CHAPTER-4

ANALYSIS OF ‘DIASPORIC SENSIBILITIES’ IN THE WORKS OF THE SELECT WOMEN WRITERS

(DIASPORIC SENSIBILITIES AND OTHER RELEVANT THEMES)

The Indian writers whether they write in English or in regional languages, keep India and Indian culture in the centre of their texts. Their plots and themes revolve round Indian conventions and society. Though diaspora writers have opted to settle in far away countries, their love for homeland does not diminish. Most of the Diaspora writers’ works reflect some common themes. An attempt has been made here to list down several frequent subjects discussed in two Diaspora women writers. After a comprehensive study of those two writers, their themes are compared with a regional Gujarati writer Kundanika Kapadia. This unique comparison of Indian Diaspora female writers to a local Gujarati writer reveals that some themes are universal. Alienation and dejection do not have boundaries. They are not associated with geographical distance but with human existence. The stories of three select lady writers reflect the following themes.

4.1 Alienation and Loss of Identity

The literature after two world wars usually narrates meaninglessness of existence and absurdity in life and relations. Though living amidst family members, today’s individual is lonely and distressed. He does not find fulfilling his duties to be cheerful experiences. His hopes and expectations are shattered and fractured. More specifically for women, the modern time is the most turbulent phase because they are not yet given the due respect by their male counterparts on one hand and they have won the freedom and awareness on the other hand. So they are on the threshold of tradition and modernity, being submissive and being rebellion and finding their own space and fulfilling domestic duties. This state of uncertainty has been faithfully reflected in almost all the women writers across the globe. Three selected women writers are not exceptions. Their characters are full of isolation and alienation. Some of the
examples below would show the seclusion felt by them.

Chitra Banerjee’s ladies mostly lose their identity as soon as they leave India and go to the foreign land after their arranged marriage. Mita of *Clothes* is one such protagonist who is separated from her Indian traditions and who found American ways of living to be strange and hostile. She wanted to move out of two room apartment which is very suffocating. She thought,

“I laugh to myself, thinking how ironic it is that after all my fears about America, my life has turned out to be no different from Dipali’s or Radha’s. But at other times, I feel caught in a world where everything is frozen in place… I stand inside this glass world, watching helplessly as America rushes by, wanting to scream.” (Divakaruni, *Arranged Marriage* 26)

After her husband’s murder, her sense of isolation is intensified.

Jayanti in *Silver pavements, Golden Roofs* felt extremely alienated when her uncle told her,

“The Americans hate us. They are always putting us down because we’re dark-skinned foreigners, kala admi. Blaming us for damn economy, for taking away their jobs. You shall see it for yourself soon enough.” (Divakaruni 43)

She was not ready to believe it until she and her aunt were accosted by a gang of four white teenage boys, shouting “nigger” and throwing mud at them.

Meera in *A Perfect Life* planned to get married to her long-standing American boy friend Richard. She happened to meet a seven years boy and she tried to adopt him legally. She thought that her loneliness would be eradicated in his company. But her sense of loneliness was intensified when the strict adoption laws made her separated from the boy.

Parameswaran’s heroines also embody loneliness and isolation. Veeru in *What Was Always Hers* is a simple Indian girl married to Niranjan in Canada. Initially she was happy to be
in the golden land of todays and tomorrows. She counted her blessings, a caring and scholar husband, two sons, kind in-laws in India who used to keep in touch through phone etc. Life was like a dream. She came closer to Jitin who was her husband’s workmate. Things were rosy until the husband declared to end their relation which Veeru smelled long back when Niranjan suggested to abort the third pregnancy.

“Something in Veeru sighed with relief. Yes, they had to end this stalemate: she had to stop thinking of him as a murderer. Life had to go on, though they had extinguished one life.” (Parameswaran, *What Was Always Hers*, 23)

This sense of isolation kept increasing when she realized her husband’s long affair with Jitin and faced Niranjan’s sad demise. She lost her confidence and identity. Ultimately, she stretched her hands towards Jitin and Jitin held it tightly to reduce coming traumas of life.

The lady narrator Maru in the novella *Maru and M.M. Syndrome* described her distinctive experiences in Canada. She decided to quit her job as a secretary in the University. The reason was the menopausal men’s batty behavior around her. She was fed up of men’s awkward behavior, obsession with cars and extra-marital affairs. She had decided to live with her scientist husband Sivaram. After going to Siv and leaving job, Maru felt much lonely as Siv used to be constantly busy in his research. Out of sheer loneliness, Maru decided to write her long dream project, her autobiography *Maru and Maple Leaf*.

“My writing was going really well. I had found my voice, ah, that magic word that my Creative writing instructors talked about.” (Parameswaran 94)

Her acute sense of loneliness forced her to be over busy. She got involved in setting up the counseling section.

“That was when I came to know about life as really lived: all the beating and battering that women endured. Now of course, new laws and the media have helped educate everyone, and you can’t open a newspaper without all the lurid details of spousal abuse: this morning’s paper had a story about three generations
of women of the same family who put up with shit because that is what they had grown up with.” (Parameswaran 97)

Indian population in foreign land is fond of celebrating festivals together. Maru found this to be the tool for combating loneliness.

“It was that time between Christmas and New Year. You know what a twilight zone it can be sometimes, that week, may be that is why everyone runs around malls, to get away from that grey zone which can really get to you if you sit still.” (Parameswaran 97)

Alienation and loss of self find its heightened manifestation in the stories of Kundanika Kapadia. Katty of *The Sound of God’s Arrival* (શરય આલન કી આલાજ) is victim of loveless marriage. Her husband Firoz is a handsome hunk who is always in search of a new prey. He is the owner of a luxurious hotel. Katty keeps in the ground facing sea and keeps smiling to the passerby. The maid narrator of the story realizes the pain behind this smile. The sense of loneliness makes Katty introvert. She rarely speaks and hates to socialize. Upon asked why she sits alone always, she answers,

“હું એક્રી છું? એક્રી ક્યું? સાથી ક્યું તો મને એકલાં રહેવાનું જ બધા મન છે. મને એકલા જ ગમે છે. પાલી આ ડિનર, રાસ્તી, પાટીઓ, ક્લબ્સ, મીટિંગો, બ્રીજ ના બીજ તો દ્રારાજ બીજ થઈ જાય.” (Am I alone? Where am I alone? Truly speaking, I like to be alone. I like only if I am alone. But Firoz would be bored and lifeless without dance, dinner, clubs and friends.” (Kapadiya 01)

The story is a long conversation between Katty and the maid narrator. When Katty could not identify the maid, she explains,

“સાધારણ બધી જ સ્ત્રીઓ માટે કય્યા અને અલંકારો જ દૂષણે છે. મેં તમારા કપડા જ

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Katty wants to remove all the masks. She wants to get separated but could not show the courage. Her words at the end of the story are full of disappointment.

"How strange it is that it is not true what you tell in presence of rising sun but it is true what you tell in the presence of wedding fire. It is not true what you tell in the utmost solitude from the depth of your heart but it is true what you tell in the presence of five hundred people. Your inner voice is never treated to be true but the corrupt language of the pandit and his incomprehensible mantras are always true. A lady can never revolt what you tell in presence of rising sun but it is true what you tell in the presence of wedding fire. It is not true what you tell in the utmost solitude from the depth of your heart but it is true what you tell in the presence of five hundred people. Your inner voice is never treated to be true but the corrupt language of the pandit and his incomprehensible mantras are always true. A lady can never revolt..."
against this bondage. Her limitless tolerance becomes her enemy. We believe in the principles of Karma. We have faith on God whom we do not know. We believe that things will be ok in the end. Nothing becomes ok. You turn to be the ashes. Thing that you believe to be ok is the death.) (Kapadiya 08)

This long utterance of Katty at the end is faithful record of her sense of loneliness in marital set-up.

Madhuri of Total Destruction (સર્વજાન) is a typical Indian lady who follows her husband’s words religiously. Her husband is also a typical Indian male who constantly doubts about her wife having an affair. He tries to find out through conversation and her behavior. Her husband does not like her childlike innocence, her playing and mixing with children, her talking incessantly and her undisturbed smile. As if he is a guardian, he wants to change her completely. Madhuri should read the books he brings; she should speak as he pleases; should behave as he commands and should smile when he indicates. Bringing complete change in Madhuri becomes his life-long aim. Madhuri’s sense of loneliness and depression kept growing. One day, they happened to meet her friend whose husband died long back. Madhuri was happy to see her to be cheerful and self-dependent. Madhuri’s husband’s chauvinistic feeling aggravated. He thought,

“જેનો પત્ર મૃત્યુના પાલ્યો હોય તે સ્ત્રી આંખ સુંદર કપાડા પહેરી ને પ્રકૃતિ જોવા આવે?
આંખ હસ્ય ધી તરફે કાટે ગઈ હોય ગેમ જોર ધી હસ્ય કરે?
ચોક્કસ્ત અને પ્રકૃતિ તેજ્યો?
ના, આ તો અતિશય અસરું કહી જવાય?
સ્ત્રી સાથે ભૌતિક કહે તે પહોંચી અકસમ.
કે અને પૂર્વ અને જોડે ને માધુરી ને સારુ લાગે છે?
શોક ની માગી જ

How can a lady whose husband had died wear good clothes? How can she come to see the exhibition? How can she laugh so loudly? How can she look so light, beautiful and joyful? This is extremely unacceptable. It is unforgivable that Madhuri smiles and talks with such lady. And it is height that she feels happy to see her.” (Kapadiya 111)
Next day, he passes an ordinance that Madhuri would ask for his permission before talking and being friendly with any lady because he works so hard for Madhuri’s welfare. She gets herself injured in a fire and declares in her last statement,

“भाया पत्ती ये मने मारी नागी छे. अहो मने बाणी नागी छे.” (My husband killed me. He burnt me.) (Kapadiya 113)

Her husband is shocked to learn it. He does not understand why she lied even though he toiled to show her right direction of life.

