THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF NEIL BISSOONDATH

A SUMMARY

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The word ‘diaspora’ today is very common as the world has become a ‘global village’. Globalization has facilitated rapid movement of people bringing down boundaries like borders. With globalization - especially in relation to trade liberalization, global economic integration, and electronic communication - has come a heightened awareness of opportunities to live and work in other parts of the world. This significant movement of people occurs not only from developing countries to developed countries but also from one developed country to another, as well as between developing countries. Since the diaspora has become a global phenomenon and human beings are always at the centre of such diasporic movement(s), it is essential to look into the lives and problems of such migrants to identify the alienation and problems of the people who have become a part of the diaspora(s).

The present research work aims to focus on the problems and dilemmas, faced by the Indian Diaspora in Canada. The angst, anxiety and struggle for survival and success of the migrants are mapped by analyzing the principal characters and the situations in which they find
themselves. This thesis proposes to examine the human condition through various characters, scenes, situations, etc. in the selected novels of Neil Bissoondath. It also focuses to mitigate the prevailing social, political, cultural, economic etc. problems that lead to the predicament of the diaspora. For this research work all the selected six novels of the author have been analysed. The methodology is to examine closely the primary texts in the light of the Socio-Economic, Political, Cultural background of the early and the contemporary diaspora as revealed in the Secondary Sources. For the content, criticism and discussion, the primary as well as secondary sources have been used. Apart from this the libraries of various universities have been used as the most important source. The interviews given by the writer are also used as source to understand the texts. Moreover, other reliable websites, online journals, libraries and open access critical comment online are referred. For the format of the thesis and the citation of the primary and secondary sources the guidelines of MLA Style sheet are followed.

The diasporic themes like migration, expatriation, displacement, uprooting from the homeland, belongingness, cultural adaption, political insurgency, the feeling of ‘no whereness’ etc., are found in the works of Neil Bissoondath. He is a prominent contemporary Canadian author who is born in Trinidad and settled in Quebec. He himself is basically a native of India and a descendent of ‘Girmit Diaspora’, so his personal diasporic experiences might have found a place in his novels. The inhuman, squalid, degrading and brutal condition of the ‘coolies’ or ‘girmits’ (the workers who were sent abroad for colonial labour, on sugarcane fields or plantations, in mines or railways which required cheap manpower, and they were treated like ‘slaves’) is depicted in the
works of Neil Bissoondath. Also, we find the problems of anxiety, hopelessness, loneliness etc. faced by his grand-parents as ‘Girmityas’ in his novels.

Neil Bissoondath is a noted writer of fiction and also an outspoken critic of Canada’s system of multiculturalism. He is of the view that Canadian multiculturalism has emphasized differences. He is an intellectual who often seems to operate on pure instincts, a self described optimist whose writing thrives on dark themes and contrary positions. Neil Bissoondath’s writing takes readers into marginalized social and geographical territories, without ever moving far outside the conventions of literary realism. He gathers information to tell his stories by acquainting himself from reading of the current events. His recent work may be particularly dark and troubling, but he’s been writing about personal strife and political violence for two decades. In fact, Bissoondath’s working method seems designed to circumvent the pitfall of didacticism. He writes without outlines or preconceived plans, and always starts out with images and characters rather than plots or themes. In his works, the physical description of unknown countries, setting and locale also from Canada, influence of other writers like Conrad, Tolstoy, Milan Kundera etc. and the element of instability also found by the reader. Most of the works are assessed with the diasporic perspective in mind and other possible thematic concerns are also examined. An attempt has also been made to focus on the major characters, narrative techniques employed and the author’s role in his writing of novels to find out the actual condition and the problems of migrants especially Canada and US and also aims to find out the reasons and remedies for existing social problems via literature.
The thesis is divided into six chapters including the introduction and the conclusion.

