CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

The main focus in the present research is that though Diaspora Literature and regional literature are two extremely different genres, they share many common elements. As Literature is the reflection of the society and societies hardly differ in structure, issues and people, these two genres have to have more commonalities than differences. In the previous chapters, an attempt has been made to analyze the characters, themes, language and symbols in the three selected writers by listing down the occurrences of above elements in their chosen texts. The identities of Diaspora community are ever-changing. They constantly evolve through the process of leaving the hometown and settling in the host-land. In the process of shifting and adjusting, they strive hard to sustain the core values of their own culture. They prove their mettle by hard work and honesty. They remain polite in the face of racial encounters and injustice. Diaspora community is hospitable and willing to spread their cultural heritage as much as in their capacity. They prefer to live in joint family. If they do not have their family there in the new land, they prefer to live near the community people who give them the sense of belonging and security. On one hand, they need freedom and privacy. On the other hand, they are in dire need of community and neighbor of their ethnicity. These traits are mostly found in the first generation of Diaspora (who spent some of the years in India before settling abroad). The second generation Diaspora (those who are born and brought up there) are more Canadianized or Americanized than the people of Canada or America. Many times, it has also been observed in the selected stories that even the second generation Diaspora people are equally concerned for preserving the heritage of their original land. All these traits are narrated effectively in the stories of Indo-American Diaspora writer Chitra Banerjee and Indo-Canadian Diaspora writer Uma Parameswaran. In the previous chapter, the stories are narrated in detail where the themes, plots, characters, language and symbols have been scrutinized. The detailed inspection of the stories of three selected writers has offered certain observations as below. An attempt is made to check the validity and reliability of three hypotheses of this research project.
6.1 Hypothesis-1

Despite apparent dissimilarities, there are many similarities in the texts of Diaspora and Non-Diaspora writers

The current research began with the hypothesis that there are many similarities in the themes and characterization of women in the works of the Diasporic women writers and non-Diasporic female writers. There are minor differences in the writings of Diaspora and regional Writers. However in the course of rigorous analysis of themes, characters, language, symbols and images of the selected stories of these writers of two categories, it has been observed that there are no significant differences. The nationality of the writer has little influence on the way they write. Many Diaspora instances of dejection, loneliness and discrimination are very much present in the regional writer like Kundanika Kapadia. Here we attempt to discuss the similarities in these two group of writers namely Diaspoa and non- Diaspora.

Before analyzing the similarities and differences of Diaspora writers with a non-Diasporic writer, here two Diaspora writers Chitra Banerjee and Uma Parameswaran’s works and themes are compared. This internal comparison would reveal the ways these writers treat their themes and characters. Some of the striking points of similarities are as under.

1. Chitra Banerjee, Indo- American diaspora writer treats her characters as representatives of Diaspora community rather than individual persons. Her lady characters feel more alienated and nostalgic and they have a burden of sustaining the legacy of being Indians. She tries to make the image of India and its values. There is less number of happenings in the lives of her lady characters but there are more narrations of interior monologues and description of thought process. eg more than half of her story Clothes is the description of heroine’s dreams about her impending stay in America and her N.R.I. husband Somesh Sen. Chitra’s ladies are freedom-lovers. They cannot tolerate Indian guests at their place. ( Preeti in the story Doors) They create their own identity instead of taking delight and becoming the shadow of their husbands’ identity. Uma’s heroines are more Indianized-submissive and sensitive. Eg Veeru in the first title novella surrenders to
her husband’s every wish, may it be leaving India or again going back to India at the time of second pregnancy, or abortion when it is third time or divorce after his affair with Jitin. Uma’s characters are individuals rather than a set of values and community. It is here that the comment of Geraldine Forbes (whose work we studied in the chapter of Literature Review) gets accepted that the new lady writers write more about the liberated women and there are images of new era women in their works.

2. They both write about the predicament of women in the new land rather than thinking about the struggle of the male counterparts in creating and maintaining identities.

3. Both the Diaspora writers talk about the changes in the lives of ladies once they are immigrated and how immigration changes their identity.

4. They both show strong thematic concern in the experiences of immigrants, particularly South Asians with an emphasis on issues of racial discriminations and adaptation.

5. Their texts are indication of bi-cultural experiences. There are hardly any stories which have locations only in India or only in America or Canada. The stories have multiple locations, shifts from India to America or Canada and vice-versa. These shifts are either virtual (in the forms of memory and imaginations) or actual.

6. The lady characters of both the Diaspora writers have constant struggle for identity. They invariably try to know their self in the face of cultural change.

7. Both of them talk about some severe loss: loss of culture, mother tongue and traditions. The entire lives of the characters go in finding suitable compensation (in the form of wealth and freedom) of this irreparable loss.

8. In the nostalgic memories of India, Chitra’s heroines remember the rigid rituals like widow’s white saris, bondages for ladies and husband beating wives. Uma’s characters fondly remember the happy old days like family gatherings, festival celebrations and bonding with neighbors.

9. Their narratives and settings are realistic and poignant. Chitra’s narratives travel from Calcutta to California. Uma’s narratives pass through South India to Vancouver, Ottawa, Manitoba Winnipeg and Saskatoon. They thread skillfully two cultures and prepare a superb fabric out of their narration power.

10. The language employed by Chitra is of typical Diaspora community. Her ladies are bi-lingual. Formerly, English was an alien language for them. Their mother-tongues were
the perfect medium for gratifying their emotional and spiritual needs. But after migration, they learn and master the English language for satisfying their social and economic needs. Uma’s characters are also bi-lingual but they do not lament much the loss of their mother tongues. They strike out a good balance by reserving English as ‘language for profession’ and mother tongue as ‘language for family and personal emotions’.

