MULTICULTURALISM IN INDO-CANADIAN WRITING: A STUDY OF SELECT WORKS

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

RAJESH N. S.

(Reg. No. 110659HM11F01)

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KARNATAKA,

SURATHKAL, MANAGALORE- 575025

FEBRUARY, 2019

DECLARATION

by the Ph.D. Research Scholar

I hereby declare that the Research Thesis entitled, **'Multiculturalism in Indo-Canadian Writing: A Study of Select Works'** which is being submitted to the National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature is a *bonafide report of the research work carried out by me*. The material contained in this Research Thesis has not been submitted to any University or Institution for the award of any degree.

(RAJESH N. S.)

Reg. No. 110659HM11F01

School of Management

Place: NITK- Surathkal

Date: 23rd February 2019

CERTIFICATE

This is to *certify* that the Research Thesis entitled **'Multiculturalism in Indo-Canadian Writing: A Study of Select Works'** submitted by **Rajesh N. S., (Reg. No. 110659HM11F01)** as the record of the research work carried out by him, is accepted as the Research Thesis submission in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. SHASHIKANTHA KOUDUR
Research Guide

Dr. S. PAVAN KUMAR
Chairman- DRPC

Acknowledgments

In this incredible journey of my Ph.D., I had the fortune to meet and work with many outstanding people, without whom I never could have done it. The final outcome of the thesis has gone through a lot of mentoring and assistance from a host of people and I am extremely privileged to have their support towards the completion of my research work. I am indebted to numerous individuals and institutions whose help allowed me to complete this research. First and foremost, l would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Shashikantha Koudur, who gave me an opportunity to pursue PhD studies. There are absolutely no words how much I am grateful to my guide who supported me throughout my journey of ups and downs. His constant support, guidance, supervision steered me to focus on my research work and finish it. I am enormously thankful to the Research Progress Assessment Committee members Dr. Harsha Vardhan, and Dr. P. Sam Johnson, for their comments, questions, and ideas. I sincerely thank to Dr. S. Pavan Kumar, Head, School of Management. I enormously thankful to Prof. A.H. Sequeira, for his immense encouragement to my study. I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. K.B. Kiran, for his immeasurable support in carrying out this research work. I also thank Dr. Gopalakrishna B.V., Dr. Rajesh Acharya H., Dr. Savita Bhat and other department faculty members.

I also thank my Postgraduation mentors, Dr. Dattatreya M., Chairperson, Department of Post-Graduate Studies & Research in English, Kuvempu University and Dr. Ibrahim Khaleel Ulla, Head, Sahyadri Science College Shimoga, and Ganapahthy H.Y., Lecturer, Sahyadri Arts College, Shimoga, for appreciating and encouraging me to choose this research journey. I owe sincere gratitude to Vikram Nayak, a very good friend of mine, for proofreading my research work that appears in this thesis. My warm thanks also go to Priyanka and family, who gave moral and practical support throughout this journey of research. A special thank you to a friend, Ravi H., doctoral scholar, Mangalore University for his endless support and inspiration.

I would humbly thank the non-teaching staff of my department – Nagesh Devadiga, Vagdevi S., Tara Devadiga, Sarojakka, for their help regarding non-academic matters. I want to thank in particular hostel staff Suresh, Eshwar, Balachandra, mess officials Madhav, Yogesh and other mess workers.

The advice and words of encouragement and comfort from all my colleagues at NITK, especially Dr. Ambika Kamath, Dr. C. Somashekar, Ramya M.H., Sudheer Muhammed K.M., Rajesh M. Kalli, Deepali Mallya M., in one way or another, contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation.

I owe the deepest debt of gratitude and heaps of love to my family members – my mother, D.R. Vijaya Bharathi and my father, N.M. Shivappa, my Sister, Vidya N.S. my brother-in-law, Lokesh S.R. and his family and my fiancée Navyashree G.R. I thank them for infinite moral support and stimulation, for their nurturing care in difficult times. They have always been an integral part of each of my success. I don't have words to express my gratitude for the enormous amount of time, support and advice they gave me whenever I needed it. They always motivated me to strive for the best. Without their support this journey would have been more difficult to complete.

I am very much thankful to my childhood friends Chetan, Chandan, Sathish, Santhosh, Shivaraj and their family who were with me during times turbulent and placid. To all others who were part of this journey and whose names are not mentioned above, I truly appreciate your contribution in guiding and encouraging me throughout the course of this doctoral study.

Rajesh N. S.

ABSTRACT

Multiculturalism is one of the much discussed concepts in the modern, postcolonial world. Globalization and modernization have increased the flow of migration to various parts of the world. This has led to the emergence and visibility of different communities (diaspora/minority) in most of the developed countries. This phenomenon, in turn has led to cultural differences, identity conflicts, racial discrimination, and other serious problems within the nations and outside it. The Indian diaspora is one of the communities facing the above problems. This study is aimed to build a comprehensive approach on how multiculturalism is discussed in the context of Indo-Canadian writing.

In my thesis I have examined representative arguments about multiculturalism by analysing the literary works of first and second generation Indo-Canadian writers. They present varied arguments on multiculturalism even though they belong to the same community. For M.G. Vassanji, multiculturalism leads to liberation of immigrants. Vassanji, in his fiction, construes multiculturalism as a solution to discriminatory practices against immigrants. In contrast to Vassanji, Neil Bissoondath would argue that it is harmful to construct specific kinds of identities. Bissoondath's works contend that cultural differences create a gap between immigrants and hosts which lead not only to racial differences but also to threats to what can be perceived as 'Canadian culture'. This advocacy would also maintain that individual rights would be ignored amidst group ones. On the other hand, second generation Indo-Canadian writers such as Priscila Uppal, Anita Kushwaha, Ranj Dhaliwal, Shaun Mehta and Vivek Shraya do not show any dilemma in accepting multiculturalism in their way of life. For this generation, born and brought up in Canada, multiculturalism is rather naturalised; they accept it more normally and consider the policy measures as a source of strength during difficult times for the community.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Indo-Canadian community, Cultural differences, Racial discrimination, National identity, First and second generation (Indo-Canadian) writers.

Contents

Chapter One

INDIAN DIASPORA AND MULTICULTURALISM: THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter introduces the topic of research, states the reason for selecting it and explains research methods and objectives of this research. It also introduces the Indian diaspora and its beginnings in Canada. Indo-Canadian is one of the largest immigrant communities in Canada. The issues related to Indian diaspora are one of the major concerns of the Indo-Canadian writers. Growing number of research studies on cultural differences demonstrates the importance of culture in multicultural societies. Retention and conservation of own culture in multicultural Canada is a big challenge felt by Indo-Canadians – mainly immigrant parents or first generation Indo-Canadians. The influence of host society and other cultures and lack of interest in heritage culture on part of second generation Indo-Canadians[1] make immigrant parents worry about retention of their culture. These external and internal conflicts exhibit in the works of both first and second generation Indo-Canadian writers. The present study focuses on the works of first and second generation Indo-Canadian writers and their engagement with multiculturalism.