The first chapter is the **Introduction** in which various Diasporic terms with their origin and background is given. In addition to that detail biography of Neil Bissoondath and his stature, history and contribution to the contemporary literary world as one of the notable writers of ‘Girmit Diaspora’ is provided. His literary career as Indo-Caribbean-Canadian writer is deeply examined in this section. It is known that ‘migration’ is there from the very beginning of the history which is still continuous and the human being is always at its centre. Though it was started in the small corner of the world due to imperialism which lead the people to leave their ‘homeland’ voluntarily or involuntarily, gradually it becomes a ‘natural phenomenon’ as it takes place in almost all parts of the world. Now-a-days, the migration occurs due to so many pull or push factors which direct the people to the developed or developing countries from the ‘third world’ especially for money or betterment. The concept of ‘global village’ accelerates the movement of people’s migration which is not only a physical but also the social and cultural trance (shift). And during this shift, most of the people or (im) migrants face difficulties and experience harsh realities in setting/rooting themselves in ‘host’ countries where the culture and tradition is different from their ‘home’ country. Hence, the (im) migrants do adjustment in other countries, accepting it as a price to pay for the betterment. Moreover, after uprooting totally themselves from their homelands, the (im) migrants have no option to go back, only to adapt to the situation which may be social, political and/ or cultural. Gradually the process of adjustment becomes so difficult along with the
‘marginalization’ – a sense of being rejected as ‘others’ or discarded as ‘foreigner’ which leads them to compromise with their original identity. The pain of being not accepted by the larger group(s) of the society compels the (im) migrants to lose their original identity only to get accepted by the ‘host’ society. This results into the division of society as ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ where so many efforts to breach the gap between ‘haves’ and ‘haves not’ are done at social and political level but haven’t got success. On the contrary, it produces hatred among the minorities since they feel ‘oppressed’. Sometimes at the peak of adjustment, they form an artificial or fake identity to get temporary success with that fluid or hyphenated identity the (im)migrants feel ‘nowhereness’ and so they doubt about their decision to ‘uproot’ themselves from ‘there’ to ‘here’. The dilemma puts them in a situation where they can’t correlate themselves from their originality. Their second generation is totally unaware about their original identity, culture, tradition and homeland which become a great loss for them only for some materialist gain in other countries where the problems of poverty, unemployment, corruption, racism, violence, war, political instability, identity crisis, socio-cultural differences, etc. exist too. However, when the (im) migrants realize such issues, it is too late, and so they have to pass their lives at the cost of dignity, and self-esteem as a human being amid the sense of insecurity and uncertainty of future. Besides, the people who even haven’t faced the migration also become the victims of existing social, cultural and political problems like marginalization, racism, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, economy crunch, real estate hike, prostitution, extra-marital affairs, linguistic problems, clash of cultures, generation gap, loneliness,
(hope)helplessness, etc. in the countries where they born and live and other people generally aspire to go.

Neil Bissoondath, a Canadian author has rightly depicted the human conditions amid the prevailing problems of both the scenarios/aspects in his works where he states that our so-called success through migration and/or changes in the world is also a kind of loss not only to ourselves but also to our future generation. As a descendent of ‘girmitiyas’ or ‘indentured system’, Bissoondath believes that his ancestors’ move was a stepping stone towards the dawn of a new victory from choicelessness and poverty to dreams, aspirations and richness which got defeat. Ironically because of the past mistakes of the ancestors, Bissoondath and so many people like him have lost their original identity or got hyphenated identities like Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Canadian or Indo-Caribbean-Canadian etc. for proving themselves fully committed to the ‘host’ country’s people, culture and tradition and saving themselves from other problems which affect everyone in present perspectives. Whatever had forced Bissoondath to leave Trinidad- smallness of the island and/or violence, corruption, political instability, sense of suspicion from another ethnic community, limited scope, riots, insecurity, identity crisis, poverty, racism, anarchy, hypocrisy, greed of power, blame politics etc. for Canada, a country of multiculturalism, becomes the major themes of his novels and also the part of his writing. Moreover, the description of some places, people and situation in almost all novels written by Bissoondath relates more or less with his own life in Caribbean. Sometimes it seems that his callous experiences of migration are depicted very adroitly and intentionally through various characters, scenes and locales in his novels to project and discuss the major issues which affect every human
being worldwide. Neil Bissoondath boldly convicts that a novel without complex and convincing characters is a kind of ‘compromised fiction’ though it depicts the human condition with important social and political issues. Bissoondath’s focus on characters helps the readers to study the human behavior and psychology through various perspectives. His ability to create variety of characters with versatile behavior in different situation/ environment is marvelous. He is a true teacher, not only by profession but also from insight as he has skills to understand the human condition very ardently on a large scale and how to project it in his works. He definitely has power to shape the inner self along with overt personality of his students as well as of the society by identifying the follies and drawbacks of them and suggesting some remedies for the betterment. His creativity of all-around characters with different attitude and understanding is visible in his writing and Bissoondath’s ability to handle any kind of critical situation(s) is excellent in the presence of such characters whose behavior and reaction by and large reveals the mentality of the society. The individual character’s condition in Bissoondath’s works is the human condition in the society in broader aspect amidst the ‘diaspora’ especially Indian, Caribbean and Canadian diaspora. Bissoondath’s most prominent characters like Raj, Yasmin, Boobie, Sita, Frank, Montgomery, Surein, Harbans, Sue’s parents, the Prasads etc. become (im)migrants for one or another reason, willingly or unwillingly and face the same hardships as an individual suffers from it in diaspora-the movement of people. As a part of movement whatever the main characters witness or experience is the crucial facts of life of any human being across the world. For instance, the helplessness, hopelessness, insecurity, uncertainty, sense of suspicion and dissociation, lack of
commitment, identity crisis, racism, poverty, unemployment, socio-cultural differences, homelessness, homesickness, marginalization, oppression, multi-culturalism, corruption, exploitation, prostitution, violence, dilemma, nostalgia, economic crunch, greed of power and wealth, selfishness etc. are common factors which impact on every human beings and their conditions. Hence it is really important for everyone to learn how to tackle such situations to live the life with peace and prosperity.