11. Both the writers use a wide variety of symbols and images, ranging from food, drink, colors, and materials to spices, furniture, cars and modern home appliances. These symbols have effectively expressed their longing for motherland, nostalgia and discrimination. Chitra’s symbols and images are vivid and open-ended. Uma’s close-knitted symbols are more poignant and instructive.

Both the writers are prestigious award-winners and they have carved their niche in writing in the foreign countries. They have narrated the immigration experiences in their best capacity as writers and professors. They both do lots of work for their Indian community there and influence thousands of Diaspora people. Divakaruni is a co-founder and former president of *Maitri*, a helpline founded in 1991 for *South Asian* women dealing with domestic abuse. She runs an N.G.O. for bringing the literacy to the underprivileged Indian children. Uma Parameswaran has been the two-time chair of the Status of Women Writers Committee of the Writers’ Union of Canada, and a member of the Margaret Laurence Chair of Women’s Studies, and has chaired the board of Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba. She founded **PALI - Performing Arts and Literatures of India** for the purpose of introducing various aspects of Indian culture to not only the Indo-Canadian youth of Winnipeg but also to the community at large. So both the writers are dedicated Indians spreading its legacy to the global level.

After the internal comparison of two Diaspora Indian writers writing in English, here an attempt has been made to compare their works with the work of a non-Diaspora lady writer Kundanika Kapadia writing in Gujarati. There are some striking points of similarities as below.

1. All the three lady writes have produced profusely. They have tried their hands and excelled in almost all the genres of literature. They have won accolades and awards of national and international repute.

2. All the three writers have devoted their writings to the issues of women’s lives. Their
main aim as writers is to express and glorify the different roles played by the women as mothers, daughters, wives, beloveds and many more.

3. Their themes always revolve round the domestic lives of women. Their writings have given voice to the plights and poignancy of issues concerning to the marital status. The intricacies and complexities of married life always find its theme in their stories.

4. Their stories are women-centric. Central characters are mostly occupied by the women. Males find marginal roles in the stories.

5. Though these lady writers are not labeled as hard-core feminists, their works manifest the injustice done to the women through ages in this patriarchal society. Their stories are sometimes reflections of women’s inability to revolt against the excess done to them and sometimes about the incredible courage shown by the down-trodden against the patriarchal norms of the rigid society. These writers illustrate that the biggest enemy of women in many cases, is their own limitless tolerance.

6. Though dejected and discriminated in the male-dominated society, their women characters exhibit strength, self-reliance, confidence and dynamism.

7. All the three writers dare to touch the themes which were considered to be taboo in the past. Men-women relationship, single mothers, childless couples and sex are some of the oft-written subjects by them. In this sense, they are the modern writers who talk about ‘new woman’ in their writings.

8. All the three writers use different fictional techniques as per the requirement of the story. For the realistic portrayal of situations and characters, they employ the flash-back technique, stream of consciousness technique, interior monologue, symbolism, power-packed words, contrasting characters, use of Hindi, Bengali and Tamil words as and when required, investigation into the psyche of the characters and dream sequences. In short, they are the real stalwarts in literary innovations. This creativity comes to them as naturally as leaves to the trees. This unattempted innovation is the key to their mastery in narration and plot-building.

9. Against the typical nature of Diaspora or feminist writing, these three lady writers do not forget to infuse the dosage of subtle humor and mild satire amidst the narration of gloom and loss. (The characters of Maru’s boss and Rahim in What Was Always Hers by Uma Parameswaran, a typical Indian guest Raj in the story Doors by Chitra...
Banerjee and Latika and Ajay in the story *Mediocrity* by Kundanika Kapadia). The readers are given the comic relief at the regular intervals.

10. All the three writers love to offer allusions in their work. This may stand as the testimony of their association with India and its legacy. There are descriptions of Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, savitri, Gayatri Mantra, Sandhyavandanam, sacred thread (Janoi) Goddess Kali, Sri Chakra and many more.

11. All the three lady writers have focused on rural area. Though the first two Diaspora writers write as outsiders, they do not forget to highlight rituals and life style of small villages in South India and Bengal. Kundanika also wrote more about the simple rustic characters.

12. All three writers are more interested in writing about the misfit and displaced middle class lady characters rather than the issues of the higher strata of the society.

13. We often find in their narration ‘stories within stories’. The central lady character narrates the story of her youth, and by doing so, they interweave multiple tales of various generation into one thread and make it a coherent mix. (*e.g. The Maid Servent’s Story* and *The Ultrasound* by Chitra, चलकाट - (Brightness) by Kundanika Kapadia)

14. They have created multiple characters from all three classes of the society. They bring to the forefront the class-distinction and cultural differences. In the story *Doors*, we came across the high-class sophisticated lady Preeti and her middle class unsophisticated husband Deepak. The story narrates how the cultural disparity makes their love evaporate and turn their love-marriage into a long-lasting hatred.

15. Instead of concentrating on the local themes and people, these writers create situations and characters that are global. The ladies are self-made professionals and earn their own living. Along with the household responsibilities, they contribute financially also and reduce the burden of their male counterparts.

16. All the three lady writers are masters in the psychoanalysis of their characters. They reach and explore the unexplored nuances of the inner psyche of the characters. The extended monologues reveal the inner urge of the characters.

17. It is a fallacy to think that alienation and dejection are typical traits of only Diaspora literature. Modern life has become so complicated that the man feels alienated in his own homeland. Kundanika’s writings share many characteristics with the Diaspora writers. If
the reader reads the stories of these three writers without being aware of the names and background of the writers, he would not be able to distinguish the Diaspora stories from the domestic stories. The complexities in relations, hollowness derived from modern lifestyle, materialism and sheer loneliness are intrinsic parts of a person, whether in his homeland or host land.