The lady narrator of the story This too is a color! (रंज तो छे ने!) symbolizes loneliness at its peak. The story begins with the news of her husband’s death. People gathered at her place to console her as if it was a mandatory ritual for them. They had a married life of more than ten years. She was attached to him. But reacting loudly to this news amidst family members, friends and relatives was a bit unusual for her. She was there physically but her mind reflected thousand of relevant and irrelevant matters. From ant on the floor to unsealed pickle bottle, she started thinking about association of death and white color. People in white seemed to her as walking graveyards. She started remembering the face of her husband Sukanth and shocked at her inability to recall the face,

“आटूली वर्दी वार जे रेरे सोतनी अंगो साथे जडायो हतृ, ते मृत्यु पाम्बरंवेत ज धुंधली, बुसाहेलिरे वांली केम जन्म गयो? अंगांमांथी बड़ु वहेला आंसू साथे अनेक छबी जाणे धीवाली गाड़ हती,कहूँसे पोते रकती ज रहे तो...तो कदाय एरे रेरे सोतनी अंगांमांथी साथे ज घोवै जाय.(Can the face she saw for thousands of times be blurred as soon as he died? His face seemed to be washed off with shedding tears. If she continues weeping for long time, his face would be thoroughly washed off from her eyes) (Kapadiya 64)

The story reflects deep philosophy of death where time makes us forget the one who
“सुकूठ येक वार जवतो हती ए वात तो जगो बहु ज द्रव ना मुतकाम नी भरी गई हती। मुतु नी घडना याद रही हती पण जेन जू मृत्यु घण्यु ते तो जागे घण्या समय थी हती ज नह। तेनु नकट्य हृ जो शंक थी सम्पूर्णपूे गात हतुं। पण तेनु मन तो बीज घण्या वियारं करी शंकनु हतुं।” (That Sukanth was once alive seemed to be the matter of remote past. The event of death is remembered, but one who died is forgotten. She was shocked. Her heart was grief-stricken, but her mind could think of many other things) (Kapadiya 64)

She decided to throw away her loneliness and white color and start looking at the color of rising sun.

4.2 Discrimination and Dejection

Discrimination is an unavoidable trait of Diaspora writing. Diaspora literature is full of examples wherein the characters, though educated and skilled, have to face injustice on the base of their skin, religion, class, gender or culture. Women characters are more prone to injustice because they have to face double discrimination, of gender and of other ethnicity. Indian writing in English mostly narrates women to be passive and traditional. Even though the female characters in Diaspora writing are strong, authoritative and aggressive, they are viewed in their role as daughters, wives and mothers. J.K.Dodiya and K.V.Surendran put it precisely in the preface of their book Indian Women Writers: Critical Perspectives, “Men have attained the status of colonizers and women the colonized.” (K.V.Surendran) It becomes difficult for the host country to ensure absolute equality of income and opportunities to the people belonging to other civilization. There are multiple occurrences where the characters fail to get promotion or rank, fail to get active participation in politics and fail to be noticed just because he belongs to the other race. Discrimination gives birth to the identity crisis and dejection. More especially among the second generation Diaspora, this severe depression results into multiple disorders. These examples below from three select texts show discrimination and dejection at the climax.
Chitra Banerjee’s story *Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs* in *Arranged Marriage* speaks about Jayanti who comes to America to stay with her Pratima aunt and Bikram uncle. She heard that uncle owned his own auto business. On her arrival there in U.S., she found that the aunt mostly remained silent. The uncle did not allow her to go outside the home. The uncle often told,

“The Americans hate us. They’re always putting us down because we’re dark-skinned foreigners, kaala admi. Blaming us for the damn economy, for taking awat their jobs. You shall see it for yourself soon enough.” (Divakaruni, *Arranged Marriage* 43)

Jayanti first took it as a usual bias of an Indian man who lacked the opportunities in the foreign land. But she felt discredited when she and her aunt were attacked by four white teenagers shouting ‘nigger’ and throwing mud at them. Uncle’s agony at such discrimination was aggravated,

“This damn country, like a dain, a witch- it pretends to give and then snatches everything back.” (Divakaruni 54)

Meera in *A Perfect Life* is in relationship with a U.S man Richard. She met an orphan boy of seven years and she took him to her house. She wanted to move to some place with the boy where no one knew them. But her close friend Sharmila advised her to adopt him legally,

“You know going away won’t work. May be it would have in India, but not here, where everyone keeps records- hospitals, doctors. No, you have got to do it the legal way. Sooner or later, he shall have to go to school, and then you shall need a birth certificate, a social security number, something to show that you are his guardian.” (Divakaruni 85)

The adoption process demonstrated instances of discrimination. Meera had to send the boy to the adoption centre so that they could find his real parents. Meanwhile, she was free to try for his adoption. One day, they called Meera to give the news about elopement of the boy from the centre. She was extremely dejected as she was much attached with the boy. She took it long
to get to normalcy. The life kept offering her the routine event but amidst those casualties, her eyes kept searching the lost life,

“I take a day off from work. I go back to Mrs. Ortiz’s neighborhood- nobody knows this-and drive through all the streets, slowly, carefully, peering at passing faces. And when I come back to my apartment, I close my eyes before the last bend of the stairs that led to my door. I hold my breath and imagine a boy in a red Mickey Mouse T-shirt sitting on the topmost step.” (Divakaruni 108)

Meera’s routine work and events of life could not remove the harsh gloominess felt by the absence of the boy.

_Darkest Before Dawn_ by Uma Parameswaran brings the theme of discrimination to the forefront. Jyoti, the leadig girl was in deep relationship with her American boy-friend Pierre. She had gone to take care of her little cousins to their house. There she encountered a racial attack,

“Jyoti opened the door and walked out in her stockings. One of the boys had just thrown a snowball at the window, and the other was about to follow suit but stopped at seeing Jyoti and pretended to clean his gloves with the snow.” (Parameswaran, Uma. _What Was Always Hers_, 161)

Jyoti was distressed at the attack but she gathered the courage to hold tight two boys and preach them,

“You want to grow up a barbarian? Eh? This is a great country but snot-faced kids like you are stinking up.” (Parameswaran 161)

Though courageous and bold, she was scared after this racial encounter,

“Jyoti’s stomach was all knotted up. It was her first encounter with racism. Oh she had heard of incidents all right. But now she has felt it for herself, the sudden uncontrollable spasm of fear and shock at hearing the word “paki” flung at her”
Though she was positive that the world would change eventually, there were some questions left in her mind unanswered,

“How could she clear her mind of them, of those junior high boys she had never seen who made obscene and intimidating gestures to eight year old girls? What about Priti? Jyoti broke into a cold sweat. And what about Pierre? Was he the man? Would he ever understand what and how one feels when they have the word “Paki” flung at them?” (Parameswaran 163)

By posing such questions at the end, the author seems to indicate that this phenomenon of discrimination is here to stay for long time.

Deepa in the story *The Icicle* is an ambitious Indian lady in a foreign land who wants to prove her mettle amidst the white people. She prefers to stay away from her husband for the sake of her career. Her husband Ranjit deeply misses her but takes satisfaction in meeting her in week-ends as he is also concerned for the fulfilment of her dreams. He does not like the fact that Deepa has to again prove herself in Canada as they don’t consider Indian degrees to be valid. He grieves to her elder sister Maru, who is the narrator of the story,

“It burns me up Maru to see her working in Henry Armstrong’s Instant Printing. For godsake, I mean, she is a straight A student and they are saying her Delhi degrees don’t count, so she ends up replacing toners in bloody photocopy machines. Pisses me off, all the racism” (Parameswaran 181)

Maru’s discussion with her husband Sivaram who is a University research Guide also talks about racist policy about immigration,

“In recent years, he had taken to bringing over graduate students from India, and paying them peanuts. I felt, he was exploiting them. He maintained that he was doing them a favor. Did I know the recent changes in Immigration policy? That if
one wasn’t related to someone already here or wasn’t an entrepreneur with a million dollars, there was absolutely no way one could get into the country? Six percent was all they admitted in the independent category.” (Parameswaran 184)

The story is full of dejection sprung out of racial encounters. Indians have tough time proving their talent and skill due to racial segregation.

Our regional literature is also full of examples of prejudices against gender and several races. Kundniki’s story *What If?* (ત૊?) narrates discrimination in multiple layers. The story has the background of the war with Bangladesh. Lacks of people were living in refugee camp. Sujata, once the wealthiest woman was also one of them. With pangs and tortures of war, the story narrates Sujata’s memory of her husband Sudhir. Sudhir was a headstrong typical Indian husband who loves and cares for her wife but could not accept her intellectual participation. Even with this successful husband and two healthy kids, Sujata always felt alienated. She always wished to be a mother of a daughter to get true love and concern. But Sudhir was never ready for a third child. Sudhir’s obstinate statement indicates his gender discrimination,

“ગે છે કિકારાઓ છ. અમ છ. કિકરી નદી તે સાર છ. આપછે આને પરણૂચવાની ચચિંતા. દામજા ની ચચિંત નથી. (Two boys are enough. It is good that we do not have a daughter. We don’t have to worry about her marriage and dowry.)” (Kapadia, Kundanika. *Kagaj ni Hodi*, 206)

Sujata was hurt. For a father, does the daughter mean only the dowry? Daughter as an anklet of delicacy, one who spreads the sweet sound in the home and one who fills everything with her existence does not mean much. Sujata’s silent emotional bond with Hussain in the refugee camp is also viewed in the backdrop of Hindu- Muslim issues.

