CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Michael Ondaatje is a postmodern novelist. The researcher has selected his novels for the research study. The research study covers the theme of Multiculturalism and Transnationalism in the novels of Michael Ondaatje. His novels *Coming Through Slaughter, In the Skin of A Lion, The English Patient, Anil’s Ghost, Divisadero* and *The Cats Table* have employed postmodern strategies. There is tremendous development of technology in the 21st century. The novels are examined through the sociological, psychological aspects of postmodern theories. The analyses of Michael Ondaatje’s works are based on these literary theories and techniques. His writing records the history of Canadian immigrants and reveals the several themes like racism, discrimination, minority oppression, nostalgia, identity crisis, migration and displacement, transnationalism and multiculturalism. He brings all the lost voices together in his novel. He brought black, Canadian, Indian, Japanese, Carribean and French together. Michael Ondaatje enters into the Canadian literary scene before the Canadian Multicultural Act of 1988. Canada has declared itself as a multicultural country tolerant and acceptable of various races after its declaration of Multicultural Act in 1988. Ondaatje has depicted multiculturalism and transnationalism in all his novels. His novels deal with the reality of the life and also deal with the various problem of the society. In the beginning of the 20th century, people from Third World countries migrated to First World countries. This migration brings hybridity and identity crisis of the migrants. The inequality and cultural differences among the people brought chaos in the country. The minority and women started demanding equal status. Because of these demands, many violent incidents have taken place in the country. The novelist portrayed the World War I and II, Civil war etc in his novels. These wars have destroyed the life of innocent people. The country has faced the problem of violence, bloodshed, political killing during the war. The horrible incidents have made people to live a life in isolation. This study focuses on the history of the marginalized people and their suffering. It also focuses on the life of migrants. Ondaatje has depicted the life of marginalized people in his novels. He portrays African Americans in United States, suppression of minority in Canada and Tamil minority in Sri Lanka.
The introduction of the thesis comprises the aim, objectives, hypothesis, thesis statement scope and limitations, review of literature, significance and methodology of the study. The introduction clearly states the logical line of the argument sustained in the subsequent chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the writer and his works. The second chapter deals with the theoretical framework which includes multiculturalism and transnationalism. Diaspora is a broad concept which is explained in the first chapter i.e. theoretical framework. Human beings are migrating from their homeland to other geographical and cultural location since their origin. The rate of migration is increasing day by day due to progress in the technology. The migrants carry with them their culture, language, habits and beliefs. This chapter focuses on the origin and development of the term Diaspora, multiculturalism and transnationalism. Diaspora is a word borrowed from Greek language. It is a very broad concept. Diasporic literature is the best way to explain the problems of immigrants and also discuss the problems encountered by the immigrants. The terms multiculturalism and transnationalism are the features of Diaspora.

Diaspora is not only in their country but also in other country. People have to face problems like language, cultural, life style etc. Migrants face problems in the new worlds and face loneliness, alienation, distress, exploitation etc. The development of the term diaspora is explained with examples. William Safran has applied the concept of diaspora to expatriate minority community. Nowadays diaspora is used to refer the any community which is transnational. The term multiculturalism is explained in this chapter. First of all, the definition of culture is explained. Culture means everything i.e. customs and beliefs. It also includes knowledge, belief, law, art, moral and habits attained by the man as a member of a society. Multiculturalism is the synthesis of variety of culture. Multiculturalism tries to bring equality in the society. It tries to give equal right to the minority people. Multiculturalism treats all culture equally and it doesn’t discriminate. Migrants are actively involved in two or more cultures. Michael Ondaatje deals with the problems of immigrants in the cross cultural encounter and transnationalism. The study of multiculturalism and transnationalism makes to understand the way of people across the national and cultural borders. Michael Ondaatje explores the theme of multiculturalism and transnationalism sensitively and honestly in his novels. Ondaatje is
himself migrated from Sri Lanka and has faced complexities of migration and dislocation. He uses his personal experience to write about the multicultural and transnational movement. Migrants can keep multi-stranded social relations with the country of origin and host country. They can take active participation in both countries. They are not the citizen of any one country but they are the citizens of the world. Steven Vertovec in his book *Transnationalism* depicted social, political and economic transformation of migrants.

The third chapter deals with the reflection of multiculturalism in the novels of Michael Ondaatje. These novels are *Coming Through Slaughter, In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient*. All these novels are published in the last quarter of 20th century. In *Coming Through Slaughter*, his autobiographical novel, the notion of other is central. He has focused on marginal characters Buddy Bolden, E.J. Bellocq, Nora, Webb etc.. Buddy Bolden is a black African American cornet player and legendary figure in Jazz style and E.J. Bellocq is a photographer.