18. Generally, discrimination on the grounds of color, gender and religion is considered to be the most typical trait of Diaspora literature. But reading Kundanika Kapadia, one realizes that women have always been discriminated, no matter where they live. They are biologically treated as weaker than males. Wifehood and motherhood are their two full-time and permanent employment where they are not granted leave for a day. Her female characters have constant search for the identity and self-respect.

19. Feminist approach is prominent in their writing. These three women novelists touched various themes regarding women’s life and position in male-dominated society. Some of the oft-discussed themes are gender inequality, her estrangement, apprehension, diffidence, agony and exploitation, struggle for new identity, psychological commotion, mother-daughter relationship, disharmony in marital relations etc. With the help of these themes, these writers have created images of Indian women. These images are of various types namely traditional, contemporary and new, open-minded, immigrant, middle-class, sensitive, sterile, emotional and altruistic woman.

20. These lady writers are lovers of symbolism and images. The symbols and metaphors of food, colors, clothes, birds, and trees, colors of sky, seasons, mirror, closed doors, gadgets and cars are so wonderfully used to describe the futility and meaningfulness of the characters and situations.

The above points of striking resemblances between Diaspora and non-Diaspora writers make us conclude that though these are two different literary genres, they have many similarities in themes, plots and issues. As life offers similar pattern of despair and delight, pain and pleasure, acceptance and dejection and agony and ecstasy, its treatment in literature seldom differs. **So the first hypothesis that there are many similarities in a Diaspora and non-Diaspora writer gets accepted during the process of analysis and interpretation.**
6.2 Hypothesis- 2

Even with the emigrated status, the role of women doesnot change much in patriarchal society. Even a woman in her own country can feel diasporic and alienated.

The lady writers selected in this research study are settled in different countries but all of them have roots in India. Chitra belongs to Indo- American Diaspora, Uma represents Indo-Canadian Diaspora and Kundanika has roots and destination both in India. The reason for selecting these three distinct ladies is to make a holistic comparison of the treatment of themes and characters given by a Diasporic and non- Diasporic writer. The close reading of their selected texts often reveals that there are some points of union in the issues and treatment of these lady writers where they meet and then run parallel. The geographical distance of these writers does not make their themes different and dissimilar. They are highly concerned about the issues and predicament of women. Their protagonists are mostly women caught in some kind of crises.

In Indian families, girls are mostly taught to be submissive, docile and obedient from the early childhood. They lead the lives under some kind of male-domination. In modern families, the girls are raised like boys. But those families have not shown courage to raise their boys like girls. Hence it has been proved that the girls are given the secondary importance in the family and hence in the society. Ladies, in their different roles of the daughter, sister, wife, mother and daughter-in-law are trained to subside their voice and find pleasure in the achievement and satisfaction of their male counterparts. They are trained not to have any ambitions and goals other than those of their husbands’. In this research study, an attempt has been made to analyze the different roles played by the lady characters and to know whether the role changes once they immigrate for the foreign land. The detailed analysis of the selected stories would bring to the forefront the post-immigration changes in the confidence, life-style, economic status and consciousness of the women characters.

Generally it has been observed that women live the life of inferior significance compared to males especially in the Indian-subcontinent. In order to be safe and secured, she is supposed to
need the male shelter of a father, husband or of a son. She is nothing on her own. Her identity is based on the identity of her male counterpart. She idolizes her brother, father, husband and son. It has also been believed that the life of a woman in the western country does not follow such rigidity. The fact that both the husband and wife earn their living gives the later the confidence to thrive and assurance to flourish. However during the reading of the selected stories, this notion of submissive Indian women and ambitious and determined Western women does not get fully accepted. Some of the examples below would throw light on the role played by the women in and outside India.

Kundanika Kapadia’s story Sarvanash (Complete Destruction) speaks subtly about the role of the women in Indian societies. Madhuri is married to a typical Indian male who has stayed for many years in America. Despite his stay there, he is still an archetypal chauvinistic male who wants to dominate his wife for the lifetime. Madhuri has to forget to sing and speak loudly as a typical Indian daughter-in-law is not supposed to do so. She has learnt to forgo her intimate possessions for her parents as per her husband’s wish. She has been trained not to oppose her husband’s words and wishes. Though she is an M.A. in Psychology, she is treated as an illiterate lady whose sole aim should be to please her in-laws. She is not allowed to talk and be friend with her old associates. Her husband wants her to be an ideal Indian wife and he constantly tries to make her one by gifting her books like ‘Ideal Lady’, ‘India’s Ideal Lady Gems’ etc. If she is found reading other than such ideal books, she is given a long tirade for her offence.

What If? (તો?) is a story of the pang of Sujata in the backdrop of war with Bangladesh. Sujata is an upper-class, literate and sophisticated lady who has lost her husband and kids and has to take shelter in the refugee camp. While residing in the camp, she recalls her married and domestic life. Her chief role as a woman is to manage the timings of her husband and kids. In her friend-circle, her married life is an object of the envy for many. For the outer world, Sujata and her husband are united. But when they are alone, they sense a typical feeling of loneliness and distance. Sujata remains alone in her world of thoughts and emotions. She gets her identity as an individual only when she loses her home and so-called relations.
In the story ‘**The scorching Sun**’ (બળતો બપોર) the writer talks about the subtle craving of the leading lady to get appreciated for her all day labor for keeping the timings of family members and for doing things beyond her capacity. The story narrates a single event where the lady is preparing for the arrival of the guests from 4:00am. She had cleaned her house, done laundry and cooking, prepared delicious dishes and then gone to the market for purchasing the medicine for her mother-in-law. Meanwhile, the guests arrived and had gone back as they were in hurry. No one noticed the hard work done by the lady to make the guests feel at home. Even her husband and mother-in-law did not mention her name in front of the guests. When she came back, she was hurt to realize that no one considered her presence in the family. The story suggests that the role of a woman is confined only to the hearth and not to the heart.