1.2 DIASPORA

Migration to other places is an integral part of human history. It started before the birth of civilization. Man moved from one place to another in search of food, shelter and other basic needs. Migration occurs at different levels, such as intercontinental (between continents), intracontinental (between countries on a given continent), interregional (within countries) and so on. Etymologically, the term ‘diaspora’ is derived from the Greek word ‘dia’ and ‘speiro’. ‘Dia’ means ‘through’ and ‘speiro’ means to ‘scatter’. The literal meaning of diaspora is ‘scattering’ or ‘dispersion’. The term ‘diaspora’ was used by the ancient Greeks for the people who immigrated to

[1] How we understand these terms, we shall see below.

conquered territories. This term was initially used for Jews outside Palestine after Babylon was conquered. However the concept of diaspora is quite broad; so different disciplines use it in different ways. We could see different definitions of the term.

One of the earliest definitions is that of Armstrong who says diaspora is "[a]ny ethnic collectivity which lacks a territorial base within a given polity, i.e., a relatively small community throughout all portions of the polity" (1976: 394). Sheffer defines diaspora as an "…. ethnic minority group of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands" (2003: 15). According to Cho, "[d]iaspora brings together communities which are not quite nation, not quite race, not quite religion, not quite homesickness, yet they still have something to do with nation, race, religion, longings for homes which may not exist. There are collectivities and communities which extend across geographical spaces and historical experiences. There are vast numbers of people who exist in one place and yet feel intimately related to another" (2007: 13).

In the modern world the meaning of 'diaspora' has changed because the pattern of and reasons for migration also differed. The advancement of technologies has made migration easier and shortened the distances of travelling. There is no country or region which has not experienced migration. All over the world, people move from one place to another for various reasons. So we can see different diasporas such as African diaspora, Indian diaspora, Chinese diaspora, American diaspora and so on. Indian diaspora is one of the largest diasporas in the world.

1.3 INDIAN DIASPORA

The Indian diaspora is the third largest diaspora next only to the British and the Chinese. According to the estimation made by the Government of India, the size of the overseas Indian community in December 2016 was around thirty million. This includes 13,008,012 Non Resident Indians (NRIs), a citizen of India who holds an Indian passport and has temporarily emigrated to another country for six months or more for employment, residence, education or any other purpose and 17,835,407 Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), a person of Indian origin or ancestry who is not a

citizen of India, but is a citizen of another country. A PIO might have been a citizen of India and subsequently taken the citizenship of another country, or have ancestors born in India (MEA 2016).

Emigration is not a new phenomenon for Indians. “Even though the history of Indian diaspora dates back to the pre-Christian era, large-scale emigration of Indians took place mainly in the nineteenth century and thereafter” (Kadekar 2012: 20). Colonial period is considered one of the important periods of Indian emigration. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a large number of people migrated to British, Dutch and Portuguese colonies under the indenture system. During the late twentieth century, the significant changes in political, social, and economic conditions of the receiving and sending countries led to large number of migrations to developed countries such as Canada, America, Japan, Australia, United Kingdom and others.

1.3.1 Emigration to Canada

Migration to Canada is a significant part of the history of Indian diaspora. 5,000 Indians settled in British Columbia to work on railroad in lumber mills or in forestry during the period 1903-1908. In 1908 the Canadian government banned Indian immigration, and the ban remained in force till 1947. Only 878 Indians entered Canada during this period. During the post-World War II period, the flow of Indian immigrants was highly selective. About three-fourths of all the post-war immigrants were highly educated and skilled. In addition to immigration to Canada directly from India, Canada has received immigrants from the Indian diaspora. The internal conflicts between natives and Indian diaspora in countries such as Fiji, Guyana, Uganda and other African countries after their independence, caused a significant rise in the emigration of Indian diaspora to Canada (Naidoo and Leslie 2006: 329).

The view of the Canadian government and its attitude towards Indian diaspora and other minority communities has changed drastically over the last few decades. Multiculturalism and other related policies and acts not only protect such communities from racial, cultural and other discriminations but also help immigrants to retain their culture, religions and traditions in Canadian society. The Indo-Canadians have established associations and organizations on the basis of religion,

region and language. The Indo-Canadians are presently one of Canada's most rapidly growing ethno-cultural populations who yearn to maintain their cultural identity and also exhibit a strong desire to pass on the cultural values to the next generation.

1.4 INDIAN DIASPORIC WRITING

A general reference to Indian literature could refer to any of these categories – Indian Writing in English, Indian vernacular literature, vernacular literature in translation or even olden literature such as the Ramayana, Mahabharatha or the Puranas, etc. "In post-independent India the term 'Indian Literature' appears as a complex and problematic section of discourse. The partition of the subcontinent and the rebirth of a secular nation within a multiple culture, variety of traditions, minor and foremost religions, hierarchy of class and caste structures, multi linguistic and geopolitical settings produce a literature both multilayered and multidimensional" (Jena 2013: 1). Indian literature contains within itself a number of national literatures, each of them having its own specific character but all of them having a general national character.

The number of Indian writers writing in English language saw a sharp increase from the late twentieth century. Among these we have writers residing in India and those who are abroad. Both these groups have produced an enviable corpus of English literature. Indian diasporic writers live in various countries like Canada, America, Australia, Fiji and so on. Large number of poems, short fiction, novels and dramas are produced by them. These writers while depicting emigrant characters in their fiction, explore the theme of displacement and self-fashioning (Sharma 2013: 3). The Indian diasporic writers have generally dealt with characters from their own displaced community but some of them have also taken a liking for Western characters and have been convincing in dealing with them. Indian diasporic writers occupy a vital position between cultures and countries. According to Jasbir Jain, "[the] word 'diaspora' is literally a scattering carrying within it the ambiguous status of being both an ambassador and a refugee. The requirements of the two roles are different. While one requires the projection of one's culture and the ability to enhance its understanding, the other seeks refuge and protection and relates more positively to the host culture" (2003: 12).

These writers have also established their credentials by winning numerous prestigious literary awards and honours such as Nobel, Booker, and Pulitzer prizes. The writers like Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Gosh, Anita Desai, and V.S. Naipaul are good examples of this. The writers who migrated in late 20th century are also contributing to Indian diasporic writing with their works. Writers such as Meera Syal, Hari Kunzru, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anjana Appachana, Bharti Kirchner, Sujata Massey, Indira Ganeshan are contributing significantly to the Indian diasporic writing tradition.