The **second chapter** is the comprehensive and critical study of Neil Bissoondath’s first novel *A Casual Brutality* (1988) which tells the story of Raj—an immigrant to Canada from a fictional, politically unstable Caribbean country called Casaquemada, and presents a tough portrait of both societies. The first chapter of this first novel is intense, as Raj-in Casaquemada’s airport, is suffering from unexplained anxiety, while he awaits a plane to Canada. Once in the plane and flying, he begins writing in his notebook about what forced him to abandon Casaquemada. What he writes are the remaining seventeen chapters. This narrative is bulk therefore consists of flashbacks to Raj’s ‘shattered dreams’. The novel narrated in first person, describes the protagonist’s inner journey towards maturity and understanding and is bound up with a physical journey from a small Third World island to a metropolitan centre of western culture. The novel is a ‘Colonial Bildungsroman’. In this chapter, the protagonist’s unexplained anxiety and reasons for his forced migration are studied closely. The feeling of helplessness and hopelessness is commonly experienced by the protagonists in almost all the novels. For instance, though Raj is a doctor, he cannot save the life of Rohan—his son, Jan—wife, grandfather, and his pet-project Sagar on the chaotic, corrupt and violent island. No
doubt he justifies his helplessness with the limitation of science and his inability to stop the violence with water (non-violence), but in reality Raj is helpless to protect even himself from his childhood and it is cleared from the fighting scene with Surein. Even he can’t express his views very frankly in support of West Indian cricket team because of the fear of being called as ‘traitor’ for supporting the racism in the selection process of the team. Moreover, he is unable to cure Mrs. Lal’s cancer which symbolically shows that Raj is helpless to remove the evils of society- poverty, corruption, violence, jealousy etc. which are already existed in the society. In the case of Wayne, a black poor boy, Raj can’t stop his exploitation from his grandparents. Even he is helpless to convince Madera who raises doubt about Raj’s commitment to the island that his commitment to the country is equal to his family. Besides, Raj is restricted by his grandparents not to enter into his parents’ old house and for that he can’t protest against because they are his caretakers and to do so is like a crime in Indian culture. Moreover, he has to disguise himself under the hyphenated identity to save himself and his family from racial attacks. The disguised identity leads him to lose his original identity which is a great loss for not passing his originality to his second generation- Rohan, his son. Another character is Raj’s grandfather, a self-made man who can’t save his store from burning and his brothers from converting themselves from Hindu to Christian only for jobs. Grappler, Raj’s uncle who has worked for 20 years in civil services is helpless to get the information about his son-Surien from the police. Jan also feels helpless as her dreams are shattered and even after such feeling of being trapped on the island, she can’t escape. Asha who is believed as a lady having some mystical powers, can’t save her husband from indulging in the extra-marital
relationship. Besides, the grandmother of Raj is alone and helpless in the last phase of her life as no child visits her regularly though she has large family. Another common phenomenon is hopelessness in all works of Neil Bissoondath and it is projected through Raj, Grappler, Raj’s grandfather, etc. in this novel. Raj as an optimistic person leaves the island because he doesn’t want to rely on ‘illusive hope’ that the island- Casaquemada would regain its peace. He is also hopeless for Mrs. Lal’s recovery from the cancer as it has spread in her whole body. Even Grappler is unhappy with the Prime minister who is handing the situation badly and not ready to accept any criticism on him or his policies and whoever opposes, killed by the Death Squad lead by Madera, in the name of Payol solution to control the ‘balls’. Grappler, an optimist person who was in favour of independence, now feels that Raj’s grandfather was right because the independence has given the people a ‘right to loot’ hence many scandals take place. And the people who were leading the movement for freedom, now become the greedy of power, corrupt and leg pullers through blame politics. It’s a drastic change on island where people become poorer after the independence and the trend of illegal investment abroad and smuggling are in demand. It seems like a failed experiment of independence of the country which can’t sustain its achievements even during the oil boom so the economy crunches down. Jan is also hopeless to return to her home country and meet her parents. Though Harbans passes his life in worse condition in Canada, can’t return to his home country because there is no hope of returning and getting success once again over there. Raj’s grandmother is really disturbed and losing her hope as no one is taking care of her at old age. After the destruction of his shop and the stroke Raj’s grandfather becomes pessimistic and counts the people in
death column and waits for his turn. For the grandfather, the life becomes futile to live even after so much success as a self-made businessman. Mrs. Perroquet finds herself uncomfortable at the old age home though she has two sons who do not take care of her at old age. Homesickness is also a product of ‘migration’ which forces someone to leave his/her real ‘home’ for another country. In A Casual Brutality, Raj is tired of smallness of the island because the island limits his dreams, so finally he decides to study medicine in Canada which is totally a new place for him. While going to Canada he has many romantic notions about that country but gradually he realizes that the country also practices marginalization in the name of multiculturalism, hence he feels homesickness. For instance on Christmas Eve when Raj is alone in Canada, he feels homesickness heavily. Though Canada is clean and less corrupt, Kayso misses the island so much and that is why in the name of serving to the home country, he returns to the island only because his homesickness crosses the limit. Jan feels homesickness on the island as the island confines her dreams. Surien, Raj’s cousin returns to the island only because he can’t adjust himself in the British culture and society after his growing homesickness. Harbans also misses his ‘home’ because his life in Canada becomes critical. Along with homesickness, most of the (im) migrants feels uprootness or totally dissociated with their home country and so sometime even at the cost of their will, they adapt the situation. For instance, Harbans has 30 years experience of teaching, but he has to work as a watchman because there is no importance of experience, only certificates are valuable in Canada and in Grenada-his home country there is no one who welcomes him wholeheartedly hence he passes his life in miserable ways. The sense of insecurity and uncertainty of future disturbs every human being e.g. Raj
hesitates to explore the streets of Canada though the country is safer. Moreover, when Raj is alone and about to be attacked by Andy, Mrs. Perroquet’s son with slangs like ‘niggers’ and ‘cockroach’, he feels very insecure. Even Jan like Celia feels unsafe on the island so she prefers the house with bars. The routine street attacks and rumours give heights to the sense of insecurity for Raj and his family. Surien like Cyril feel insecure in England though they know the laws because both become the victim of racial attacks. The installation of burglar-proofing and windows with bars symbolically suggests the insecurity of the people who are not safe even in their houses or offices. When adjustment reaches to its peak, it produces dilemma in the mind of (im) migrants who become nostalgic and remember their good past. Raj though returns to his home island, questions about his decision why he had returned to the island whether for himself or his family. In reality he returns to the island with selfishness-for money, wealth and reputation. The constant process of adjustment in the society forces them to lose their original identity and accept disguised/hyphenated identity which is in demand. Raj though belongs to Casaquemada identifies himself as Canadian to save himself from the racial attacks. Harbans and Frank have different original names but they live with new identities for the sake of job and safety.

