the sea of memories of his daughter. Nirmala leads as a typical Indian wife but when time changes, she adapts to modernity, “But few years ago she, too, had yielded to modernity and abandoned her ritual of cream and red powder for the packs of felt stickers that came in a huge variety of shapes, sizes and colours” (*THW* 10). The characters try to build a bridge between their relations but it becomes unbridgeable. They instead choose to connect through memories. Even Sripathi recollects his disturbed memories of her daughter Maya. Nirmala writes a letter to her daughter without revealing to Sripathi. He reads one of the letters of Nirmala to Maya:

The thicker one to Maya, full of snippets of information about the family and even the political situation in the country, newspaper clippings, recipes from Nirmala. Gossip from Putti, adolescent secrets from Arun. Sripathi suppressed the memory angrily. Had he not banished his daughter from their lives? (*THW* 16)

It is clear that only Sripathi is against his daughter but not Nirmala, Arun and Putti. He thinks often that only he expelled Maya from their lives. His recollection of memories urges him to speak to Maya but his honour does not allow him.

As a small child, Nandana lives happily with her parents in Canada. The life of Nandana somersaults after her parent’s death. She stubbornly denies to budge from her Canadian lifestyle when she goes with her grandfather Sripathi to India. She feels sheltered when she recollects the days which spent with her parents:

She remembered how her father always put an *n*-shaped piece of cereal in her first spoonful of milk and guided it into her mouth. And her

mother's smell of after-bath lotion as she ran past, half-dressed, frantically packing lunch boxes and calling instructions: "Don't forget your keys, I will be late home today, there's a meeting, pick up Nandu at two-forty-five, make sure she does her homework. (*THW* 166)

Nandana wants to go back to Vancouver because she finds difficulty in adapting to a strange culture. Badami reveals the concept of 'home' and clashes of culture. Maya expects her parents to come one day to take her home. Nandana tries to go back to her home in order to escape from the cultural conflicts.

Badami's character, Maya is not alive but she lives through the memories of her family, "Maya: illusion. The name was singularly appropriate for a daughter who had disappeared from their lives like foam from the shoulder of a wave" (*THW* 96-97). They collect memories of Maya:

The last time he had seen her was at the international airport in Madras, where they had all travelled to bid her goodbye . . . Nirmala couldn't stop weeping, he recalled. It embarrassed him, that wild outpouring of sorrow. Even in private he would never allow himself to break down like that. It showed a lack of dignity. So he stood there stoically while Nirmala sniffed and sobbed, until Ammayya, who hated being left out, had burst into tears as well, setting off Putti in turn. (*THW* 97)

Even though he worries inside, he wants to maintain his dignity. As the head of the family, he dedicates his life to the welfare of the family. Badami uses memory to express the diasporic spaces and cultural differences.

Sripathi recollects the birth of Maya who is his first baby, adorable and loving. He recollects, "he had chosen the name for her when she was born, for he could

hardly believe that he had fathered this beautiful, perfectly formed creature” (*THW* 95). He tries to bury all memories of Maya. Sripathi and Ammayya are old-fashioned in thought while Maya, Nandana and Arun are modern. He gets angry when she marries a man out of their caste and culture. He angrily says, “If you persist in doing this foolish thing . . . never show your face in this house again. *Never*” (*THW* 113). Badami gives a deep insight of how children face challenges of expectation and tradition in family.

Badami applies memory between characters to build their own individuality and meaning of life. The concept of memory gives a note of hopefulness and helps to determine one’s own destiny. The cascade of memories helps Sripathi reminiscence the childhood of Maya. He recalls:

Sripathi had a sudden memory of Nirmala seated on the verandah, Maya held firmly between her knees, grumbling and squirming as her mother braided her thick tresses – Nirmala with her mouth full of pins and ribbons, her muffled voice telling Maya to stop fidgeting, as her hands swiftly combed out the knots and snarls used to do for the child. (*THW* 147)

The phone call from Vancouver informing about the accidental death of Maya and her husband is the turning point in the story. Nandana’s life is caught in a space of in-betweenness which Badami clearly portrays through memories. Badami explores cultural clash with the help of nostalgic memories. It clearly shows the problems such as search of identity, belonging, or cultural clash that arise due to shifting of culture.

Even memories help to cure the wounds of the past and are able to connect with the person who was responsible for the hurt. Coming to terms with the past also helps to forget that incident. Though Sripathi does not agree to her marriage and he

cuts off of all ties with her, his memory about her soothes him gently. He says, “It was true that it was he who had told her never to come home, who had refused to reply to her letters or her phone calls, but by dying she had stolen from him the opportunity to forgive and be forgiven” (*THW* 137). Memory is a healer which knows how to pacify our heart and mind.

Memories build one’s own identity in the society, especially when the characters’ face dual identity. The narrative shifts from India to Vancouver reflecting both Canadian culture and Indian culture. It clearly exposes that just by migrating one cannot forget their homeland. They cannot abandon their own culture, and their attachments to motherland remain forever. Nandana’s experience in Madras railway station is narrated:

She snapped awake as soon as they reached the station, though, and gazed around wide-eyed at the crowds that were boiling on the platforms, even at the late hour. It must be strange and disorientating for her, though Sripathi, the steady roar of sounds- vendors, children wailing for their parents, coolies shouting for customers, beggars, musicians- the entire circus of humanity under the high arching roof of Madras Central Station. With her small fingers, the child clipped her nostrils together to block out the stench of fish, human beings, diesel oil, food frying and pools of black water on tracks. (*THW* 151-152)

Badami narrates the difficulty of adapting to a new culture and environment to Nandana. She points out that Nandana is unwilling to come to India. Badami reveals that Nandana finds difficulty in adjusting with food, lifestyle, and social life of India.

The issue of adjustment to a new land looked upon as a strange environment is narrated through Nandana. When she was a kid, Maya tells the story of her family and

life in India. Nandana perceives things as a foreigner when Maya tells stories about India. When Maya shows the picture of her house in India, she asks inquisitively “Are there ghosts inside?” (*THW* 70). She hates her mother’s family except Nirmala and Arun. After she migrates to India, she feels discomfort in Indian culture at the places like home, school, railway station etc., She does not talk to her grandfather’s family but only lives with her parents’ memory. Badami narrates as:

It was now a month since their return from Vancouver, but the child showed no desire to speak. She obediently allowed Nirmala to comb her hair, feed her and pat her to sleep, but she avoided Sripathi, ducking into her room when she saw him. He was hurt by her rejection but made no attempt to approach her either. (*THW* 159)

The trauma resulting from collision of cultures fall on Nandana who is unable to escape. She does not like India so she struggles to come to her original homeland, Vancouver. The angst and anxieties resulting from the longing for a home in the truest sense of the term weighs heavily in Maya’s and Nandana’s hearts. Due to cultural clash, they have undergone the problems of identity, nostalgic memories, a sense of belonging and experiences a trauma.

Maya and Nandana’s experience as immigrants and their search for identity is narrated through the nostalgic memories of the homeland and the culture of the alien land is contrasted with that of the homeland. At the same time, the memories of Sripathi starts questioning about the inner life of Maya:

He realized he had not known his daughter’s inner life, the secret world of dreams and fears, the complexities and the affectations that fellow children through their youth . . . How had she grown up in the same house for twenty years, right under his nose? She had turned

from a beloved child – who held his little finger while crossing the road, who wept with worry if he did not come home at exactly six in the evening – into a person he did not know. (*THW* 148)

He recollects this memory while going on a foreign trip to Vancouver. He experiences the cultural differences and dislocation which his daughter has undergone.

Sometimes, memory functions as a bridge as the trauma unveils the true feelings of the relationship. Badami finally shows the transformation of Sripathi's cultural process in different places. He accepts Putti's marriage with a milkman, Gopala.

After Sripathi returns from Vancouver, he transforms into a new man and enters into modernity. She accepts her sister's marriage with a low caste man, Gopala. In the end, Sripathi accepts Nandana and gifts her his pen. Nirmala is caught in the hands of tradition and customs. She later breaks its wall and emerges out of it. She builds her own identity as Saroja in *Tamarind Mem*, Badami shows her broad-minded views, "child's future is more important than past sorrows" (*THW* 323) Nirmala does not want to stop celebrating Deepavali because of her daughter's death and choose to celebrate for the sake of Nandana.

Badami has depicted that each character faces the memories and thoughts of identity crisis, anger and frustrations, dreams and disappointments. She conveys the fact that immigrants who are facing dual identity undergo the cultural conflicts. She beautifully picturizes the realistic representation of both the cultures through nostalgia. The characters retain their identity and start their new life. Memory guides them as a path to reach their final destinies. Badami focuses on both cultures as well but only exhibits through a tool of memory.

Her third novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* is well decorated by the memory as a narrative tool. The novel is about severe political, racial and cultural

conflicts which are displayed through the nostalgic memories. The fragmentation of the past helps the characters to generate the feelings towards their homeland and gives a note of hope to reenact their lives. Especially this novel speaks about the pain of trauma faced by the people in the impact of partition. Memory helps to recreate history where the people struggle to get back their identity. Badami weaves a memory to go with a flow of history in order to interconnect more stories.

Badami narrates the story of three women whose lives get affected by partition and other political turmoils. The novel has an epigraph from Agha Shahid Ali, “my memory keeps getting in the way of your history”. Badami connects memory and history which go in stream hand in hand interweaving the stories of the three women Sharanjeet Kaur, better known as Bibiji, Leela Bhat and Nimmo. The three characters are different from one another but each in search of a quiescent place to get over the political turmoil and cultural clashes.

Badami begins the novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* with a memory of Sharanjeet Kaur (Bibi-ji) who is a beautiful and charming face than her elder sister Kanwar Kaur. Badami narrates the story of Bibi-ji and her memories which starts flowing in the beginning of the novel itself:

Years before she stole her sister Kanwar’s fate and sailed across the world from India to Canada, before she became Bibi-ji, she was Sharanjeet Kaur. Her memories began from the time she was a six-year-old living in a village called Panjaur, a dot in that landscape of villages scattered across the fertile plains of West Punjab, alike in their annual yearning for the monsoon rains and a bountiful harvest.

(*CYHNC* 1)

She has stolen her sister's life and settled in Canada. Even her father Harjot Singh has a crushed dream. Native to Punjab, Harjot Singh had huge aspiration to move to Canada and considered it as into the place of his dreams.

The memory travels from Delhi to Vancouver, which connects the story of three women. The past runs instantaneously with the present which provides a betterment towards future. Bibi-ji's mother becomes a sole bread-winner of the family after Harjot Singh disappears to Canada. She is burdened with the responsibilities to bringing up her two daughters. Badami narrates that Bibi-ji recollects what she has done to her sister:

She had stolen the man meant for Kanwar, but time passed . . . letters from her absent husband to mark the passage of time . . . He seemed to be obsessed with his community, and underlined the richness of Punjabi traditions and culture . . . he would write that she should learn English ways, should become a modern woman so that she would settle into life in Canada. (*CYHNC* 32-33)

Bibi-ji is confused regarding in which languages she should write a letter back to her husband. She is determined to be a modern woman and learns both the languages; settled in Canada. Bibi-ji and Pa-ji have started their own restaurant called 'Delhi Junction'. This one place where the people of Canadian and Indo-Canadian, gather and talk, discuss and dispute their ideas in general.

She gets the feeling of guilt when she recollects her past memories as Badami writes, "Bibi-ji remembered guiltily how envious she had been the first time she had read this letter. Now Kanwar was swelling with another baby . . . while her belly, for all the nightly loving that she and Papa-ji indulged in, remained flat as the Gangetic plain" (*CYHNC* 43). The past memories affect her present life in spite of living in a

luxurious life in Canada. Her memories haunt her when she recollects how she has stolen her present life. She thinks guiltily that why she does not have a baby.

A bundle of memories stands bewildered and confused in Bibi-ji's present life but she is a good earner and business woman. Her desire is to live a prosperous life, Badami writes, "Opportunities lay around them like pearls on these streets. But they are visible only to people with sharp eyes . . . I am looking for pearls" (*CYHNC* 48). She adapts to Canada very well. She enjoys being settled in Canada and her memories rove from Delhi to Canada. Bibi-ji and Pa-ji welcome the new immigrants to Canada. When Bibi-ji asks him about many people in their house coming to stay, Pa-ji replies, "People helped me when I came here, and this is my way of paying back. We are strangers in this land and have nobody but our own community to turn to" (*CYHNC* 47). Immigrants find comfort with the people rather than living in isolation. But here Badami shows both the characters feel comfort with people as well as hostland.

The memories of Bibi-ji uncover the fact that she cannot get rid of her guilt towards Kanwar. Throughout the novel, memories of Bibi-ji cover half of the part. She recollects the memory of lavender smell, soaps, and perfumes when she reads a letter of Kanwar, Badami is narrated thus:

How much she had loved that smell once, she remembered. There had been a time, when she arrived in Canada, that her life had been lined with lavender. Inside their home – underlying the strong odours of garlic and turmeric, cumin and coriander – a sensitive nose could catch the determined drift of lavender. Dried lavender lay scattered in here underwear drawers and in her shoes. She was identified not by the sound of her foot-steps, but by the fragrance of lavender that preceded

her arrival and reminded like a memory after her departure. (*CYHNC* 54)

In the writings of diaspora, the scent of lavender mostly depicts the blend of memory and diasporic experiences across time and space. The representation of a fragrance is to examine the important aspects of Western thought, including the common background of culture, space and lifestyle.

Another part of the story continues with a difficult woman Leela Bhat, whose life is hanging in-between of cultural spaces. Her mother, Rosa Schweers is a German but father, Hari Shastri is an Indian. She spends her whole life by searching for an identity because of her half-and-half identity as everybody in her house call her. After she is married to Balachandra Bhat, she feels her status and identity changed but finds difficulty to forget the term 'half-and-half'. Badami brings to light the patriarchal violence through the narrative. Leela questions herself about her label 'half-and-half' as:

Was it her fault that her father, Hari Shastri, had strolled down the street in London on which Rosa Schweers had lived? . . . And, carried by that tide of affection, had married Rosa Schweers, A casteless German woman of no known family? Was it Leela's fault that she was the product of that union? (*CYHNC* 77-78)

She wants to throw these questions to her grandmother because she labels her as half-and-half. Her grandmother further adds, "Because she is also half-and-half there, that's why . . . Like the Anglo-Indians of Cox Town" (*CYHNC* 78). Leela's childhood life spends with the shame and hurt. When she is a little older, she reminds that her family stamped her as "Half-breed" (*CYHNC* 82) and half-and-half. Badami narrates when Akka questioning about Leela's identity, "Half-breed . . . Worse than

an untouchable. At least a toilet cleaner has a caste. But this girl, where does she belong? Tell me, somebody, *where?*” (CYHNC 82). She struggles to get her identity in the world where she faces rootlessness, generational rift, cultural clash and identity.

Badami uses a narrative technique in order to bring out the nostalgic longing for homeland. Particularly, Leela faces a challenge of diaspora and complication in diasporic community which is depicted through memory. In an alien land, she feels isolation which is a curse for the immigrants. After the death of her mother, the whole family shows their anger and hatred towards Leela. Venki later adopts her and gives her extreme care. Badami reflects Leela’s thinking of marriage and marrying a prosperous groom gives her status in the world which in turn is assumed to help her to come out of that marginalised status.

Badami highlights the fear of being marginalised again when her husband asks her to migrate to Canada along with their children. While she packs the things, she recollects the tradition and customs of Bhat family:

She loved his ancestors – purebred Hindu Brahmins, untainted either racially or in their religion – whose photographs hung in the solemn, garlanded rows on the wall, their glassy foreheads smeared with Kumkum and ash, their saintly eyes looking down at the serene, uneventful span of their offsprings’ lives. And she loved the living relatives, every single aunt, uncle, and second cousin, all bearing the stamp of unambiguous stolid perfection. (CYHNC 99)

Badami clearly portrays that characters’ quest for self makes them to know the difference between Indian culture and Canadian culture. Badami describes the plight of a character, Leela, who is caught in the dual identity; she gets a position as the daughter-in-law of the well-family of Kunjoor Bhat.

She does not want to migrate to Canada because she feels there is no sense of belongingness. She recollects the memories of her husband's home, "one day they were to leave, Leela wandered slowly around her house, touching every window and door in farewell" (CYHNC 99). Further Badami describes Leela's remembrance of her father-in-law, "She remembered him sitting here quietly day after day, reading books in English, Kannada, Sanskrit, working his way through his library" (CYHNC 100). Through the character Leela, Badami depicts this tug-of-war amidst tradition and modernity.

Memory not only functions as a medium to maintain the cultural traditions with the motherland, but also protecting their children to not get trapped into tradition and customs. Even Leela smells the fragrance of lavender and she describes thus, "She was *disappointed* that Vancouver was not something she could readily and immediately hate . . . It was different—a wonderful, clean smell of tree resins and new rain. Leela had to admit it, she *liked* the smell" (CYHNC 108). The smell of lavender symbolises the starting of new life which lure towards the new world.

Her memories force her to constantly compare the two different places Vancouver and Bangalore. Ironically, she feels both are the same. She recollects what she has seen in Vancouver is compared to her house in Bangalore, "The ordinariness of the scene, so like that in her own yard in Bangalore" (CYHNC 114). She struggles to reconcile her life in Vancouver but it troubles her. Leela cannot speak with Bibi-ji first, she is more aware of believing somebody in a new land. The questions arise in the minds of Leela about Bibi-ji and the people who discuss in Bibi-ji's restaurant The Delhi Junction café:

They seemed opaque, these strangers' homes, and she wondered if they would ever fall open and reveal to her lives, the thoughts, the feelings

that occurred inside them. Would she ever understand the people who inhabited them? What made them belong, and what made her a foreigner? How long would she remain foreign? Would she eventually become a woman of meaning here, a person who was a somebody, or would she remain without context, tied to the past that meant nothing to anyone except herself? A past, that would, if they lived here long enough, become irrelevant to her children? (*CYHNC* 129)

She is shocked about Bibi-ji that she adapts to western culture. Leela likes Vancouver but hesitates to adapt to it. She feels strange. But the fact is, Bibi-ji is leading a successful and wealthy life. On the other hand, Leela finds no contentment and happiness in her life because of the guilt that she stole her sister's life.