The story *Difficult Climbing* (ક઩યાું ચઢાણ) is a subtle tale of a couple on the honeymoon. They wander near the mountain, jungle and river, holding hands, giving promises
for future and dreaming about wonderful tomorrows. They happen to meet a lady there who claimed to be his beloved. There is a subtle form of discrimination of the husband towards his wife and alleged beloved. The lady invited him to her place. She gave him her address. The narration of the wife waiting in the hotel room for her husband is the finest narration of dejection. She was moved. But she gained her composure when the husband came back injured. He told that he fell in the bay, got caught in the branch of the tree and survived. This is symbolic. She came closer to her husband and decided to climb the tough path with him with full trust,

“समृद्धि विश्वास नौ एक सुरज उठयो हे ने तेना दिगंतव्यापी आकाश मा नाना नाना खोफ जेलिये ने आश्विया जेवडी अनिश्चिताभो जोको जय हे. (The sun of complete trust is arisen and in its all encompassing sky, little fears and puddle like uncertainties are melt) (Kapadiya 34)

Thus the minute study of the three select authors reveal that discrimination and dejection are universal. They are imbibed with the human existence.

4.3 Cultural Changes and Issues of Survival

Existence of multiple cultures is one of the most fundamental facts of the modern society. It is very difficult for any country to survive only on its culture and ignore the others. So an individual of a diasporic community becomes the bag containing the culture of the homeland and the hostland. His life in the foreign land is a process of accepting the culture of the settled country and retaining the culture of his own country. Diaspora theorist William Saffron in his attempt to define Diaspora pointed out some common characteristics of the expatriate community. Among others, two vital traits, according to him, are as following.

(1)Who are conscious and committed to the safety, prosperity and maintenance of their homeland. (2) Who continue to relate to their homeland. (Safran, Diasporas in Modern Societies:
Myths of Homeland and Return of Diaspora:

In the process of settling in the new land, they face alienation, dejection, discrimination, loss of identity and sense of homelessness. In this initial negative phase, they cling to their original culture which becomes their safety net. On one hand, they try hard to accept the new culture by westernizing their names, adopting modern life style and making changes in clothes and food habits. On the other hand, they attempt to retain their own culture by sticking to joint family and turning to be over-religious. Amidst such confusions and issues of survival, they undergo some cultural changes. As pointed out by Hemlatha K. in her research paper,

“The British, on leaving India, left Indians oscillating between Eastern and Western culture. The literature of this period also reveals the cultural conflict in the minds of people.” (Hemlatha 247) (Hemlatha. K, Gita Mehta’s Karma Cola, 247).

The examples below would illustrate the argument.

Chitra Banerjee’s Arranged Marriage is full of instances of the characters facing cultural change and issues of survival. In the story Clothes, the leading lady character Mita was chosen by an N.R.I. Somesh Sen who owned a store in America. He came to India for the marriage. After the marriage, they had hurried honeymoon because Somesh had to leave America just a week after the wedding. When Somesh told her that the store sold beer and wine, she did not like it. Somesh explained,

“A lot of Americans drink, You know. It is a part of their culture, not considering immoral, like it is here. And really, there is nothing wrong with it. When you come to California, I shall get you some sweet white wine and you’ll see how good it makes you feel.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 21)

After reaching there, her dressing and style of living has undergone a leaping change,

“I’m wearing a pair of jeans now, marveling at the curves of my hips and thighs, which have always been hidden under the flowing lines of my saris.” (Divakaruni,
The changing culture was soothing for her. But life never remains the same. In an unfortunate incident, Somesh was attacked and murdered. The family which was residing in America and accepting the cultural change with open arms, followed their own culture religiously,

“There is a cut, still stinging, on the side of my right arm. It is from the bangle-breaking ceremony. Old Mrs. Ghosh performed the ritual, since she’s a widow, too. She took my hands in hers and brought them down hard on the bedpost, so that the glass bangles I was wearing shattered and multicoloured shards flew out in every direction. They rubbed the red marriage mark off my forehead.” (Divakaruni 33)

The story is a cultural mix, offering the glimpses of both the cultures. Mita had to face the survival challenges there because everyone insisted for her return to India. Ultimately, she decided to be in the land where Somesh breathed his last.

**A perfect Life** is a story of Mira settled in America and having live-in relationship with long time boy-friend Richard. She so much adopted the American culture that she had no hurry in getting married and having children,

“What I liked most about Richard was that he gave me space. I’d been afraid that after we slept together he’d either lose interest in me or start pressuring me to marry him. Or else I’d get pregnant. That was what always happened in India. But Richard continued to be passionate without getting possessive. He did not mind if I went out with my other friends, or if work pressures kept us from seeing each other for days; when we meet again, we slipped into our usual comfortable groove. Thanks to the pill and his easy going attitude (It was Californian thing, he told me once.)” (Divakaruni 74)

They both decided to get married and have children but they were not in hurry. The households of friends who had babies seemed to her a constant flurry of crying and feeding and bumping and throwing up,
Many of women friends considered me strange. The Americans were more circumspect, but the Indian women came right out and asked. Don’t you mind not being married? Don’t you miss having a little one to scramble onto your lap when you come home at the end of the day?” (Divakaruni 75)

Instead of pondering on their advice, Mira tried to find out faults in their unorganized look and life-style. She did not want life to be a routine set of events like education, marriage, children, their education, their marriage and so on.

“In India, marriages and becoming a wife was only the prelude to that-all important, all consuming event- becoming a mother. That was not why I’d fought so hard – with my mother to leave India; with my professor to make it through graduate school; with my bosses to establish my career. (Divakaruni 77)

But as she is an Indian lady, she can’t resist dreaming about their future child,

“Somehow I just couldn’t picture it. The details confused me. Would the baby have a thick dark mop of hair, like Indian babies do? Or would it be pink and bald, like American babies? What color would its eyes be?” (Divakaruni 90)

Cultural change is highly noticeable in the story *Doors*. Preeti and her husband Raj had love marriage and living in America. Preeti was a headstrong independent N.R.I. who gave great importance to privacy. Whereas Raj was a typical extrovert Indian male who found closed doors to be very much uncomfortable,

“The concept of doors did not exist in Raj’s universe, and he ignored their physical reality- so solid and re assuring to Preeti- whenever he could. He would burst into her closed study to tell her of the latest events in his computer lab, leaving the door ajar when he left.” (Divakaruni 193)

In Raj’s typical Indian culture, closed doors have no place and ultimately, Preeti’s insistence on privacy shut the doors for deep inside her own being.

Uma Parameswaran in her *What Was Always Hers* narrates so many illustrations of cultural changes and subsequent issues of survival.
In the title novella, Veeru from India got married to Niranjan from Canada. When she came to Canada for the first time, she was reserved and shy lady. Niranjan was a party leader, an extrovert man who had foreign followers and admirers. When Veeru was pregnant for third time, Niranjan advised her to get aborted. Veeru was shocked as Canadian culture could make them afford the third child,

“They lived here, here in Vancouver, British Columbia. One, two, three, it had no relevance. They could feed ten as easily as one. Free schooling, free medicare, free everything. This was the golden land of golden todays and tomorrows.”
(Parameswaran, Uma. What Was Always Hers, 14)

Veeru met Jitin and Demmi- Niranjan’s party- followers. They helped Veeru in adopting the new culture. She never saw before the electric kettle of water for making gallons of tea, oven pilot etc. In frequently conducted parties at her house, the cultural exchanges often took place,

“Two of the eight women were older. For Veeru, they made a special effort and mixed a bit of Hindi in their Punjabi. Three other were young and white. Two of them spoke to her very slowly, with a lot of sign language and laughs, to get her to understand English. But the third white girl, Lisa, spoke to her as she spoke to anyone else, and for that Veeru loved her, and felt she understood her better than anyone else, not the words, which flew over her head, but the meaning.”
(Parameswaran 18)

Veeru met Jitin and started calling her name adding ‘Didi’ which she did not like. The Indian culture of adding ‘didi’ and making instanteous relation was unwelcomed there,

“Just call me Jitin. In this country everyone calls everyone else by just their first name.” (Parameswaran 19)

Her stay there brought a welcome change in her as it happened with almost every Indian female going away from the country,

“Both her Punjabi and English improved with time because she had to use both
languages every day. She learnt to drive, and was behind the wheel every weekend, as Niranjan sat beside her poring over his notes and the boys sat at the back singing Ten ‘bottles of beer on the wall’ or some such song till their throats were hoarse.” (Parameswaran 22)

Canada’s liberal culture as far as man-woman relationship is concerned is reflected when Veeru asked about Jitin’s intimacy with Niranjan to one of the party co-workers,

“This is Canada, they said, and a man’s hand on woman’s shoulder meant no more than on a man’s.” (Parameswaran 26)

When Niranjan revealed about his affair with Jitin, Veeru was taken aback. The following consolation given by Niranjan indicated the degree to which he accepted Canadian free culture,

“Nothing will change except that I won’t be here at night. You can stay here; I think it is best not to disturb the boys’ routine. Tell me what you would like me to do, what you need, and I will make sure you have it. The house, the allowance that will let you live in the same fashion as we are living now.” (Parameswaran 27)

Living in modern culture, Indians do not forget their age old rituals and traditions. When Niranjan died in a car accident, his parents kept calling their daughter in law Veeru for consolation and guidance for the funeral rituals to be followed religiously,

“She opened the carton. Packed in layers and layers of plastic and news paper were a bottle of water, an envelope with two flat paper packets- sacred ash and sindoor, and a letter. It was from Bappaji. ‘Dear daughter Veeru, We have little right to ask you for anything, and no right at all to tell you what you should do. And yet, if you will, please get Vikram to place a drop of Gangajal on his father’s lips. (Parameswaran 46)

After Niranjan, it was tough time for both the ladies to survive emotionally, socially and financially. Their tremendous maturity made them join hands for the future battles.
Though in the modern culture, male domination cannot be undermined. This is well reflected in the story *Maru and M.M.Syndrome*. Maru, the lady narrator decided to quit her job as a secretary because of her annoyance for middle aged menopausal males,