1.5 INDO-CANADIAN WRITING

Much of the Indian immigrants from the Caribbean and the African countries migrated to the UK and Canada in the 1960s, as a result of ethnic tension between themselves and the blacks. At the same time adoption of multicultural policy in Canada created more space for Indian immigrants. Indo-Canadian writers contribute significantly to Canadian literature by producing a good number of works. Canada's literary world has witnessed a significant rise in fictional writing, drama and poetry by authors of the Indo-Canadian origin in the past few decades (Naidoo and Leslie 2006: 335). Some writers originate directly from India, such as Rohinton Mistry, Anita Rau Badami, Ashok Mathur, Rahul Varma, Uma Parameswaran, Bal Sethi, Balachandra Rajan, Saros Cowasjee and so on. Others have distant roots in India, such as African-born M.G. Vassanji, Guyanese-born Cyril Dabydeen, and Trinidadian Neil Bissoondath, Harold Sonny Ladoo, Samuel Dickson Selvon, and Rabindranath Maharaj. A new Canadian-born generation is represented by Vivek Shraya, Prscila Uppal, Anita Kushwaha, Ranj Dhaliwal, Shaun Mehta and others.

At present Indo-Canadian writers have seized an important place in the Canadian literary world. For instance, M.G. Vassanji, one of the prominent figures of the Indo-Canadian writers, not only won prestigious awards but also became a member of the Order of Canada. But this literary travel is not easy for Indo-Canadian writers, as Graham Huggan says, "[u]ntil relatively recently, South Asian Canadian writers found it difficult to gain access to publishers. Either, in a residually colonial culture, the writers themselves were not taken seriously, or their work was not considered

reflective of the 'core' Canadian experience. But the writers persisted, and some of them now count among the nation's finest. Bharati Mukherjee (now living in the United States) and Michael Ondaatje are the best known; others, such as the fiction writers Neil Bissoondath and Rohinton Mistry, or the poets Himani Bannerji and Rienzi Crusz, have captured prestigious literary awards as well as nationwide attention" (1995: 42).

In the course of this thesis we shall be making a distinction between first generation and second generation Indo-Canadians. There have been casual remarks earlier regarding these different generations through which Indo-Canadians wrote. In our context, when we speak about first generation Indo-Canadians, it may not directly correspond with the actual first generation Indians, who immigrated to Canada (which could be older than a century). Our reference would correspond with those who wrote and became popular and would fall in line with the life and times of M.G. Vassanji' (1950 -). They were first generation immigrants too. We shall see another reason below to coincide the first generation Indo-Canadian[2] writers with the times of Vassanji. On the other hand, when we refer to the second generation writers, we mostly refer to the recent writers, born and brought up in Canada and whose parents had settled in Canada earlier. First generation writers succeeded to establish their own literary community in Canada. Vassanji's magazine *Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad*, provided a platform for many emerging Indo-Canadian writers and most of these writers who contributed to the magazine belonged to first generation. These writers explored issues related to immigrant communities such as cultural differences, quest for identity, difficulties in initial settlements, alienation, various discriminations and so on. They also focused on issues related to Canadian society. For example, Neil Bissoondath's *The Innocence of Age* explores the problems of Canadian mainstream society. Second generation writers continue the literary tradition of the first generation writers, producing significant number of literary works. The second generation writers generally deal with issues related to LGBT communities, racial discrimination, cultural conflicts, intergenerational problems, individual identity and freedom, etc.

[2] Henceforth first generation Indo-Canadians are referred to as first generation and second generation Indo-Canadians, as second generation.

1.6 MODELS OF CULTURE

Culture plays a significant role in an individual's life. Due to modernisation, globalization and rise of immigration, there has been substantial increase in contact between different cultures. Managing and negotiating one's own culture is difficult in multicultural countries. There is a perpetual influence on one another to hold political power in the countries where more than one culture existed. These cultural battles are not a new phenomenon; they have a long history. It took a strong form with colonial settlers, motivated by imperialism and economic trade. Domination of colonial settlers triggered endless conflicts between colonisers and various indigenous communities. Cultural imperialism or culture and the power equations in the post-nineteenth century world have rendered the current society highly complex. The study on cultural models such as acculturation, assimilation, transculturation, biculturalism, melting pot and multiculturalism denotes the importance of cultural differences in multicultural societies.

1.6.1 Acculturation

The term acculturation was introduced by American anthropologist John Wesley Powell (Arroyo 2015: 133). "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield et al. 1936: 149). One of the anthropologists Thurnwald states acculturation as, "a process of adaptation to new conditions of life" (1932: 557). Gillin and Raimy delineate acculturation as "those processes whereby the culture of a society is modified as the result of contact with the culture of one or more other societies" (1940: 371). "Acculturation is the dynamic bidirectional process by which an individual or group retains beliefs and practices of an ethnic heritage and adopts those of an ethnic group with which there is repeated or prolonged contact, regardless of the reason for this contact" (Cote and Bornstein 2000: 12). Acculturation is different from assimilation and multiculturalism. In acculturation individual or groups undergo some influences of each other with continuous contacts. For instance, Second generation Indo-Canadians prefer Canadian food over Indian traditional food.

1.6.2 Assimilation

Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess define assimilation as, “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (Park and Burgess 1921: 735). Assimilation is an integral part of immigration. Generally immigrants (exiles, refugees) who voluntarily migrate to other countries and abandon their home country due to various political and social reasons acquire new culture and other aspects of host country. “Cultural assimilation is the concept in sociology in which an ethnic minority adopts the beliefs, languages, and customs of the dominant community, losing their own culture in the process. This phenomenon usually occurs when two or more communities come into contact with each other, due to a shared geographical boundary, or immigration” (Historyplex). Assimilation is strongly opposed by immigrants who put continuous efforts to retain their own culture. In contrast, natives believe that assimilation helps to preserve and promote their national identity and values.

1.6.3 Transculturation

The term transculturation was coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. According to Ortiz, “the word transculturation better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word acculturation really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of a new phenomenon, which could be called neoculturation” (1995: 103).

1.6.4 Transnationalism

Transnational migration is defined as, “a process of movement and settlement across international borders in which individuals maintain or build multiple networks of connection to their country of origin while at the same time settling in a new country”

(Fouron and Schiller 2001: 60). Development of technology, transport and communication create opportunities for immigrants to build relationship between host and home country. “Transnational communities are dense networks across political borders created by immigrants in their quest for economic advancement and social recognition. Through these networks, an increasing number of people are able to lead dual lives. Participants are often bilingual, move easily between different cultures, frequently maintain homes in two countries, and pursue economic, political and cultural interests that require their presence in both” (Portes 1997: 812).