*The English Patient*, a famous novel, projects multicultural and transnational perspective. All the four characters in this novel have migrated from different cultural backgrounds. Hana is a Canadian and Patrick is the step father of Hana and friend of the thief Caravaggio. Almasy is a Hungarian and Kirpal Singh nick named as Kip is the Punjabi Indian who is fond of western culture. The theme of multiculturalism is prevalent in this novel. The novel took place before the Second World War and it was published in the year 1992. Ondaatje has mixed the people from Canada, India, British and Greek in an Italian Villa. Identity of all these characters in an unknown place is the mystery of the novel. Ondaatje creates a multicultural reality where all the characters think of themselves as international bastards. The burned man identity is mysterious. Ondaatje draws characters from different cultural backgrounds and from different nations. He tries to show the unity among the nations through the multicultural perspective.

Ondaatje in his novel *In the Skin of a Lion* projects the people who are marginalized, silent and ignored by the world. The people who have contributed to the construction of Bloor Street Viaduct are neglected from the official history of Toronto. Ondaatje has presented Canada his adopted land realistically. The immigrants know more about Canada than the native of Canada but they are always regarded as an outsider. Patrick,
the protagonist of the novel, in his search of his culture, understands that he himself is an immigrant in his own country. The immigrants cross boundaries with full dreams but face many problems in alien world. Ondaatje has depicted the problems of learning a language by the immigrants in the alien countries. He highlights the theme of outsiders and discrimination through the characters. He also highlights the deplorable conditions of immigrant workers in tanneries. The language barrier is also highlighted in the novel. Patrick’s inability to understand English language separates him from his own community. Nicholas Temelcoff realizes in Canada that the migrants’ first step in foreign land is language acquisition. Ondaatje portrays both Patrick and Nicholas who are able to cope with the new environment for achieving the new opportunities. The researcher has focused the problems encountered by the migrants in multicultural world. Migrant faces problems like cultural clashes, marginalization, different relationships in the host land.

The fourth chapter focuses on the reflection of multiculturalism in the novels of Michael Ondaatje. The novels are Anil’s Ghost, Divisadero and The Cats Table. These novels are published in 21st century. We come across the maturity of writer in his later novels. He uses many catchy phrases in his novels. In his novel, Anil’s Ghost, he portrays Anil, a protagonist who is moving across cultures. The choice of selecting a male name is to escape from the boundaries of female identity. When she returns to her homeland, she thinks about her gendered identity. She has escaped from the cultural gendered roles when she left her country of origin, now she once again thinks in a marginal position. She is a forensic anthropologist in foreign land. She is torn between the nostalgia of Sri Lankan culture and her desire for freedom in alien land. Her identity is shaped in three different countries i.e. America, England and Sri Lanka. Because of the influence of three countries, she is not able to speak her own language i.e. Sinhalese.

Ondaatje’s novel Divisadero explores the theme of multiculturalism. Anna and Segura hide their true identities. Anna travels to rural France from her native country America. She has crossed the border of her country and faces a number of problems. The novel traces back to the time of Californian gold rush. The people who came there in search of gold lived happily irrespective of different cultural backgrounds. The people from different cultural backgrounds arrived at Petaluma. Anna continuously travels from one
country to another country and forms a new relation. She carries her past memories along with her.

Ondaatje’s last novel *The Cat’s Table* depicts the voyage of Mynah and his friendship with Ramadhin and Cassius on the ship. All the characters explain their cultural roots with each other. Michael or Mynah is eleven years old when he starts his voyage. This novel is autobiographical in nature, Ondaatje also travelled at the age of 11 from Sri Lanka to Canada. This journey connects Michael to his past, present and future. The elements of multiculturalism are depicted in these novels. Cultural clashes, migration, marginalization, multicultural relationships etc are dealt in these novels.