The third chapter focuses on the critical aspects of *The Innocence of Age* (1992) and *The Worlds Within Her* (1998), the second and third novel of Neil Bissoondath respectively. In the former work, the reasons for intergenerational tension and its subsequent affects as well as the views on migration and multiculturalism in Canada of both the generations are discussed. And in the latter work a study of the troubled life of the
protagonist-Yasmin, her confrontation with past and attempts to unfold the secrets of life is analyzed in this section.

*The Innocence of Age* (1992) is the story of Pasco- a father and his son Daniel who live in entirely different worlds, although both have always resided in Toronto. It is about intergenerational tensions in an increasingly racist Toronto. This novel suggests that migration is not a necessary prerequisite either to intergenerational conflict or to cultural alienation within the family. It effectively "ethnifies" Canada's dominant cultural group. Besides, Pasco feels helpless to convince his son- Daniel that country is more important than the company as Danny works for Mr. Simmons, a greedy business tycoon who exploits tenants and other people only for profit against Pasco’s wish. Gradually Danny can’t stop himself from being ambitious to greedy. Even Montegomery, an immigrant is unable to handle his daughter Charlene who is out of his control by following her whims in Canadian cultures in the name of ‘freedom of individual’ which leads her finally to the prostitution. Besides Mrs. Newman, as a crisis management counselor for teenagers is not able to handle her own daughter Megda who leaves the home for living with her lesbian friend. The more critical case is of Sita, a victim of human trafficking, who can’t go out of Canada as her passport and tickets are taken away by Mr. Simmons and no one is there in Canada who can help her for escaping from that the place. Moreover Pasco and Montgomery are hopeless because their children behave against their wish and even after so many attempts from parents’ side their children are not ready to work as a support to them in the old age through they did lots of adjustment and hard work to make their children’s future bright. Montgomery, a mailman in Canada, also misses his homeland because he has to do lots of adjustment in ‘host’ country. Sita is shocked
with the situation in which she is trapped after her arrival in Canada so she misses her country a lot. Sita is hopeless to go back to her homeland as a victim of human trafficking and being trapped in Mr. Simmons old house. Besides, Montgomery and his wife do lots of hard work as immigrants in Canada only because there are fewer opportunities to earn money in their country (probably Grenada). Moreover Sita who is being sexually, emotionally and financially exploited by Mr. Simmons, can’t go back to her home country because it is the country where poverty is so much that the people are ready to kill anyone even for vegetables means the country is so poor where food is important than money. Sita does adjustments by doing mean works in Canada because she is the eldest daughter and only hope of family to get rid of the poverty after her father’s murder. Pasco’s insecurity at old age grows when his restaurant is attacked by the blacks. Montgomery is unable to secure his future with full of hope in another country. Frank, Boobie and his brother repent on their decision after not getting success and security of their future in Canada. When Charlene-Montgomery’s daughter hits back to her mother who slapped her for discipline, Montgomery doubts about his decision and deeds for his daughter. After getting passport with the help of Danny Sita is confused where to go as no one knows her in that country and if she returns to her home country, what the story she should tell to her family.