Bibi-ji and Leela become good friends. They share about the past and the present lives. Leela again feels rootless even though she permanently erases her identity labelled as half-and-half. Bibiji says to Leela, "A bad memory was *necessary* for a person wishing to settle in, to become one of the crowds, to become an invisible minority" (*CYHNC* 137). She further adds, "In this country we are all in the same boat" (*CYHNC* 137). This is the first lesson she learns from her friend Bibi-ji. Then Leela recollects a taxi driver who has given the address of Sharanjeet Kaur in case Leela finds her in Canada. Both are in shock about the truth that Sharanjeet Kaur is Bibi-ji and she is also an aunt of Nirmaljeet Kaur. Leela comes to know about her Niece Nirmaljeet Kaur and her husband, Satpal Singh who are living in India.

The third part is narrated about the story of Nirmaljeet Kaur, better known by her name Nimmo, who is a niece of her sister Kanwar's daughter. She orphaned by violence during partition. She is adopted by a Sikh family, educated and married to Satpal Singh. She recalls once her mother says about a nightbird:

It was the fabled nightbird, so sweet and unearthly was its singing. Nimmo had a vague memory of her mother telling her stories about this bird, whose song was a portent of ill-luck. Or was it death? She shook her head to remove the darkness and started to prepare the day's meals. (*CYHNC* 145)

Nimmo does not know the place of Bibi-ji, she sends postcards to her. Nimmo does not want to excavate the past. She has more dark memories which she does not want to think about it. At the same time, she is cherished with the memories of her mother.

The novel clarifies the comfort of Badami's in knitting the personal life with the nostalgic memories. Disappointed with life, she carries the wound in her heart throughout her life. She cannot come outside of those dark memories of her mother; father and two brothers face violent death in partition of India. The memories of her mother haunts her as:

This silence returned to haunt Nimmo again and again. Had she buried another memory under this one? Had her mother really come back to take her out of the bharoli? Or had she crawled out of it herself? If it indeed been her mother, where did she disappear to after she had washed herself and Nimmo? (*CYHNC* 156)

The traumatising effect of political violence on many is portrayed in a heart-wrenching manner. The pain that she has undergone is overwhelming which she finds unescapable. The memories begin flowing when she thinks there is no one, with no hope of enjoying life with family:

How could she explain to him what it was like to have your life pulled out from under your feet, to wake up one day and find you have no family or home in the land your people had tilled for a hundred years?

How could he understand the pain of not knowing whether these memories were in fact memories or only figments of her imagination?

(*CYHNC* 159)

She feels alone and isolated in her own land with only her heart full of memories for company. She does not even know whether Kanwar is her mother or not because she calls her as 'Amma'. The fragmented past continues flowing leaving her in a dilemma but she manages to overcome that.

Nimmo finds herself unsettled in memories of her childhood showing her mother being raped and then committing suicide. She perpetually gets lost in her childhood memories, "As much as she tried, Nimmo could not rid herself of the memory of a pair of feet dangling above a dusty floor, their clean oink soles smelling delicately of lavender soap" (*CYHNC* 159). Badami uses the fragrance of lavender to express a love, memory of the past, or losing someone. The smell of lavender retains multiple memories, which gives happiness and peace.

Nimmo likes Bibi-ji because she also a passionate admirer of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The traumatic experiences of Bibi-ji, Leela and Nimmo reveals in the historical incidents and the violence of the political turmoil. Nimmo shivers when she hears about the prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Emergency. She reflects, "She found it difficult to believe that the woman whom she so admired, and for whom she had voted in two elections, should impose such a thing as this Emergency without good reason. The country must be in danger" (*CYHNC* 269). The wounds that are caused by some historical events such as Partition of India, Komagata Maru, the storming of the Golden Temple under the order of Indira Gandhi, the destruction of the Golden Temple leads to assassination of Indira Gandhi by two Sikh bodyguards, later

bombing of Air-India Flight 182 which has taken the lives of 327 people. The Sikh people want their separation, so they start a movement Khalistan Movement.

The narrative of three women torn between two cultures create in-between spaces in a foreign land. Each character faces the experience of cultural trauma with the help of historical events and memories. The portrayal of three women makes the novel colorful and vibrant. Badami focuses on the cultural and political upheavals presenting memory as a beautiful engraved mirror which projects inescapable reality of life. The three characters struggle to build their own individuality but homelessness leads to identity crisis. Badami reveals that sense of belonging can sculpt one's identity.

In her three novels, Badami highlights the issues of identity crisis, sense of belonging, traumatic experiences and nostalgia due to cultural conflicts. She reveals the fact that people do not belong in their own culture, then they feel a sense of belonging to nowhere. Only memory helps to understand the insights of reality, and how one's culture is important. The theme of cultural conflicts between east and west as seen in the novels under study reveals that culture has a great influence on human lives.

Badami proves that literature is a powerful medium to express the sufferings of women. Badami gives a valuable message that 'The world itself a Maya' in *Tamarind Mem*, she comes to say that nothing in this world is permanent, it is illusion but not true. Badami uses the story telling technique in her novels. She uses the narrative technique which fluctuate through each character, mainly she prefers female protagonists. She has finally climbed the ladder of success by giving four extraordinary novels.

Badami uses the techniques in her novels such as stream of consciousness, historical events, political background, post-colonial impact. She uses the flash back technique to relive or reconstruct the past. She proves herself that she is versatile in many languages. Her narrative style is recognized with a magnificent use of words and phrases in different languages. The words like ‘Kanmani’, ‘Kishmish’, ‘Pallav’, ‘Lehenga’, ‘Pulkas’, ‘Besharam’, ‘Cobra mithai’, and the names like Ajji, Putti, Pujari. She enriches the words like ‘Rama-rama’, ‘baap-re-baap’, ‘boring old bak-bak’, and ‘ting-tong-bells’.

Badami powerfully captures the role of memory in human lives which help them to attain their desired life and destiny. Badami depicts the doubtful nature of the characters’ identity, not knowing where they really are and which culture to follow Indian or Canadian. The three novels clearly show that Badami’s works are choked with memories. Badami’s characters Saroja, Nirmala, Nandana, Bibi-ji, Leela and Nimmo face their cultural challenges strongly. A woman should fulfil her traditional roles as well as her dreams. Finally, Badami paves the way for modernity.

In her three novels, Badami portrays the struggle of characters between two cultures. Though mothers get trapped into a cultural expectations or conflicts, they do not allow their children to get trapped. She represents the cultural challenges that the characters are facing, which in turn is used to propel them towards their destination. She mentions elaborately about the quality of a particular culture, their own ways, lifestyles, their behaviours, beliefs, thoughts. She expresses the individuality of a character when they sense homelessness or rootlessness. Badami uses memory as a tool to express the feelings, emotion, thoughts. Badami decorates the characters with the memories of their happiest moments and helps them achieve self-realisation though the unhappy ones.

The three novels *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk*, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* clearly give a view of two cultures and how it reflects on the lives of the common people. It shows images of women and their characteristics revolving around three different generations with a vibrant perspective. The narratives of the characters give a warmth and newness which is vividly described about each and every part of the people in her novels. In the light of culture, they understand how important is to know about one's own culture. As an immigrant, making comprises in a new world is not a new thing as Badami has expressed. Exploration of memory is a major subject in this chapter. Through narratives of memory, the characters retain their identity and came to self-realisation.

Chapter - 3

Crossroads Between Tradition and Modernity

In the present literary escapades globally, immigration is the central preoccupation as far as the crux of the works are concerned. This echoes the reality of the global scenario. The concept of migration unpacks the intricacies of diaspora. It gives disparate meanings and words such as home, rootlessness, dislocation, homelessness, and a sense of belonging. In the diaspora discourse, immigrants face cultural challenges which have led to the hyphenated identities and involves multiple homes. The complexities of immigrants are clearly displayed in the writings of diaspora such as burden of the memory of homeland, experience of dual identity, desire for homeland and cultural differences. In *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/Longing*, Neera Singh mentions Avtar Brah's words:

I argue that the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a 'homeland'. This distinction is important, not least because not all diasporas sustain an ideology of 'return'. In examining the subtext of 'home' which the concept of diaspora embodies, I analyse the problematic of the 'indigene' subject position and its precarious relationship to 'nativist' discourses. (qtd. in Brah 24)

He distinguishes home from a desire, not all the immigrants are able to fulfill their dream of returning to their motherland. The immigrants belong to their homeland, who long to accomplish their desire and aspirations as individual in an amalgamation of the two cultures.

In recent years, migration and immigrant are becoming popular in diasporic writings. In particular, it brings to light about the complexities of immigrants' life by

highlighting the problems of exchanging two cultures. Diaspora focuses on the immigrants' life and their interaction with the homeland. Gabriel Sheffer defines modern diaspora as, "Modern Diasporas are ethnic groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their country of origin – their homelands" (3). Even surviving in an alien land enables the characters to understand the phenomenon of cross-cultural and transformation.

The problems such as creating their own identities, dislocation, expatriate experiences, a sense of alienation, culture of homeland vs culture of hostland arise when they confront the dilemmas of cross-cultural concern. The diaspora of the characters to an alien land gives a strange experience which carve out a space in order to build their own identity. The home brings out the distinctive characteristics of fondness, love, marriage, dream and desire towards their profession. It directly links to the themes of adaptation, issues in relationship, marriage, motherhood, parenting, negotiation of new territory, conflicts between tradition and modernity in cultural milieu which are often wrought with pain and alienation.

The merging of two cultures gives the problems of assimilation, acculturation, and dislocation. Due to cultural restrictions, people face challenging questions which are related to their homeland and identity. The immigrants undergo numerous sufferings in their life due to the collision of two cultures. They face mental and physical struggle in their life. The problem of acquainting with one culture leads to strangeness in other culture. In *Homi K. Bhabha*, David Huddart mentions the words of Salman Rushdie which is taken from his work *Imaginary Homelands*, "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures; at other times that we fall between two stools . . ." (48). Culture of one's homeland is the marker of identity.

India is a secular country where people give importance to culture, traditional values and customs. Every country has its unique customs and culture, same as India. Tradition is originated from the past and deep-rooted in culture. In diasporic writing, the writers strongly tend to represent India's heritage, its tradition and customs, moral values, caste, culture, and religious beliefs. Tradition provides a sense of belonging and reconnect the family together. It allows to showcase the belief that it carries one's identity. It also reinforces the values, customs and belief which is held by the ancestors. Tradition shapes one's identity and personality.

Tradition helps to create a sense of identity and purpose. Tradition serves as the self-image of society, individual and community. It is playing an important role in creating the self-image of a person and of a culture. Pertti J. Anttonen writes about Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin discourse about Tradition, which is intimate with the past. They discuss, "To do something because it is traditional is already to reinterpret, and hence to change it" (35). Tradition is sculpted by the past which is undividable from the interpretation of tradition in the present. Tradition is followed by the ancestors and it is modified and changed from one generation to another.

Tradition is used in a broad way. According to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, tradition means "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (1). The traditional things are precious and emotional to the Indian people. The great attainment of life is bound by the tradition and social aspects. Friedrich Nietzsche mentions in *Human, All Too Human* about tradition, "Every tradition now continually grows more venerable the farther away its origin lies and the more this origin is forgotten; the respect paid to it increases from generation to

generation, the tradition at last becomes holy and evokes awe and reverence” (51-52). People have their own traditional way of living and pass it from one generation to another.

The concept of tradition specifically represents the lives of immigrant women. The tradition is strongly influenced by patriarchal system and conventional values, which devalue women and confine them in the familial roles. In diasporic fiction, the women characters tend to retain their identity by breaking the tradition and customs in a rule-bound world. Due to cultural restrictions, the immigrants face multiplicity in a new land. As Rajendra Chetty and Pier Paola Piciucco comment:

New territorialized identities resulting from a cultural mixture therefore strongly challenge monogamous love for a single country and it should hardly surprise us then that contemporary Indian diaspora writers engage ethnic, cultural and political conflicts that are re-shaping previous constructions of the West, as well as of the East. (7)

Many writers reshape their experience of migration through their writings. The writers bring out the problematics of cultural assimilation faced by the immigrants. They also explore the interplay between tradition and modernity. An individual is caught in emotional twists and turns between conflicts of family relationships, traditions and culture.

Modernity is a key concept which helps to understand the self-identity and social metamorphosis. It helps people to come out of their traditional roles and become an independent. People embrace it only when they forsake their traditional cultures. Tradition is derived from the past but modernity is the characteristic of being in the present. Anthony Giddens comments on the features of modernity, “A feature of modernity is that distant events and actions have a constant effect on our lives, and

a constantly increasing one too. That is what I mean by disembedding, the ‘lifting out’ of forms of life, their recombination across time and space” (98). Modernity lifts the people up by making them to realise what is the purpose and status of their life.

Modern writers depict ongoing reality by exploring the human experience. Due to cultural change, an immigrant confines in conflictual situation which make them isolated in a new land. Modernity is a keynote for a better future, especially to women. It unveils the complexities of the position of women concerning to traditional roles. The writers show about the traditional interpretations of women’s role and their position in patriarchal society. The theme of tradition and modernity has been an ever-present theme in diasporic fictions.

Caught between tradition and modernity, the immigrants find inability to extricate themselves from a traumatic situation. In most of the diasporic writings, writers represent modernity as the vehicle of identity. The writers define the clashes between tradition and modernity and also, they render a solution to make harmony between the two. The way people live, experience, and think are built by cultural and social practices. Traditional way of living represents one’s nationhood and heritage. Modernity shapes society and identity by recreating tradition or questioning the tradition. Tradition and modernity are tied to a nation, culture, and identity. Tradition and Modernity is not be viewed as opposing poles of cultural realm. Rather, they are the unifying warp and weft that are weaved together into the beautiful kaleidoscopic carpet that is called culture.

The tension of migrant living is represented in all diasporic writing; but mainly it shows a tinge of women’s experiences of migration. The women endure a lot of hardships and sufferings for their home and for their family relationships. They tolerate their sufferings in dissimilar way simply to fulfill their aspirations and status

in patriarchal world. Sheila Rowbotham says about women's feeling of in-betweenness:

Then sometimes we were sunk into ourselves. But always we are split in two, straddling silence, not sure where we would begin to find ourselves or one another . . . came the experience of one part of ourselves as strange, foreign and cut off from the other which we encountered as tongue-tied paralysis about our own identity. We were never altogether in one place, we were always in transit, immigrants into an alien territory. (31)

Much of the work uses tradition and modernity as a tool to display the immigrants' struggle between two cultures.

In present times, as modernisation proceeds, traditional systems and structures are giving way to modern ones. Immigrants try to fulfill their two conflicting roles, one as traditional and other as modern. The diasporic fiction depicts the daily life of immigrants with the true replication of cultural confrontation. It affects their life in various dimensions which clasp the social, domestic, psychological and political realms. It is crystal clear that social restraints are more in Indian culture but not in Western ethos. Due to cultural conflicts, the immigrants are confined between the Eastern and the Western culture.

The changing process of cultural pattern is reflected through the writings of diaspora. It mainly affects the life of the women immigrants. It also portrays the challenges faced by women immigrants in their decision either they live their life by making their own choice or a forced immigrant life. They try to escape from the forced marriage, traditional roles and customs. They want to fulfill their aspirations

instead of fulfilling the dreams of others. The conflicts between two cultures create the internal and external problems.

Many writers are concerned with the concept of tradition and modernity, identity crisis, cultural conflicts and bring out these themes in the diasporic writings. The writers like V.S. Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharathi Mukherjee, M.G. Vassanji, Rama Mehta, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are concentrate their works around the complications of immigrants' relation to tradition and modernity. The diasporic writers project an emotional life and individual relationship of an immigrant in most of their writings.

The writers have showed the changing attitudes of the characters when they experience the migration and confront the cultural conflicts. The writers of Indian origin in Canada renovate their experience of migration in their literary works. The writers show the flexibility of migration and relocation in an alien country where immigrants maintain religious, cultural, traditional connection with a homeland. They concentrate on the themes of forced migration, relocation and settlement in a new country, cultural memory, and tradition vs modernity.

The writers bring out the true representation of the two cultures parallely with the help of two twin notions of tradition and modernity. It involves the characters to face the challenges when they dwell on the conduct of culture in domestic, political and psychological spheres. Many writers prove their enormous work as a novelist by encircling their keen eyes on the Eastern and Western cultures and their remarkable influence on human life. Modernity is more liberal and broad-minded in its point of view whereas tradition is a conservative which infers customs, morals, and standard values.

Pertti J. Anttonen mentions the views of Stuart Hall, David Held and Gregor McLennan on Modernity, “is that distinct and unique form of social life which characterizes modern societies” (28). In the book *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said critically analyses the Western culture with the Eastern culture. He has highly acclaimed the attitude of the western culture towards the East. The conflict of tradition and modernity create a state of perplexity which alienate them from the host land and the host people. Modernity does not inevitably lessen tradition but it turns into an aspiration and transformation. Stuart Hall lays down the views on culture:

Our questions about culture . . . were concerned with the changing ways of life societies and groups and the networks of meaning that individuals and groups use to make sense of and to communicate with one another what Raymond Williams once called whole ways of communicating, which are always whole ways of life; the dirty cross roads where popular culture intersects with the high arts; the place where power cuts across knowledge, or where culture progresses anticipate social change. (10)

The individual in traditional society either gets trapped in traditional roles or tries to break barriers. Identity defines one’s individuality which is recognised for the originality of the indigenous soil. The theme of tradition and modernity presents as an encounter in the form of a clash between the human values of India and an independent life in Canada. The writers handle both tradition and modernity with a sense of balance by showing its two perceptions and background. The changing ethos of womanhood is also of dominant interest in the exploration of tradition and modernity.

Anita Rau Badami exposes the oppression of women, the divide between man and woman, their quest for individual identity and social independence in her writings. She is concerned with women's purposeless life and gives a voice to them through her fictional characters. She portrays that there are women who are open-minded, courageous, independent, and boldly fight for their rights and individuality. She exposes that women also have their own dreams and passion in their life. But it is crushed by the social norms, traditional life or by patriarchal society.

Badami has keenly observed the Indian values, customs, culture and tradition. She perceives the vastness and profundity in the conventional life of Indians, especially women. She depicts how woman rebels from her husband to become an independent human being. The female characters who are profoundly entrenched in the Indian culture and family, struggle to be free. Badami exhibits her female characters revolt against all the conventional rules and values of traditional Indian society. She brings out her characters as they fail to restore their identity in traditional Hindu society and modern society. She struggles to bridge the gap between two cultures of the East and the West.