1.6.5 Biculturalism

Biculturalism generally, “represents comfort and proficiency with both one’s heritage culture and the culture of the country or region in which one has settled” (Schwartz and Unger 2010: 26). In Bicultural countries people generally maintain and negotiate dual cultural identities. Due to the colonial settlements most of the countries have turned bicultural. For instance, countries such as Canada (English and French), New Zealand (Pakeha [the white European settlers] and Maori [the indigenous community]), Belgium, Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji, Switzerland and many countries share bicultural features.

1.6.6 Melting Pot

The phrase melting pot was first used by famous play writer Israel Zangwill in his play *The Melting Pot* (1908). Melting pot is used to denote the immigrants’ integration process in America. Zangwill describes, “America as a place where immigrants shed their past modes of being as ethnics of a different land and contribute certain aspects of their experiences to the genesis of a new type of person, the American” (Smith 2012: 390). The new American identity is appreciated and promoted by native Americans. According them the concept of melting pot not only supports assimilation of immigrants but also promotes cultural diversity in American society. Former American president, Bush in his speech at annual Independence Day naturalization ceremony said, immigrants ‘‘made America a melting pot of cultures from all across the world. They’ve made diversity one of the great strengths of our

democracy. And all of us here today are here to honor and pay tribute to that great notion of America'' (quoted in Brulliard 2008).

1.7 MULTICULTURALISM

The issues concerned to diverse groups such as, indigenous peoples, national minorities, ethno-cultural nations, old and new immigrants, feminists, LGBT and others gain importance since late 20th century (Parekh 2000: 1). Growing number of immigrant population, collapse of the communist regime in the Soviet Union and the East European nations, nativist backlash against immigrants and refugees and continuing importance of ethnicity in Western countries cause the transformation of the homogeneous society into a culturally diverse society (Kymlicka 2000: 3). Contrasting life styles, views, various practices of immigrant communities are discouraged by mainstream society. According to Kymlicka, "… cultural diversity gives rise to a series of important and potentially divisive questions. Minorities and majorities increasingly clash over such issues as language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, education curriculum, land claims, immigration and naturalization policy, even national symbols, such as the choice of national anthem or public holidays. Finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to these issues is the greatest challenge facing democracies today" (1995: 1).

Natives' treatment of immigrants sometimes evokes the feeling of alienation in host society. These uncertainties make immigrants think about their own identity and push them to a larger struggle for recognition of identity and differences. Immigrants' demand for recognition, acceptance, respect and public affirmation of their differences sometimes face strong opposition from natives who believe in the model of tolerant society. These clashes between majority and minority communities turn into major worries with the involvement of nation's politics. As Bhikhu Parekh wrote in his book *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, "… these new movements are sometimes subsumed under the capacious term multiculturalism.… Multiculturalism is not about difference and identity *per se* but about those that are embedded in and sustained by culture; that is, a body of beliefs and practices in terms of which a group of people understand themselves and the world and organize their individual and collective

lives" (2000: 3). The term 'multiculturalism' incorporates or comes to tackle the questions of cultural differences, identity construction, racial discriminations, religious intolerance, individual rights, terrorism and other modern issues rather than mixture of multiple cultures. As Ali Rattansi argues:

> … multiculturalism has never been about encouraging separation and segregation. It has involved the creation of structures in which the incorporation of immigrants and ethnic minorities occurs fairly and with the recognition that the desire of immigrants and minorities to retain aspects of their cultures is reasonable, and that cultural diversity is itself desirable and benefits the nation in a variety of ways…. it has an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory strand that is often ignored in debates about the meaning and effectiveness of multiculturalism (2011: 4).

Most of the times, the word cultural diversity is replaced by the term 'multiculturalism' or 'multicultural society'. In the present world, every society is multicultural but the treatment of issues related to multiculturalism varies from one society to the other. As Paul Kelly wrote, "[a]ll modern states face the problems of multiculturalism even if they are far from endorsing multiculturalism as a policy agenda or official ideology. They do so because they face the conflicting claims of groups of people who share identities and identity-conferring practices that differ from those of the majority in the states of which they are a part" (2002: 1). Conflicts related to cultural diversity increased along with rise of new wave of immigration. New immigrants who migrated from Africa, the Caribbean and the Asian subcontinents to Britain, Canada, the United States and other western countries strongly opposed assimilation in host countries, demanding separate rights. Demands for recognition and special rights for minority groups led to implementation of multiculturalism and other immigrants-related policies in Canada, Australia, and other developed countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, UK, USA, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland (Rattansi 2011: 9).[3] George Crowder explains the reason behind implementation of multiculturalism policy. With new migration,

[3] Canada and Australia have become multicultural countries. Others have adopted certain aspects of multiculturalism policy.

> … came a change of attitude in the host countries, where the traditional policies of assimilation — the insistence that immigrants adopt the majority culture — came to be seen as neither necessary nor desirable. Unlike previous waves of immigrants, the new arrivals were thought to be too 'different' to be easily assimilated. While for some policy makers this was immediately a major problem, for others it was something to be welcomed (Crowder 2013: 2).

After implementation of multicultural policy, the issues related multiculturalism turns out to be debatable ones in the international arena. Multiculturalism has always had its supporters and critics. As Crowder wrote, "…. for some people it has highly positive connotations: an attractive diversity of ways of life, mutual respect among citizens from different backgrounds, free expression and creativity, colourful dances, exotic customs, culinary variety. For others it suggests social fragmentation, a stultifying political correctness, inegalitarian privileges for certain groups, the abandonment or denigration of the core ethical standards and achievements of Western civilization and even of science and reason" (ibid: 1).

Well-known multiculturalists, Will Kymlicka, Keith Banting, Tariq Modood, Bhikhu Parekh, Nasar Meer, Nathan Glazer and Varun Uberoi believe that adoption of multiculturalism policy not only strengthens immigrant groups but also boosts immigrants to fight for various demands. According to Banting and Kymlicka, multiculturalism policy goes "… beyond the protection of the basic civil and political rights guaranteed to all individuals in a liberal-democratic state, to also extend some level of public recognition and support for ethnocultural minorities to maintain and express their distinct identities and practices" (2006: 1). Yong, Charles Taylor, and Gutmann emphasise identity, recognition, and representation are closely associated with immigrant communities which require special consideration from the mainstream society. As Taylor says, "[o]ur identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (1992: 25). Amy Gutmann expresses her opinion on group identity:

> [w]ithout any group identities … individuals are atomistic, not autonomous. Group identities help individuals have a more secure sense of self and social belonging. Moreover, group identity peoples women and disadvantaged minorities to counteract inherited negative stereotypes, defend more positive self-image, and develop respect for members of their groups (2004: 2).