Fifth chapter deals with the reflection of transnationalism in the novels of Michael Ondaatje. Ondaatje is Sri Lankan Canadian poet and novelist. His novels depict postmodern and postcolonial themes such as identity crisis, migration, nostalgia, isolation, hisoriographic metafiction etc. The novels *Coming Through Slaughter, In the Skin of a Lion and The English Patient* depicts the history of the migrants. In *Coming Through Slaughter*, he depicts the migration of Buddy Bolden and E.J. Bellocq. Both live a life of isolation. In despair Buddy Bolden became mad at the end of his life and E.J. Bellocq committed suicide by setting himself on fire. In the Skin of a Lion projects the history of migrant workers and labourers. The real contribution of the workers and labourers for the development of Toronto and Prince Edward Viaduct is not seen in the official history of Canada. These migrants carry with them their culture and identity to the host country. They always have a feeling of isolation and nostalgia. They think of their home country in the host country. These migrants keep relationships with their country of origin through variety of ways. This dual citizenship of migrants is called transnationalism. His novel, *The English Patient* depicts the history of migrants from various countries. These migrants live in a dilapidated Villa. Hana, Caravaggio, Almasy and Kip came from different countries and living amicably with one another. They try to maintain good relationships with one another.

Sixth chapter deals with the transnationalism in the novels of Michael Ondaatje. These novels are *Anil’s Ghost, Divisadero and The Cat’s Table*. These novels are published in the first two decades of the 21st century. The maturity of novelist is seen in his later novels. He used different terms and catchy phrases in these novels. His novel Anils Ghost
depicts the story of Anil who is a forensic anthropologist comes to Sri Lanka after fifteen years as a agent of human rights organization. She started searching the dead body of people who are killed and buried. She migrates to different countries for education, job etc. She forgets the culture and language of her own country and she becomes completely a westerner. Divisadero is a fifth novel of Michael Ondaatje. It also depicts the issues of transnationalism. This novel is about Anna, Clarie and Coop. After the violent incident on Petaluma farm, all these characters migrate to different places. At the host land they face problems such as alienation, language barrier, nostalgia, migration, relationships etc. Ondaatje’s last novel The Cats Table also tells the story of Michael who travels to England. He meets various people on the ship Oronsay. They also face similar problems such as nostalgia, identity crisis, alienation etc.

Ondaatje’s novels depict human experience and dilemmas and challenges of migration. He says that identity is always fluid and constantly in the process of formation. His novels depict dilemmas of workers and labourers. He provides voice to the individuals who are marginalized. His aim is to restore the name and identity of the marginalized people who contributed for the progress of the country. He depicts identity crisis in a native land and the transnational plight of the people. Here the movement is viewed not as an absolute disjunction from home or roots. He thinks about the concept of transnationalism which is beyond home and culture. He also depicts the multicultural relations of the individual beyond their territory. The identity is not fixed and it is free in transnational spaces where boundaries are crossed. His multicultural relations develop a new path towards a multicultural attitude. Ondaatje goes beyond the country and tries to establish transnational and multicultural relationships. He also highlights the violence and suffering of the marginal people in his novels. He depicted the real picture of World War I, World War II, Civil War and bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These wars have killed many innocent people. In this world racism, discrimination is prevalent and it takes life of numerous people.

In his novel, Michael Ondaatje highlighted the inequality which is present in the society and Ondaatje gives a message to them to fight for justice. He also gives a message that we are not of one country, we belong to all country. We are not the citizen of one country; we are the citizen of the world. He gives messages of equality, non-violence,
fight for justice, human rights etc through his novels. His novels also highlighted the suffering of the people in the postmodern world. People should accept the changes and live a positive life.

Ondaatje promotes multiculturalism and people should live amiable with each other in the society. Migrated people always are haunted by their past country. They have to adjust into the new environment and migrants faces different challenges in the host country.

The present research puts forward some of the important points which will help to the migrants, outside their country of origin.

1) The migrant’s face number of problems in a host country. Migrants carry with them their deeply rooted culture, customs and nostalgia to the host country. They mix their own culture with the new culture and their culture becomes hybrid one.

2) Ondaatje’s characters mix their culture with new culture and live in multicultural relations. Migrants face problems of insider and outsider, language etc.

3) Migrants go beyond their own country and form the transnational relations. They are not the citizen of one country. They become the citizen of the world.

4) Ondaatje’s characters continuously move from one country to another country for a number of reasons. They establish their relations in an alien land.

5) Immigrants face the problem of identity in host country and the country of their origin.

6) They cross their geographical place to fulfil their dreams.

8) The theme of multiculturalism and transnationalism is prevalent in all the novels of Michael Ondaatje.

9) Nostalgia is prevalent in his novels. All the characters think about their past which guides them for future.

10) Michael Ondaatje promotes multicultural and transnational relations and treis to create brotherhood among the nations.
11) Ondaatje tries to give rights to the marginalized people through the establishment of multicultural relations. He gives more value to the workers and marginalized people in his novels.

12) Cross cultural relations are prevalent in his novel. These relations try to maintain cultural diversity among the nation.

13) He gives message of non-violence, human rights and equality through his novels.