_The Worlds Within Her_ (1998) is centered around a middle aged woman- Yasmin, a TV anchorperson and first generation immigrant to Canada who returns from Canada to a politically unstable Caribbean island to disperse the ashes of her mother-Shakti. The story of Yasmin’s troubled life is told through a complex layer of flashbacks and flash-
forwards and it is full of contradictions between the mother’s and the daughter’s versions of family history. Moreover, Yasmin is also helpless on her serious quest because the layers of truth revealed by Cyril and Penny are contradictory and that is why she can’t decide on whom she can rely. Though she has made up her mind that she would not establish any attachment to the island or the people, in the end, she feels worry about the future of Ash, her nephew which suggests her inability to run away from her original identity Even, Cyril, as a lawyer can’t do anything against the ‘bad johns’ (black) who attack on him out of racism which finally shatters his vision and dreams. Besides, Shakti is helpless to stop humiliation and marginalization from her mother-in-law, in response only to show some pity for Myra, a washer woman who has been working like salve. Celia is also helpless to remove his claustrophobia and get her husband’s dignity back as other people consider Cyril as ‘useless’ man. When Yasmin comes to know that Amie is her real mother and Shakti is only the caretaker who has sacrificed her whole life only for upbringing her, Yasmin is hopeless to repay Shakti’s debts as she is not alive. When there is a blast infront of Yamin’s hotel, she first calls to her husband in Canada which reflects her homesickness on her short journey. Celia like Jan, Cyril’s British wife and Shakti’s only companion feels confined on the island and wishes to return to England at any cost. Cyril like Surien, a lawyer is unhappy with the racial practices of blacks in Britain, and so he chooses to return to his ‘home’. When Shakti is in London she realizes the feeling of homesickness like Celia on island. While going on evening walk, Yasmin is stopped by the hotel receptionist as the situation is out of control and no safety on the island. Shakti feels unsafe among the people of her own community who practise discrimination with her
after the murder of her husband-Mr. Vermon. Jan and Celia both have come to islands to support their husbands-Raj and Cyril respectively. Jan and Celia both have come to islands to support their husbands-Raj and Cyril respectively. question about their decision whether it is only to support or for their own adventure when they experience the claustrophobia on the island. Even after so many sacrifices for her husband and family, Shakti is struggling to get her own identity. On her short journey Yasmin searches her original roots not only for herself but also for her daughter. In this fluidity of identity, the people also experience the fluidity of culture and problem of cultural assimilation. On one hand they can’t leave their original culture and on the other hand they have to accept the new culture which results into the clashes of the cultures. In the constant game of cultural assimilation, people realize that they have lost their original culture and tradition and so their next generation will not sustain it in future because of no prior knowledge of that. For instance when Yasmin was small, Shakti took her to Canada, away from the island so Yasmin is totally dissociated with her original culture and it becomes worst when her daughter- Ariana who questions about her originality which is not answered by Yasmin properly as she is also not aware about her original identity! Gradually it results into the hybridity of culture and society and the big question is of the survival of the ‘hybrid’ generation in the multi-cultural society and that is why Yasmin’s in-laws were initially denying their son to marry with Yasmin. Since it is decided to closely examine and explore the ‘human condition’ in Indian diaspora to Canada and US.

The forth chapter is totally focused on the same aspect by examining in detail Neil Bissoondath’s novels- Doing the Heart Good (2002) and The Unyielding Clamour of the Night (2005). In the former work Doing, the causes and effects which are responsible for turning an
academician into an insular being and how the novel becomes ‘a novel of memory’ is analyzed. And in Night amid immense obscurities how much it is difficult to practise one’s idealism in the real world, where evil conditions like civil war and strife disfigure the human psyche.