The novel *Tamarind Mem* represents the Indian traditional values and qualities of patience, tolerance, acceptance, love and perishes of despair and disappointment. These qualities reveal that the characters find a sense of being trapped in a different atmosphere. Badami interprets the invasion by the modern western values on the traditional beliefs throughout the novel. She renews the old established relationships within a family with the help of the modern thoughts. She has presented the story of two characters, one is tamarind mem, Saroja, who is searching for individual freedom in her life, the other is tolerant and perspicacious Kamini, who is living an independent life but longing for her mother's love.

The need for individuality and freedom is the predominant theme of Badami's works. The character Kamini's story is a tool to uplift the story of Saroja. Saroja and Kamini have two different perspectives of their life. Kamini lives an independent way of life whereas Saroja lives a perplexed life. The voice of Saroja dominates the novel. She possesses a gift of sour tongue in order to defend herself in patriarchal society. Saroja, as a young girl was compelled by her mother to eat bitter gourd so as to make her sharp tongue blunt. The first part of the novel is about Kamini, the second part is of Saroja. Saroja explains how she is confined in the wall of restrictions, "My childhood is drawn within the walls of that house, the protective circle of my parents form about me, the road taking me to school or to the market" (*TM* 157). Badami shows Saroja's dissatisfaction towards her life.

Saroja desires to do medicine. But it is prohibited from her parents and she is forced to marry. She is confined into marriage and traditional roles. Her mother says, "A woman can read and study all she pleases, her words mean nothing after all. So why you are wasting your youth and our money? Get married . . . A woman without a husband is like sand without the river. No man to protect you and every evil wind will blow over your body" (*TM* 158). She argues with her parents to fulfill her dreams. Her mother frequently says her to blunt her sour tongue. Her mother says, "With a tongue like a knife, you aren't fit to be a doctor" (*TM* 158). Marriage is one of the important factors that comes under the list of traditions and customs.

Badami displays how Indian people see marriage as highly important in woman's life. Saroja's mother says, "A woman's happiness lies in marriage" (*TM* 159). She further adds, "Marriage is a crop that will last a thousand years" (*TM* 162). Saroja questions her mother asking her whether she is happy in her marriage life. Her mother remains silent to Saroja's question. Saroja thinks within herself that, "If she is

unhappy why does she push me, her daughter, into the same jungle of sorrow? Why can't she allow me a chance to create my own shade instead of sheltering under somebody else's? (*TM* 162). She wants to create her own room.

Badami picturises Saroja as a woman who tries to break out from the traditional prison to the modern world. Later, loneliness, frustration, disappointment and loss of individuality break her psychologically. Due to her parents' compulsion, she got married to a man much older than her. Her husband Vishwa Moorthy, a railway engineer is fifteen years older than Saroja. He is a pipe-smoking, pessimistic and unromantic who cannot fulfill Saroja's romantic dreams. Her mother says, "Don't forget, you are a woman now, with a life of your own, and you will have to clean up the messes you create. I will not, and neither will your father" (*TM* 177). All of a sudden, marriage becomes a burden to her.

The novel *Tamarind Mem* highlights the struggle of the Indian women who struggle for survival while being caught between tradition and modernity. Badami mirrors the status of the women in India through the character Saroja. She has a new role to follow after her marriage. A frustrated Saroja feels trapped in traditional role as a typical Indian wife and mother who must always look into her family's needs. Her job is to take care her husband, children and her family. She is an archetype of a stereotype woman always cleaning, keeping the home clean, taking care of husband, and raising children. Later this is exposed as the reason why she turns out to have a sour tongue. She expresses her anguish after getting married to her old husband:

I am married to a man who has no feelings to spare for a wife. A dried-out lemon peel whose energies have already been squeezed out caring for a sick mother, worrying about his sisters, inheriting his dead father's duties. It ate up his youth. With my tamarind tongue, never yielding a

moment, I use my grandmother's strategy of words to ward off the pain of rejection. His aloof, merciless cool, my defensive anger. I will not beg for the affection that is due to me, his wife. Why, even a cat demands a caress, a gentle word. Deprive it of attention and it will wander to another home. (*TM* 216)

Saroja recollects her smashed dreams and desire because of her parent's restriction. Even though she gets only disappointment and dissatisfaction in her marriage life, she fulfills her duties as a typical Indian woman. In early times, in Indian society, women have so many restrictions, if she crosses any one of it, they label her as a witch or blue stocking with an itch for scribbling. As Saroja's mother says, "Decent girls don't go to the movies alone or with boys. Decent girls spend their time at home learning to cook" (*TM* 218). They lose themselves in the traditional life, rules and customs.

Badami expresses Saroja's saga of survival while negotiating the paths intertwined between Eastern and Western culture. Even though she inherits Eastern culture her status quo urges her to be a role of modernity because she is married to a railway officer who sticks on to the Western culture. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir exemplifies the condition of women in a family:

Housework, women's way of appropriating their empire, is however, a never-ending losing battle against dirt. Day after day, over and over, they wash dishes, dust furniture and mend cloths that tomorrow will be dirty, dusty and torn again. Housewives never have the sense that they have achieved a positive Good, but that they are engaged in a constant struggle against Evil. In their war against dust, stains, mud, dirt they are fighting sin, wrestling with Satan. (93)

Saroja uses her sharp tongue to express her frustration and vengeance upon her thwarted life. Saroja confronts the struggle between two cultures. This experience has made Saroja to protect her daughters not to get trapped in the traditional life.

In the present society, lives of women are confined to the social discrimination, colours, caste and many others. At the time of Roopa's birth, Roopa's grandmother insults Roopa by her colour, "No one in our family is as black as this child. Must be from your husband's side . . . She looks like a sweeper-caste child" (*TM* 6). Badami focuses on the social discrimination which is connected with the colour of black. They choose the name with the colour of black, "Meghna, that's what we will name her," suggested Aiji. "She is like a dark, rain-filled cloud" (*TM* 6). Saroja names her daughter as Roopa. Her two daughters, Kamini and Roopa, represent Sun and its Shadow. It shows the indirect meaning namely bright and dark but Saroja names her two daughters precisely as wealth and beauty.

In traditional society, gender differences and inequality are still viewed in many countries. Through the characters of Badami, social bias is exposed clearly. In Indian society, the people treat daughter more onerous than son. Male chauvinistic Rayaru, wife of Aiji, is a good example of bias in gender. He has stated a list of expenses when Saroja was born, "Maturity hospital-Rs 50.00; ayah-Rs 1.00; sweets-Rs 2.25; jamedaar-Rs 1.50 . . . The list went on: a pink Canjeevaram sari and a gold necklace, which cost him 200 rupees, for Aiji. If she had borne him a son, it would have been a diamond pendant" (*TM* 12 - 13). In Eastern ethos, they prefer only a boy baby than a girl.

People accept the cultural ideas and religious followings thoughtlessly. Badami brings the concepts of social customs such as caste system and religious differences, superstitious beliefs to the light. As a Brahmin family, they believe in

their traditional ideas and do not mingle with any other caste. Saroja's family expect a groom in their own caste. Another character is Chinna, a widower, who faces many restrictions in the society. Her husband died when he was ten years old. If wife dies, then society encourages a man to marry a second woman in Eastern culture. But in Western culture, everyone is equal and are mostly treated uniformly without any distinctions.

At the same time, Saroja finds no way to escape from her traditional roles and disappointed life. Badami classifies her as a strong character through her perceptive of life and her sharp words. No one escapes from the sarcastic words from a sour tongue of Saroja. Saroja feels as she stays in a state of in-betweenness neither to follow the East nor the West. She struggles to break traditional rules and morals in order to attain a peace of mind.

Saroja has an affair with the mechanic, Paul da Costa that offers her a sense of liberation to come out of a dispassionate marriage. She chooses to follow her mother's life not because of the love towards her husband but she adores her daughters. Sometimes, she compares her life with the life of her elders in a family, her mother, her grandmother Ajji. She learns the responsibilities and duties from her mother. From her grandmother she receives her sharp tongue and wish to make her own individuality. Even though she is infatuated towards Paul da Costa, she is not willing to accept him because she does not want to destroy her daughter's life. Badami brings out the views on her life in the Eastern way but most of her thoughts are expressed in the Western way.

In *Tamarind Mem*, Badami manifests the truth that culture and traditional things mirrors the quality of characters, inheritance of modesty, gentleness, respect and adoration which helps them to stand out in their life. Many people think that

marriage gives freedom to a woman but Saroja understands that is not freedom. It is rather moving from one cage to another. With unflinching pertinacity, Saroja never lets this circumstance happen to her daughters. She reminds her mother's words, "I didn't want you children to grow up with shame" (*TM* 215). Similar to her mother, she says when she becomes a mother, "My girls know how to pick their fruit" (*TM* 148). When Roopa elopes with a foreigner, her relatives raise a question about his caste and culture:

Who is this unknown fellow? Is he our caste? Are his parents good people? Does anybody in this city know them? Saroja, Saroja, You should have locked up this daughter of your's! Is she pregnant? Why this sudden marriage, no time to call anybody! What about the older one? How can Roopa get married when Kamini is still not hooked, hanh? Saroja You are stupid (*TM* 148).

No one understand the pains of Saroja. She understands her daughters' pain and allow them to make their own decision. Due to the cultural conflicts, the generational rifts occur. Badami clearly displays the generational rifts through the differences of marriage, social customs of the East and the West.

Badami distinguishes the Eastern and the Western culture clearly. The Eastern culture follows the traditional rules, customs and patriarchal rule but the Western culture never minds traditional life but simply allows people to spread their wings widely. Badami represents that women are restricted by their family or traditional rules of the society and as a result their dreams and desires remain largely unfulfilled. Badami portrays her fictional character Saroja as an example to build her own identity and use a sharp tongue to defend. Due to her husband's job, Saroja keeps on moving from one place to another with her children. She expresses a genuine feeling,

“Nothing is steady after my marriage. I have no friends to talk to without feelings that I am revealing my inadequacies as a wife. Friendship is like a tree. It needs time to mature, and we stay in one place long enough for that! And my husband is a gypsy who I see for a short while every month” (*TM* 236). For a woman, after her marriage, she believes that her husband is everything. The Eastern culture gives importance to a woman only if she has a husband but the Western culture values the priority of an individual.

Saroja too expects to spend time with her husband but it leads to disappointment. Because of his job, he is sent off to various places. She imagines life as surviving in a jail. She realises that she is locked in a traditional life which crushes her. Her life is shifting from the various places like Ratnapur, Lucknow and Calcutta. Saroja’s mother is not happy in her life but she knows how to balance her mind culturally and manage her life. Her mother bravely says, “It is a lottery ticket I picked and I could do nothing about it. Marriage is a game of give and take, sometimes one has to give a little more than the other and so the balance is maintained” (*TM* 243). Saroja thinks that marriage life is merely a sacrificial life.

Badami presents the real-life situations and inequality in an Indian society. She has a good eye on traditional life and culture of Indian society. Inequality is the common issue in diasporic literature. It still exists in the traditional society especially in Indian culture. De Beauvoir says, “Marriage subjugates and enslaves women and it leads her to aimless days, indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without questioning its purpose” (*TM* 500). Most of the lives of Indian women are similar to the life of Saroja. The novel reflects the restrictions and limitations faced by a woman in the Eastern culture.

The problem Kamini and Saroja find in their different choices and perception also affects their emotional bond. Saroja laments, “I waste my youth showering love and affection on these children and what do I get in return. Nothing!” (TM 151). In patriarchal society, men expect that women should only take a parental responsibility and familial role. K.R. Sujatha and S. Gokilavani in their book *Feminine Aesthetics of Indian Women Writers* present the idea that “The nature of motherhood is dependent on the cultures and societies that have molded them. Indian motherhood is inculcated in the woman from the day of her birth. She is raised to look forward to nothing else and she rates her worth by her efficiency to fulfill this role” (147). Saroja also gets imprisoned in a cultural phenomenon and appropriately sculpts her mind.

Saroja is satisfied with her daughters’ life. Being a modern mother, she protects her daughter from a rule-bound world. She tries to escape from her traditional imprisonment to seize the modern unconventional world. Badami portrays Saroja as a traditional Hindu wife. She is a modern woman but she wishes to die as a *sumangali*. After her husband dies, her life turns out to be an independent way. At the same time, Kamini likes to do her Doctorate in Chemical Engineering in Calgary University in Canada. She opposes her because there is no protection for a girl abroad. She expresses:

My daughter wants to go to some place near the North Pole. I ask you, what is wrong with her life here? Do I ever stop her from doing anything? No. Did I say a word when she refused to look at that bone doctor from England? He wanted to marry her right away, no fancy engagements, and all that. Right away. Such a good boy. In addition, my other daughter, married to meat-eater. Oh my heart breaks. All this

I have tolerated. I have been a modern-times mother and these girls have taken advantage of me. (*TM* 150)

She slowly tries to get out from the parental role and duties. She never dissuades her daughters from their decisions. She expresses her sadness when Kamini departs to Canada, “Can’t you think of anything else to say? Or you don’t want me to talk? All right, not another word for me! Once you are gone, who will I have to talk to, anyway? Better get used to silence now itself” (*TM* 152). As a mother, she does not want to detach herself from her daughter.

After Dadda’s death, Saroja enjoys the sight of different places that her husband once restricted to take her. She wants to live a life of her own. She teaches her daughter to make their own choices. She completes her duties and roles as an Eastern woman such as a daughter, a wife and a mother. Now she is ready to look into her life and make some changes. She is ready to make her own colours in life without others restricting her choices. Her strategies toward her daughters is completely different:

They are grown women now, with worlds of their own, and decisions they alone can make. Do I interfere in their lives? Ask Roopa why she ran away like a thief to get married to a perfectly acceptable man? . . . Do I ask Kamini why she never marries, why she had to go to Canada to study . . . No, I leave them alone, but they cling to me like leeches, sucking up my energy with their constant nagging. (*TM* 262)

Badami depicts Saroja as a traditional Hindu woman who struggles to escape from a rule-bound world. She finds it a mystery when she comes out of her home. She tells it to her train passenger, “Walking away is hard” for her and also, she further adds, “It is easier to grit your teeth and stay” (*TM* 208). Her train friend protests Saroja, “Going

away is the easiest thing in the world. It is like dying. So simple it is to die. Living is hard, to make this small amount of time loaned to you by the gods worthwhile is hard. The real test is life itself, whether you are strong enough to stay and fight” (*TM* 208). She fails in the test because she is not ready to destroy others’ life to get her life satisfied.

On the other hand, she frets about her daughters’ life as a traditional mother. At the same time, she enjoys the travel without any restrictions. She says, “But . . . but . . . there I go wandering off into new stories without finishing the old” (*TM* 260). Her experience makes her broad-minded and think like a modern mother. She also says about her memories, “My memories are private realms, rooms that I wander into, sometimes sharply focused, sometimes puffy and undefined” (*TM* 263). Her extreme tolerance gives her strength to succeed in life. She advises to Kamini:

But these are my memories, I want to remind Kamini. Why should you worry about them? Why do you allow my history to affect yours? Why should it matter to you if your father made me happy or an Anglo mechanic? They are dead and gone. Yesyes, our stories touch and twine, but they are threads of different hues. Mine is almost at an end, but yours is still unwinding. (*TM* 263)

Badami cleverly builds a character Saroja, who faces many challenges culturally to get her own individuality. She travels to various places in search of her identity. She experiences much pain and hardships that make her to feel as crushed between tradition and modernity. Badami reveals that Saroja feels a sort of insecurity when she has undergone a traumatic experience in life. Due to the collapse of two culture, the characters are caught between two sustaining values of tradition and modernity. Badami exposes that the two characters, Saroja and Kamini struggle to build their

individuality. The constant search of identity is the common theme in Badami's literary works.

Badami in her second novel *The Hero's Walk* depicts the traditional life of an orthodox Brahmin family. A close examination of this novel is under the tradition and modernity. The orthodox Brahmin woman, Ammayya, a mother of Sripathi Rao, pride about her caste. She despises Munnuswami, a low caste neighbour, holding most of the property in the Brahmin Street, "This is no longer Brahmin street, cow-shit street would be a better name for it," she said bitterly, "If only we had known that the rouge was saving our money to drive us out of here, we would drunk water instead of milk. Much safer for all of us it would have been!" (*THW* 20). Except Ammayya, everyone in her family has a good bond with Munnuswami's family. Similarly, Ammayya of *The Hero's Walk* believes in traditional beliefs and customs which cannot allow her to adopt a modern way of life. Ammayya says, "Modern life is an unstable, hi-tech world swirling like a magical pool just beyond her reach and she thought wistfully that she might like to dip her fingers in it" (*THW* 82). She keeps an upper-class status and thinks it as a dignity to live in the society.

Badami portrays her as a sceptical woman. Ammayya is not ready to abandon her Brahmin way of life. Ammayya's view of society is small and it pushes her to an alienated life. She argues with Sripathi, "She told Sripathi gleefully, about Maya's betrayal. "Serves Sripathi right," she remarked. He spoilt her. That's what comes of giving your children too much freedom. Look at our Putti, what a nice child she is. My darling will always look after me, I know that" (*THW* 84). One of the rules is that children should obey their traditional rules and they are never allowed independence.

When her daughter Putti likes Gopala, a low caste neighbour, Ammayya considers it as a dishonour to their family. She demeans as, "Insolence! Low-class

crooks. Taking our homes and our daughters and all . . . Beat up my grandson and steal my daughter. Think that will make you any better than you are? Only fit for collecting dung!” (THW 332). She further curses Putti, “Putti, if you marry this loafer you will be dead for me forever. My curses will be on your head. A mother’s curse is the blackest of them all. Your children will be born deformed. They, too, will abandon you. And that evil fellow will beat you every single day!” (THW 332-333). Badami has focused on the caste system and cultural practices in the homeland land.