On the other hand, critics of multiculturalism such as Brain Barry, Susan Okin, Allan Bloom, Samuel P. Huntington, Roger Sandall, Christian Joppke, Geoffrey Levey, Rogers Brubaker, Neil Bissoondath and others argue that, multiculturalism is against the basic liberal democratic principles such as individual freedom and equality. According to them multiculturalism policy supports group rights over individual rights and treats people differently on the basis of race or ethnicity. Liberalists also claim that multiculturalism is an obstacle for individual development and social justice. According to Brain Barry, "[c]laims for special treatment are advanced by groups of all kinds while material inequality grows and the post-war 'welfare state' shows increasing signs of strain" (2001: 3). But supporters of multiculturalism policy counter that the policy "… often enhance the choice of individuals, by making available options that would not otherwise be available, and promote the equality of citizens, by removing barriers and contesting stigmas that disadvantage members of ethnic and racial minorities" (Banting and Kymlicka 2006: 2).

There are contrast opinions expressed by both critics and defenders about multiculturalism which encourages the retention of immigrant culture in host society. Critics claim that multiculturalism allows immigrants to retain their culture and other aspects of their community which leads to various kinds of discriminations – racial, political, economic and social. They also express their concern over the increasing number of discrimination incidents which damage the harmony of the society. In contrast, multiculturalists defend the retention of immigrant culture. According to them culture, religion and other aspects represent the identity of the immigrants community which they feel is essential for their existence in host society.

At present the debate over multiculturalism policies has shifted from the cultural to the religious and thereby, touched the sensitive chord. After the 9/11 attack, multiculturalism has been viewed as a big threat to the safety of the nation. Many

critics argue that multiculturalism nurtures religious fundamentalists who are against liberal democracy. But defenders of the policy would strongly oppose this allegation. Though the policy has its own limitations, they would argue, the government monitors and restricts such activities of organisations and religious institutions of immigrant communities.

Increasing number of religious violence and racial discriminations raise questions not only against the adoption of immigrants but also the existence and continuation of multiculturalism policy in developed countries. Many European and Western countries strongly believe that too much of toleration creates a problem for national identity and security. Therefore some countries such as Britain, New Zealand, Netherlands, US return to the idea of homogeneous society from the multicultural society. David Cameron in his speech expressed the failure of multiculturalism in Britain, "… young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values" (Cameron 2011). Despite political and religious differences, Canadian government considers multicultural policy to be the pride of Canada and constantly promotes it.

1.8 CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Canada is the first country which adopted multiculturalism as state policy. Canadian Government adopted this policy due to the demands from various immigrant ethnic communities such as Germans, Italians, Ukrainians, Chinese and the South Asians. The Royal Commission, which was appointed by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published its report in 1967 and clearly mentioned that Canada was no more bicultural (English and French), but was multicultural. So in 1971 Trudeau declared Canada would adopt multiculturalism as official policy. But till 1988 there were no clear objectives and directions in this policy. In 1988 the Canadian parliament adopted Canadian Multicultural Act with

clear objectives and regulations. According to this Act, multiculturalism is the fundamental characteristic of Canadian society which helps preserve the culture and language of every citizen of Canada.

The key objectives of Multiculturalism Policy are to:

a. recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;
b. recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;
c. promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation;
d. recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;
e. ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;
f. encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;
g. promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;
h. foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;
i. preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and
j. advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada (Minister of Justice).

1.9 MULTICULTURALISM IN INDO-CANADIAN WRITING

As we have seen above, there are two arguments about Canadian multiculturalism, one appreciating differences as liberation and the other maintaining that multiculturalism prevents equality by supporting difference. Cultural diversity is one of the important themes associated with Vassanji's fiction. Vassanji's novels convey the immigrant experience in terms of cultural retention on the one hand and systemic marginalization on the other. He tries to maintain elements of his own culture, tradition and customs by narrating the story of the Shamsi community. Canada is the land of opportunities but at the same time it becomes a space of cultural dislocation. Celebrating cultural difference may be harmless according to Vassanji but for Bissoondath it threatens the sense of identity and unity both for those practising it and for the larger society that tolerates it. We can see contrasting arguments over Canadian multiculturalism in the works of Vassanji and Bissoondath. For Vassanji, cultural difference is the integral part of Canadian society which helps immigrants to retain and enjoy their own culture, tradition and religious practices. In contrast, Bissoondath criticises the recreation of past life in host countries; for him Trinidad – his ancestral country – is simply a place of birth and nothing more than that. Too much of diversity creates a large gap between immigrants and natives which leads to discriminations in terms of race and culture. He also opposes the exhibition of cultures through festivals and carnivals which not only simplifies cultures but also masks the historical importance of their differences.

Bissoondath is concerned about the Multicultural policy which has turned into a contentious political policy rather than a progressive one. He says there are two hidden agendas behind the implementation of this policy: first, is to attract ethnic votes and second, is to keep ethnic communities as marginalised from English-Canadian mainstream society. He states that "[m]ulticulturalism has, over the years acquired aspects of a holy cow for many, a cash cow for some. Both are dangerous creatures" (Bissoondath 1994: 6). He suggests that the basic principles of multicultural policy such as recognition, appreciation, understanding, sensitivity, responsiveness and respect for each other are not serving their real purpose of bonding people together. Rather, these are limited to government papers.

In this thesis I have chosen to deal with M.G. Vassanji and Neil Bissoondath from the first generation writers in the second and third chapters respectively. This conscious choice is to foreground the two writers with a clearly polarised arguments in favour of and against the multiculturalism policy. Among the first generation writers, we do not see any other writer who takes an in-depth and a clear position vis-à-vis the multiculturalism policy. The larger argument in my thesis is that multiculturalism as a policy not only affects the life of immigrants and natives but also poses existential dilemmas in the first generation as presented by the above two writers. But second generation Indo-Canadian writers such as Priscila Uppal, Anita Kushwaha, Ranj Dhaliwal, Shaun Mehta, Vivek Shraya do not display such a dilemma in accepting multiculturalism policy in their way of life. They support the policy which they perceive to be a source of strength during difficult times.

Study of multiculturalism and other related issues in general can be found in various disciplines such as political, social and literary studies. Treatment of multiculturalism in Canada is not the same as in other countries because of the implementation of the Multiculturalism policy. Multiculturalism as a policy is not only projected as the pride of the nation but also is a part and parcel of immigrants' life. There is an over-bearing presence of multiculturalism as a policy in the Indo-Canadian mind. The idea of multiculturalism as a policy is inseparable from the idea of multiculturalism itself when it comes to the authors under discussion. Generally, immigrants who belong to the third world countries are treated as minority communities in Canada irrespective of their caste, class, gender and economic status. The existence of multiculturalism policy helps these immigrants to shift from invisible to visible minorities (Parameswaran 1985: 89). Even though multiculturalism is one of the issues of debate in contemporary literary studies, most studies are limited to engagement of multiculturalism in the writings of first generation in the Canadian context. The present study not only explores the contrasting arguments among the first generation writers but also brings out the second generation writers' views on multiculturalism and related issues.