These are the stories by a regional writer discussing about the role of women in India, in their original homeland. Generally it has been assumed that once the women step out and leave the native country for marital happiness, in pursuit of study and career or for material affluence, their roles change. After settling there, they do not have much house-hold responsibilities. In our first selected Diaspora text, all the leading lady protagonists leave India and get settled in America mostly because they were chosen by NRIs and PIOs. In the story *What Was Always Hers* by Uma Parameswaran, Indian ladies have come to Canada for varied reasons. The close reading of the texts and instances would elucidate the difference in the roles played by the ladies in and outside India and whether their emigrated status brings any difference in it.

**Sujata** in the story *Clothes* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is married to an N.R.I. Somesh Sen and has gone to America after her marriage. She has tried much to get settled in the new milieu and she was mostly successful in her endeavor. But she hardly finds any difference in the life-style of both the countries. She has to cover her head with the pallu of the sari and serve tea to the old woman that come to visit her mother-in-law where like a good Indian wife, she must never address her husband by his name. 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 Deepali’s or Radha’s. But at other times, I feel caught in a world where everything is frozen in place, like a scene inside a glass paper-weight. It is a world so small that if I have to stretch out my
arms, I would touch its cold unyielding edges. I stand inside this glass world, watching helplessly as America rushes by, wanting to scream.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 26)

In an unfortunate happening, she lost her husband there. Like in a typical Indian family, the family members pressed her hands to break her glass bangles and rubbed the red marriage mark off her forehead. Her in-laws wanted her to go back to India as there was nothing there for her anymore. So here we hardly find any change in the role played by a lady in the family.

**A Perfect Life** is a story of a Calcutta girl Meera who had come to America for her pursuit of career. She fell in love with an American man Richard who gave her enough space and freedom. They both were enjoying their lives to the fullest. There had no household responsibilities. Meera happened to meet an orphan boy and she took him home. Gradually, she became highly concerned for the needs of the boy rather than that of Richard and hers.

“The needs of children came before the needs of adults, I had learned that already. Mother-love, that tidal wave, swept everything else away. Friendship, romantic fulfilment, even the need for sex.” (Divakaruni 99)

She was now so attached with the boy that she thought of adopting him legally. She had become a typical mother-figure, always worried for her boy. During the process of legal adoption, she had to get seperated from the boy which was extremely difficult for her. The news of Krishna’s elopement from the adoption centre made her insane,

“I consider quitting my job- I was doing so badly I was close to being fired anyway-and returning to India. At one point of time, I wrote a letter to my mother saying that I would consider an arranged marriage if she could find me a widower with a little boy of about seven. Such a man, I reasoned, would understand about mother love far more than Richard- or any other America male, for that matter ever could. But I never posted the letter. Even then, crazy as I was with anger and sorrow and guilt, I knew that would have been a bigger mistake than the ones I’d already made.” (Divakaruni 106)
The story signifies that Indian ladies’ kindness and motherly temperament remain unbroken even in foreign land.

The Ultrasound is a typical story juxtaposing the roles of a woman in India and in America. Runu and Anju were two close cousins, former living in India and the later in America after her marriage with Sunil. Anju was happy for her good fate as she was living a comfortable life in America. Both the cousins kept in close touch through expensive long distance calls and letters. During their conversations, we came to know about the sad life of Runu due to her torturing in-laws. Runu was forced to abort the girl child as her mother-in-law did not find it fitting that the eldest child of the family be a female. When Anju advised Runu to go back to her mother for delivery, Runu said,

“My mother says it’s not right that I should leave my husband’s home. My place is with them, for better or worse. She’s afraid they’ll never take me back if I move out, and then what would happen to me? People will think they threw me out because I did something bad. They’ll think my baby is a bastard.” (Divakaruni 225)

There was a heated argument between Anju and her husband over it. Anju argued in favor of Runu’s escaping to her mother’s place and continuing with the pregnancy. Sunil, like a typical prejudiced Indian male was sceptical about such revolt. He argued,

“Runu is the one who’ll have to face it everyday. Even if money isn’t a problem, what kind of life will it be for her? She certainly won’t have the chance to remarry. She’ll be alone with her daughter the rest of her life, a social pariah, someone the neighbors point a finger at every time she walks down the street. What about the social stigma?” (Divakaruni 227)

Anju kept arguing in favor of Runu’s freedom. She was shocked when Sunil asserted loudly, “Abortion is the lesser of the two evils.” (pg 227) It is here that Anju realised,

“May be you’d have wanted me to have an abortion if my baby hadn’t turned out to be a boy.” (Divakaruni 228)
The readers realize that the importance of the boy child is a dominating concept not only in India, but throughout the globe.

The Word Love is a story of an Indian girl who was in a live-in relationship with her American boyfriend Rex. They were living in California. The entire story is a narration of a dilemma of the central heroine who wanted to share the fact of her relation to her mother in India. She knew about the worry and constant search of her mother for a suitable groom for her. So she wanted to tell about Rex but could not muster the courage for the same. Rex did not understand the importance of sharing such news with the mother because of his tormenting childhood which had years of being shunted between his divorced parents till he was old enough to move out. The girl was constantly haunted by the whispery voice which she used to listen the moment she said yes for the relation with Rex,

“Sometimes the voice sounds different. It is a rushed intake of air, as just before someone asks a question that might change your life. You don’t want to hear the question, which might be how did you get yourself into this mess, or perhaps why, so you leap in with that magic word, Love, you tell yourself love love love. But you know deep down that words solve nothing. And so you no longer try to explain to him why you must tell your mother.” (Divakaruni 60)

The leading lady had to struggle a lot to share it with the mother and ultimately when she told her, the mother had cut off the relation. Shocked and dejected, she had decided to come back to India and to stay with the mother forever. The story suggests that the Indianness is in the roots of our people. The role the society defines for ourselves does not change because we immigrate to the other land.

Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs is a well-narrated story where the role of a lady in India and in foreign land is well-defined. Jayanti, an ambitious Indian girl planned to go to U.S.A. for further study and career. She was little hesitant to reside at her Pratima aunt who was a distant relative,

“I think, what if uncle and aunt don’t like me? What if I don’t like them? I
remember the only picture I’ve seen of them, the faded sepia marriage photo where they gazed into the camera, stoic and unsmiling, their heavy garlands pulling at their necks. (Why had they never sent any other pictures?) What if they hadn’t really wanted me to come and were only being polite? (Americans, I’d heard, liked their privacy. They liked their lives to be soothed and uninterrupted by the claims of relatives.” (Divakaruni 38)

Jayanti had impressions that her Pratima aunt would be a bold, independent and modern lady. But when she met her, she was not happy to learn that the aunt was meek and obedient. She never violated the commands of her husband. She seemed to live a fearful life. Uncle was a typical rigid man who never allowed her wife any space to breathe.

Preeti in the story Doors was born and brought up in U.S.A. She was a vibrant and confident girl who made her decisions without consulting even parents. She fell in love with an Indian man, Deepak. They got married amidst the suspicion of the close relatives about the success of the marriage. Things were good in the initial years of the marriage. But gradually Preeti’s American habit of privacy and freedom took a heavy toll on their married life. Deepak’s cousin Raj came to stay with them. Preeti struggled a lot to convince Deepak for sending Raj to a hotel. In the process of persuading Deepak, Preeti did not realise that the distance between them grew to the degree of unbridgeable because Deepak’s idea of a wife was different. He expected her to be guest-loving and adjustable.

The title novella *What Was Always Hers* by Uma Parameswaran offers many such instances of similar roles played by women, no matter in which country they reside. Veeru was a typical Innocent Indian girl who was chosen by an N.R.I. Niranjan because he was impressed by her knowledge of Vinobaji at the age of seventeen. They got married and Veeru left for Canada with thousands of dreams of happy and prosperous life. But destiny had something contrary to offer. Niranjan was running an N.G.O. for the betterment of the down-trodden people and their rights. He had many followers, Indians and foreigners. Jitin, a young girl from Punjab was one of them. Veeru felt friendly with Jitin but Jitin kept an uncomfortable distance with Veeru. It was later she realised that Jitin and Niranjan were in deep and long affair. Unlike other ladies, she did not feel hatred for Jitin. When she heard about the sad demise of Niranjan in a car
accident, she stood for Jitin in her financial and emotional crisis. So a lady is an embodiment of sacrifice and selfless love not only in India but anywhere in the globe. The newly-achieved sense of modernity and freedom does not make them forget their roles and duties towards fellow men.

In an experimentive story *Maru and M.M. Syndrome*, the lady narrator Maru left her job as a secretary in the University. She had decided to be with her husband who was at the vulnerable age of fifty-five. She observed in the University that males at this menopausal age become batty and eccentric. Her role as a house wife after leaving the job was to tolerate eccentricities of her top-brass scientist husband who used to recite thousands of Gayatri-Mantras for mental peace and some magical affluence. She used to organise parties and get-togethers as her husband was fond of socialising. Like a common housewife in India, she was always worried that some evil spirit should not touch their home. She invited a Tamil man who was expert in exorcizing the presence of devil in the family. The readers wonder how a lady of such higher stature in Canada could believe in superstitious matters.

In the story *How We Won Olympic Gold*, Maru was planning to visit India. She was worried about her husband Siv’s routine after her departure. (Over-concern of Indian ladies of keeping schedules of the husbands and thinking that it would be totally disrupted in their absence) When she was about to leave, Siv became over-caring and anxious which made Maru annoyed,

“I heard that speech, with minor variations, about one hundred and forty-seven times between then and the time I walked through the security gates at Manipeg Airport with Bunto in my arms. Even though I often enough felt like hitting him over the head. I also felt sorry for him. That husband of mine loves his son, abso. Dotes on him, and I felt awfully guilty about seperating them for two months.” (Parameswaran 168)

After she reached India, those phone calls became a major exercise in timing and patience. Like an extremely obedient wife, she followed the timing strictly for attending his calls. She was always willing to obey his orders. She kept waiting for his calls,
“Bunto was brought over around 8 o’clock and I gave him his breakfast at 9 o’clock and still no phone call. I had dozens of packing details to attend to but I knew Siv well enough to know that if I did not confirm my travel plans with him, I would have to pay for his two days worry with two years of rebukes.”

(Parameswaran 172)

So the role of Maru was to take care of Bunto as her husband was much attached with him.

The extensive reading of these three selected texts reveals that the woman, whether in India or in abroad, is considered to be a home-maker and one who sacrifices her joy for the betterment of the husband, kids and in-laws. Her role always remains the same anywhere. We can conclude that the women in the foreign land are given more luxury and fewer burdens of family responsibilities. As there is a common norm in abroad that everyone earns his/her own living, women are not dependent on their husbands. And the capacity to earn gives other traits like love for freedom and privacy, decision-power and assertiveness in whatever they do. Hence there are many examples of the lady characters in the two Diaspora texts where the ladies, in the end of the stories, take some bold actions which seem to be contrary to their conventional role of a home-maker. But in most of the cases, their status in the foreign land confirms their traditional roles. **So the hypothesis that even with the emigrated status, the role of women does not change much gets partly accepted and partly rejected.**

Kundanika Kapadia’s stories reflect that alienation and frustration have nothing to do with the geographical distances. Frustration is in the air of modern era which we are raised breathing. Finding a truly happy and satisfied man has become a herculean task. A grown-up person finds it hard to escape loneliness, dejection and depression. So the hypothesis that a person feels alienated and homeless even in his home country gets fully accepted.