Sripathi Rao, son of Ammayya is like his mother. He narrates most of the novel, *The Hero’s Walk*. He is a copywriter, hard worker who “did not believe in ostentatious displays – of possessions or of emotions” (THW 3). At the age of sixteen he has taken a decision that he will not be like his father. His father is a true patriarch. He has humiliated his family by having a public affair with another woman. He respects his mother Ammayya and he wants to be dutiful to her. He writes letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines unknown to his family, “It was the perfect way to vent his spleen and express his deepest thoughts – those blatant, embarrassing emotions that he was so reluctant to display in speech or action. He could write about anything under the sky and occasionally his views found their way into print” (THW 8). He writes a letter under his pseudonym, “He was particularly pleased with his pseudonym . . . Pro Bono Publico. On behalf of the people. Like his boyhood heroes—the Scarlet Pimpernel, Zorro, Jhanda Singh the Invisible—he was a crusader, but one who tried to address the problems of the world with pen and ink instead of sword and gun and fist” (THW 8-9). He has no courage to expose his real name.

Badami brings out the themes of home, individuality, tradition and modernity. Sripathi Rao’s family is an orthodox Brahmin family, so they follow their tradition and customs. As a traditional Hindu family, they just believe astrology and

superstitious belief. Ammayya's traditional thoughts never permit her to concede into the realm of modernity. Ammayya's son Sripathi Rao, her daughter Putti, her daughter-in-law Nirmala bump into the change because they realise the inevitability of modern world. Ammayya becomes a suspicious woman due to her conventional thoughts. She believes no one but she takes care of her daughter Putti very well.

Nirmala is the wife of Sripathi Rao and a mother of two, Maya and Arun. Badami describes her as a typical wife but she understands the necessity of modern world after her daughter Maya's death. She is a fifty-two years old traditional woman and looks younger than Sripathi. She has a soft and sweet-tempered face. Sripathi remembers that she had used vermilion on her forehead but she uses only round and red sticker bindi. Badami describes:

“. . . would apply a dot of Boroline cream to the center of her forehead. Then, just as carefully, she would dip the same finger into a small silver pot of vermilion and press it against the creamy circle. But a few years ago she, too, had yielded to modernity and abandoned her ritual of cream and red powder for the packs of felt stickers that came in a huge variety of shapes, sizes and colours. Ever since, Sripathi had had a running argument with her about the bindis that she left stuck to the bathroom mirror like chicken-pox marks on the glass. (*THW* 10-11)

Nirmala understands her own way of life and creates her individuality. The constant search of identity is the major theme in the novel. It is expressed through the characters' struggle to attain their status and identity.

Badami highlights the struggle to fill one's freedom to do their own choices. Sripathi is opposed Maya's marriage with a foreigner and not ready to take her daughter's decision happily. It is evidently shown that Sripathi fails to mould his

daughter's individuality. Maya likes to pursue her higher studies in Canada. When Maya's relatives ask Sripathi to look for a groom, Sripathi replies there is no need to rush up the things. She says, "Let her study, she has a good brain. She might even go in for medicine, who knows? Our Maya is smart, she can take care of herself" (*THW* 98). As a traditional wife, Nirmala compels Sripathi Rao to look for a groom. She argues, "I only said we should start looking. Maya may be smart, but it is difficult for a girl to survive on her own. Even if she is a big scholar, she needs somebody by her side. We will not be around forever you know" (*THW* 99). In Eastern culture, people think that women cannot do anything by their own without the help of men.

Badami discloses the state of women in traditional world. They are not permitted to grow as individual being. They are imprisoned in the traditional rules, roles and customs because several restrictions are dumped on them. Maya goes to Canada with many restrictions. She has found her job and her husband Alan has got admission to do his Ph.D. in Vancouver. She writes a letter to Sripathi Rao regarding her love towards Alan:

I don't know how else to say this, so let me be direct. I want to cancel my engagement to Prakash. I am in love with Alan Baker, whom I have known for two years. We want to get married and with your blessings we hope that will be to celebrate the weddings in Toturpuram this summer, after my studies are over. I know this will come as a shock to you, but I hope that you will understand . . . I miss you all and am anxious to hear from you, so that we can make plans to come home and get married. (*THW* 108-109)

Maya is a modern woman who has mustered up her courage to express what she desires. Sripathi shows his anger after reading Maya's letter, "don't show your face in

this house again. *Never*” (THW 113). Maya has been brought up in an Orthodox Brahmin family but she never gets trapped in a traditional life. Sripathi Rao and Ammayya hate Maya because she has married Alan Baker, a foreigner who is a Christian. Alan is the cause behind the collapse of marriage with Prakash.

Destiny brings the family back together. The novel shows the emotions and feelings of each character even though they separate in different places. The novel, *The Hero's Walk* gives a view about diaspora and the struggle of immigrants. Here, both Maya and Nandana face many challenges to come back to their homeland due to the conflicts between two cultures. The clash between tradition and modernity is well displayed in the novel through her characters. The gap between tradition and modernity is well said by J. C. Heesterman in *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*:

We are prone to overstress the stability of traditional societies and the upheaval caused by modernization. On the other hand we are apt to play down the capacity of tradition for initiating change and accommodation to modern circumstances . . . The initial impetus towards modernity in India came from the west but being modern is not the same thing as being westernized. Indeed the modern west and not be the model of social change people need to distinguish between modernity and more trendiness. The freedom of a woman to choose her own life partner or life goals is a modern value. (15)

Same as Maya has no freedom to choose her own life. Badami expands one's familiar outlook of life in a different perspective. She brings the idea that immigrants not only cross the different cultures and countries but also walk between the divide of self and others.

Sripathi guiltily thinks about Maya and Alan's death. They both have died in a car accident. Their daughter, Nandana, an eight-year-old girl, is crushed between two cultures. Badami's idea of cultural confrontation is highlighted in her novels. Her understanding of people and experience of her life between two cultures is clearly reflected in the novels. The life of Nandana who is a Canadian born child changes after her parents' death. Through the character Nandana, Sripathi recollects Maya's past life. Even though Maya is dead, Nandana reminds the family that she is alive. Nandana meets the cultural clashes in a strange land (India). The cultural collision continues in diaspora and conveys a sense of intricacy in human life.

The death of Maya creates a storm in Sripathi's life. He feels guilt when he looks at Nandana. He becomes the guardian of Nandana. He goes to Vancouver to bring Nandana to India. As a traditional man, he is not ready to accept her daughter Maya to marry a Christian. But the fate is, Maya's death makes him to realise that even a woman has a dream and desire. Badami shows that understanding is the best method to live a happy life and also to build a peaceful surrounding. Sripathi Rao thinks:

He realized he had not known his daughter's inner life, the secret world of dreams and fears, the complexes and affections that follow children through their youth, eventually hardening into death weights? How had she grown up in the same house for twenty years, right under his nose? She had turned from a beloved child – who held his little finger while crossing the road, who wept with worry if he did not come home at exactly six in the evening – into a person he did not know.

(*THW* 148)

In Eastern culture, the elders expect their children to follow the tradition and customs. They have grown up within their traditional background of Brahmin system. They fail to understand their children's dreams and desire.

In Indian culture, they give importance to rituals, customs and traditions. Badami shows that rituals are the most important custom in the Eastern culture. When Sripathi returns to India with Nandana, Nirmala asks about post-death ritual of Maya. In India, people believe that the post-death ritual helps the deceased to get serenity and their soul attain peace. Nirmala asks to Sripathi that he has done rituals properly or not. She asks:

Did they close her eyes with coins? And put one in her mouth as well?
 . . . And who washed her body? Did they wash her hair as well? It is
 not auspicious otherwise . . . My poor child has gone like a beggar,
 without any proper rituals, and you say it doesn't matter? Her soul will
 float like Trishanku between worlds . . . Now, if she had died *before*
 her husband, it would have been better for her. She would have gone to
 Yama-rajā as a sumangali in her bridal finery with her wedding beads
 around her neck and kum-kum on her forehead. (THW 173)

The novel exhibits the superstitious beliefs and Indian myths in traditional realm of India. After he returns from Vancouver, he turns out to be a man of superstitious. His superstitions are narrated as, "There were other superstitious too – three cows were a portent of death, a coconut with four eyes meant a fatal illness, black cats and lumps of vermilion-stained mud were all ill omens. He snapped at Putti for asking him where he was going one morning. "Bad luck to ask such questions," he said" (THW 161).

The life of children is pitiable in leading the conventional life. After Nandana's arrival, Nirmala gradually moves towards the modern world and learns to fly in her own wings. She never wants to be traditional woman who obeys all the rules passively. She transforms herself into a rebel for her existence in a rule bound world. Like Saroja, Nirmala is the epitome of an ideal woman who is fulfilling an expectation of the society as a role of a wife, a daughter-in-law, and a mother. Nirmala postulates a better future for Nandana. Nandana unites with the family which shows she has adapted to them and the new land, India.

Nandana initially finds it difficult to mingle with the family. She roams like an illusion around her house in India. Badami depicts the immigrant experience through the character, Nandana. After her arrival at Madras airport, she feels the strange things in India. She sees an entirely different scenario in India:

She snapped awake as soon as they reached the station, though, and gazed around wide-eyed at the crowds that were boiling on the platforms, even at the late hour. It must be strange and disorienting for her, thought Sripathi, the steady roar of sounds – vendors, children wailing for their parents, coolies shouting for customers, beggars, musicians – the entire circus of humanity under the high arching roof of Madras Central Station. With her small fingers, the child clipped her nostrils together to block out the stench of fish, human beings, diesel oil, food frying and pools of black water on the tracks. (*THW* 152)

She longs for her home (Canada) and she struggles to adapt the Eastern culture. She feels different atmosphere than that of Vancouver.

Badami points out the difficulties that are faced by Nandana, she could not adjust to the food, stay, and customs. Nandana is curious about Deepavali, "But she

wanted to stay and see what this Deepavali was all about. Perhaps, she thought, she would go home *after* she had burst a few crackers. Nandana realises that the festival in India is different than Western culture. she expresses, “She had realized that in India they didn’t have Halloween. Instead there was something called Deepavali, when people got presents and burst fireworks” (*THW* 278). Nandana’s arrival brings a hope in Sripathi’s life. An expatriate Nandana longs to go back home and her parents’ affection, but she fails to accept her grandfather’s family. She struggles to mingle with the people in in-between world but she constructs her own home in the immigrated country.

Nandana has started her new life as a Canadian in India. She slowly adapts to the Indian culture and its practices. While her mother Maya, tried to fit in with the new identity as Canadian, Nandana attempts to do the same in India. The immigrant experience of Nandana helps to find her own way of making standard life. Nirmala understands her fault of not being able to stand up for her daughter, Maya because she was confined to the patriarchal rule of her husband. She doesn’t want Nandana to trap in traditional rules. She breaks her barriers and shapes her individuality.

Nirmala has opposed Ammayya and initiates Putti and Gopala’s marriage. Her transformation is a success to a modern woman. she has succeeded without hurting or breaking anyone’s relationship. Badami shapes her characters as a modern woman by breaking the traditional rules and customs. They break the four walls of patriarch society. They realise that they have a power to fight for their rights and wish to live by their own shade. Sripathi has also undergone a lot of hardships and tragedy which make him a wise man eventually.

The third novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* is mixed with the two cultures and associate with tradition and modernity. The novel is about three women

characters who follow their own traditions without any deviations. The three women are Sharanjeet Kaur, better known as Bibi-ji, Leela Bhat and Nirmaljeet Kaur, better known as Nimmo. The novel precisely deals with the shattered lives of these three women whose dreams and hopes are shattered. Badami has depicted the complex life of her characters with emotions. Similar to Badami's *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* deals with the themes of male chauvinism, gender bias, caste system, political turmoil, tradition and modernity.

Badami depiction of an expatriate woman's identity as 'half and half' and a feeling of in-betweenness. The condition of women from dependence to independence is well projected in the novel. She begins her novel with Bibi-ji who likes to go abroad. She steals her sister's life and marries an immigrant, Khushwant Singh, better known as Paji. Her father has disappeared to Canada to snatch his dreams. He desires to live a luxurious life in Canada like other immigrants. After Harjot Singh disappears, all the responsibilities fall on the head of Gurpreet Kaur, a mother of Bibi-ji. She warns Bibi-ji, "Beware of anything that begins with the troublesome question Why Not" (18). Later she murmurs the question of Why Not, and changes her life.

Badami introduces her as a village woman, later she goes to Canada and reaches the status of a business woman. Bibi-ji, "was so pretty that even the old half-blind grandpas sitting around the banyan tree turned their heads to peer at her when she walked past" (*CYHNC* 21). Kanwar is rejected by her grooms because is not good looking as Bibi-ji. Kanwar bears the rejection from men because her appearance. It tells about the patriarchal aesthetics that men evaluate women only on the base of their looks. Gurpreet gets angry on Bibi-ji for being good-looking. Badami portrays the dreams of a woman:

Sharan looked down at her sister's face, transformed by the soft light of the moon and hope into something almost pretty, and was filled with sudden envy. It would be Kanwar, after all, who would go to the country that Sharan had dreamed about ever since she could remember. But Canada, with its lavender soap and chocolate, was *her* fate. *She* was the one who longed for Abroad. She wished that this man who was causing such a flutter in the house was coming for her. *Why*, she thought, *a single look at me and he would demand to marry me like all the other men have*. An idea crept into her mind. *Why not give him the choice, why not let him see both of us sisters and decide?* (CYHNC 27)

Bibi-ji's desire urges her to go to Canada. She wishes to live a luxurious life in Canada. After her marriage with Khushwant Singh, she lives lonely in her village. Due to the World War II, Pa-ji leaves Bibi-ji in Panjaur and goes to Canada.

Badami expresses the feeling of women in patriarchal society which affects physically and mentally. Without her husband, Bibi-ji feels alienated in her own motherland. She begins to feel, "as if she was indeed a widow" (CYHNC 32). Even though she has attained her dreams of marrying a man in abroad but she could not go to Canada. she expresses her lonely life:

She had stolen the man meant for Kanwar, but as time passed, with only letters from her absent husband to mark the passage of time, she began to wonder whether she had done the right thing after all. Was she only going to have a long-distance husband? Would she ever see anything more of him than the lengthy epistles he sent every month and that the postman read out with zest to her and later disseminated to the rest of the village? (CYHNC 32)

Pa-ji is obsessed with his Sikh community. He underlines the richness of Punjabi traditions and culture throughout the letters. He writes in a letter that Bibi-ji should learn English ways. She expresses her chaotic state, “Sharan was confused – what exactly did he want her to be? A traditional Sikh or an English mem?” (*CYHNC* 33). She wants to become a modern woman so that she is able to settle in Canada without any problem.

She feels like she is on a two-edged sword. She is sent to Amritsar, to learn English ways to become a modern woman. She observes, “to become a modern woman with two tongues in her head: one to do business with the goras who ran the distant country that awaited her and the other to deal with her own people” (*CYHNC* 33). She has a belief in her religion. As Badami writes, “She ran out of the yard to the edge of the field, where a holy stone, believed by the Hindus of the village to harbour a powerful goddess, reared out of the earth. It was smeared with turmeric and vermilion, and someone had scattered flowers around it” (*CYHNC* 7-8). As a Sikh, they do not worship idols, pictures and stones. Her mother says, “. . . that gods from all religions were holy and it would not hurt to pray to them now and again” (*CYHNC* 8). In Eastern culture, people follow the religious rules and customs. But Bibi-ji breaks her religious rules in order to fit into a modern world. She cuts her hair a few inches. She moulds her like a modern woman.

Bibi-ji migrates to Vancouver, Canada. She creates her own position for herself and fulfills the desire of her father once he had embraced in a mind. She encourages her husband to open a restaurant called The Delhi Junction. She becomes a successful business woman but she is not happy in her life. She fails to accept that her life has really changed. She is never able to soothe her memories for her

homeland. In Canada, Bibi-ji and Pa-ji lead a luxurious and an independent life. She has created her own home in a migrated country as Nandana in *The Hero's Walk*.

Another Character, Leela Bhat, is labelled as a 'half-and-half' by her grandmother. The relatives use her nickname to taunt her continuously. Badami describes Leela as, "the pale-eyed, thin daughter of Hari Shastri and Rosa Schweers, a half-and-half hovering on the outskirts of their family's circle of love" (CYHNC 74). Leela's mother Rosa Schweers is a German and her father Hari Shastri is an Indian who belongs to a traditional Brahmin family. Hari's family believes in Hindu culture and tradition. In India, racial discrimination and marginalisation still remains in the society. Badami brings out the theme of racism and patriarchal violence to the women which plague the society even today. They believe that marrying a casteless woman is a heinous crime. In western culture, they accept mixed race and never follow any traditional norms. They allow them to live as they wish and never interrupt in others' life.

Leela's grandmother insults Rosa on the basis of her colour and her religion. Akka, Leela's grandmother treats Rosa as an outsider and her relatives also discriminate her. Leela undergoes several sufferings within her family. She feels alienated in her own family. She longs for her parents' affection. Leela has totally forsaken by her parents and family members. She has taken care by their home maid, Venki. Leela has learnt from her grandmother how to use a sharp tongue like her. She uses her sharp tongue to scold Leela's mother and Leela. She scolds, "Half-breed, worse than an Untouchable. At least a toilet cleaner has caste. But this girl, where does she belong? Tell me, somebody, where" (CYHNC 82). The complexion and caste are the social evils which afflict the Indian society. They prejudice by one's colour and caste.

The main focus of Badami is to display the anguish of three women who are being torn by patriarchal society. The clash of tradition and modernity give a traumatic experience against native land and foreign land. Badami shows a feeling of in-betweenness in a native land give a feeling of abandonment. Thus, Rosa threads Leela, “Never forget you are mine. Even though you have their brown skin, you see the world with my grey eyes. They are wicked, filthy creatures, pigs, dirtyevilpigs” (CYHNC 82). Leela understands half of her mother’s mixture of language.

Badami feels women are relegated for several reasons such as caste, gender, education, race, religion and also superstition. Her novels emphasise on the perceptions of social images, myths and the gender based entrenched thoughts. She portrays how they get dishonour and anguish in the society to attain their identity. Leela is labelled as half-and-half but she has not done anything wrong. Her grandmother, Akka compares Leela’s life with Trishanku. Trishanku was a king many centuries ago. He wished to take his body along with him to heaven when he died. He took his absurd request to the great sage Vishwamitra, he agreed to send his body to heaven in a mortal form. He performed rituals and chanted mantras to raise Trishanku to the heaven. The king moved upward to heaven; the arrival of Trishanku’s body alarmed the God by this unnatural occurrence.