*Doing the Heart Good* (2002), is the story of an elderly Anglo-Canadian professor living with his daughter’s family in Montreal who re-examines his insular life after burning of his house what turns out to be arson. Like other protagonists, Alistair Mackenzie, is also helpless because he has to do lots of adjustment after the death of his wife-Mary and he has to live with his daughter- Agnes in her house. He feels alone and helpless while remembering his past, where lots of people who come and go, leave impressive memories but Alistair with his cynical attitude messes up all the things. Alistair’s sister Ruth-Ann can’t recognize him as she is suffering from Alzheimer. Thrush, a colleague of Alistair is helpless to save his reputation though he is innocent. He can’t stop his daughter Agnes to do charity for teenage mothers. Besides, being a refugee Frank is helpless to support Boobie and his brother, the refugees, in Canada. Boobie and his brother face lots of hardship though they have passports, visas and papers. Alistair’s hope declines for his wife Mary who is suffering from tumour which ends with her death which puts Mackenzie into the realm of loneliness. Even Thrush is hopeless to restore his dignity so he commits suicide. Frank, Boobie and his brother have no hope of success as their dreams can’t come true in another country as refugees and out of frustration Frank who is totally displaced from his home country, kills an unknown brutal person on behalf of Boobie. Ruth-Ann, who loves to travel for adventure and pleasure, finally accepts that the real pleasure lies at the ‘home’ which is very near to everyone’s heart. The feeling of
homesickness of Frank, Boobie and his brother is different from others because as refugees they have to accept the ‘host’ country as their ‘second’ home since there is no hope in ‘home’ country and the push factors responsible for their migration. Even Frank is hopeless as his wife is unable to conceive and no one is left in his home country so he passes his life with everyday adjustment in Canada as refugee by doing some mean works like gardening. The same case with Boobie and his brother whose family members were killed for the land by the mafias and due to poverty and war, they (im) migrate to Canada with hope to become rich in less time to get their land back. To live in a small cottage, spending ration with calculation, doing any work for basic needs etc. are kind of adjustments Boobie and his brother do since they have no option left. In language classes, when Boobie’s homesickness crosses limit and his adjustments are unbearable, he feels ‘here’ is bad and ‘there’ is good means still he wishes to return to his country. The constant process of adjustment results into disguised/hyphenated identity which is in demand. Frank like Harbans has different original names but they live with new identities for the sake of job and safety.

The novel Night (2005) unfolds in an unnamed country closely resembling Sri Lanka, a land torn with racial, religious and political strife. The tale’s protagonist, Arun Bannerji (21), is a young man of privileged background, leaves his home in the prosperous north to teach in the devastated south, where a civil war between the military and rebel insurgents profoundly affects daily life. Arun is idealistic and driven by a need to give meaning to his life. Surrounded by poverty and the constant threat of violence, Arun's optimism is eventually depleted but the thought of educating the village's children overwhelms him. When violence finally touches him personally, he is forced to
confront with basic truths about his friends, family, country and, most wrenchingly himself. Arun’s parents can’t convince him not to go to south for teaching poor children by leaving lucrative job in the capital. On the other hand even Arun is helpless to uplift ‘two-percenter’ by his extra efforts because the dirty politics doesn’t allow the oppressed or marginalized people to come to the main stream of the society. Arun has witnessed the reality of southerners (two-percenter), their condition and brutality of army but he cannot oppose the army or government as they have resources/tactic to kneel down Arun’s ideals. Moreover, Anjani is also helpless to prove herself innocent only because she is from minority when she was expelled from the school in the capital. Even Kumarsing is unable to convert his dreams into a successful business in the capital as the majority gives only mean works to him and does not allow him to do business at all. Mr. Jaisaram can’t decide whose way of progress is good weather of the army or the Boys, the insurgents. For Anjani, now there is no hope to return to the capital and pursue her study like Kumarsingh who feels suffocating in Omeara to dream but can’t go outside of the town as there is no hope or future for him in the capital. Though Omeara has only beginning and middle, no end means hardly any future; the people of town are choiceless as the minority or two-percenters. The Jaisarams are hopeless for grandchildren as their both children- Nagrat and Anjani are dead which pinch them a lot. Arun’s hopelessness propels when army denies to search Anjani after her abduction. Arun feels away from the ‘home’ as the town- Omeara limits his dreams and his efforts to make the children of minority to learn something to reach to the main stream of the society have no impact and the responses from of the people and army are negative and non-cooperative respectively. While experiencing the
marginalization, discretion and oppression in the capital, both-Anjani and Kumarsingh feels homesickness. Even Seth, an army official always talks about his wife which indicates his homesickness. Arun feels insecure in the town where anything can happen at anytime though the army is present over there all the time! With the death of only bright student- Shanti, Arun’s hope also declines and his kind behaviour converts into arrogance. The main reason for the increased sense of insecurity and uncertainty is the violence, corruption, mishandling the situation, insurgency and emergency like situation because the poor governance and dirty politics of the greedy politicians who are not ready to accept any criticism about their wrong policies and try to tame the rebel by the power of Army, Death Squad and controlling the press. As a result, smuggling of guns, drugs, human trafficking and illegal immigration pick up the pace.