“The same faces, now fifteen years older: the women faculty show more wrinkles but the men are more batty. The women color their hair, most of them, and the men don’t. But then, they don’t grey that early, would they? They have no worries. They know a touch of grey makes them look distinguished. Most are clean-shaven now, just so the grey doesn’t show on their chins, and some are balding, but these men always carry themselves as though they were rulers of all they survey.” (Parameswaran 71)

Typical Canadian culture is reflected in Maru’s description of males,

“Then there is workaholism and alcoholism, often so interconnected, one can’t figure out which is cause and which effect. Cars, drink, overwork all bad.”
(Parameswaran 72)

When Maru knew about her boss Will’s affair to Erica, she was shocked as she knew well Erica’s husband and Will’s wife. They both were good enough not to give reasons to their spouses for falling for someone else. But this is Canadian free culture. Maru’s scientist husband Sivaram is an epitome of distinctive Indian culture. He is a blind chanter of Gayatri Mantras and Sandhya. Maru described,

“I assumed when my marriage was arranged with this young man from North America that he would be like one of my brothers or cousins, cavalier about customs. The first thing that struck me in our honeymoon in Ooty when I woke up with a start to hear the water running and the clock hands on five fifteen was, oh no, if marriages are made in heaven, why doesn’t someone up there not think about simple compatibility and match larks to larks, owls to owls?”
(Parameswaran 90)
There is a growing culture of community party in Canada and the people pacify their alienation and loneliness by attending such gatherings,

“Parties are for intellectual exchange and/or fun and laughter, not for guzzling beer and wolfing down food.” (98)

Name-changing in foreign land is another typical trait of cultural change. Hence, Sivaram becomes Siv, Veerbala is Veeru, Jitinder is Jitin, Ranjit becomes Ranj and Niranjana becomes Neera.

It is a fallacy to believe that cultural changes occur only in cases of changes in country. Even inside the country and state, these occasions of cultural change are apparent. This is well-narrated by Kundanika Kapadia in Kagaj Ni Hodi, her superb collection of short stories. 

Rain Again is a wonderful story of an aged couple who has fulfilled all the social and domestic duties. Their son is married and they have a kind daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law was so matured that she has forgotten that her in-laws had protested the inter-cast marriage once. Their financial condition was also good. The aged couple decided to change their names because with each name, an image is made. When the husband proposed for the change in name, he believed that the wife would not be ready.

“पररवर तो ये खड़त शरीर गयो. हावे आम जाते तो वल्लोगाबानी वच्छु वृत्ति तो स्रीजोमं ज. तेमने आजी अपरी माया- लुताचनी, इयाजिजरानी, घरनी, घर नी थीबस्तुप्रोनी, भालीयां धरके घस्तुप्रो नी. (He was surprised because ladies have tendency to get clung to everything. Ladies have all kinds of affections, with past, husband, children, home, things of home, things in attic etc.) (Kapadia, Kundanika. Kagaj Ni Hodi, 184)

But then he thought,
“Ladies have the common habit of changing everything...They change surname after their marriage, even the name, the city, the home,...Perhaps they have the ability of getting separated from everything they were stuck to.” (Kapadiya 184)

So the issues of cultural changes are not something new for females. Then the couple has planned to live the rest of the life away from affection and any kind of allurement and nameless, because names bring all kinds of miseries.

The story (ફધું જ યાખ થઈ ગયુ શતું) What If? talks about the common cultural notion of happiness. In almost all the cultures, it has been assumed that a person is considered to be happy if he/she possesses material wealth, successful spouse, healthy kids, good relations and sound health. But this story reveals the deep philosophy of happiness where Sujata becomes happy after losing riches, prosperity, husband and home. The story is narrated in the backdrop of war with Bangladesh. In an attack, Sujata was separated from her husband and family. The husband was killed,

“બધા રાજ થઈ ગયુ હતું. પોતે જે વસ્તુઓ પર આભિમાન કરીનું, પત્ર હેયા હેય પર હોવા બહુ તૈરાક ગાવ અનુભવ્યો, કાયારેક પોતાના સોહનલા યહેરા માટે, કાયારેક સમુદ્ર જે પોતાની સદી સૌથી સૂચર હોવા બધાં, કાયારેક મિશ્રે વયથે સમાઈ, કોમેંટ કરતી વાતને....ટેટટેટેટલી વાર ટેટટેટેટેલી પ્રકાશ નું આભિમાન અભીવધું! ધણી વાતને આ નાનકા વસ્તુઓ નું આ ડેટ વની ગઈ હતી. બધાં આભિમાની ચૂં જેદા તુફાન થઈ ગયા. આ કે કે કે કે કે કે શિખ્ટ આપયા નથી.” (Everything turned into ashes. The things for which she felt immense pride once- like the high status of her husband, for her charming face, sometimes for her excellent sari in the group, sometimes for making a smart comment amidst friends…. So many times she felt various
types of arrogance. Many times, she became the centre of attraction in friend circle. All the arrogances became trivial like sand. No arrogance could give her any kind of protection.” (Kapadiya 199)

She met Hussain in the camp and felt close with him. But then she realized that all kinds of attachments were short-lived,

“ભયી દેખાતી એકતા એકતા જે લોક છે. પોતાનુ ઘર, પોતાની પાત્ર સુધીર, સુધીર, જે દુનિયા નો સૌથી નિકટ નો ગાઢત્ય, તેની સાથે ભીષણ આવી ઊપર ઊપર ની લાગભીયો ની સમાનતા જ નાહી? બીજાઓ સામે બઢી દુનિયા સામે તેવો જે બની ને રહેત, પણ જે બીજા ની સબંધ આવતા સુધીર હું દ્ર શક્ત જતી. પોતાની ભદીર લાગભીયો ના અને વિયારાઓ ના જે મોટા મોટા જમ્બલનને હરીયાળ વિસ્તારી હતા થેમા પોતે એકલ જ સમયુક્ત, કાઢતી હતી. પોતા ની સાથે કોઈ જે-ખોઈ જ નાહી. (All visible unions are only ephemeral. Her home, her husband Sudhir, one who was the closest in the world. Even in the union with Sudhir, she felt shallow feelings. They were one when the world was watching them but when they were alone, Sudhir used to go far. She used to roam alone in the fertile and infertile parts of her inner self. There was no one with her- no one.) (Kapadiya 202)

Then Sujata happened to meet a lady who had been deserted by her husband as she was pregnant and husband doubted her character. Sujata herself was raped in the refugee camp and became pregnant. It was here that she found her real aim of life, working for thousands of such women being deserted by their males. When she lost everything which was culturally believed to be needed for happiness, she got her noble direction of life.

The story સુખ (Happiness) is a good attack on our cultural notion that life in a foreign country makes one materially strong and spiritually and emotionally frail whereas life in India is vice-versa. It is a fabulous story of two sisters Amita and Sona. Amita was married with a
wealthy businessman and living in India. Sona had come from America. Amita was waiting eagerly for her arrival and she had boasted a lot to neighbours and friends about her coming to India. But when she came, Amita was not happy to see her completely unchanged.

“साव हेवा कपड़ा पहेवा छ? अनेभेग पलाजेक ज छ. परहेच थी हेवा आवेने तो केदार प्यार होइया? अनेकेवाटी अनेवाटी वस्तुधर लाहे आवेने? आ तो काल लाहे आवी लागती नथी. जराय घेभार नती. आठला वरस क्षुण शुण?” (What kind of clothes is she wearing? And there is only one bag. How smart the person is if he/she comes from a foreign land! She does not seem to bring anything. She does not have any glamour. What did she do all these years?) (Kapadiya 09)

Amita wanted to show her sister renovated house, car, and diamond jewelry. But Sona was more interested in relishing the open sky, sunlight, sand and flying birds. Amita bragged about her husband Amit,

“पुणूष नो प्रेम. पत्नी नो प्रेम बहु मोटी वात छ. आ बाधुं जन्मिर, घरेणां मारी ज पसंदतरी नू रोजढी ज करवी आप्यां छ. अजित अडेकेष वस्तु मने पुढी ने ज करे.” (There is no more happiness in the world than husband’s true love. He makes it all for me, the jewelry, furniture and all. Everything is of my liking. Ajit does everything with my approval.) (Kapadiya 12)

Sona was more involved in the wreck of books than her conversation. Amita did all possible attempts to impress Sona with her wealth. She organized a party wherein she invited some big shots of the city. She wanted to match-make for Sona with the brother of Ajit’s politician friend. But Sona was more worried about an injured street dog outside the party-hall. Amita was much annoyed. But she slowly realized that Sona was always more happy and secured than her though she did not possess anything. She thought about momentary span of her
so-called happiness,

“બધુ જ બલાસ ઘાં ઘાં શકે. તેની નજર સામે ઉભેલું સુંદર ઘર માનાંક જ જાણે કાબે-જમિયાં ડેલવા લાગ્યું. આરે..આરે, આ ઘર તો પછી ઘાં શકે...ધ્રુવામાં ભોજ જાય તો આ બધુ જ હાલકડલખ ઘાં ને સોંદ પર તુંકી પડે. અન્ય સમુદ્ર બલાસ ઘાં જાય. આરે આવતીકાલે તો ઘંઘ પાણુ બને. પત્ર વીજ છી ને યાંપણ લાગે. પોતાના સાલાક મીઠા છોટાં વલણી રાખી હેતુ ને હેતુપ્રી બનની જાય. એક એનું બદુદ હતું, જથાં પોતે સવ્વ સમુદ્ર થી રહીત હતી: હીન, હરિક્ષ, માયબલીત, નિતન્ત થેકડી, અસહ્યા...સોના પાસે ક્યાં જ મોહનુ. ને છતાં પાણ તે પોતા થી વધારે સલામત હોય તેવી રીતે વાત કરતી હતી.”