Indra who denied to allow Trishanku to enter and threw him out. He began to falling back to earth and he begged Vishwamitra to send him heaven. Vishwamitra became furious, he could not lead this situation easily because he promised to the king. He built a new heaven and restored his body in it. The Devas tried to console him because it was against natural act. The sage Vishwamitra compromised with the Devas and led live in his new heaven. The new heaven is known as Trishanku’s heaven. The king shall dwell upside down in his heaven. He hung upside down

between two worlds, the heaven that he strived for and earth he belonged to. Akka says that the condition of Leela is same as the king Trishanku, both are referred as a half-and-half. Leela's relatives says, "Our Leela is up-in-the-air like that upside-down king . . . Because she is also half here and half there, that's why . . . Like the Anglo-Indians of Cow Town" (CYHNC 78). Venki consoles Leela:

So what is wrong with being like Trishanku? Was he not a lucky fellow to have a foot two world? Did he not have a heaven of his own around him? Hanh? My chick pea, listen, it can be an advantage to live neither here nor there, like a frog, comfortable in water *and* on land. The thing is to understand how to make use of this ability. (CYHNC 83-84)

Leela thinks she is neither a frog nor a Trishanku. In Eastern culture, they give importance solely to caste, tradition and customs. The comparison of Trishanku's life with the female characters is clearly noticeable in Badami's novel.

As a traditional Brahmin, they maintain a strictly vegetarian diet but Rosa is non-vegetarian. Rosa orders, "the servant Savitri to bring her a tiffin-carrier full of mutton curry or a chicken biryani from a Muslim restaurant in the town market" (CYHNC 79). Akka calls her family and complains, "I am telling you, if dead animals come into this house and are eaten by that woman, your mother will go away. She will leave and *die* on the street" (CYHNC 79). They follow a strict rules and customs and maintain it firmly.

Leela marries Balachandra Bhat, lovingly known as Balu. He is in love with Leela so he asks Shastris to send Leela's horoscope. In Indian culture, horoscope is believed seriously for any occasion. After Leela get married to Balu, she migrates to Canada with her children. As Badami expresses Balu's fondness, "He had a fondness

for certain modern, western, strange notions about divorce and widow remarriage, the education of women and their inheritance rights” (*CYHNC* 91). Badami is not projecting men as the villain, but the norms traditions and customs which stop women to develop in the society. Leela likes to be a traditional wife and a mother. Leela attains her goal of being seen as an original Indian by marrying a High Brahmin, Balachandra Bhat. She takes her husband name and she fit into his family. She finds respect and love from his family. No one calls by her nickname half-and-half or casteless woman.

She has migrated to Vancouver where Balu has got a better job. Leela feels she is betrayed by her fate. She feels hybrid from her childhood, but after marrying Balu she thinks she has got a real identity. As a traditional wife, she feels strange in adapting to a new culture. In Canada, she acts as a traditional and submissive person reliant on her husband. She feels miserably for her failed destiny, “Why Leela wondered despondently, did her destiny appear to be linked to things that fell from the air?” (*CYHNC* 98). Leela’s contentment and delightful life remains in the tradition of Brahmin family. When she is uprooted in the Canadian society, she feels hybrid once again. She wishes to go back to her native soil. She feels like straddling between two worlds. Leela has strived in order to find a place in Canada. Even though Leela is raised within the Eastern culture and tradition, she proves herself as a modern woman by looking Balu’s eyes straightforwardly.

Badami has projected that every expatriate has their own roots from the deep family soils and carve out the voracity for abroad. Even though Badami’s character is seen from the view of Indian, the modernised thought collaborates within their mind. Leela tries to build her own home in Canada but she does not want the status of immigrant in Canada. Soon Vancouver becomes her familiar place and she becomes

friend with Bibi-ji. She asks Bibi-ji about her travels, “How long would it take for this new life to become a skin over the open wound of departure, or the older wound of being half and half?” (CYHNC 137). She confesses that every immigrant walks in a minority boat as Bibiji said, “In this country we are all in the same boat. The Minority Boat” (CYHNC 137). Leela longs for her native soil and she holds her children to not get trapped in the mixed impact of western culture.

Badami’s highlights her views about the immigrant who longs to go back to the motherland, particularly due to identity crisis between boundaries of culture and nation. Leela has a comfortable life in Vancouver but she is not satisfied enough to seize the comfortable life. Leela expresses her desire to go back to India, “. . . I want to go to India next year . . . It has been too long” (CYHNC 312). She struggles hard to go back to India. She tells her stubborn wish to her children that she should die in her own home. She feels alienated and does not have a sense of belonging. She does not fit as an Eastern or Western. Balu lives with his guiltiness that is Leela’s death. He says, “She never wanted to come here . . . I was the one who insisted. If we hadn’t left Bangalore . . .” (CYHNC 396). Her death proves that she was born as a half-and-half and lived her life as a half-and-half. Similar to the king Trishanku, she neither belongs to a native land nor hostland.

Nimmo is the third protagonist in *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* She undergoes many hardships and sufferings in her life due to Indian society. She has lost her mother and brother due to political violence. She is restricted socially, economically and politically. She is confined within traditional rules, religious and educational conditions. She encounters a political problem and faces a dreadful experience. Many transformations have undergone in her individual life. As a Sikh

Nimmo leaves her homeland Punjab and enters into a new place, New Delhi which named as the state of minority caste.

At the age of eighteen, she gets married to a Sikh, Satpal. The memories of the past haunt her badly that trouble her sleep. She recalls:

Yet the chalky taste of fear that had clogged her throat since her mother had thrust her into the wheat bin remained with her even now, when she was a grown woman with a family of her own. Sometimes when she heard water running at night she was reminded of her mother's furious washing, and her nostrils would fill with the smell of the pale violet soap. She hated waking up and not finding her husband's body beside her. (CYHNC 158)

She gets hope by her husband's Satpal words. He says, "Sometime in your life you have to let the fear go, Nimmo" (CYHNC 159). She explains it to him, "It was like to have your life pulled out from under your feet, to wake up one day and find you have no family or home in the land your people had tilled for a hundred years?" (CYHNC 159). She hides her fear but does her duty to her family as a wife and traditional mother.

The changing identities and human bonds are clearly shown in the novels of Badami. Nimmo struggles to get her individuality but her fear does not allow. She tries to get out of her inner fear but it follows like her own shadow. The caste system is still existing in India which affects the innocent lives of people. Likewise, Badami depicts the character Nimmo as a powerless woman because she belongs to a minority caste. She supports herself to become a hopeful person, "*I will always look after you,* she murmured to her unborn child, *I will give you everything your heart desires.* And in exchange, this unborn child would be her talisman against fear and sorrow"

(CYHNC 167). Nimmo does not want her children to get through the fear which she has faced.

Nimmo struggles to find her own identity. She says, *“Let’s wait a bit, let’s talk this through, I’m not sure I am who you think I am. I am not sure where I came from. I don’t know my mother’s name or my father’s, I was a small child . . .”* (CYHNC 169). The pain of not having an identity is reflected in the novel by the character Nimmo. The educational ailments are clearly shown through the woman characters. The problem of illiteracy faced by Kanwar is evident as she seeks help from a school teacher to read Bibi-ji’s letter. Nimmo considers her son’s future; she sends her son with Bibi-ji to Canada. In Eastern culture, people believe that their children get best education and a bright future in abroad. They think that education is not mandatory for a girl child but they educate their son. In western culture, they think education is importance to all individual. They do not have any gender bias in education and for many things.

Nimmo is brought up in a traditional Sikh household but she thinks as a modern woman. She sends Jasbeer with Bibi-ji for getting the best education and new life. They have seen a foreign land as the treasured place which gives an opportunity and a better future. They also believe that woman’s grace rests in her familial roles such as daughter, wife and mother. Nimmo’s husband gives a space for Nimmo. He asks her to take some space and time for herself. He demands, *“Now that he is in school you will have some time for yourself. Maybe you can do some tailoring work and bring extra money, hanh?”* (CYHNC 146). It shows that they are in need of money that’s why she hands over her son to Bibi-ji.

Bibi-ji’s arrival is the only reason for the unhappiness of Nimmo. Nimmo is an optimistic woman, she expects hopefully that her son would return to her. She is a

hopeful woman and no longer a fearful woman. She recalls the past of her mother and that violence keep out her mother from Nimmo. She requests them to leave her family members, “Brothers, why are you doing this to us? She said to him. We have been neighbours for so many years, tell these people we have nothing to hide, tell them. Please” (*CYHNC* 359). She becomes a brave woman and hides her daughter in a cupboard but her idea is ineffective. The past memories of her mother make her a hopeful and courageous woman. She has cherished the past memories and live on her past gladdest flashes.

Badami has clearly projected the idea that double identities and a sense of belonging nowhere are the barriers in the immigrants’ lives. They feel intolerable in a new land because of the mix up of two cultures. Due to cultural collision, the situation brings the two forces of tradition and modernity into conflict but it gives an idea of self-development. Tradition is followed by the ancestors but it shapes according to the need and time. Modernity embraces the belief of independence than embracing the traditional ideas. In most of the diasporic fiction, the concept of tradition and modernity is used to reflect the social and cultural clashes. Tradition makes people narrow-minded but modernity mould them as an individual self.

Badami has shown that how the conflict between tradition and modernity is balanced by the women from earlier times to recent times. They try to break from traditional restrictions which are dumped on them by their native culture. People think that they uphold and preserve their own culture but they are confined within it. Navigating the crossroads of tradition and modernity, Badami reveals that one should live their lives on their own terms instead of living for others. It helps to connect different cultures with deeper perception of understanding one’s own surroundings.

Due to cultural difference and assimilation, the characters tend to lose their own identity and so do their children. Badami explores that the social, cultural, traditional tools responsible for making their life miserable and meaningless. They wrestle with the tradition and modernity at its core due to complex cultural entity. Most of the women cannot avoid to be a live in this modern world. Through these crossroads, women through self-understanding, change their life as they wish and begin to live independently. Although the people are influenced by modernity, some of the traditional aspects are still deeply rooted in the world. This makes an uncertain future for the people. Badami exposes that women wish to lead their life as Virginia Woolf said 'a room of her own'. As a writer, Badami brings to the light about the balancing of two things, individual and society, between tradition and modernity, which can set the milestone of success to lead a happy life.

Chapter - 4

The Search for Individuality in Hybridity

Hybridity is a tantalising idea and an interesting study in diasporic literature. It has become a core part of diaspora. It has been used as a negotiation of identity which develops out of the conflict of belonging to two cultural spaces. The immigrants in the novels under study bear a sense of dual belonging to the cultural spaces of India and Canada. The immigrants try to maintain their cultural connection with their motherland either directly or indirectly. This affects their identity and causes tension between two cultural spaces. Due to the unchanging tension between the Eastern and the Western culture, it leads to the process of searching for their identity and culture in a new land.

In a different space, acculturating into a new milieu, immigrants try to preserve a culture which they belong. In a new land, immigrants reflect their distress as well as elation, peace as well as conflict, finding new identity as well as losing in it. The immigrants are trapped between two incongruent cultures, their uprootedness turns out to be intriguing because they still carry their hyphenated identities. They carry their hybrid identity that has divided their lives into half. They try to overcome the challenges of expatriate evocations of family relationships, exasperation, joy, agony, race, caste, and encounter between two cultures.

The idea of hybridity is used mainly as the diasporic subject which gives another perception of diaspora. In colonial discourse, hybridity is a term which is used for people who are mixed-breeds. The concept of hybridity inhabits a fundamental role in postcolonial context. Ankie Hoogvelt says, hybridity is, “celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the

difference” (158). Homi Bhabha has developed the concept of hybridity, which constructs a culture and identity within the state of colonial aggression and disparity.

The confrontation of two cultures form an in-between space which Bhabha terms as the third space. Jonathan Rutherford argues, “all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity” (211). Due to mixed culture and breed, the hybridity and the third space have created. Bhabha brings out the set of challenging concepts like hybridity which comes due to varied cultural contact and collaboration. Similar to Bhabha, many theorists such as Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak have coloured the concept of hybridity in postcolonial discourse. Hybridity polarises one’s world into self and other. It also refers to mingling of cultural practices, adaptation or assimilation of culture which in turn can be viewed as positive as well as repressive.

The development of hybridity can be seen mostly in diasporic fiction. The writers preoccupy their literary creation with the subjects such as hybridity, in-betweenness, mobility, cross-cultural elements, cultural identity and displacements. In *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Robert Young asserts, “A hybrid is technically a cross between two different species and that therefore the term hybridisation evokes both the botanical notion of inter-species grafting and the ‘vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right’ which is regarded different races as different species” (10). Young expresses the term hybrid as an intersect between two different cultures or breeds.

The perception of diasporic sensibility is unsettled and loaded with the issues of having multiple identities or no sense of fitting anywhere. Diaspora focuses on cultural issues, multiplicity of belongings, hybrid identities, a troubled relationships and collective traumas. These issues can challenge the fixity of identity to the immigrants. The immigrants often hold their double consciousness and inhabits

multiple belongings and identities. In diasporic fiction, the writers bring out the idea of home, which is a place of dreams and desire. Pramod K. Nayar in *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*, expands the concept of Homi Bhabha's hybridity:

Hybridity is the rejection of a single or unified identity, and a preference for multiple cultural locations and identities. Hybridity can take the form of revival of a pre-colonial past, such as folk or tribal cultural forms and conventions within nativist or even reactionary movements, or adapts the contemporary artistic and social productions to present-day conditions of globalization, multiculturalism and transnationalism. Hybridity, as seen in postcolonial theory, is the answer to the dangers of cultural binarism (us/them) and the fundamentalist urge to seek 'pure' cultural forms. (179)

Migration with trauma has impelled immigrants into an intercultural conflict. It infers an unsettling identity which locks an immigrant in the conflict between individual and public space, cultural gap and ethnic differences.

Hybridity is not a solution to the immigrants but it confronts at the borders of self and other, the motherland and the hostland, the Eastern culture and the Western culture. Hybridity warns the immigrants about the complexities of living in disparities of two cultures. The discourse of hybrid identities assumes a new aspect and paradigm when screened through the multiple concept of class, caste, colour, culture and individuality. Jasbir Jain writes in his own words about the views of Homi Bhabha:

For Bhabha, the term hybridity is a process, not a position. He firmly places it within the imperial colonial encounter and locates it in a permanent state of flux, a concept which moves to and fro between two

cultures, where the interstitial spaces, otherwise inaccessible, become articulate. These interstitial spaces dismantle binary oppositions, they also express insurgency, resistance and an in-betweenness. The polarities of self/other, tradition/ modernity, signifier/signified are rendered either obsolete or irrelevant . . . Nowhere does he view hybridity as a resolution. The tension between two cultures remains as an active and vibrant source of creativity, self-preservation and cultural formulations. (37-38)

The people struggle to be rooted in their own identity and culture; it is not similar and equivalent with the other cultures. Hybridity is a more eye-catching term, even though it is viewed as a negative sometimes.

Diaspora attempts to provide a real meaning to the identity of living in different lands through this term hybridity. The writers struggle to picturise the problems of hybrid identity of an immigrant. Diaspora obtains fundamental prominence for immigrant writers in the development of fixing human's struggle, experience through the concept of original identity. M.G. Vassanji says that place do not determine the growth of the people but the location which they migrate to keeps on varying and new identities also keep changing. In Devika Khanna Narula's *South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blossoms In Winter Gardens*, she adds Vassanji's words, "not uprooting and moving boundaries, but simply setting them afloat and free, for an identity, a literature, in the broad sense, to grow, to explore, find and define itself; and perhaps keep on defining itself (qtd. in Narula 100). She further adds that changing of identity is a result of acculturation and cultural conflicts.

The people who are living in diaspora try to preserve their identity. The immigrants carry their cultural baggage in a new land and seek their individuality.

They are labelled as the other which refers their in-between life. Devika Narula Khanna gives the statement of Rocio G. Davies about hybridity:

Hybridity, an important characteristic of all ethnic literary texts, can therefore be considered a strength rather than a weakness. It does not imply a denial of the traditions from which it springs, but rather focuses on a continual and mutual development. In this manner, the text itself becomes the embodiment of the histories, the mechanism for modifying and recreating personal and collective identity. (qtd. in Narula 78)

Defining identity is not a simple task and it includes a set of characteristics such as one's social roles, individuality and sensible self-image. In diaspora, individuals dwell with their multiple identities. The mingling of identities leads to cultural identity and result in hybridity. It is not only the outcome of acclimatisation of one culture by another culture, but it is also something new and unexperienced.

An individual identity is deep-rooted in culture and also constructed by one's religion, nation, history, tradition and so on. The people are caught between two cultures, languages, notions and communities. The immigrants go through the problems such as nostalgia, a sense of belonging, assimilation, acculturation, uprootedness, in-betweenness and double identity. They try to relocate or recreate their own home in a new soil. The immigrants who are living as a hybrid identity, also label them as an outsider, half-an-half, trishanku, and other such terms.

Hybridity is a complex phenomenon and remains centre in the arena of diasporic literature. The writers clearly express the multifold dimension of human endeavour. M.A.R Habib mentions Frantz Fanon's essential point, that is, "the 'nation' is a necessary condition of culture" (qtd. in Habib 743). He further adds,

“The nation gathers together the various indispensable elements necessary for the creation of a culture” (qtd. in Habib 743). The problematics of homelessness lead to alienation and cause to feel a sense of in-betweenness. Habib states, “Hybridity expresses a state of “in-betweenness,” as in a person who stands between two cultures” (750). The condition of being in between of two cultures challenge the notion of fixed identity.

The writers picturises the immigrants’ problem with hybridity and they struggle to obtain their new, unmixed identity. In the nineteenth century, hybrid has a negative view. Robert J. C. Young states:

Hybridity is a making one of two distinct things . . . Hybridization can also consist of the forcing of a single entity into two or more parts, a severing of a single object into two, turning sameness difference . . . Hybridity thus makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different. (24-25)

The predominant aspect of hybridity is traced only through the base of both cultures and acculturation. The migration and acculturation affect the immigrants’ identity. Acculturation leads to the crisis of identity. It causes them to feel like sinking into one’s culture beneath the supremacy of the other culture.

Acculturation affects both the individual and society. It is a common premise in the diasporic literary creation. It shows the tendency of individual to intermingle with the cultural elements. It deals with the transformation of two different cultures when immigrants try to assimilate in an adopted land. The immigrants do not have any desire to blend with other cultures. They do not want to maintain their cultural

identity but rather prefer to preserve original identity. In a modern world hybridity, acculturation or third space present a challenging set of circumstances.