The fifth chapter is the critical analysis of The Soul of All Great Design (2008). The novel tells about "Alec" who is grown up in suburban Toronto. Alec eventually surmises that the quickest way to escape the dreariness of home and his job at a hardware outlet is to play off his gentle manner and almost feminine look. "Alec" is a man who is convinced early on in his professional career as an interior designer that the only way he can achieve success is to fabricate his identity as he is gay. "Sue" is a young woman, forced to balance her Indian immigrant parents' strict traditions in Canadian society where she must hide aspects of herself from both worlds. When Alec and Sue meet, their chance encounter which quickly leads to a passionate affair stoked by the thrill of secrecy. It draws out the tension of Alec's impending breakdown in a series of understated but evocative scenes book ended
and distorted by Alec's self-serving confessions and cynical appeals to the reader for sympathy. Sue, the reluctant but hopeless romantic, is equally compelling, and the domestic scenes capture the dynamics of an utterly ordinary Indian immigrant family.

Here, the use and importance of pseudo identity to live a successful public life even at the cost of betraying one’s own self is studied. And the strife between ‘inner self’ and ‘outer self’ is discussed. Moreover, ‘Alec’ has the same kind of helplessness to sustain his passion of interior decorator with his artificial persona of a ‘gay’ in the presence of Caroline and ‘Sue.’ Even ‘Sue’ or ‘Sumintra’ is helpless to express her real self of Canadian teenager amid the restrictions of Indian tradition and culture. That is why Sumintra introduces herself as ‘Sue’ to show that she is also a part of Canada like other teenagers and Alec behaves like a ‘gay’ only to fulfill the social expectations that an interior designer should be a ‘gay’. Besides the Prasads and Sue’s father are helpless to get success in host country very easily so they have to do adjustments. Though Alec loves Sue, he is in dilemma to come out with his real self (not of a gay) as he has to lose lots of things –reputation, wealth and the success. Besides Alec finds himself hopeless to get success when he is at hardware store and behaves like a normal one. Sumintra doubts that she would never be able to live her life on her wishes because she feels trapped between Canadian culture and Indian tradition. Rima who is sent to India only to save the honour of community by her parents-the Prasads in Canada, is hopeless to return to Canada as her passport is taken away and she has to pass her remaining life like a prisoner in India. Sue and Rima’s parents have no hope of good future of their girls in Canada that is why they look for
Indian grooms for them. Moreover, Manohar and the Prasads from Designs remembers their home country too much since they haven’t got success in ‘host’ country according to their dreams because whatever was respected in their home country- experience, degrees and talents have no place in Canadian society which requires papers and certificates for any job of reputation. With the degradation of qualification of (im) migrants, the sense of homesickness becomes crucial and the decision of Sue’s parents to marry their daughter with Indian groom is firmed as a result of that. Alec, Kelly and Sue have to compromise with their talent by doing some simple works at initial level though they were not of their choices. Manohar as an engineer sells food and the Prasads have to run a restaurant though they have high qualifications. Sue’s parents say no to Sue to stay at Kelly’s apartment only because of the fear of safety for girls. Alec’s dilemma to come in public at the cost of professional success achieved by performing like a ‘gay’ is very difficult. Sue’s confusion to choose between parents and Alec leads her to take risky chances for her ‘desires’. Gradually this dilemma leads (im) migrants to the feeling of ‘nowhereness’ and consequently the loss of their identity.

The sixth chapter is the Conclusion of the thesis in which it is observed that no human being can live without any kind of identity and the people like Mary and Windy by doing some social works try to restore the identities of prisoners, social activists like Miriam, etc. but ironically their concern is only to get success in the work rather than providing proper environment to the victims for remaining life. This hypocrisy of social work where winning is more important than the human beings, freezes the will of humans at the cost of their ‘free will’. Even some government policies- generally formed with good intensions
for the upliftment and betterment of the ‘oppressed’ mass of the society who face the identity crisis and poverty, are ineffective to mitigate the social barriers because of the poor governance and meager implications which produces hatred among the people. The practice of discrimination and marginalization widens the barriers between rich and poor and along with the clash of cultures that rapidly emerges e.g. the clash of African and Indian Communities in the Caribbean countries is visible in the works of Bissoondath. It also produces the sense of suspicion among the ethnic groups as the people who have dual citizenships are considered as ‘traitor’ or not committed to the host country and culture so the people of the host country blame the (im) migrants for the changes in the city, unemployment and economic problems etc. Moreover, the situation becomes worst when the institutions like the Army and Police don’t work properly for the safety of the society. The people are choiceless amid the capitalistic attitude of the society.