1.10 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of my research is to explore the concept of Multiculturalism and how it is depicted in the select works of Indo-Canadian writers. The specific research objectives are:

- To identify the broad differences between the literary engagement of the first and second generation Indo-Canadian writers.
- To explore the issue of multiculturalism in the select works of Indo-Canadian writers across generations.
    - To examine the contrasting approach to multiculturalism among the first generation writers**.**
    - To consider if multiculturalism is a non-issue for the second generation writers.

1.11 RESEARCH METHOD

In my thesis I have used two important methods of literary research: Discourse analysis and Textual analysis.

1.11.1 Discourse Analysis:

Discourse analysis is concerned with the investigation of language, both written and oral. It is a useful research method for investigating ideological dispositions evident in texts. It systematically focuses on patterns of, and in, language use, especially in relation to large sections of text/s (Griffin 2007). By using this method one could understand the patterns and inner meanings of words and language which are used in novels written Indo-Canadian writers.

1.11.2 Textual Analysis:

The text is complete only when the reader understands it. Analysing texts is one of the important parts of reading. Secondary sources play an important role in understanding and interpreting the texts. Writer becomes neutral once the text is produced. The reader interprets the text in his own way with the help of secondary sources (Belsey 2007). I try and analyse the novels of Indo-Canadian writers with the help of

secondary sources that can be largely considered to be from the fields of history and politics of the Indian, Canadian and African diaspora. Therefore, the overall thrust of the thesis is largely interdisciplinary. The thesis title uses the word 'writing' instead of the word 'fiction'. I would like to make it clear that the major preoccupation of the thesis is fiction itself. I have used the novels of the above-mentioned authors to look into the objectives specified. However, to consolidate my argument, the thesis uses an essay collection and handful of interview texts as supporting materials.

1.12 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis has been divided into five chapters, including introduction and conclusion. The introductory chapter presents in brief the setting of the present study, introduces Indo-Canadian writings and its engagement with issues related to multiculturalism. The second chapter makes an attempt to study multiculturalism and the importance of cultural differences in first generation Indo-Canadian's life with the reference of Vassanji's works. The third chapter critically examines the first generation Indo-Canadian writer Bissoondath's writings vis-a-vis multiculturalism. The fourth chapter discusses the second generation Indo-Canadian's engagement with the idea of multiculturalism and with the mainstream society in their day-to-day life. The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by bringing out research findings, observations, contributions, and directions for further research.

Chapter Two

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE WORKS OF M. G. VASSANJI

When you don't write about yourself, you remain unknown. And when you are unknown, you don't exist; or you exist as caricature – Vassanji (2014)

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

After implementation of the multicultural policy, literature dealing with the immigrant experience of cultural differences, identity construction, alienation, and racism in Canada gained audience. The prolific Indo-Canadian writer M. G. Vassanji in his novels addresses these important issues, associated with retention of culture in multicultural Canada. Retention of culture is not an easy task, and immigrants put continuous efforts not only to retain it, but also to preserve it for future generations. Vassanji and other immigrant writers support these efforts in their own ways. This chapter is divided into four main sections, after introducing the author. The first section of this chapter explores the importance of the immigrants' culture. The second section deals with the construction of an Indo-Canadian identity in Canada. The third section discusses the role of nostalgia in the immigrants' life. The fourth and final section of this chapter explains how these aspects lead to racial and other discriminations.

2.2 M. G. VASSANJI

Moyez Gulamhussein Vassanji is one of the most prolific writers among the Indian diaspora in Canada. He was born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1950, and was brought up in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. His family was a part of the Indian community, who had immigrated to Africa. In 1978, he immigrated to Canada, and in 1980, moved to Toronto where he began writing. He founded and edited the *Toronto South Asian Review* (TSAR), which became the *Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad* in 1993. This magazine provided a platform for publication and discussion for many South Asian writers in Canada. Vassanji has published eight novels: *The Gunny Sack*

(1989), *No New Land* (1991), *The Book of Secrets* (1994), *Amrika* (1999), *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003), *The Assassin's Song* (2007), *The Magic of Saida* (2012), and *Nostalgia* (2016). He has also published three collections of short stories, *Uhuru Street* (1992), *When She was Queen* (2005), and *Elvis, Raja* (2006). His nonfictions are *A Place Within* (2008), *Extraordinary Canadians: Mordecai Richler* (2008), and *Home Was Kariakoo: A Memoir of East Africa* (2014).

With the publication of his first novel *The Gunny Sack*, Vassanji was established as an important voice of the Indian diaspora. He is the winner of the Giller Prize (Canada, 1994, 2003), the Commonwealth First Book Prize (Africa, 1990), and the Bressani Prize (Canada, 1994) for fiction; the Governor General's Prize (2009) for non-fiction; and the Molson Prize awarded by the Canada Council for the Arts (2015). He is a member of the Order of Canada, which has been considered a great honour for the Indian diaspora. He has also been awarded several honorary doctorates. His work has been translated into Dutch, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Latvian, Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Swahili, and so on. Much of his best writing comes from his memories of growing up in East Africa and later, as a young adult in Canada. His writing is characterized by his use of words from Indian vernacular languages[4] and his delineation of characters, who navigate between the cultural values of their homeland and their adopted home.

Generally, Canada is referred to as a 'country of immigrants'; it is true, not because of the immigrant population, but because of the condition or status of the immigrants. Canada's multiculturalism policy not only accommodates immigrants, refugees or exiles from different parts of the world, but also supports the economic, political, and social development of these people. The biggest problems perceived by immigrants in host countries are retention of culture, religion, language, and tradition of their country of origin. Most of the time, immigrants compromise and lose the above identity-related factors due to the various pressures from the host country. For instance, in Harold Sonny Ladoo's *No Pain Like This Body* (1972), Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988), V. S. Naipaul's *Half a Life* (2001), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Oleander Girl* (2013) protagonist

[4] Henceforth, vernacular languages.

experiences of identity loss denotes the condition of Indian immigrants in host society. But in Canada, the multiculturalism policy allows immigrants to retain their culture, religion, tradition, language, etc., irrespective of their background. In an interview Vassanji says:

> [i]n Canada there is a great deal of tolerance, I would even say celebration, of people coming from different places. That's how the country has evolved. I give readings to all sorts of groups whose backgrounds are completely different from my own. This can be a thrilling experience, reflecting how the world has changed (Bower et al. 2011: 5).