(Everything can come to an end. The beautiful home in front of her eyes starts oscillating. Oh, this house can collapse. Everything can crush if there is big loss in the business. All prosperity can come to an end. Anything can happen tomorrow. Husband can start loving the other woman. Her own smart and shrewd kids can revolt. There is one point where she is deprived of all the richness, where she is afraid, worried, helpless and lonely. Sona does not have anything but she talks as if she is more secured and happy than her) (Kapadiya 16)

Thus there are multiple instances of cultural changes and grave issues of survival and identity crisis in all the selected texts

### 4.4 Nostalgia and Memory

Dislocation, dejection and homelessness give birth to nostalgia and fond memories of the homeland. In order to avoid the feeling of depression and alienation, diasporic people start living with the help of warm and tender memories. Out of the sense of nostalgia, they tend to glorify the traditions, rituals, culture and experiences of homeland. They create their imagined world there and after the end of hectic and dejected day, they get lost in this anticipated world where
everything is happy and expected. In one of the most diasporic novels by Monika Ali *Brick Lane*, the character Chanu comments,

“They don’t even really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the villages here” (Ali, Monika. *Brick Lane*, New York, scribner, 2004. Pg 32)

Sense of homesickness becomes their safety-net for fighting against injustice and discrimination. Their longing for homeland and cherished memories are so intense that it becomes the tool of diaspora community. In the collection of essays on diasporic community in Canada, Vijay Agnew, a Canadian feminist historian of Indian descent focuses on the paradoxes and the shifting identities of these diasporic subjects, whose experiences of joy and sorrow are burdened with a tension between

"Living here and remembering there, between memories of places of origin and entanglements with places of residence, and between the metaphorical and the physical home" (Agnew, Vijay. ed. *Diaspora, Memory, and Identity: A Search for Home*, pg 4)

The location of the diasporic subject is thus represented in the essay as a ghostly location. As such, the contributors to this volume examine

"How memories of the past define our perspective, help us negotiate our circumstances, and develop new ways of being and becoming" (9)

Thus nostalgia and memory play a vital role in the existence of diasporic community. To reinforce the argument, some of the examples from the stories of three selected writers are cited here.

The characters of Chitra Banerjee’s Arranged Marriage are often nostalgic about their homeland and traditions. In the story, *Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs*, Jayanti came to America for further study and decided to stay at her aunt’s home. While welcoming her at the air-port,
Pratimaaunt went homesick,

“Aunt talks and talks. She asks about the design on my sari, deep rose-embroidered peacocks dancing against a cream background. Is this being the latest fashion in India? (She uses the word desh-country, to refer to India, as though it were the only one in the world.) “I am always loving Calcutta, visiting your mother in that beautiful old house with marble fountains and lions.” She wants to know what movies are showing at the Roxy. Do children still fly the moon-shaped kites at the Maidan and do the street vendors still sell puffed rice spiced with green chilies? How about Victoria Memorial with the black angel on the top of the white marble dome, is it still the same? Is it true that New Market with all those charming little clothing stores has burnt down? Have I been on the new subway she has read about in India Abroad? Imagine all those tunnels under the city, you could be getting lost in there and nobody will be finding you if you do not want them to.” I hear the hunger in her voice. And so I hold back my own eagerness to know about America and answer her the best I can.” (Banerlee, Chitra. *Arranged Marriage*, 49)

*The Word Love* is a story of an Indian lady who has started a live-in relation with an American man. She decided to inform her mother in India about her relation. She finds it difficult because such liberal relations have no place in Indian culture. Her American beau Rex insists her to reveal it soon. He finds her trepidation about the disclosure of affair strange,

“It isn’t you. I would have the same problem no matter who it was.” You tried to tell him about your mother, how she’d seen her husband’s face for the first time at her wedding. How, when he died (you were two years old then), she had taken off her jewelry and put on widow’s white and dedicated the rest of her life to the business of bringing you up. We only have each other. She lives in a different world. She’s never traveled more than a hundred miles from the village where she was born; she’s never touched a cigarette or alcohol; even though she lives in Calcutta, she’s never watched a movie.” (Banerlee, Chitra. *Arranged Marriage*, 58)
When Rex suggested continuing the affair without revealing it to her, she did not like the suggestion and again got lost in the sweet memories of her mother,

“The line of your jaw slants up at the same angel as hers when she would lean forward to kiss you goodbye at the door. You’re hearing the street vendor call out momphali, momphali, fresh and hot, and she is smiling, handing you a coin, saying, yes, baby, you can have some. The salty crunch of roasted peanuts fills your mouth, the bathroom water runs and runs, endless as sorrow, the week blurs past, and suddenly it’s Saturday morning, the time of her weekly call.” (Banerlee, Chitra. Arranged Marriage, 60)

Rex continues soothe her but she could not decide to tell her because she is afraid of the aftermath. Amidst melancholy and confusion, it is memory of her mother’s love that keeps her alive,

“Once when you were in college you had gone to see a popular Hindi movie with your girlfriends. Secretly, because Mother said movies were frivolous, decadent. But there were no secrets in Calcutta. When you came home from classes the next day, a suitcase full of your clothes was on the doorstep. A note on it, in your mother’s hand. Better no daughter than a disobedient one, a shame to the family. Even now you remember how you felt. The dizzy fear that shriveled the edges of the day, the desperate knocking on the door that left your knuckles raw. You sat on the doorstep all afternoon, and passerby had glanced at you curiously. By evening, it was cold. The numbness crept up your feet and covered you. When she’d finally opened the door after the midnight, for a moment you couldn’t stand. She had pulled you up, and you had fallen into her arms, both of you crying. Later she had soaked your feet in hot water with boric soda. You still remember the softness of the towels with which she wiped them.” (Banerlee, Chitra. Arranged Marriage, 62)

Lastly when she decided to leave Rex and go back to the mother, her heart again filled with memories,
“You remember the monsoons of your childhood. There are no people in this memory, only the sky, rippling with exhilarating light. And a word comes to you out of the opening sky. The word love.” (Banerlee, Chitra. Arranged Marriage, 71)

**Doors** is the story of the couple Deepak and Preeti love-locked in marriage. Their notion of love and concern towards each other was intact till there was an entry of Deepak’s cousin Raj into their home. Preeti was a lover of privacy and she hated the idea of Raj staying with them. Deepak was much closer to Raj when he was in India. He tried to convince Preeti,

“Imagine, it’s been five years since I’ve seen him! We used to be inseparable back home although he was so much younger. He was always in and out of our house, laughing and joking and playing pranks. You won’t believe some of the escapades we got into.” (Banerlee, Chitra. Arranged Marriage, 190)

Even the stories of Uma Prameswaran are full of homesick remembrances felt by the characters. In the title novella **What Was Always Hers**, Veeru had come to Canada after her marriage with Niranjan. After knowing about his affair with Jitin, she was shocked. But she decided to live happily with her two children Vikram and Adarsh. She started earning. After Niranjan’s death, she had gone to Jitin’s house for persuading her to take some share of property to raise her daughter in a good way. When she reached Jitin’s home, she was absent. She met her daughter Neera and lost in the memories of Vikram’s childhood,

“Veeru turned and saw the child directly for the first time, and tears sprung again. Vikram, she thought, so like Vikram at the age, his father’s little bright eyes, and shock of soft black hair, the same nose, the same way the hair fell over the ears. Vikram was now more like her, his face round, his hair thick and curly, but at that age how his grandparents and aunts had doted on him, spitting image of his father….she felt week for the nostalgia for that sprawling house in Safdarjang where her real adult life had started.” (Parameswaran, Uma. What Was Always Hers, 55)
Darkest Before Dawn is a wonderful story of brother Jayant and sister Jyoti. They are first generation diaspora population in Canada. Jayant is so much unhappy in this country that he often blames his father for leaving wonderful country India and he immerses himself in nostalgic memory of his house and grandmother in India. Jyoti, as an elder sister, always tries to calm him and assure him that things would be all right soon. But she also gets into the warm grooves of memories frequently,

“Jyoti went to her room and her fingers trembled as she tried in vain to shut the door on her memory. They were in India still at the time. She was about ten. Jayant, whose school, even though run by the same Roman Catholic Mission, as hers, had a longer December vacation so he was visiting cousin in Delhi. In an interclass recitation competition, Jyoti had been chosen to represent her section. She was already known for her talent for memorizing poems overnight and this was not the first time she had competed. That evening, as she memorized the selected poem, the import of the lines hit her:

Oh call my brother back to me!

I cannot play alone:

The summer comes with flower and bee,

Where is my brother gone?” (Parameswaran, Uma. What Was Always Hers, 155)

Jayant is a good example of ‘neither here nor there’ population, who is always nostalgic for India,

“He remembered his grandmother, seated in the courtyard of their ancestral house on the familiar thick woven mat of silk straw. The courtyard was large and rectangular and seemed cut in two halves. The far half had trees, a bakul tree that spread its branches over the far right wall, and there were flowering bushes of jasmine and raat-ki-rani, and a clump of banana trees. Along the far left wall was the vegetable patch from which the gardner brought in coriander leaves or mint
and fresh okra or long beans every morning. …At the centre was a planter of whitewashed brick for the tulsi plant, complete with little niches where the clay lamps and incense sticks could burn despite rain. And near it, under the shade of a parijata tree sat his grandmother with her violin. It was a scene etched in Jayant’s memory, a scene to which his spirit returned in quiet moments, a scene which he sought out when storms came up. A scene where everything was in place, exactly in place. Aji playing her violin every day just after her three o’clock tea.”