The concept that cultures are not pure but hybrid is not a new-fangled one. The blend of western notions with conventional faiths often lead the characters with dilemma. Cultural hybridity is a neglected issue because of the shift in identity. The hybrid is a word which denotes multiplicity, mixture, identity, otherness and in-betweenness. Cultural hybridity affects the creation of identity particularly in individual's lives. In a postcolonial perspective, the idea of cultural hybridity is to unfold the notion of national identity of immigrants. As Robert Young discloses, "There is no single, correct concept of hybridity: it changes as it repeats, but it also repeats as it changes" (25). Cultural hybridity theorises the different cultural amalgamates.

The experience of acculturation implicates depression, anxiety, strangeness and estrangement. It arises the fear of losing one's own originality in a new land. Hybridity forms a space of otherness or in-betweenness and also other various identifications. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin mentions about Stuart Hall's the concept of hybridity in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*:

The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (qtd. in Ashcroft; Griffiths; Tiffin 438)

The writers try to bridge the gap between two cultures. They bring out the individual values and experiences of the new environment. One of the major arenas in diaspora is hybridisation. Through the medium of fiction, the writers try to showcase an importance of identity. They clearly show the immigrants' struggle to construct their identities and recreate ethnic identities as well.

The writers of South Asian descent such as Michael Ontaaje, Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Kamala Markandaya, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Uma Parameswaran, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Rahul Varma, Himani Bannerji, Rohinton Mistry and Neil Bissoondath have recurring themes of identity and ethnicity in their work. They are paving the way to enhance the idea of construct one's own identity and space. They often explore the fundamental disputes of alienation, cultural shock, racism, assimilation and hybrid identity. The dilemma faced by immigrants when caught between two conflicting cultures is brought under the spotlight.

The theorists Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak discuss the migrant subjects represented by cultural identity and hybridity. Homi Bhabha highlights about an individual's suffering when their fixed identities get rejected. He says:

A doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once which makes it impossible . . . to accept the invitation to identity: you're a doctor, a writer, a student, you're different . . . It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different' – to be different from those that are different makes you the same – that the unconscious speaks of the form of otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement.

(12)

In diasporic fiction, the writers highlight the problems that the immigrants face in a new land, the lifestyles they accept and their fight for survival. The problem of displacement leads to a dilemma where they get caught in in-between space.

Anita Rau Badami uses hybridity as a conceptual tool to highlight the portent of cross-cultural shift in identity. She explores the two dimensions of culture and identity throughout her novels. The issue of hybridity is exposed in terms of understanding the two different cultures. She brings out the concept of assimilation as a challenge to the immigrants. The immigrants feel trapped in hybrid spaces and struggle to get their own individuality. Badami portrays how their life is filled with the mixture of identity in one side and protecting their culture on the other.

Badami focuses on the fear of multiple identity and assimilation. She exemplifies the vision of everyday life of ordinary people who carve out their own trajectory of displacement and migration. In *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk* and *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Badami centers the concept of hybridity and their struggle to get out of that space. She brings out the issues of motherhood and raising children which dominate her novels. She focuses on the issues of bringing up of children in an alien culture and the struggles of the protagonists to shield their native culture.

In *Tamarind Mem* Badami brings out the fact that people give importance to social life rather than individual life. The individual life of immigrants is under restraint or ruled by the social aspects. People refuse their personal choices or ideas due to their influence towards social attributes. Badami portrays the conflicts which arise in human life due to the clash of different cultures. In *Tamarind Mem*, Badami depicts how her characters, Kamini and Saroja are perceived as uncultured due to the impact of diverse cultures. In *Postcolonial Literature an Introduction*, Pramod Nayar

reveals the experience of diaspora between two variable cultures, “Diasporic writing captures the two invariables of their experience: exile and homeland. All the diasporic literature is an attempt to negotiate between those two polarities. The writings of exile or immigrant writers undergo two moves, one is temporal, and the other is spatial” (188). Similarly, Badami’s character too endure various problems such as dislocation, multi-cultural thread, homelessness, marital issues, estranged relationships.

Badami highlights the cultural bond which force the characters to engage in the troublesome situation. She expresses the life of an expatriate who struggles to survive as an estranged one, away from their family and also from the native land. She mirrors out the cultural collision which cause double identity of an immigrant. Her characters namely the daughter Kamini and mother Saroja describe their lives within two perspectives.

Kamini migrates to Canada for her higher studies. Badami states that Kamini builds her own memories and decide her own purposes in life. The novel begins by Kamini’s narration of her present life in Canada. she has her own memories, the landscape of both India and Canada. She describes the cold, snow, and ice of Canada. Kamini describes, “Some mornings I woke to find frost on my window pane. If I peered at the window I could see the perfection of each icy crystal. And when I leaned away, there was a glittering filigree of ferns, silver fronds, tree branches as delicate as the ones in those fairy tale books my Ma used to buy for me” (*TM* 15). Kamini’s memories soothe her with the warmth of her past.

Kamini and Saroja are bound together within the trajectory of the problematic relationship of mother and daughter. Kamini narrates her past and describes the landscape of Canada, “I called my mother every Sunday from the silence of my basement apartment, reluctant to tell her how I yearned to get away from this freezing

cold city where even the traffic sounds were muffled by the snow” (*TM* 2). She feels alienated and longs to get her mother Saroja’s love back. She struggles to get her identity between borders of culture or land. She has caught in alienation in a new land with the collective identities. Badami focuses on her state of flux and how she strives to get rid of loneliness in an alien land.

Badami’s representation of identities is showed through the landscape of two nations. Kamini occupies her space in-between of two worlds, one is an adopted place and the other is a native land. Kamini forces herself to live a life of alienation in order to lead an independent life in Canada. she says, “I waited for her to interpret the silences between my words, to sense my loneliness, to say, “Why don’t you just come back home, I need you, I am getting old.” I would drop my work and catch the next flight back” (*TM* 15). She tries to bind her relationship with her mother and she wants to get rid of loneliness.

Kamini’s in-between space gives an unbiased perception of the world. She longs to see her mother and renews an old bond with her mother Saroja. Another problem Kamini has faced in Canada is that her name is always pronounced wrongly by her colleagues. There she has begun to create a new identity in order to surpass her older national identity. She complains to Saroja:

I gave her glowing accounts of my research supervisor, my colleagues Greta and Bob, who turned pink with embarrassment when they tried to pronounce my name, apologizing profusely each time they transformed it into something different: Kemani, Kimani. “Why you don’t tell them it is Kaa-mee-nee? What use telling me?” asked Ma. (*TM* 15)

Kamini has a portable life in her childhood due to her father's job. She has observed that his father's job is transferred to various places frequently. Kamini prefers to immigrate to Canada for her higher studies but she feels remorseful for her mother's isolation. Kamini likes abroad and chooses to relocate in a new country.

Kamini not only wishes to resettle in Canada, but also wants to preserve familial relationships. She frequently communicates with her mother through telephone or postcards. Her mother Saroja is in Madras and her sister lives in the United States. She also upholds a close bond with her sister Roopa. As an immigrant, she recalls her mother's unsatisfied life and her childhood life. She has grown up in railway colonies where she listens to an astonishing story by her aunt Chinna, father, maid Linda Ayah and others. Kamini recollects her immature perception of her mother's life and her cruel action towards Kamini. She is blamed by her mother for listening to stories:

Dadda, tell me a story, I begged when he returned from a trip to Shillong . . . Waste of time, grumbled ma. Her fight with Dadda had begun long before I born, so I could not understand it at all. Was it because he refused to take her along when he went away? Or perhaps he smoked so much? Maybe she wanted him to tell *her* all the stories that he told me alone. (TM 42)

She grieves a lot because of her mother's separation and also yearns for her love and care from her childhood. But now, Kamini expects her mother to comprehend her alienation. Apart from her loneliness, she enjoys the liberty with no responsibility. She feels neither homelessness nor a sense of belonging nowhere, but wants to break out of her loneliness. She finds no escape because she confines herself to this

atmosphere which she has created. Kamini expresses her loneliness through describing Canadian and Indian landscape. She reveals:

I stared out the narrow window set high in the wall of my basement apartment. The snow had piled up in chill swaths, and I could barely see what lay beyond. I felt like a mole tunneled into its lair of darkness, weary of the never-ending night that had descended on the city. When I left home in the morning the stars were still scattered in the sky, the moon a pale aureole. And at the five in the evening . . . barely able to turn my head for the padding around my neck, it was still night. I held Ma's card against my face and breathed in deeply. Opened my eyes and I could see, against the implacable white of the snow outside my window, dark leaves and the bright colour of fruit ripening in the sun.

(*TM* 124)

Her life shuttles between Canada and India. Kamini spends her whole life by accompanying with loneliness. She tries to maintain her native identity as well as the new identity in a new land.

Badami craftily displays how Kamini as an adult, gets maturity and starts to comprehend her mother's miserable and disappointed life. Kamini realises that her father is the only root cause for her mother's past unhappy life. She observes, ". . . perhaps Dadda was to blame for the person Ma had become. He shut her into rooms from which there was not even a chink of an escape. He himself had left again and again, and every time he came back, he needed to be readmitted into lives altered daily during his absence" (*TM* 147). The separation makes Kamini to understand Saroja's perspective. She realises:

Ten years ago, I had felt a simmering resentment against my mother. I believed that she had wronged Dadda with her rigid anger, her unkind words. I refused to acknowledge the years that Ma had spent being a good wife, looking after her daughters, supervising the household, making sure that Dadda got his meals exactly on schedule. How bored she must have been. If she wasn't at home when Roopa and I came home school, we sulked, accused her of being indifferent. (*TM* 147)

The determined thought of her mother replenishes Kamini to accomplish her mother's dream of becoming a doctor or some other positions. She decides to escape from her mother, "My one ambition being to finish school and get out of the house, away from Ma, believed, that would be like escaping from one locked room into another, forever wandering in a maze, hitting my nose against closed doors" (*TM* 122). She gets away from her familial role by getting her admission for her Doctorate degree in the Calgary University. She creates her own home in a new land. Kamini does not want to get out of third space, but she wishes to escape from her alienation. She accepts her migrated country and hybrid space but needs her mother to accompany her.

Badami has artistically created her characters Kamini and Saroja, to understand the experience of two cultures. Kamini adores the western life but her necessity for love and affection confirms that she is ready to come back to India. She adapts to her new life in Canada but she never has a good company for love and affection. She feels guilt for her mistake and endures more pain without love and care but she does not desire to leave her new home. The immigrants leave their homeland for a good source and it assists in redefining their identity. Similarly, Kamini's identity faces both cultural worlds and also it encounters the shifting opinions and ethics.

Badami focuses on the cultural encounter between east and west in the combination of physical and emotional as well. She brings out the tear-jerking feel of Kamini to connect back to her homeland. Kamini also has encountered the psychological suffering when she struggles to adapt herself in Canada. She says:

I jerked out of uneasy sleep gasping and sweaty, relieved that, even from thousands of miles away, my mother could reach out and pull me away from the nebulous terrors of a nightmare. The rustle of paper being thrust through the slot in my front door woke me completely . . . And almost as if my dream had summoned it up, another of Ma's weekly postcards, bringing with it the warmth, the smells, the sounds of another country oceans away from Canada. (*TM* 112)

Kamini tries to sustain her identity as Canadian and also maintains her original identity. There she faces a question of her real identity. Badami portrays the hybrid identity of her character, Kamini. She not only proves her survival in an alien land but also has obtained her identity.

Badami portrays both the Indian culture and Canadian culture in an optimistic perspective. When both confront one another, it brings out the amendments of socio-cultural problems. Kamini tries to reconstruct her own individuality and space against traditions and customs. Through the observation of her mother's past unhappy life, she has realised the importance of life. She gets rooted in the new culture of host land. Kamini admires the landscapes, seasons, atmosphere of Canada. she expresses the change of winter season and arrival of spring:

A change of season trembled at the edge of the river, just below the ice, hidden in the brown stubble of last year's grass, coursing through dormant branches. The snow outside my window seemed to shift and

tiny green shots pushed through. Almost all of them would be dandelions, which were considered weeds here in this country. But I liked their tenacious brightness. They reminded me of the besharam plants in our Ratnapura house. (*TM* 137)

Badami uses flowers, trees, snow, seasons to give a hopeful life to an immigrant. Kamini looks back with loneliness, nostalgic memories about her homeland and love from her mother. All her psychological issues and memories of her homeland are connected to culture.

Badami thoughtfully uses the perspectives of Kamini and Saroja to bridge the gap between two worlds, Canada and India. Kamini tries to establish her identity and rebuild her home. Badami portrays Kamini as a broad-minded and confident character. Kamini's self-confidence helps her to adapt a new land. It also helps to learn from her own experience in life. Badami explores the complexities of isolation and separation faced by an immigrant Kamini. She wants to determine her own destiny instead of living in another's shadow.

Kamini realises that being an immigrant, she needs to acquire her individuality to possess her own life. Unlike her mother, Kamini leads her life independently and comfortably in Canada. When she knows the truth about Saroja's travel across India, she is concerned about her. She asks, "But how do we know if you are all right? How do we reach you?" (*TM* 30). But Saroja does not understand Kamini's affection. She does not feel her double consciousness because she has caught up between here and there. She does not long to return to her native land.

At the core, Nostalgia helps Kamini to bridge the connection between alienation and longingness. She lives an independent life but is confined in memories and loneliness. Kamini takes enormous efforts to tie with her mother. But her mother

scolds her for no reason. Her mother wants to win in their arguments. She says, “I waste my youth showering love and affection on these children and what do I get in return? Nothing!” (TM 150). Kamini makes her mother to understand her loneliness but she is not understood. Kamini relives her life in the post cards which her mother sends. She reads one of her mother’s recent post card, “The gulmohur tree outside my flat will be in bloom in a few weeks . . . I should be home in time to catch the flowers as they fall. Such a simple thing can give me so much pleasure. It has taken me long to see that happiness isn’t hard to find. No?” (TM 147). Only nature accompanies Kamini and Saroja who are in the two different worlds.

Badami provides incredible insight into Kamini’s struggle in the diasporic land and her journey of the self in search of the misplaced identity. The in-between space leads to identity crisis and isolation. Throughout her part, she expresses the beautiful landscapes of Canada which is surrounded by snow and ice but no one is there to accompany her. Kamini is looking back at how her mother is trapped in cultural restraint. Badami has exposed the life of Kamini in a new land which begins with cultural shock forcing her to fight the melancholy of a new life in an unsolicited place along with the memories that drag her towards her motherland.

The novel represents the traumatic and expatriate encounters of Kamini through her nostalgic memories. Badami elucidates her characters’ plight of being imprisoned within the Indian society’s customs and cultural ethos. Kamini longs for her past life when memory starts to flow. Saroja wishes that her daughters should chase their aspirations and enjoy a life of their choices. Kamini knows how to choose what she needs. Kamini explores her love by realising the past. She is happy in her hybrid space because she chooses this space. She finds harmony to replenish their relationship and start her new life.

In the end, through the glimpse of memory, Kamini understands the harsh truth of reality and lead her new life. With the help of the past memories, she creates her identity. Even Saroja decides to let her daughters to start their own life. Kamini's determination is not to get trapped in the hands of pointless cultural customs. Kamini chases her dreams and makes her own memories without any responsibilities and restrictions. She realises her uniquely juxtaposed life amid the past and the present. Her self-realisation is the pavement to the way of shaping an individuality.

Her second novel, *The Hero's Walk* reveals an ordinary Indian Brahmin family dealing with complex relationships, cultural differences, trauma and assimilation. The theme of cultural confrontation between the East and the West is seen in the novel *The Hero's Walk*. Badami clearly elicits the inner psychic of Nandana who has encountered the cultural clashes in different ways. Nandana is a seven-year-old Canadian girl, who has lost her parents in an accident. Being Canadian-born, Nandana encounters the conflicts between two cultures and gets trapped between two modes of cultural realm. Throughout the novel, Badami expresses the sense of grief and struggles to get away from an alien land, India.

Badami decorates her novels with multicultural aspects and a new form of clubbed culture. It leads to the results like hybridisation, acculturalisation, cultural confluence and alienation. It also creates the unconventional divisions of colour, race, caste, gender and culture. The novel *The Hero's Walk* begins with a morning scene of Toturpuram, the description of Brahmin street. Sripathi Rao has heard the news that his daughter Maya and her husband Alan Baker died in a car accident in Canada. A man informs Sripathi Rao that he is the legal guardian to Nandana. He says, "As you are probably aware, Maya appointed you legal guardian and trustee some time ago" (*THW* 32). Sripathi Rao goes to bring back Nandana to India.

Badami uses hybridity as a powerful concept which raises the question of identity. Mainly, the character Nandana wishes to live a western way of life but she confines to the traditional life. The survival of Nandana thrusts her into the so-called hybrid space. The life of Nandana is confined between two different cultures, different people and different lifestyle. Nandana looks strange in Indian lifestyle, dress, food, place. Even when she was in Canada with their parents, she dislikes the cultures and lifestyle of the East.

Unlike Nandana, Maya likes to follow Indian lifestyle and also that of Western. She has visited Nandana's school in a sari. When Nandana's grandmother Nirmala cuts up her one of the saris to make her skirt, Nandana feels it to be a ridiculous outfit. She says, "That was the kind of outfit, she said, that she had worn when she was a small girl in India. Nandana felt silly in this dress, especially she'd had to braid her hair and wear some flowers in the braid, and put a small round sticker on her forehead like the one her mother wore with a sari" (*THW* 71). She struggles to adapt to the Eastern culture and creates her own imaginary homeland. She carries her double identification of original motherland and adopted country. Radhakrishnan. R discusses the concept of hybridisation:

Diasporic subjectivity is thus necessarily double: acknowledging the imperialism of an earlier 'elsewhere' in an active and critical relationship with the cultural politics displacement. 'home' then becomes a mode of interpretative in-betweenness, as a form of accountability to more than one location. (1-2)

Similarly, Nandana tries to adapt to the Eastern culture but she has a problem with the question of her identity. She tries to construct her new home and recreate her new identity as well.