Bissoondath uses the technique of flashbacks and flashforwards to tell the story with peculiarity of hiding the name of the island. He minglesthe plot through description of place leads the readers to assume the life on Caribbean countries. He includes and depicts almost all the aspects which affect the human being in one or other ways throughout the life. Apart from helplessness, hopelessness and homesickness, in most of the novels poverty is the main problem either for (im) migration or locals. It is shown through increased number of shantytowns and beggars. The greed of power and wealth produces oppression, marginalization repression among the people. It is observed that Bissoondath never discloses the name of island except Casaquemada, but from its description it resembles to Trinidad-his
home country. Raj’s stay in Canada and his experience of multicultural society is somewhat Bissoondath’s own experiences who initially criticizes multiculturalism of Canada then gradually accepts Canadian society as his home. In most of the novel it is observed that the woman characters like Janet Linda, Celia, Ruth Ann, Sue or Sumitra have to suffer upto the death because of their adventurous nature. Bissoondath’s own claustrophobia reflects in Raj, Jan, Celia’s personalities. Bissoondath keenly depicts that the human beings are less valuable in the capitalistic mindset society where they invest in car rather than helping a beggar because the car gives profit means if a person is profitable then it has value otherwise his reputation is degraded upto ‘stone’-motionless which shows the degradation of human dignity and values.

The problem of the loneliness of teenagers as well as of the aged people is common to all the novels. Jan invites Raj to her apartment as she wishes to talk to someone. Pasco, Alistair, Grappler, Raj’s grandfather etc. feel loneliness at old age. The great irony takes place when Mrs. Perroquet is sent to ‘Pleasure Dome’- an old age home where there is no ‘pleasure’ at all though she has two sons. Pasco and Montgomery wait for their children’s support at old age but getting no success. It is rightly projected that the aged people are considered as neglected group in the society. One solution according to Raj’s grandmother is that one should have so many children since they will become the asset at the old age and the children will take care of them but this Indian mentality is rejected by the new generation who loves to live their lives on their own wishes and whims and for that they are ready to cheat anyone even to their parents like ‘Alec’ and ‘Sumintra’ or ‘Sue’
The younger generation has to compromise with their career/area of interest and job. Raj is interested in reading like his mother but opts medicine; Jan likes teaching but has to work as a bartender. Kelly as an architecture simply designs building and Sumintra whose decision to leave science gives her one kind of demotion in the field of marriage. Bissoondath discusses another important issue of Canadian society in which the number of teenage mothers is increasing which is a great threat to country’s future because it is the misguided youth like Ash and others in Worlds who read scriptures as their wish and ready to sacrifice their lives for revival of Hinduism to save it from BMWs-Black, Muslims, whites. These seeds of racial mentality reflect in riots and violence where people target particular community or race only because they have wealth. And to manage such wealth people possess dual citizenship which propels social barriers. The clash between Surein and Jan is personal but overall it reflects the clash of two culture- Caribbean and Canadian. Besides, the hike in real estate price is widely observed and discussed by Bissoondath in almost all works. Raj is not able to get house for his family easily only because of boom of real estate hike. The death of small children- Rohan, Kevin, Ariana, Devin, David suggests the loss of hope from the point of view of author. Besides, most characters like Raj’s grandfather, Alistair’s mother, Shakti, Montgomery etc. died due to heart attacks gives an impression that it is the easiest way to die. The common phenomenon of disturbed marriage lives of Raj and Jan, Grandpa and Grandma, Yasmin and Jim, Sean and his wife, Wayne and his wife reflect the loose bond of relationships in the society where trust deficit is high between husbands and wives. The village girls and poor women enter into the prostitution only because of the poverty and economic crunch. It is like
the sudden changes of fortune come in the life of well-settled people like Skelwy who has thoughts but facing unemployment.

As life is a lottery and it guarantees nothing so all the human beings have to learn how to survive themselves from poverty, unemployment, corruption, racism, violence, loneliness etc. emerged through diaspora. Actually, the question is always there why the ancestors of Raj (or of the humans) had migrated from their homeland, if they would not then such problems wouldn’t arise. However, it must be accepted that they were choiceless as the poverty forced them to be the ‘girmitiyas’ but the question still exists that with all the means available to us in the century where the world has become a ‘global village’, still we migrate and for what? We are also helpless to solve some prevailing social problems of our society or hopeless to get the answers of such burning questions.

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