### 6.3 Hypothesis 3

The writings of the selected women writers broadly confirm to the established theoretical framework related to Diaspora theories. The Diasporic writers exercise a
variety of techniques (in narration, characterization, dialogues and in language) for expressing their diasporic sensibility. And there are many similarities in such techniques employed by non-Diasporic writers.

In the selected two texts, some of the Diasporic theories find solid representation in plot, themes, style and characterization. One of the pioneering scholars in the field of Diaspora theory is William Safran. In his scholarly article *Diaspora in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*, he described and classified Diaspora groups. He has given six standard points for identification of Diaspora clusters. These six points are as authentic as Bible. No Diaspora researcher can complete his investigation without studying this theory of Diaspora community given by Safran. These points are briefly narrated here. The examples from the selected two Diaspora lady writers are given below each point for the support of the argument.

1. **The Diaspora people, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “centre” to two or more peripheral or foreign regions.**

Most of the characters of the book by Chitra’s *Arranged Marriage* are dispersed from India. In the story *Doors*, the parents of the central lady figure Preeti migrated years before to U.S.A. Preeti was born and brought up there in the liberated culture. Jayanti from *Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs* decided to leave India for better career and prospects and planned to stay with Bikram Uncle and Pratima aunt who had migrated to America before a decade. The lady narrators of the stories *A Perfect Life* and *The Word Love* have immigrated to U.S.A. against the wish of their mothers and other family members.

The characters of Uma also share the similar trait. Veeru in the title novella *What Was Always Hers* came down to Canada after her marriage with Niranjan. Maru and her scientist husband Siv migrated to Ottawa and Manipeg for better financial prospects. Maru’s brother Ranjit and his wife Deepa came to Canada for escaping the hustle-bustle of family bondage in India.

2. **They retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland-its physical location, history, achievements etc.**
Both the texts are full of examples where the characters become nostalgic about their golden days in their homeland. There are passages of long narration of their home in India. Jayant in *Darkest Before Dawn* finds solace only in the memory of his Aji (grandma), courtyard, storerooms, Parijat tree in his ancestral home. Throughout the story, he could not come out of the virtual world of the memory as there are no better things in a foreign land than the memory of the past.

- **They believe that they would never be accepted fully by their host society and therefore feel alienated and insulted.**

Perhaps no character in the stories of these two writers feels at home in the host-land. There is no instance of a character who has not wept in the face of dejection and alienation. Jayanti in the story *Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs* was shocked to face intolerable racial attack where the white boys picked up the fistful of slush and were throwing it to Jayanti and her aunt and called them “nigger.” The lady narrator of *A Perfect Life* was in love with her American boy-friend Richards. She felt dejection when she wanted to adopt seven years old Krishna and Californian Adoption laws did not allow her. The lady characters of Uma Parameswaran’s *What Was Always Hers* are also victim of migration-blues. Veeru in the title novella came to Canada after her marriage with Niranjan and felt alienated and dejected when she came to know about her husband’s affair with his colleague. Ranjit in the story *Icicle* was not happy because the Indian degrees of her brilliant wife Deepa were not considered valid in Canada and she had to do a menial job there.

- **They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would eventually return when the situations are favorable.**

It has been observed during the reading of the two selected writers that the characters in Diaspora stories always dream of going back to the original country. They never get cut off from it. The lady narrator of the story *The Word Love* was in a live-in relationship with her American boy friend. She was dejected and frustrated due to her inability to share this relation with her mother in India. After months of dilemma and alienation, she decided to go back to India. In the story *Affair*, Meena was a bold and beautiful socialite.
She was in affair with her American boss. Out of commotion and failure to bring her back, her husband Srikant decided to come back to India. In *What Was Always Hers*, Maru in the story *Maru and M.M. Syndrome* argued in favor of regular visits to India though they were highly expensive and could eat the entire saving done so far.

- **They have a collective commitment to the maintenance or restoration of safety and prosperity in the original homeland.**

  It has mostly been observed that an Indian living in England would be happier when India wins against the cricket match against England. This is so because by heart he is always an Indian. The same is the case with the characters of Indian Diaspora texts. Though they live outside the country, they keep wishing good for the native country. E.g. in the story of Uma Parameswaran *The Icicle*, Maru’s scientist husband Siv sponsors the bright students from India. He gives them a foothold into the country. During his conversation with Maru, he called Indians as ‘our people’ even though he has spent more of his life outside India. But in his subconscious mind, he is yet an Indian and would be so for the rest of the life.

- **They continue to relate to their homeland personally or vicariously in an ethno-communal consciousness.**

  Each incident of dejection, alienation, loneliness and discrimination makes them fondly remember their country. So they virtually keep living in India. The Diaspora writers use alternating narration as an effective tool. They narrate one actual event happening in the host-land and then as a repercussion, one flashback event in India in the memory of the character. E.g. in the story by Chitra Banerjee *The Word Love*, the lady narrator was dejected due to her failure to share her live-in relation to her mother in India. She kept remembering about her life in Calcutta and how her schoolmates used to bunk the classes to watch a movie and then rebuke of a mother etc. In *Darkest Before Dawn*, Jayant virtually lives in India as he constantly misses his ancestral home and his grandmother.

So the theory by Safran finds its full representation in the selected Diaspora texts.
6.4 Differences in the Degrees of Diaspora Sentiments

(HDS and LDS)

As mentioned above, the researcher believes that modern man is dejected and dislocated even in his own country and even in his own home. During the study, it has been observed that each selected text offers diverse degrees of sentiments. There are some instances where the characters feel High Diasporic Sensibilities and there are some occurrences where they undergo Low Diasporic Sensibilities. The regional text Kagaj Ni Hodi is one such text where the degrees of dejection and depression seem to be tolerable. E.g. in the story Fraud (Chhalna), the writer narrates the tale of Sudha who worked in a school. She had become a close friend of her colleague who was the narrator of the story. Sudha depicted her happy life, her caring and concerned husband, their wealth, her luxurious home and her enviable life to the narrator. When the narrator visited her home in absence of Sudha, her mother told the narrator about the white spots on Sudha’s back and legs which was the reason for her inability to get married. The narrator realized that Sudha had created the world of illusion around her where she thought about her imaginary husband and happy life. After the initial shock, the readers accept her innocent fraud and lies because they realize that such lies are driving-force of her life. The degrees of sensitivities are naturally law here.