(Parameswaran, Uma. *What Was Always Hers*, 156)

This long narration of India is a proof that many diasporic members spend their time and days with the help of memories. The story further is nothing but cherished and sad memories,

“At the time of his first visit back to his grandparents from Canada, Jayant had been fourteen. Not young enough to admit openly that he wanted to sit by his grandmother, nor old enough to take the initiative and speak to her. He was self conscious of his Marathi: it had rusted in the last four years away from India. Even though his parents speak Marathi at home, he and Jyoti had switched to English and his kid brother, Krish, could not even understand Marathi.”

(Parameswaran, Uma. *What Was Always Hers*, 157)

This power of cherished memory is also well-reflected in regional literature. The person is alienated even in his own state and home. The memories of the past make the sad incidents of present endurable. Kundanika Kapadia is a master of blending past and present in her narration. In the story, *પ્રલાવ ઩ય (On the Journey)* there is a good tale of a couple who is fond of travelling to the known and unknown destinations. But as they are not extremely rich people, they cannot afford to be on the journey always. So they find out a good strategy of remaining on the imagined tours. Sitting in the verandah, they constantly imagine that they are on the journey to Nainital, sometimes to Rajasthan, Kashmir and even to the foreign countries. In their imagination, they have been to Marina beach of Madras, Grand Ruins of Mahabalipuram, Minakshi temple of Madurai, tea gardens of Darjiling, Jungles of Congo etc. The wife reminiscences,
“आम आदिवासी सामे आईं जोधा विना ज अमे प्रेममां पड़ी गया हता। सेंट्रल लायब्रेरी
ना रेकरनल मंड माँ हुं ‘नेशनल ज्योग्राफी’ नी जाल्लो उद्धलावती हती, मारे येक भास
जया नी माहिती जोखीत हती, ते ना मनता आउन्टर पर बेलो मदहनीश ने में
पुछ्युं: ‘जोगो ना जंगलो विशे नी माहिती जवां थी मज़रे? त्या लाज़े ज जोड़ जसुं होय
हे। त्या ज़वानी मार्ज धाज़ो कुरा हे।’ मारीभाज मां उलेला जोड़फ जबे कयुं, ‘ हु त्या गयो
हुं,’ जयरे मे तेनी सामु जोहुं, से संग़क कस़ा पहेरेलो येक सुपाक, सज़,पातो खुबां
हतो। मे कयुं , ‘त्या तो जोड़ ज़ह शकुं नयः। तें झुं कयुं, ‘हा, त्या ज़वानु सष्ममकारक हे।
मने ये जंगलो मां प्रवेशता हता त्या ज दूर थी तीरो आववा माइंडुं। हु बयवामां सक़ज़
निवद्य। हु त्या नी थोडी वस्तुनु पणा लाच्या हुं। तमभे रस होय तो मारा घरे
आवचो।’ बीज़ा रविवारे हु अना घरे ग़ा हती।येको मने घाणी वस्तुनु बतावी। येको
मने जोगो ना जंगल विशेजनु येक मोड़े, पुष्पण माहिती थी बरेखुं पुस्तक बेंट मा
आयुं.....अने पकी अमे पररू गया।” (We had fallen in love without seeing much
in each other. I was searching for a file in the reference room of National Library
for collecting the information on a particular place. I could not find it. So I asked
the library helper for it, ‘Where could I find the information on Congo Jungles
where people rarely dare to go. The path leading to Congo is very complex.’ The
person standing beside me answered, ‘I had been to Congo.’ When I looked at
him, he was a mannered, lanky and clean man. I told him that no one could go
there. He answered, ‘Yes, it is difficult to go there. But I happened to meet a tribal
and he brought me there. As soon as we entered in the jungle, they started
throwing poisonous arrows at us. I manage to survive. I brought some things from
there. If you want to see, come to my home next Sunday.’ I had gone to his house
next Sunday. He saw me many things. He gifted me a voluminous book full of information and snaps of Congo’s jungle. And this is how, we got married.”

(Kapadia, Kundanika. *Kagaj Ni Hodi*, 82)

The entire story is well-narrated with the help of describing tools like flash-back and imagination.

*Brightness* is a story of two friends, one highly successful and the other a big failure. This story is described in the first person narrative where the person who failed addresses the successful friend. The victorious friend is rich and having good business, beautiful wife and children where as the other one has not achieved anything except good heart and philosophy of life where wisdom and knowledge defy wealth and worldly success. The entire story is a kind of nostalgic remembrance of their childhood,
If we compare, failure is far better than success. It is extremely private experience. In it, there is no one to take credit or to show their right on us and in our solitude; our well-wishers come very close to us. We used to play together in our childhood. But you do not know anything about my infancy. Your mother used to stop you playing with me because you were rich and we were not. My father used to stop me playing with you because he was cultured, knowledgeable and scholar. My father used to tell me ‘no’ for so many things. Not to speak while taking food, Not to sleep after 6 am, Not to play before completing homework, not to run in the house in presence of the guests, not to laugh incessantly, not to read story books without his approval. He made me wear a thick chain of ‘no no’ in my legs. He wished that I become the ranker in the school and be as pedantic as him. But I liked playing much and you better know one cannot play with shackles in the legs.) (Kapadia, Kundanika. Kagaj Ni Hodi, 142)

This narrator broke the bondages and followed his instinct. The story is a recollection of the childhood memories.

*Candles Spreading Darkness* (अंधाफृऩा भ Observable भीऩाफूऩी) is the most poignant narration of the past love of the male narrator and Suhasi. The entire story is in form of the memory of the hero about his old school where he used to love silently a girl named Suhasi. The narrator missed his old childhood days, his school, Maths’ teacher, his heart-ache and his friends. The narrator kept remembering about his first love,

“मारेअयानक ज एं निशाष होरवी पडंली- मारापितानी भडंली थयाना कारेये. निशाष नों छेललों टिवस मने बरसाव याके परिश्का पुरी धार हंती; परिश्रामो आवी गया हंतां अने मारामित्रांचे मने विद्याय आणणया एक नानकडो समारंभ गोळ्यां हंती. प्रमुख तरीले पटेलसाहेब नेपोलाब्या हंतां. तेमच्या एक हेशियार विध्यार्थी तरीले मारा
I had to leave the school suddenly because of my father’s transfer. I exactly remember my last day in the school. Exams were over, the results were out and my friends organized a farewell party for me. Patelsir had been invited. He praised me as a bright student and he wished me luck for my bright future. I sang many songs. It was not only my farewell from school and friends but it was farewell of the innocent pleasures and freedom to fly in the sky. I had seen tears in the eyes of Suhasi. Suddenly there was grief in my heart as now I would never be able to see her. She had never talked with me so far. But I always felt that the feelings in my heart were echoed in her heart.) (Kapadia, Kundanika. Kagaj Ni Hodi, 53)

The rest of the story was the search of the narrator for Suhani. The writer has masterfully used this tool of narration with the help of memory.

There are numerous examples of instances of nostalgia and narration of fond memories in all the three select authors.

4.5 Rootlessness and Longing to be connected with homeland

When diaspora community moves from their original homeland to the destined country, they do not move alone. They travel with their identity, culture, traditions and place. After reaching the foreign land, their psyche constantly travels here and there. There is a persistent comparison going on about culture in their homeland and culture in the hostland. Rootlessness
and displacement fill the major part of life in the expatriate community. Literature in the present era has become the mouthpiece of rootless and dislocated persons. More there is the feeling of having no basic identity due to economic, social and religious disparity, more they have the desire to be connected again with the home country. Their notion of ‘home’ changes with their stay in the alienated land. When in India, they had their home in Gujarat, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra or Punjab. But after shifting to the alienated land, entire India becomes their home. They tend to make instant connection with any remote news about India. They start following their conventions more intensely.

Diaspora theorist Avtar Brah, while studying the diasporic groups in the host community, gave the notion of home for diaspora group as below,

“Where is home? On the one hand, ‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the Diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as a place of ‘origin’. On the other hand, ‘home’ is also the lived experiences of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day…all this as mediated by historically specific everyday of social relations.” (Brah, Avtar, Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities, 192)

Some of the examples from the stories below would throw more light on this concept of rootlessness and longing to be connected with homeland.

In the story Affair by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena and Abha are two friends living in America. Meene has turned out to be a like a complete westerner whereas Abha is still an Indian in look, attitude and psyche. Meena insists Abha to change her look to speed up the heartbeat of her husband Ashok. Abha thought,

“Sometimes Meena’s ideas were so adolescent. I remembered my mother, who’d spent most of her life in the simple red-bordered cotton saris most Bengali mothers wore, dabbing at her plump face with its pallo as she hurried from kitchen to nursery to dining room. I doubted that she ever made my father’s
heartbeat speed up (though of course he loved her)-at least not in the last thirty years that I’d known them. ‘You are starting to sound like an American, Meena! Indian marriages aren’t based on such superficial things.’” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 236)

And Abha got stuck to her look and Indianness. Further in the story, when Meena’s husband Srikant comes to know about her affair with her American boss, he decided to return to India alone and embracing the country again with all its ugliness and beauty.