Retention of own culture is not an easy task, even though many policies support immigrants. In host countries, immigrants are often influenced by the dominant culture. So retaining culture is the biggest challenge felt by immigrants. For instance, in Uma Parameswaran's *Mangoes On The Maple Tree* (2002) exposes the dominance of Canadian culture on Indo-Canadian family. It is one of the important features of Vassanji's fiction. His works mainly focus on the life of immigrant communities from India and Africa. By narrating the story of a visible minority, Vassanji not only gives voice to his community, but also explores its culture, history, religion, and language for the rest of the world. In one of his interviews, Vassanji talks about his writing thus:

> I am writing about people who live on the margins of global culture, and that requires a lot of work. You can't look at my writing the way you look at [that of] a white Canadian writer. The problem for many of us is that we are pioneers, telling stories that have never been told, naming things that have never been named—even the names themselves are hard to pronounce!— and all of those things are on my mind. It looks easy but I have to work very hard. A large part of my audience has never been to Africa or India, let alone understands the complexities of these communities. Even the language structures affect my writing because I have to bring these things across to the reader without making it obvious (Rohleder 2016).

Vassanji's fiction is concerned with both Canada and the country of origin. This chapter examines how Vassanji views Canada and its attitude towards Indo-Canadian immigrants and the treatment of cultural diversity, by analysing his novels *No New Land*, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, and *The Assassin's Song.*

2.3 IMMIGRANTS' CULTURE AND DIFFERENCES

Cultural diversity has become an increasingly prominent issue in recent times. The rise of "migration, asylum, population transfer and the increasing diversification of identity patterns within traditionally homogeneous groups" has resulted in the growth of cultural diversity in modern society (Tierney 2007: 1). Most of the countries around the world follow the model of 'nation-state', which gives importance to its identity, language, history, culture, literature, myths, religion, etc (Kymlicka 1995: 18). But some groups such as migrants and other non-dominant groups within the territory challenged this model and tried to assert their own culture, language, tradition, religion and so on. These antagonisms resulted in the implementation of a public policy like the multicultural policy.

For Vassanji, cultural difference is an integral part of Canadian society, which helps immigrants to retain and enjoy their own culture, tradition, and religious practices. Culture is manifested in the language, myths, collective memories, rituals, symbols, customs, traditions, etc (Parekh 2000: 143). Vassanji's works engage with a series of examples of how immigrants attempt to retain their culture by rigidly holding on to their language, food, dress, and religious practices.

2.3.1 Language

Language plays a significant role in the life of immigrants. The usage of their mother tongue not only creates comfort among immigrants, but also helps to preserve their culture. There are continuous conflicts between majority and minority languages in host countries because language is not only a part of the tradition or culture of any community, but also the flag-bearer of prestige, honour, and political and social power of those respective groups. Most immigrants are worried about the decline of their language in the host countries. Craith says, "[i]f the language of the home is neither visible nor audible in the broadcast sector, this is highly likely to have an adverse impact on the status of the language at societal level, and the lack of recognition in the public space has been an important factor in the decline of many languages" (2007: 9).

Linguistic diversity is one of the important features of Vassanji's multicultural fiction. Even though he uses different vernacular languages in his works, his fictional language is English. According to Vassanji, English has a global readership, which helps make his culture reach the mainstream.

> I can't write in Swahili or Gujarati. If I could I would have done smaller things, but English has always been my writing language; and there's always so much more to read in English. It's the language in which world culture meets and we have to be a part of it. Also, English gives me a bigger readership, because of course any serious literature has a global readership and you want to be able to tell the story of Africa to the world, you don't just want to be talking to yourself. So for both reasons I think English is important. And now I think there's no choice, English has become so important in east Africa that they speak of Swanglish (Bower et al. 2011: 6).

Vassanji's works feature different vernacular languages of India and Africa. He is very interested in the usage of Indian vernacular languages such as Hindi, Guajarati, Kutchi, Punjabi, Sanskrit, among others. Besides, he is also fond of the African language of Swahili. According to Gromov, "...Vassanji really profoundly uses the local languages both to spice up his text with 'local colour' and to introduce and describe the local cultural phenomena" (2014: 62). Here are some examples of the Indian languages evident in Vassanji's works:

> The major says softly, '*udu tyam jatavedasam devam vahanti ketavah*—' which verse from the Rig Veda I complete, *'drshe vishvaya suryam...,'* for all to see, the sun (Sanskrit) (Vassanji 2007: 163).

> *Kesri sinha, swarupa bhulayo Aja kero sangha, aja hoi rahiyo*. Saffron Lion forgot his true self. Living with goats, he became a goat (Gujarati) (ibid: 216).

> See how much she loved him. Papa muttered once. Is se ishq kehete hai. Heer ki tarah nikli, hamari beti…. Heer, the Punjabi Juliet who also died for her love (Hindi) (Vassanji 2003: 233).

In some pockets of African countries, indigenous languages have gained greater importance than other languages. Due to the ill-effects of colonisation, colonised (or post-colonials) developed hatred against European languages. For example, in *In-Between World of Vikram Lall* when Vikram Lall meets the Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the President of Kenya, he greets him as 'Excellency', which angers the President. "He

looked at me, growled derisively without raising his voice, What is this *excellencee* the British have taught you? I am a father to my people" (ibid: 296). This dialogue shows how languages are associated with the feelings of Africans.

> Is this how you speak to your father, he growled, like this — eti with a letter? Na cheti kama hicho —Excellencee! he scorned, brandishing the letter with contempt….I'm sorry, my father, I was embarrassed. Niliona haya, I said in the Swahili I had learned in Tanzania...Nyinyi wahindi wenye adabu, kwa kweli, lakini....You Indians are brought up well, but a letter is not the way. But now —sasa — it is done. Go. Tell your uncle to get on the plane and not do foolish things here in Kenya. Look what his friend Double-O has done to our Kenya (ibid: 308).

Vernacular language helps to develop a strong bond between the immigrants. So, they speak in their own language when they meet. Canada is a country, where English and French have been adopted as official languages, but this is never a problem for the immigrants. The usage of mother tongue not only comforts immigrants, but also indicates their resentment against the forceful implementation of a host language on them. Vassanji's writings often evidence that characters belonging to the same community exchange dialogues in their own language. Vassanji also uses vernacular languages to express the feelings of the characters – emotional bonding with languages in an immigrant's life.

> We were more friends than in-laws. We spoke in English usually, but alone by ourselves, the two of us often broke off into Hindi. His family was from Banaras and had been Buddhists for a few generations, ever since a group of monks had come to the city and converted a locality there. He had been brought up with Hindu practices also, but had relinquished most of them as an adult. He had come as a medical intern to Iowa City, and there met Cathy—who, as the family joke went, had initially taken him for a Native Indian (Vassanji 2007: 286).