In a Diaspora text, the characters are bound to feel double dejection- the dejection of existence which every living human tends to suffer and dejection and sadness of leaving the place of birth and childhood and entering into the country of strangers. Obviously, the characters in such texts experience High Diasporic Sensibilities. E.g. The lady narrator of the story The Word Love in Arranged Marriage by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was in painful dilemma to tell about her live-in relation with her American beau Rex to her mother in India. She had tough time in convincing her mother before coming to America. Now convincing the mother for such relation was a herculean task for her. Throughout the story, she tried often to tell about it on the phone-calls. She had tough time even in persuading Rex for the need of telling it to the mother,

“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 her 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 often told you.” (pg 58) When she was able to tell about it one day, her mother reacted bitterly. She cut off all her relation with the narrator. The narrator then kept her calling, “It’s hard to see the digits through the tears. Your knees feel as though they have been broken. The phone buzzes against your ears like a trapped insect. No one picks it up. You keep calling all week. Finally a machine tells you the number has been changed.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 65)

It is here that the readers too feel dejected and acute sadness. The readers are literally annoyed when Rex kept in contact and frequently visited his ex-girl friends. The readers are elated to learn about the narrator’s decision to come back to India permanently after severe and intolerable impasse.

In What Was Always Hers by Uma Prameswarn, the disporic feelings felt by Veeru, the central lady figure were so high as to disturb her existence. She came to Canada after her marriage with an N.R.I. Niranjan. Gradually, she came to know about his affair with his party-worker Jitin in whom Veeru had immense trust. She felt dejected and frustrated but continued living with her two sons in Canada after her divorce with Niranjan. When she was given a call to tell her in unfortunate news by a party-worker, she felt sad,

“Veeru’s heart missed a beat,. Habit, one of the habits that remain long after they should, she thought, that reflexive throb of fear, so what if he has fallen off some ladder he was always climbing. Why call me? Call her, his wife, she wanted to say but as always she said nothing, and waited through her heart thudded what when where how is he? She did not want idle gossip to spread about how rattled she had sounded asking what when where, as though she were still his wife.” (Parameswaran 34)

The rest of the story narrates her attempts to support Jitin, Niranjan’s second wife financially and emotionally. The story presents innumerable high diasporic instances where readers are compelled to think that Veeru could have better fortune if she had never left India.
The focal point of the investigation is that there are only differences of degrees in the sentiments of alienation, dejection and depression felt by the diasporic and non-diasporic characters. Modern life does not allow anyone to go far from its tight grip of hostility and hopelessness.

In this research study, two major areas of investigation namely feminism and diaspora literature have been taken. An attempt has been made to narrate the traits of diaspora literature through these two texts from a feminist perspective. Here an analysis is made to justify the inclusion of typical feminist traits in the stories from the selected writers. Neeru Tandon in her book *Anita Desai and Her Fictional World* writes,

“Feminism in literature is essentially concerned with the representation of women in society. Feminism has always meant independence of mind, spirit and body. The demand of feminists is women’s control over their own lives. With the advent of feminism, each and every female oriented subject has become an issue of contemporary literary debate. Feminists consider that male authored texts have obtained double standards in their treatment of male and female characters. Today female writers feel that she is helping to create a viable tradition which is at least definitely emerging. Thus, to become a feminist means to be prepared for a profound personal transformation.” (Tandon 104)

Though our selected women writers are not hardcore feminists, their stories are mainly female-centric. These writers, through their stories, try to identify and answer the contemporary women issues. All the twelve lady protagonists in the stories of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are victims in the patriarchal set up of the society. Their ambitions and dreams are brutally crushed. But instead of being depressed in the battle of life, they bounce back with the renewed spirit and vigor. Chitra has created all kinds of women. Her canvas of women portrayal is vast and varied. Her characters are powerful enough to take their own decisions. E.g. Sumita in the story *Clothes* decided to stay in America only and not to return to India after the death of her husband in the racial attack,

“That’s when I know I cannot go back. I don’t know yet how I’ll manage, here in this
new dangerous land. I only know I must. Because all over India, at this very moment, widows in white saris are bowing their veiled heads, serving tea to in-laws. Doves with cut-off wings.” (Divakaruni, Arranged Marriage 33)

The female characters of Uma Parameswaran are not stereotypical creations of a typical Diaspora woman writer. Her characters are not merely the victims of male supremacy and suppression. Being victims of helpless circumstances give them the depths of human psyche. They revive their spirit, emerge as powerful individuals and forge ahead in the heroic journey of self-awareness. E.g. in the first title novella, the lady protagonist Veeru got married with an N.R.I. Niranjan and had gone to Canada with an expectation of luxuriant and peaceful life. All her troubles started when she came to know about her husband’s affair with Jitin, the party-worker. For a housewife completely dependent economically and emotionally on her husband, this affair came as a cultural shock. Very soon, she gathered herself, found the career of her choice, managed to raise her two children and started to be self-dependent in all the fronts of life. On hearing the news of the death of Niranjan, she came forward and took the initiative of meeting Jitin and helped her financially and morally in bringing up her little daughter Neera. The readers are amazed to see the transformation of Veeru from a simple and innocent village girl to the self-assertive and helping lady who even does not consider her husband’s new wife to be her enemy.