The heroine of the story Clothes, Mita is an aspirant Indian girl who comes to America after marriage. Her parents considered her to be lucky as she had been chosen by an N.R.I. from California but Mita was in dilemma whether going far away would be a good decision,

“If things worked out the way everyone was hoping, I’d be going halfway around the world to live with a man I haven’t even met. Would I ever see my parents again? Don’t send me so far away, I wanted to cry, but of course, I didn’t. It would be ungrateful. Father had worked so hard to find this match for me. Besides, wasn’t it every woman’s destiny, as my mother was always telling me to leave known for the unknown? She had done it, and her mother before her. A married woman belongs to her husband, her in-laws. Hot seeds of tears pricked my eyelids at the unfairness of it.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 18-19)

In the state of confusion, she got married with that N.R.I. boy Somesh Sen and went to America. She got accustomed to the American life style on one hand and to respect her in-laws residing with them on the other hand. In this act of balancing, she often missed India badly. As the story unfolds, Somesh’s shop had been attacked and before leaving, the attacker emptied the bullets into Somesh’s chest. The in-laws were kind enough not to blame Mita for this unfortunate incident,

“They didn’t say even once, as people in the village, that it was my bad luck that brought death to their son so soon after his marriage.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 31)
She felt alienated and uprooted. In the frenzy of thoughts, when the funeral ceremony proceeded, she thought,

“I know Somesh would not have tried to stop the gunman. I can picture his silhouette against the lighted Dewar’s sign, hands raised. He is trying to find the right expression to put on his face, calm, reassuring, reasonable. OK, take the money. No, I won’t call the police. His hands tremble just a little. His eyes darken with disbelief as his fingers touch his chest and come away wet. I yanked away the cover. I had to see. Great America, a place where people go to have fun. My breath roller-costing through my body, my unlived life gathering itself into a scream.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 32)

She felt so evacuated that she lost complete control over herself.

The characters of Uma Prameswarn have the same ordeal. They go to Canada with big expectations and then start feeling ‘out of culture and time’ and then yearn to be again to India. It seems like a vicious circle. It the first long title novella, Veer came to Canada with her husband Niranjan with lots of hopes. Her husband used to run an N.G.O. there in Canada for the rights of workers and laborers. She was happy amidst many Indian faces,

“Most of the workers were Indians, and she felt she was back in the village, except that the young men in the village would never have come into her mother’s kitchen and talked so freely and loudly.” (Parameswaran, Uma. What Was Always Hers, 17)

She met Jitin, a lady not very beautiful, with long nose and a flat forehead but the personality of one who was in control of herself, her surroundings, and a leader. Veeru was much impressed with this lady associate of Niranjan,

“Veeru loved to watch Jitin and she wished Jitin would laugh more often; the laugh that drove away the sadness from that lovely face; it was not the sound, which was short and suppressed, but the way it lighted her face, blotted out that unfathomable sadness that dwelt in her eyes those times she seemed to withdraw
into her private unfathomable world.” (Parameswaran, Uma. *What Was Always Hers*, 19)

Veeru had inner urge to come back to India and she had the chance when she was pregnant for the second time,

“Those four months in Vancouver provided Veeru with enough fodder to regale her village aunts and friends for a whole month. Our Veeru bitiya, they said, our own little bitiya had not only crossed the seas to see the world but has come back pregnant. Smart little one.” (Parameswaran, Uma. *What Was Always Hers*, 20)

Veeru had landed in Delhi and had spent only two days there. She was eager to get back to her son, who was living in the village. Back in the village, she relaxed into the old routine. The old routines in India are our safety net. We feel tranquil in it. In the foreign land, when it has been seized from us, we feel completely rootless. Veeru was so happy coming back to India that even she did not like to live with her parents but with her in-laws,

“She started being extra-attentive to her mother-in-law’s needs, hovered around her, peeled the oranges just right, hurried ahead of her senior sister-in-law to make the carrot juice that both parents had in the morning before the servants came in, pressed her mother-in-law’s feet, asked her to tell her stories from long ago so Vikram and she could know more about Niranjan.” (Parameswaran, Uma. *What Was Always Hers*, 20)

On going back to Canada, when she learnt about her husband’s affair with Jitin, she felt completely rootless and depressed. The rest of the story narrates how an awkwad relation between these two ladies turns out to be the most intimate one after the sad demise of Niranjan.

*Maru and M.M. Syndrome*, a long novella of nearly eighty pages is another fine example of dislocated and rootless people throughout the world. Maru is the lady narrator who feels uprooted where she works as a secretary. The reason for her decision to leave the job is that she finds the middle-aged men around her to be eccentric. So she decides to go back to live with her scientist husband Sivaram. Even though one of the top brass in the scientific scene of Canada, Sivaram is so rootless that he is always indulged into his Indian routes of worshipping God
incessantly,

“He wanted to chant a hundred thousand Gayatris. ‘A hundred thousand would take forever,’ I said. ‘No, Maroo’ he said, ‘You really should try to include finite in your vocabulary. At one minute per Gayatri, it would take one hundred thousand minutes which is one thousand, six hundred and sixty-seven hours which is just under sixty weeks, if one could spare four hours a day. At the end of one hundred thousand Gayatris, it is said that something would happen, an effluence, a spiritual tejas, a power.’” (Parameswaran, Uma. What Was Always Hers, 91)

Readers are amused to meet such rootless and funny characters who do such things even in Canada. Further in the story, Maru met a South Indian man who believed firmly in paranormal phenomenon and wanted to remove Sri-Chakra painting from Maru’s home to cast out evil spirit,

“This sri-chakra is a kind which can turn truths to lies, good to evil, without meaning to, I grant, but they are not good. Get rid of it. Don’t tear it up because they would disperse it as the wind dispenses pollen. Don’t burn it as the wind might carry the ashes. Don’t even throw it in a well because it would pollute the water for a thousand years. And don’t keep it at home.” (Parameswaran, What Was Always Hers, 124)

Even the regional literature is full of such examples of rootless people. The rough patches of life make the people sometimes lose their home, hope and direction. One does not need to be in the exile for experiencing the feeling of depression, loneliness and homeless. Some relations become so intolerable and some incidents are so excruciating that one feels homeless in his own home. The complexities of modern life and relation tend to be terribly agonizing to make one feel expelled in his own land. Kundanika’s master narration proves the point in the following examples.

Chandrvadan of the story नित्यति (Destiny) is a good example of the people who are
retired, have performed their duties well and then they feel pathless. Neither have they have goals and activities nor charm and spirit to live a good life. He does not have any reason to feel dejected but something inside him, may be the state of inertia makes him completely out of the place,

“Whenever a person having performed their duties goes out of the way, there is no reason to feel so. There is no depression, no failure, and no sudden death of any close relative or there is no big upheaval in the surrounding and then also, there is a deep feeling for being out of place in home and outside.” (Kapadia, Kundanoka. Kagaj Ni Hodi, 162)

He starts sharing it with his wife but it is beyond her understanding. He feels annoyed,

“Whenever a person having performed their duties goes out of the way, there is no reason to feel so. There is no depression, no failure, and no sudden death of any close relative or there is no big upheaval in the surrounding and then also, there is a deep feeling for being out of place in home and outside.” (Kapadia, Kundanoka. Kagaj Ni Hodi, 162)
Before thirty-two years, he told to this lady, ‘Without you, even the heaven is incomplete for me. If I do not have your company, my life would be like a journey of a blind man in the darkness.’ Then this lady got married with him. And they lived with some quarrels and some tuning, not a very bad married life. And now this lady is not hearing to him at all. It was all in vain to wish for her earnestly in the time of youth and to get satisfied after getting her. Even if he had not wished for her, life would not be much different than what it is today.

(Kapadiya 163-164)

The rest of the story narrates the meaninglessness of life and worthlessness of existence in the absence of some concrete goal and noble aims.

The Music of Stone is a story of a completely rootless man who recollects his childhood when he thought that he was much matured even at the age of fourteen. The story reveals the truth that the definition of understanding changes with the age. At any given age, everyone believes that he has the utmost maturity and whatever he understands is the complete truth. The narrator realizes that our understanding is not based on our maturity but on our ignorance and selfishness. The thing that we call understanding is actually so shallow that it can completely shatter by the outer pressure. The narrator tried to understand the real cause of quarrels of his parents. He did not understand why they kept fighting though they were matured. Out of depression, he used to sit alone for hours on the hill. Here he experienced that there was no actual company of any human being in the life. At some point of time, everyone has to face utter isolation. People generally get afraid of loneliness but one who masters it comes winning out of
Sometimes, he used to meet his Arun uncle there on the hill. They used to talk about various types of stones found there in the hill. Little narrator used to impress the uncle with his knowledge of various classifications of the stones. The narrator described his knowledge to the uncle,

“पत्थर मां पण्य स्वर होय छ. जो वे मेल वाण पत्थर ने एकबाज साथे टकराईरे तो तेमाथि मधुर स्वर नीको छ. पत्थर एक जवती वस्तु छ. पण आप्ले समज्ये तेना करता तेनुं जवन जुऱ्य छ. मेल वाण ये पत्थर शोधवाणुं बढ़ुं अध्य होय छ।”

(There is a distinctive music in each stone. If we ram two stones well-matched to each other, they produce sweet music. The stone is a lively thing and its life is totally different than our perception about it. It is very difficult to find two stones in harmony.) (Kapadiya 177)

On knowing that the narrator loved the music, uncle started singing songs. The narrator felt the pain in his voice. When he went home, he found that the cause of the fights between his parents was perhaps the uncle. The narrator always felt that his mother was a kind and determined lady. If his father could have tried to understand her more, their married life could have been saved. The mother in her long address to the narrator told,

“भनेतार माटे चित्ता नदी हेम के तुं छोकरी नदी। पण तुं मोटी धारा ने लझ करवानी तारी उमर धारा त्यारे जेब्रोकरी साथे तुं लझ करे तेनां विरो येटकुं जारू हे जेके तेनां मा-बाप, छोकरी ने तेनी धर्म विदुः, पैसा के प्रतिभा आतर तो तारी साथे परमावतां नदी ने? तुं मोटी यद्यश त्यारे तने धर्मी वातो समज्ये त्यारे तने भवर पकड़े से समाज येटकुं छुं? व्यक्ति अने समाज नो शुं संबंध छ अने मालूसो ना परमधर संबंध मां मेल हेम स्थापातो नदी? त्यारे तु समज्ये के प्रेम के येक सुगंधीर तत्व छ। ली अने पुष्प ना प्रेम ना धर्मा स्वतुरपो होय छ अने देवा येक मालूस समज रोके छ, जेनुं कहत पवित्र
I do not worry for you because you are not a girl. But when you reach the marriageable age, do not forget to inquire that the girl is getting married to you out of compulsion of the parents for money and reputation or voluntarily. When you are grown up, you would understand what is the role of society and the relationship of a person with the society. You will understand why there is no harmony between humans. You will understand what love is and there are many forms of love between men and women. You will understand only he can love truly whose heart is pious. But our hearts are usually tarnished with distrust, expectations and demands. And that is why it is very difficult to find two persons in complete harmony with each other.) (Kapadiya 180)

She put her hand on the head of the narrator, blessed him. The next day, she committed suicide only to increase the rootlessness of the narrator.