Being an Indo-Canadian, Badami has lived her life through the contact of two cultures. Both the places are exquisite for Badami but it nullifies the phase of migration or cultural conflict. Most of her novels are highlighted by her autobiographical elements. Unlike Maya, Nandana is not comfortable in India. Maya is migrated to Canada which is chosen by her and so this migration does not leave her in a complicated situation. Maya does not wish to return to her homeland but she wishes to see her parents. Maya likes to follow the mixture of two culture. She sends some photographs to her mother Nirmala, “. . . the next envelope from Maya in a dark blue Canjeevaram sari that she had taken with her when she left home, and Alan in a suit; another at a party, surrounded by friends; and a third at the beach, Maya’s legs startlingly bare in a pair of green shorts” (*THW* 113). Maya has gone in opposition to culture by marrying Alan Baker, a Christian but at the same time she follows the Indian culture in Canada.

Badami’s portrayal of orphaned Nandana is equally imprisoning and heartbreaking but she is unable to express her angst and craving to see her parents and her homeland. Nandana remains silent since she left Vancouver. Badami exposes the lifestyle of Nandana when she arrives in India. Sripathi Rao notices Nandana’s western outfits, “The child had drawn an unsteady line of kohl under her eyes and looked like a raccoon. She chewed steadily on something . . . A bubble grew out of her mouth like a swollen membrane. She wore ragged jeans and a sagging black T-shirt with the word *WHY?* Inscribed on it in hot pink” (*THW* 146). A modern girl enters into an orthodox Brahmin family and transforms the ambience of home.

Maya has felt comfortable in the Western culture but Nandana feels strongly uncomfortable in the Eastern culture. She does not utter a single word but only remains silent. Dr. Sunderraj says, “Nandana does not say a word, as you might have

noticed . . . She is normally a very talkative child, you know, so this silence is unusual” (*THW* 143). It is cleared that Nandana hates India and also people. When Nandana reaches Madras airport, she gets tired by the smell of old sweat and cigarette smoke. She also feels disturbed by the sounds of vendors, children sobbing for their parents, beggars and many other such noises. Badami expresses Nandana’s contemptuous behaviour towards India as:

When she arrived at the station, there are zillions of people on the platform, and all of them were talking at the same time. She clapped her hands against her ears. She wanted to get back inside the train; she liked it in there. A small group of people separated themselves from the crowd and came straight towards her. (*THW* 152)

When her grandmother takes her to be an American child, Nandana screams within her inner self as “I am not American. I am Canadian” (*THW* 153). She inhabits the Western culture and feels proud of it. She does not bear the position of being in-between because it transforms the self within her.

As a child, Nandana finds a sense of alienation in a new land. The deepening state of rootlessness insists upon Nandana to recreate her home and identity. She tries to escape from a sense of in-betweenness. This space leads to dilemma and loss of identity. The questions which raise inside the head of Nandana:

How long was she going to live in this old house that was full of strange noises and dark corners? Was she supposed to go to school here? Who would help her to tie her shoelaces exactly the way she liked them? She was glad that her mother’s brother slept in the same room . . . She had warmed to him right away. But she still hoped that

she would not have to live in India, in this old house, for very long.

(*THW* 154)

Nandana is unable to survive in India where she faces severe mental problems. Badami represents Nandana's incapability to accept the ways of life in India. Though Maya is frequently made to recall the rituals and customs of Indian tradition, she is unable to run away from the fate that befalls a hybrid person. Sripathi Rao writes down a letter to Maya, ". . . your mamma tells me to inform you that the Yugadi festival is on the twentieth of March this year. You are to wash your hair, say a small prayer to the assortment of gods we believe in and eat a small helping of something bitter mixed with something sweet" (*THW* 105). Nandana is peculiar about an Indian festival and customs:

She had realized that in India they didn't have Halloween. Instead there was something called Deepavali, when people got presents and burst fireworks. She wondered why Mamma lady hadn't bought *her* any new clothes . . . she was the child at school who wasn't getting new clothes or fire-crackers for this exciting festival. (*THW* 278)

She always fondly thinks about going back to her home Canada. But she excitedly stays in India to see what the festival is out of curiosity. In Canada, they celebrate Halloween instead of Deepavali, so Nandana imagines pumpkins, hobgoblins and witches.

Identification and self-adoption are the greatest hindrances of the immigrants in an alien land. Badami mainly focuses on Nandana and depicts how a seven-year-old girl endeavours to carve her own identity in the new land, India. The alienation of Nandana has leaves her in a vortex of complete chaos and sense of abandonment. She does not talk with Sripathi Rao because she sees him as a stranger. Badami has shown

the indifferent behaviour of Nandana such as anger, hatred, fear to leave her motherland. The only thing which pacified her mind is the memories of her parents.

She reminisces:

She remembered how her father always put an *n*-shaped piece of cereal in her first spoonful of milk and guided it into her mouth. And her mother's smell of after-bath lotion as she ran past, half-dressed, frantically packing lunch boxes and calling instructions: "Don't forget your keys I will be late home today, there's meeting, pick up Nandu at two-forty-five, make sure she does her homework." Everything in Indian house was so slow and old. (*THW* 166)

Whenever she thinks about her parents, she picturises her Canadian house from the memory. She needs someone to understand her traumatic situation. Though she finds hard to adjust herself in a strange place, she strives to construct her identity.

Badami strongly delivers the pain of immigrants grappling to survive in a different nation. The immigrants find it difficult to chase for their shelter in the different parts of the world. Hybridity disturbs the life and insight of all the immigrants who are in search of roots and comfort in an alien land. Badami has displayed the complexities of hybrid identity through the character Nandana. Her silence exposes her hatred towards India. She dislikes everything in India. She shows a lack of interest to go to school. She also dislikes to play with her school friends. She says, "Nandana wanted to stay at home. She didn't want to stand and watch Nithya and Ayesha and Meena play and whisper secrets . . . My mother is in Vancouver, Nandana wanted to shout. I am only here for a short while" (*THW* 279). She wants only one thing to be done, "All she wanted to do was get to the railway station and the

airport and home” (*THW* 229). Badami shows Nandana’s fear to settle in an alien land.

Badami makes an effort to bridge the space between two cultures. Nandana's life represents the hybrid life. She is suspended between two cultures, native and adopted country. The novel highlights the psychic unease of Nandana due to adapted culture. Nandana’s identity as a Canadian is almost modified with the identity of an Indian. The cultural identity and socio-cultural differences create problems in Nandana’s life. The social milieu is emphasised in the novel *The Hero’s Walk*:

Sripathi noticed that her knees, which protruded through holes in her ragged jeans, were scratched and dry, bony childlike hillocks absurdly at odds with her swaggering look. Earlier on, Sripathi had seen a drawing on one knee, a man with a wild moustache and a large mole on his forehead. Had the child done it herself, or was it tattoo like the ones on the arms of those wandering, dirty Lambani women who lived on his street in Toturpuram? Sripathi had heard that tattooing was fashionable in these foreign countries. And her hair, what on the earth had she done to it, for God’s sake? A mass of fierce black curls surged out of her scalp, with beads strung in rows here and there. (*THW* 147)

The novel endeavours to give a picture of how Nandana finds her own identity and space. Nandana does not like to wear her school uniform; instead she wants jeans.

The craving for security and protected place to call home reveals the battle between life and death. Nandana’s life is a silent war. She cries within herself, “She wanted to cry when she thought of her parents and their voices coming out of the darkness, warm and comfortable . . .” (*THW* 185). Nandana does not like to live in India and the lifestyle, food, people are entirely different and hard to accept for her.

She feels as if she is placed in a difficult space between two cultures. As Devika Khanna Narula Says in *South Asian Diaspora: Summer Blossoms In Winter Gardens*:

It is generated by an analytical and critical evaluation of one's socio-cultural identity, the consciousness of which has come with spatial and temporal distancing; situate in a 'different' space . . . In the 'new' world, where one is now situated, there is an awareness of being on the periphery, of a hyphenated identity, and of not belonging to the mainstream: these are the realizations that dawn on the consciousness of the individual . . . (36)

Badami exactly says that the socio-cultural attributes affect the life of an individual being. she represents the predicament of not being adept to acquire the pure identity throughout the lives of immigrants.

As an immigrant, she has faced many hardships and sufferings to get away from a new land. She mainly encounters the cultural confrontation which affects her mentally as well as physically. She finds it difficult to break out of her alienation. When she plays with her three friends, she gets caught in the tunnel. There she recollects her parents' memory:

All the tears that she had collected inside herself burst through, and she cried harder and harder. They were mean, like her parents. They had gone away. She had prayed every night to Hanuman to send her parents back to her, the brave monkey god Aunty Kiran had told her about, who always helped people in trouble, who made everybody happy. But it hadn't worked. The monkey god hadn't done anything at all. (THW 250)

It shows that Nandana has a strong faith on God. As a child, she hopes that her parents come back one day and her life turns to be a happy one. She fails to mingle with her new world but she wants to reach her native land. Her tears show the psychological suffering which she undergoes in diasporic land.

Badami visualises the perspective between the two worlds, India and Canada through the character Nandana. Her characters learn to be courageous, self-determining and fearless. This learning assists Nandana to adapt herself to several circumstances. Eventually she speaks to everyone in her family. When Sripathi Rao reads Maya's letter and cries for her, Nandana comes nearby to offer him consolation and support. She asks, "Are you crying because your mother died?" (THW 357). He replies, "Yes, partly that." (THW 357). Nandana instantly conveys her emotions, "My mother also died" (THW 357). Sripathi also answers, "Yes, she was my daughter" (THW 358). This shows Nandana gets a comfortable new life and her family in the new land.

The Hero's Walk mirrors the struggle of Nandana to build a home in a new land and to construct her own identity. Badami creates the psychological tension between transnational identity and acculturation. In the same way, Nandana's identity has confronted both traditional and modern worlds. Finally, she accepts her several hardships and torments either gladly or reluctantly. She has faced many cultural challenges at the beginning when she has shifted to India. But later she trusts that her encounters will provide the much-needed hope in her life.

The novel focuses on the psychological intricacies which arise once people identify as immigrants. Initially, Nandana is not ready to accept another culture and adopted country. She later accepts the truth and also starts her new life. She realises that one must cherish a diasporic life because it is an exquisite gift. Nandana makes

up her mind to adapt and accept things as it is according to her circumstances. She mingles with her mother's home and gets grandparent's affection. Eventually, she sees her mother Maya's home as her own home. She has recreated her own individuality even in her hybrid space.

Similarly, Badami's third novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* deals with the unhappy state of immigrants' life and their struggle for attaining the peaceful life. The characters in this novel agonise a lot by losing all their treasured relationships one after another. Badami projects the lives of three women in different perspectives. Her three protagonists in *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* face cultural challenges and identity crisis. The novel charts the intertwining stories of three strong Indian Women- Bibi-ji, Leela and Nimmo, each in search of a peaceful and stable life between changing cultures and space.

Badami's novels sketch the exact replication of cultural confrontation in the cascade of several components such as domestic, social, psychological and political realms. She uses the different parameters and aspects to identify the problems of cultural collision between the East and the West. Badami has exposed these issues through the character Leela. She is labelled as half-and-half by her grandmother. A snob, Leela tries to create her own identity instead of living in-between space. Her sour tongued grandmother scolds her and her mother. Her mother is a German Rosa Schweers and father Hari Shastri is an Indian who belongs to Brahmin family.

Similar to Nandana, Leela does not like to live in a hybrid identity initially. She has accepted her life as half-and-half even though she has not done anything incorrect. Her relative says, "Because she is also half here and half there, that's why," Naani explained. "Like the Anglo-Indians of Cox Town" (*CYHNC* 78). Being in her motherland, Leela feels alienated and a sense of belonging nowhere. Her grandmother

also says loudly, “Half-breed . . . Worse than an untouchable. At least a toilet cleaner has a caste. But this girl, where does she belong? Tell me, somebody, *where?*”

(*CYHNC* 82). In Indian society, they give an importance to caste system, colour and customs.

Leela understands only half of her mother’s mixture of language. Rosa warns Leela about being half-and-half, “Never forget you are mine. Even though you have a brown skin, you see the world with my grey eyes. They are wicked, filthy creatures, pigs, dirtyevilpigs” (*CYHNC* 82). Akka, Leela’s grandmother often compares the king Trishanku with Leela. The king Trishanku sways between two worlds, likewise Leela lives in the same state of him. Narayana points out, “our Leela is up-in-the-air like that upside-down king, Akka . . . “Like Trishanku?” Akka asked” (*CYHNC* 78). Leela asks herself whether it is her mistake to be the child of mismatched parents.

The label that Leela carries out everywhere is half-and-half. She gets through the psychological endurance for not having a space for herself. She longs for the affection and love from her family. A caring servant Venki takes care of Leela. She gets warmth and solace through the kind words of Venki:

So what is wrong with being like Trishanku? Was he not a lucky fellow to have a foot in two worlds? Did he not have a heaven of his own around him? . . . it can be an advantage to live neither here nor there, like a frog, comfortable in water and on land. The thing is to understand how to make use of this ability. (*CYHNC* 83)

This substantiates the hybrid identity of Leela even in her native land. She has decided to persist in her higher studies in university. But she gets married to Balachandra Bhat, called as Balu by his family and friends. He is from such a

renowned Brahmin family with a doctorate in chemical engineering from Indian Institute of Science.

Leela's life turns out to be happy after the arrival of Balu. She wants to get away from her grandmother's home. She finds love and care in her husband Balu's home. She sets out to create her own heavenly life in order to erase her half-and-half tag. The home is filled with lots of relations which appears to Leela as somewhat new. She expresses, "She loved his ancestors—purebred Hindu Brahmins, untainted either racially or in their religion—whose photographs hung in solemn . . . their glassy foreheads smeared with Kumkum and ash, their saintly eyes looking down at the serene, uneventful span of their offsprings' lives" (CYHNC 99). Leela has resumed her blissful married life along with her two children.

Leela gets disappointed with Balu for asking her to come to Canada along with her children. Her life gets disturbed by the persistent desire of Balu to move to Canada. Leela wishes to join with the well-known family to get their love and care. She yearns to possess the tradition of renowned Bhat's family so that she breaks out her life of half-and-half. Badami has crafted a difference between Balu and Leela in diverging from their own cultures. She moves to Canada with an unhappy heart. Her mind changes when she enters the new space of Vancouver. She expresses her state of mind towards Vancouver:

She would not allow herself to be beguiled. She was feeling the oddest mix of emotions, agitation and anger, for no particular reason . . . She was disappointed that Vancouver was not something she could readily and immediately hate. And it did not smell like Cubbon Park at all. It was different—a wonderful, clean smell of tree resins and new rain, Leela had to admit it, she *liked* the smell. (CYHNC 108)

She starts to like Vancouver and finds little comfort. She starts to understand the cultural conflicts. She asks her daughter Preethi to enter the threshold by her right foot. Even in Vancouver, she follows the Eastern customs. She commands to Preethi, “Right foot first . . . Even here . . . And don’t stop in the doorway . . . Remember, it’s an in-between space. Neither here nor there. It is dangerous” (CYHNC 110). She does not allow her children get trapped in the life of in-between space as her. Leela writes a letter to her mother-in-law:

Vancouver is not a bad place. It looks a lot like our Bangalore with many large trees and clean roads. It is similarly not as big as Delhi and there are very few people. This house is very nice also. She would never write anything but positive words in her letters. It wouldn’t do to let people know that she was in any way dissatisfied. (CYHNC 110)

She suffers in silence because she feels there is no one who can understand and help her recover from her trauma. She tries to construct her own home against all troubles and sufferings that destiny has offered her.

Badami highlights the cross-cultural phenomenon and efforts to preserve one’s own ethnic culture in an adopted country. Through Leela, Badami picturises that immigrant tries to rebuild an unreal home in an adopted land. Correspondingly, in Canada, Leela decorates her home with Indian things, “that way it would smell more like Home” (CYHNC 111). She further says:

She would cut this New World into the shape she wished it to be, pull at the edges that didn’t match the pattern of her memories and rename it. she would redraw maps and mythologies like the settlers who came before her, those men and women from Europe who had taken a land already scored by earlier populations and marked it with their own

symbols and meanings, owned it with their namings and words. Like them, she would make this corner of the world her own until it was time to return home. (*CYHNC* 111)

Leela makes her life comfortable but at the same time she faces many racial comments in Vancouver. She adjusts to her new life in Canada but she cannot escape her identity as half-and-half or hybrid. She wants to break her coloured identity in order to find her individuality.

Badami shows the fear of living in-between space and how it disturbs the immigrants' existence. As an expatriate, she recalls her grandfather's words, "What a blessing it is to die in your own bed, under your own roof, with your own family surrounding you, full of the knowledge that you have lived as thoroughly as you wanted to" (*CYHNC* 101). Badami clearly represents the expatriate life of Leela who fights back for her life. Through Leela, Badami has displayed the superiority of a specific culture. Suddenly, the questions run through her mind about the strangers who dwell near-by:

Would she ever understand the people who inhabited them? What made them belong, and what made her a foreigner? How long would she remain foreign? Would she eventually become a woman of meaning here, a person who was a somebody, or would she remain without context, tied to a past that meant nothing to anyone except herself? A past, that would, if they lived here long enough, become irrelevant to her children? (*CYHNC* 129)

Being half-and-half, Leela thinks that she does not belong to either worlds. A question of identity rises when she thinks about her life of half-and-half. Her destiny really

pulls her into an actual space of in-betweenness which aptly suits her tag - half-and-half.

Through Leela's search of identity, the moment of questioning is central to the way towards resolution. She wishes to return to her homeland because she finds it difficult to adapt to a new culture. She tries to find a new comfortable place to create a new life within. She feels she could not simply despise Canada. She understands eventually, "But this new world they had moved to was different. Here you *needed* maps to find your way" (CYHNC 130). Her problem only comes to an end when she understands the truth and tries to retrieve from that situation. Leela asks herself when she feels in awe of Bibi-ji's travel, "How long would it take for this new life to become a skin over the open wound of being half-and-half?" (CYHNC 137). She thinks about Bibi-ji's words about "The Minority Boat" (CYHNC 137). They believe that boat does not allow them to sink, when they desire to exit.