Kundanika Kapadia has rightly been hailed as a pioneer of feminism in Gujarati literature. With the publication of her novel Seven Steps in the Sky, lady protagonist Vasudha has become a household name in all Gujarati families. Vasudha has dared to challenge the patriarchal society by revolting against the supremacy of her husband after thirty-two years of her marriage. And this novel has given birth to the genre known as the works with the issues of women as central themes. Kundanika’s women belong to all strata of the society. The women characters are educated, urban, sophisticated and refined on one hand and rural, illiterate, rustic and unpolished on the other hand. Her women characters are dynamic, not motionless. E.g. The lady narrator of the story What If? (તો?) is a victim of war menace. In a war with Bangladesh, she had lost her home, husband and kids. She lived in a refugee camp. She was tortured and raped. Once a sophisticated lady of immense wealth and luck, now she had problems of even
food and residence. She was extremely dejected and depressed. Then she happened to meet a lady who had been deserted by her husband as he was suspicious about the child in her womb. Sujata, herself pregnant now, decided to work for many such forsaken ladies who lost their identities as their husbands denied keeping them. Sujata consoled that lady and decided to work for thousands of such ladies who had been penalized for the crime they had not committed. She had decided to fight against the society which considered deserted ladies as corrupted. She got a noble aim of her life. Now the life has got its real significance.

And courageously Sujata decided to continue her pregnancy with the expectation that the child could be a delicate girl with innocent eyes. The title is justified when she was pondering about the abortion as the society could never accept such child born out of rape. But she thought what if the child was the girl whom she dreamt for years. She displayed immense courage by keeping up the pregnancy.

The stories of these three writers are stories of women’s melancholy resulting from the male-dominant society and their inability to bear the pang of the circumstances. Instead of surrendering to the patriarchal torment, their characters emerge out triumphantly in their struggle for justice and equality. The close reading of their stories reveals that the core issues of women’s life emerge from the adjustment in marital and societal set up, whether in India or abroad. Countries may differ; women’s issues remain the same.

Conclusion:

When migration has become a common world-wide phenomenon, it is imperative to study Diaspora literature. Diaspora Literature has been serving as the window to the world. When the Indian diaspora is forming the unique and large workforce in the world, Indian Diaspora writers are paid good attention world-wide. Their themes and plots have become field and interest of research for many international scholars. However, during our research study, it has been observed that the typical traits of Diaspora literature are found more in First Generation Diaspora writers. Many experiences came to them as cultural shocks. They had not been habituated to witness licentious relation, sex before marriage, freedom, privacy, independent
teen-agers, father and son drinking together, ladies working for more than twelve hours a day and many such issues bred in multicultural society. So they tended to feel dejection, depression and loneliness. They were misfits in the plural civilization. Whereas the Second Generation Diaspora writers have been born and brought up in the same plural society. They have not seen anything beyond what the host country has been screening them since childhood. Moreover, they have accepted certain innate social things so naturally that those things do not matter to them. So their writings are more vibrant and positive. They no longer talk about cultural dislocation, conflict between the values of both the nations, problems of adjustment in the new country, alienation, nostalgic memories, racial prejudices, sense of being a marginalized society and the problem of seeking an identity. On the contrary, the second generation diaspora writers talk about the pleasant journeys, assimilation, adventures, their contributions to the host country, political participation and racial equalities. Alienation and dejection have nothing to do with the geographical location. The modern life has become so complicated that such distressing feelings can be experienced in our own country. When a person in India is moving from Gujarat to Maharashtra (Known as Intranational Diaspora eg a Bengali Diaspora in Tamil, Punjabi Diaspora in Gujarat), he is bound to feel the diasporic sentiments of discrimination and depression. In the age of globalization, people have stopped to feel one country as his native country. The entire world has become the family. So a person sitting in the corner of his own home and in his own country can be as dejected and helpless as the one outside the country. In the age of cut-throat competitions for study, job and business, we hardly see anyone who is never depressed and lonely. So the present research study has found out similarities in the traits of diaspora and regional literature. The researcher wants to assert that nostalgia, memory, sad feelings, loneliness and discrimination are natural human occurrences which take place even within the country. Wherever and whenever they arise and disturb the existence, the solution lies in the acceptance, understanding and tolerance for the new culture. The host country has to broaden the psyche in which they should start believing in Vashudev Kutumbakam.

**Relevance of the study**

When Indians form one of the largest Diaspora communities in the world, it is imperative to study the literature produced by such community. The Diaspora reading gives an opportunity
to learn about their lives outside their native home. We come to know how much are they assimilated, how they get accustomed to new conventions and to what degree do they struggle to keep up their basic identity. It has been an interesting field of research to compare and contrast the Diaspora and non-Diaspora literature. Are they two totally different genres? Or as they come out of the issues and themes of human beings and humans are alike everywhere, do these two genre have many commonalities? In order to answer these and many other such questions, two Diaspora and one regional Gujarati text have been selected; all the three have common debate as issues and plights of women. It has been anticipated that the research would be of good help for the future research candidates in the field of Diaspora studies. During the research study, it has been observed that even Gujarati Diaspora writers like Panna Nayak, Madhumati Mehta, Preeti Sen Gupta, Natvar Gandhi, Ashraf Dabawala and many more are of renowned repute. This research can be extended into a full length intra-comparison of the Diaspora community living in the same place but writing in different languages. I am sure the poetry of Indo- American Diaspora writer Chitra Banerjee writing in English and Indo- American poet Panna Nayak writing in Gujarati would have many similarities in themes and treatments. Same is true with the vast Punjabi and Tamil Diaspora writers. In my Post-Doctoral research, I would attempt to analyze the poetry of above Indo- American Gujarati poets with that of Indo- American English poets living in diasporic state. So any research in the field of Diaspora literature has always been of high relevance in the globalised world today. Hence the current research study has vast social and literary relevance.