The analysis of the selected texts reveals that at some point of time, everyone feels rootless and nomadic.

4.6 Multiculturalism and sense of freedom and privacy

The traits of Diaspora Literature are unlimited. The thesis does not claim to include all the possible traits as it is practically unfeasible. Neither does the researcher assert that all these characteristics would invariably be present in any work of art penned by a Diaspora writer. It is an erroneous belief that the Diaspora literature offers melancholic reading because it is mostly a tale of dejection, seclusion, homelessness and shattered dreams. This notion of sad tale finds its truth in the first generation Diaspora where the migration was mostly forceful and the scopes limited. In the case of second generation Diaspora, the literature is more a celebration of life as they are cherished and respected in foreign land. They find their presence felt in the pluralist society. Cross-cultural influences in the modern-hybrid society are so governing that the
Diaspora community identifies and eradicates awful elements from native culture and admires and includes good factors of the host culture. Similarly they influence the host culture by their good traditions and legacy. There is a growing need of multicultural literature which can make the readers respect the other culture along with providing some high-quality literary texts. The influence of multicultural existence can really benefit the individuals who are in right frame of mind. The point is strengthened further by citing some of the examples of the stories of three selected women writers.

Rex in the story *The Word Love* by Chitra Banerjee does not understand culture of his Indian girl-friend (lady narrator) who finds it difficult, almost impossible to tell about their live-in relation to her mother in India because of the different ethnicity of Rex,

> “Why are you doing this to yourself? I hate seeing you like this. You’re acting like I was some kind of criminal. Don’t tell her that you’re living in sin. With a foreigner, no less. Someone whose favorite food is sacred cow steak and Budweiser. Who pops a pill now and then when he gets depressed. The shock’ll probably do her in.” (Divakaruni 59)

Rex whose *childhood had years of being shunted between his divorced parents till he was old enough to move out* naturally expressed surprise for the bonding between the mother and daughter.

Mita of *A Perfect Life* is in intimate relationship with Richard. She likes Richard because of his habit of giving her *space*, which is a typical western trait,

> “Tall, and lean and sophisticated, he was very different from the Indian men I’d known back home, and even the work he did as a marketing manager for a publishing company seemed unbelievably glamorous. When I was with Richard I felt like a true American. We’d jogging every morning and hiking on the weekends, and in the evenings we’d take in an art film, or go out to a favorite restaurant, or discuss a recent novel as we sat out on my balcony and drank chilled wine and watched the sunset. And in bed, we tried wild and wonderful
things that would have left me speechless with shock in India had I been able to imagine them.” (Divakaruni 74)

Under the influence of American culture, Mita started hating the marriage only for the sake of tradition. She would get married only on her own terms.

Cathy in the story Doors is a close friend of the heroine Preeti. Under the influence of Western culture, Preeti is obsessed with the concept of privacy. She was born and brought up there in America. Now as she falls in love with a typical Indian conservative man, people have their suspicions about the success of marriage. Cathy opined,

“I must admit I had my doubts in the beginning, though I did not want to say anything- your mother was already being so negative. Just like her, I thought he’d turn out to be terribly chauvinistic, like other men I’ve seen from the old countries.” (Divakaruni 184)

One of the friends of Deepak had also warned him,

“Are you sure you are doing the right thing? She’s been here so long it’s almost like she was born in this country. And you know how these ‘American’ women are, always bossing you, always thinking about themselves...It’s no wonder we call them ABCD- American born confused Desis.” (Divakaruni 184)

Uma Parameswaran’s What Was Always Hers talks about multiculturalism and newly-achieved sense of freedom and privacy in the new land. In the first title novella, when Veeru came to Canada from India, she took time in getting used to the American ways of handling home appliances like electric cattle, pilot flame, oven pilot etc. when Veeru came to know about the affair of her husband with party co-worker Jitin, she was initially traumatized. But instead of weeping and pleading, she decided to be independent. This land of prospects and affluence does not let one depressed for a long time if one truly wishes to come out of the mess.

“As she (Veeru) got into her Volvo after the meeting, inserted the key into the ignition and heard the purr of the engine as the car glided out, she felt power
again, the power of how far she had come, how she had become the woman she was born to be, self confident, energetic, a pro at the art of speaking, of sizing up her audience and speaking in their language: she had carefully crafted herself into her role by growing, growing to become the woman she was born to be. A jilted wife, she thought, was that what she was born to be? Rage, jealousy and hatred, washed over her again.” (Divakaruni 31)

The influence of multiculturalism is best reflected when Veeru, after her break-up with the husband, responded with cool mind the flirtation of her handsome American colleague Gerald,

“Veeru would not admit to herself that the reason she had become such a tasteful dresser, so careful about the quality and colors of her accessories and make up was because as she stood on front of her clothes closet, she would imagine his eyes quickly taking her in each morning. He would come to her each morning within minutes of her arrival, as though by chance, but she knew he waited for her every morning, and if she did not come by nine-thirty, he would be at the front desk for some reason or another, waiting for her to appear, after which he would go away as though he had not been waiting for her. She did not want to look at it seriously, even to herself, in case she found out that after Niranjan there could be no other that she could come close to or allow to come close to her. No, she did not want to be a martyr, one of those village women, who crawled back to their husbands after being beaten black and blue, or who remained grass widows while the men consorted with devdasis. Just for that, she sometimes wished she would find someone.” (Parameswaran .What Was Always Hers, 33)

After the sudden death of Niranjan in a car accident, the white co-workers of the party had adopted Indian cultural heritage to pay a fitting tribute to the master,

“It was registered as a non-profit ethnic organization, and was a member of the National Intercultural Council. Within two years, it had become even more of a force in the province. Politicians now came to their events wearing colored
turbans, with wives in colorful salwar-kameez, and they all clapped to bhangra
music and drank Taj beer imported from Delhi.” (Parameswaran, Uma. What Was
Always Hers, 52)

_Maru and the M.M. Syndrome_ is another story revealing multicultural influences on the
people. Maru left her job and started living with her husband in Ottawa. Her husband Sivaram
was among the top-brass scientist of Canada who had nicely adopted the rules of the Western

culture. Christmas there was more a festival of celebration than Diwali,

“It was that time between Christmas and New Year. You know what a twilight zone it
can be sometimes, that week, may be that is why everyone runs around malls, to get away from
that grey zone which can really get to you if you sit still. The room echoed with sounds of
Christmas, carol sung at the Club party two days before Christmas, glasses clinking with
Christmas toasts, and the laughter of voices as family and friends had filled in the year’s news to
each other.” (Parameswaran 96)

Even the regional literature could not escape the power of multiculturalism. Kundanika’s
story reveals that no society can be powerful enough to sustain on its own. In the story _શરયાલન કી આલાજ_ (Sound of God’s arrival), Katty fell in love and then got married with Firoz
who did not belong to his culture. Later she realized that they both represented completely
different cultures,

“_મને એકતા રહેવાં ગમે છે. મને એકતા રહેવાનું જ બાદ મન છે. પછુ કિસ્સાજ અલગ છે. આ બધું ના લેવું, આ ડીનર, ડાન્સ, પાર્ટી, ક્લબ, મિટ્સો, બ્રીજ ના હોય તો કિસ્સાજ બોર્નાંગ જ ના લેવું,_” (I love to remain alone. I wish to be
alone more. But Firoz is of different nature and culture. He would be bored in the
absence of dinner, dance, party, clubs, friends and bridge. He would not feel alive
in the absence of all these.) (Kapadia, Kundanika. _Kagaj Ni Hodi_, 01)
The story *Mediocrity* is an attack on growing artifice in our relations and life. People invite friends in the party just to show them the affluence and newly-brought furniture. This furniture purchased from different countries is the symbol of melting cultural boundaries,

“ટ્યુબ લાઈટ થી અજ્જવાલા ખેળતા દુભ માં તેઓ બધા બેકા હતાં. કીમ અને બ્રાઉન કેટરના સોજા સામસામે ગોહ્વાયા હતાં. ટિવિયાન પર ડનલેપ ની ગાડી અને તે પર અનેક રુંગના પોયા પોયા કુશા હતા. એક ભુરુંખાં શીશેશ હતાં તેમાં જાપાન ના ફ્લાષવાઝ અને જર્મન ના ફલસ્ટિક ના ફૂલ સુધી ની વિવિધ વસ્તુઓ હતી. અંધ વગર ની વાતો કરવા માતે આ એક સમયુક્ત સેટિંગ હતું.”

(People were sitting in the lighted big hall. The sofas of cream and brown colors were juxtaposed. There was Dunlop mattress on the coat and there were soft colorful cushions on it. There was a show-case in the corner in which they arranged flower-vase from Japan and plastic flowers from Germany. This was a perfect setting for talking on the meaningless matters. (Kapadia, Kundanika. *Kagaj Ni Hodi*, 86)

**Conclusion:**

Thus it has been studied that the typical traits of Doaspora literature like alienation, dejection, discrimination, nostalgia and identity-crisis are also apparent in native literature. These themes are embedded with the very existence of humans. So it would be a fallacy to believe that the diaspora literature and native literature have different and varied set of themes and issues.
Works Cited