Leela becomes capable to build another home in a new land. Vimala, Balu's cousin writes a letter to Leela about Arjun, Leela's son. She asks whether he is thinking about his marriage or not. Leela get worried about Arjun's *gori* girlfriend, Fern. She accepts her son's affair as she has accepted her present life. She thinks:

. . . after a night of tossing at the prospect of half-and-half – or indeed one-third – grandchildren, she gave up, defeated by fractions, and shrugged mentally. It had been difficult for her—even painful, she remembered, so painful that she had put away, in some dusty corner of her mind, her memories of her large, sad mother. But it would not be difficult in this world, where change and movement and hybridity were commonplace, for any children that Arjun and Fern chose to have. Not so difficult, anyway. (CYHNC 307)

Badami projects Leela in two perspectives. One as an Eastern woman who has been stuffed with emotions, obligations, love and many other such channels to imbalance her thoughts and causes her to feel the anguish of many labels. Another one is as Western woman wherein she has modified herself to fit into the new scheme of life and she becomes fearless to encounter the problems.

Leela's past life haunts her and it comes to her mind frequently. She has a cozy home in Vancouver but still her mind is not convinced to hold the contentment of her new life. She conveys her desire to go to India, ". . . I want to go to India next year . . . It has been too long" (*CYHNC* 312). Her decision goes wrong and becomes a hopeless one. On the day of leaving, her mind is occupied with the thought: "Where was the home exactly? Back in Vancouver or ahead of her in India?" (*CYHNC* 391). Her mind is packed with the doubts of her real home. She recollects her grandmother's statement, "Nothing worse than to be a dangling person, a foot here and a foot there and a great gap in between. Imagine how painful it is to stay stretched like that forever" (*CYHNC* 392). She further adds, "Like King Trishanku, a floating, rootless, accursed creature, up-in-the-air" (*CYHNC* 392). She understands that she is literally suspended between two worlds and two cultures.

Badami clearly shows her life and death as a half and half. She dies in the bombing of Air India Flight 182 and she fails to go back home. Badami indirectly says that Leela's life is neither slated to fit into India nor into Canada. Similar to the King Trishanku, Leela is stuck between two worlds, home and new world. Her death deeply disturbs the life of Balu. He says sadly, "I was the one who insisted. If we hadn't left Bangalore . . ." (*CYHNC* 396). She has lived her whole life as half-and-half. Badami depicts the tragic life of an expatriate, Leela and her unfortunate death.

Badami clearly depicts the problem of homelessness and hybrid space. She says that home is a difficult idea for the immigrants. The immigrants live in-between space. In a new land, living in-between is not that easy because it is identified as unsafe, painful and relegating. Leela changes her mind positively with the progression of western thoughts. She understands that hybrids are normal in the contemporary world. Her death shows Leela's birth as half-and-and and her death as half-and-half. Eventually, she accepts her hybrid space when she decides to return Vancouver.

Another major change in the arena of diaspora is accepting their hybrid space in the modern world. In the beginning, an immigrant faces the maximum level of dissatisfaction and frustration. Badami has given an extensive examination from the cultural perspective in social and domestic setting. Throughout her novels, she focuses on the challenges of immigrants who encounter cultural collision, alienation, rootlessness and the condition of surviving in the middle of an alien land. They accept the harsh realities and certainty of the world to which they fit.

Hybridity is a prismatic concept which offers a kaleidoscopic picture of mixed cultures and people between two worlds. As hybrid beings, Badami's characters not only try to know about their own self and one's own place, but also, they must need suitable company to uncover oneself to others. The hybrid space helps them to understand the outlook of two worlds and two cultures profoundly. Badami helps her characters to celebrate their in-between spaces and observes all cultures as they are captivated in a constant progression of hybridity. Acceptance assists them to learn from their own experiences. Their adaptation is the result of all the affliction they have undergone. Their adaptability is the sole way to discover new meanings and to lead a comfortable and contented life.

Chapter - 5

Summation

An incredible writer Anita Rau Badami depicts the trauma and conflicts of diasporas in an effective manner. She also reveals how immigrants live with the pain of trauma in order to achieve their individuality. She points out that the immigrants have had to stabilise their identity between two different cultures. Her realistic approach towards exploration of diaspora speak about real life experiences and explore the unfavourable situations and environments in one's life. She attempts to reveal the experience of distress and anguish which arise due to immigrants' issues and multi-cultural identity.

The cross-cultural conflict is the biggest area of concern in diasporic writings. Badami exposes the skirmishes between the inner self and society, a native culture and an adopted culture, the state of in-betweenness of an immigrant beautifully. She highlights the profound thoughts of migration, diaspora, nostalgia, culture, identity, understanding of ethnicity, socio-cultural ideas. The problems of dislocations and in-betweenness are well displayed in Badami's novels. She conveys the immigrants' encounter and how they tackle the problems of alienation and identity crisis in their own distinct way.

Badami has herself experienced the two different cultural spaces. This further provides an impetus for a true-to-life portrayal of the angst of an immigrant. As a result of the diaspora, immigrants face the complications such as fragmentation, a feeling of foreignness, double identity, hybrid space, alienation which primarily create chaos and collisions. She describes the issues relating to nostalgia, cultural ethos, identity and craving for home which are the pivotal concepts in diaspora. The

immigrants combat the identity crisis when they attempt to settle down in an adopted country.

The study aims to showcase the lives of immigrants who have undergone the multicultural experience, uprootedness, displacement and the quest for the self. Badami portrays her characters from different layers of society. She sketches a profound and clear picture about the socio-cultural changes and identity differentiation which are taking place in modern society. Therefore, her three novels connect with the homeland and interact with culture over long period of time in a unique manner. The three novels of Anita Rau Badami chosen for the study namely *Tamarind Mem*, *The Hero's Walk*, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* remind in particular about the past, nostalgic memories, historical events, their own pain and wounds, old and new culture and the traumatic moments of the characters.

The problem of identity and hybridity speak through the characters because of cross-cultural conflict between the homeland and host land. With an understanding of these, the characters attain self-realisation and break the barriers of tradition, customs and values. In *Tamarind Mem*, Badami uses a flashback narrative technique to highlight the diasporic discourses. She depicts her characters both in the perception of native culture and adopted culture. Through her characters Kamini and Saroja, she probes into the notions of cultural and individual identities. Badami portrays how Kamini catches the complicated cultural encounter and lives through a sense of nostalgia.

Badami epitomises the distinctive persona of Indian woman and her marginalisation in patriarchal society. Badami characterises Saroja as she is in persistent search for her individuality whereas Kamini creates her new different identity on the grounds of emotional assessments. She focuses on the familial

relationships, balance between native and alien land, cultural experiences and complications of human's way of life. Badami binds the relationship of mother and daughter together who are opposite in every way. She portrays the life of Saroja who has often been trapped in a variety of experiences in her own native country. Kamini finds comfort in her new country but immerses in isolation. She finds a fierce silence around her in a new environment.

Badami has given a new life to a diasporic writing by imbibing many elements such as nostalgia, exploring both cultures and cultural adaptability. Throughout her novels, Badami focuses on delineating the picture of India. She has clearly shown the cultural differences, identity formation and isolation through nostalgia. Nostalgia and memory play a crucial role in diasporic writings to convey diasporic sensibility. In Indian society, people give importance solely to customs, morals and are also faithful to their community. The immigrants wish to move away from their restricted family but struggle to create a new space in new environment.

An exploration of Badami's novels shows the poignant freshness and real experiences which tells the essence of diasporic sensibility. Through her writings, she mesmerises her reader by the way of handling both her native culture and adopted culture hand in hand, expressing human experience in a broader way, especially through immigrational experience of women and reliving the life with the past and the present. She provides a deep glimpse of the plights of women, their agony, forced marriages and how they feel restrained by customs and norms. Badami exhibits the effervescence of Kamini's immigrant experiences and her all-embracing blend into her adopted country and its culture.

In the context of diaspora, nostalgia is an ever-growing concept used in literary creations of contemporary writers. Badami is well-planned in narrating the life

of the characters with the help of nostalgia. In *Tamarind Mem*, the past memories assist to display the emotional tangles and interconnectedness in family. It also helps to resolve the conflicts within family and strives to reunite with them. A presence of the nostalgia makes the novel even more colourful and intense. Kamini and Saroja uncoil their stories of the past and the present in two different perspectives so it is easy to understand the crux of the story. Nostalgia alleviates their distress of mind and visualises the future with great hope.

From the perspective of Kamini, Saroja needs some break from her traditional roles and wants some breathing space from her life. Badami portrays Saroja as a traditional archetype woman who can convey her experiences of vacillating between tradition and modernity. She finally surmounts all the sufferings from her patriarchal society and breaks the traditional rules. Badami showcases Saroja as an example for the contemporary women who try hard to grasp the individual identity. She adds a piquant flavour to her novels by poignantly encapsulating the diasporic experiences, the emotional rendezvous, the pictures of memory and cultural orientation.

In her second novel *The Hero's Walk*, Badami tries to connect human space and social space. She observes the characters' different patterns of diasporic experiences. Through different lenses, she projects the image of two cultures and how it affects the characters' entire life. The bond of father and daughter, mother and child uncover their strong relationships by the past memories. Her women characters are stuffed with an emotional engagement because of living in the hands of male-centric society and in a diverse cultural circumstance.

Particularly, the novel *The Hero's Walk* vividly throws light on a host of aspects such as fluctuating human relationships, conflicts between individual and social life, cultural agony, clashes of tradition and modernity, self-discovery and

nostalgia with the trace of cultural angst. As an expatriate, Nandana finds uncomfortable and unhappy in an alien land. She needs friends to accompany her to get rid of alienation. Badami shows Nandana's psychological endurance through the irrepressible tears and silence. She starts to live in taciturnity where she begins to lose her voice for her identity. She breaks down all her hitches and accepts her hybrid identity.

The characters are caught between the two worlds, later they find themselves too far-flung from their native country and its culture. The characters like Kamini, Maya and Nandana feel their state of in-betweenness and try to fit into their particular labels. The conflicts between tradition and modernity arise when they struggle to adapt to a new culture. Badami picturises the lives of women in Indian society where they grow up within the four walls of a male-centric society. So, unquestioningly women should accept the norms and adhere to men's conventions. The female characters try to back off from their traditional roles and begin to live their own way of life.

Badami explores the unexplored scrape of women which throw light on how Indian women encounter the difficulties, ambiguity about their position, their adherence towards age-old traditions and so on. The novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* also deals with the difficult subjects such as the impact of culture, double identity, socio-cultural variations and political fluctuations. Badami's representation of Indian women create to reimagines the status of women and explores negotiations of their identities. *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* voices the complicated journey and border crossing of immigrants from India to Canada. As immigrants, Bibi-ji, Leela Bhat, Nimmo, Pa-ji and Balachandra Bhat encounter a different diasporic experience in a new country. The characters eventually realise that

they can acclimate and adjust in different milieus in order to subsist in an adopted land.

The study brings to light how immigrants undergo the cultural challenges in their life. Badami, in her writings, furnishes an exquisite platform to comprehend the characteristics of diaspora and also the problems which are faced by diasporic communities. She creates the picture of immigrants' experiences and their major shift, mostly about women immigrants. Predominantly, they get trapped between the socio-cultural shades of Indian society and modern ways of life in Canada. She shows the track for upliftment through the characters' endurance. The immigrants either try to embrace the adopted culture or attempt to maintain their native culture. The mixing of two cultures may affect the immigrants' lives both psychologically and physically. Due to the interaction of two different cultures, they are not able to blend with the two cultures at the time. This results in cultural conflicts that disturbs the lives of immigrants both personally and socially.

Badami proves herself as an eminent writer by creating her women characters as survivors and great fighters against the male-dominated and rule-bound society. She gives a deep insight about the women psyche and their disparate experiences in society. Gender inequality is a multifaceted problem which deteriorates the condition of women. In *Tamarind mem*, Badami points out the past cultural constraints that affect the personal life and dreams of Saroja. She wishes to be a doctor but her parents force her to marry. She highlights how Indian society gives importance to marriage in the life of woman. Marriage is highlighted as a necessity and inevitable for a woman. Saroja feels trapped in the traditional roles as a wife and mother who always be the archetype of a stereotype woman.

Though Saroja is confined in the traditional roles and past cultural restrictions, she does not want her daughters to get trapped into it. Kamini leads her independent life in Canada whereas Roopa chooses her own way of life in America. Badami in her novel, *The Hero's Walk* has brought out the cultural upbringing which later results in perplexity of identity and cultural entanglement. As a traditional Hindu woman, Nirmala gives respect to tradition and obeys the principles. She strives hard to break her confinement and wishes to spread her wings in her own way. She never lets her daughter to stuck in the past cultural restrictions.

Badami voices against the conventional rules which subjugate the women. The characters like Saroja, Ammayya, Putti, Nirmala, Bibi-ji, Nimmo, Leela Bhat face the cultural challenges, oppression by men, socio-cultural constrains which influence them. In *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* Badami creates the characters as powerful survivors to show how women should defend themselves from the patriarchal society. Badami has experienced the state of in-betweenness in her own life so that she can elaborately portray the image of Indian and Canadian society.

The cross-cultural barricades create more complexity for the immigrants to bridge the cultural gap. Through her writings, she says that people have to embrace and accept cultural differences. She tries to balance the both cultures to avoid the cultural collisions. The immigrants take some time to accept the reality in their lives. They are jammed between two ways of viewing the situation- Western and Eastern. They fight within themselves and attempt to reshape their lives and destinies.

Women want to break the barrier of man-controlled society to succeed in life. Thus, their pursuit of individuality begins in the end. They want to live their own life but at the same they never break their traditional roles. Badami expounds the aspirations and nostalgias of immigrants who anticipate to recreate their own home in

an adopted land. They even face the issue of self-identity which impinge on them with the overlapping challenges. The agony that meets the immigrants' mind is the twinge of having double identity. They feel disconnected from their native country and sense like they belong nowhere.

The characters like Saroja, Kamini, Vishwa Moorthy, Sripathi, Nirmala, Maya, Arun, Maya's daughter Nandana, Putti, Ammayya, Bibi-ji, Leela, Nimmo, Paji, Balachandra Bhat are different in their nature of mind and also remain elusive. Badami shows two manifestations of mind – one is that, some accept their life as it is and survive with the past memories; second is, they long to see their native land and feel inept to survive in a new land. As an immigrant, Badami grasps the true state of Indian society and Western culture and has a tendency to recreate it via her real-life experience and nostalgia.

Badami displays the experience of hybridity which presents the multiplicitous encounters throughout the novels. She describes the experience of mixed identity through the characters to help understand the true manifestation of two different cultures. Kamini and Bibiji accept their hybrid identity and lead their exultant lives. On the other hand, Nandana and Leela Bhat are not happy in a new land because they wish to go back to their native land. Their search for identity creates the turmoil and tumult in their lives. Badami ruptures the manacles of women immigrants by valiantly voicing out the state of women in Indian society.

Through her explorative writings, she highlights the social glitches, suppression of women, the connection between tradition and modernity, the lack of vigour in women's lives and importance of human relationships. She proves herself as an impressive storyteller through her three novels. In exploring the novels of Badami, she gives a positive attitude towards both Indian and Canadian cultures. She reveals

the conflicts which stem from the confusion of identity. They start to fight for their real identity. The people label immigrants as half-and-half, hybrid identity, migrants and have many different tags.

Diasporic consciousness is part of the major global cultural influences which creates the inner upheaval to the immigrants. The immigrants feel neither merged nor mixed in their new land, but feel as split from their real identity. Badami not only displays the multiplicity of cultures and identities but also speaks about multiplicity of selves. She clearly points out that the development of self-understanding is the keystone of identity formation. Subsequently, the characters begin to pursue the ways of accomplishing their aspirations independently.

Badami discloses that immigrants also have their own rights and public obligations as every citizen. The people are becoming more varied and dissimilar due to migration. The immigrants confront social challenges which affect their whole life, their children's education and both economic and social aspects of the family. In today's world, one automatically attains the status of a global citizen because of the advancement in science and technology and the presence of diasporas.

The concept of hybridity develops the idea about the exchange of two diverse cultures. In the beginning, immigrants feel the chaotic state which create tension and tumultuous situation. Some begin to celebrate and rejoice their hybrid identities. Badami helps to understand the problems of space, liberty and identity and explores their interconnectedness between two cultures. She tries to reunite the characters with the family and resolves the generational rift and cultural clashes.

Badami's writings reflect individuals trapped in the perplexity of immigrant lives who try to crack their divider. In present days, it is common to live with the multiplicity of culture and people in the globalised world. Women through self-

realisation, modify their life as they wish and start to live unconventionally. As a novelist, Badami brings under the spotlight the harmonising of two things, individual and society, caught between tradition and modernity. She assists her characters to rejoice their in-between spaces. And also, she urges to perceive all cultures without intolerance as they are entranced in a relentless development of hybridity.

Acceptance helps immigrants to acquire something positive from their personal experiences. Their acclimatisation is the result of all their hardships they have experienced. Their adaptability is the only way to uncover the meanings in their life which shows the path to lead a secure and satisfied life. An exploration of identity helps them to carve their own paths and makes them to realise that it not essential to settle down in the native country. They came to a realisation and understanding of reality. The self-realisation accomplishes them to recreate their new identity that will classify them.

Badami has an excellent ability to narrate the story and make her fictional characters to be real. She gives an extensive study of the Indo-Canadian diasporic literature which highlights the cross-cultural conflicts and the diasporic experiences. The study also aids to comprehend the impact of culture and its influence as portrayed in the novels. Badami is well aware of the both cultures because she has experienced the same cultural confrontation when she has gone to Canada. So, her novels formulate a better understanding regarding a more broad-minded and smooth acclimatisation of distinct cultures.

The primary problem of clash between tradition and modernity is border crossing and relocation issues. So, Badami tells the way to get away from this clash amid tradition and modernity is a recognition of global citizen's standards and an essence of tolerance. Badami tries to bring out a wide-ranging outlook about the

cultural clashes and cultural differences. She is one among the well-regarded writers who has gained people's attention by representing the picture of two countries – India and Canada in balanced aspects. She has successfully brought the two cultures in and shown its challenges and impacts brilliantly.

The tropes which she has applied in her novels are nostalgia, tradition and modernity and hybridity. It gives the optimistic conception about the multiplicity of cultures, migration, inhabitation and diaspora. An opulent use of nostalgic tropes reminds the constant war between the past experience and the present life. Nostalgia not only suggests a looking back to an extinct past but also helps to envision the future with a great hope. Badami unravels the question about the modernity through the tropes of tradition. With the help of these lenses, they can stick every bits and scraps of two dissected cultures to reconstruct a sense of completeness and unity. The intention of the study is to explore the cultural narratives from the perspective of different experiences. Badami provides a noteworthy arena that offers a profound understanding of what is implicated in the experience of cross-cultural arena.

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