> Beside me, Mahesh Uncle was muttering a stream of invectives in Punjabi — *badmash sale... kamine... neech... kambakht log*... bastards — and my mother told him a few times to control himself (Vassanji 2003: 33).

The usage of vernacular words also means sections of his vocabulary are unfamiliar in the context of the host country. By using unfamiliar words, he explores the cultural, historical, social, and political background of the characters. For instance, in his works, he often uses words from different languages such as *Muhindi, askaris, ginans,*

mukhi, ji, mahraj, mweusi, bwana, karibu, mweupe, padharao, maru, boavo, and so on. In his interview, Vassanji explains the reason for this:

> [what I do is alter the tradition of Western writing and make my experience part of what is written here. With all English writing, instead of moulding oneself to current practice, one tries to change to suit one's objectives. But that has to be done in a subtle way, in a way that the reader accepts. When you introduce new words you have to decide whether to introduce them as foreign words or as words that will mean something to the reader if put in italics. The same goes for introducing concepts that are unfamiliar. There is, for instance, Dar es Salaam, a place no one has heard of, except the immigration authorities. And then suddenly you find people discussing Dar while discussing my novel. This is one way of broadening the substrata in which we operate. Others have been doing that all the time. A perfect example is Faulkner—he wrote about a place which is for me very foreign. But read enough of him and it becomes a real place (Interview Kanaganayakam 2008: 24).

Vassanji uses vernacular languages also to explore the culture of his origin in a multicultural Canadian society. According to Bandia, "African writers use them (mixed language) to express certain specific functions in a social interaction situation, and also some community-specific ways of communicating….When African writers cannot adequately express African sociocultural reality in a European language, they resort to the use of indigenous words and expressions" (1996: 141). Vassanji in one of his interviews expressed his view on language:

> I have a much more aggressive view towards language; if we were invaded, then I now see myself as part of an invading force, or part of an invading culture from the Third World which is now helping to transform the cultures that invaded us. So what I do is use the language, but change it and add on to the literary traditions here. What I attempt is to bridge different literary traditions. I see the whole process as much more positive (Interview Kanaganayakam 2008: 24).

2.3.2 Religion

Cultures are often deeply influenced by religious beliefs and values. Religion is one of the fundamental markers of the Indian diaspora. Religious practices are central to the immigrants own articulations of self and a sense of diasporic belonging. Religion not only represents the immigrant's identity, but also works as a bridge within the diasporic community. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, and other religions are followed by Indian immigrants.

The preservation of religious tradition is one of the primary preoccupations of immigrants. In the present society, religion no longer remains a belief or faith; it becomes the identity of the individual or community. Even though Canada is a religiously diverse country, it is dominated by the Christian religion. So, by following and practicing religious beliefs, immigrants try to retain their religion in a multicultural Canada asserting themselves.[5]

As a member of traditional religious sect, Vassanji's characters yearn to preserve their religious identity. His protagonists belong to either Muslim or Hindu community, and sometimes to both—such as the Khoja Ismailies. The latter is a community that he belongs to, a minority community from India. By narrating the story of these religions or sects, Vassanji gives voice to these communities. In his interview, Vassanji articulates his views on religion:

> [y]es, because I was brought up under a very syncretistic tradition, a tradition which I see currently under threat. But, as opposed to Rushdie, I think I was brought up in an even more syncretistic culture. Our names for the imam would be the Hindu names for the Krishna; we would still speak of the Krishna in worshipful terms—a fact which really bothered a lot of mainstream Muslims. Our people were converted between two and five hundred years ago from sects which worshipped the god Vishnu, yet Vishnu was still an important part of the religious atmosphere I was brought up in (Interview Rhodes 1997: 116).

Some of the most striking characteristics of any religion are worship of god and related symbols and observing certain rituals. Religious places such as temple, mosque, gurdwaras, churches, etc., are important spaces for a diasporic community. These places not only help provide a strong identity within and outside the community. These religious places not only serve the present generation, but also the future ones. Vassanji's works thickly delineate religious places and the importance of religion in the immigrants' life.

> At the end of the street was a Hindu temple; a low-caste was sweeping the sidewalk, the priest in singlet and dhoti sitting at the door threshold, expectant. His stare, and Pedro's, trapped me in a moment of guilt and I had no choice but to go inside and pay my respects to Rama and Krishna and Ganesh (Vassanji 2003: 238).

[5] This could lead to religious resurgence and paranoia among the mainstream, as we shall see in the next chapter.

> This happened just outside Makindu, on our way to Mombasa. Outside the station was a Sikh temple, to which my mother went to pay her respects. If there was no Hindu temple, she said, a Sikh one could do just as well. She brought for us some halva prasad from there. The train started only when the Indian station master had seen her to our compartment (ibid: 118).

Vassanji's works exhibit various aspects of Hinduism and Islam, such as religious beliefs and practices, sacred texts, religious symbols, sacred myths, etc. For instance, there are constant references and narrations from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. He also mentions the sacred prayers of the Ismaili and Kikuyu communities such as *ginans* and *maumau* oaths, respectively.

> The sufi had been told during his long voyage, and often with a horrified look on the face of the informer, that the people of Hindustan worshipped not only idols of men and women, but also images of animals and, if that were not strange enough, the human procreative organs as well (Vassanji 2007: 07).

> The Mau Mau are devils, I said, echoing my mother. Her term was "daityas" from mythology. Krishna had slain many daityas, even as a child. Rama had slain the ten-headed Ravana, and Mau Mau were like that wily daitya, changing shapes at will in the forest, impossible to defeat (Vassanji 2003: 25).

Religious issues have become an important concern of the present society. Every community tries to preserve their religion, whether in homeland or the adopted land. However, though Canada is multicultural, the immigrants' religion has come under question several times. The attacks of 9/11 have given a negative image about the Muslim community. It has not only affected the immigration of Muslims, but also placed them in the position of a suspect. The *Islamophobia* is the biggest problem faced by Muslim communities all over the world. By narrating the story of immigrants who belongs to these communities, Vassanji not only becomes the voice of these communities, but also explores its positive side.

2.3.3 Food

Food is not only a source of basic nutrients, but also one of the key components of an individual's culture. According to Bray, "[h]ow and what we eat is one of the fundamental ways we define ourselves as social beings and members of a given group… food and the manner of its consumption is one of the important indicators of

ethnicity and class" (2003: 3). Food plays an important role in the retention of the immigrants' culture in host countries. By following their food tradition, immigrants deny being assimilated with the host country and pursue their own tradition. Vassanji's works illustrate the role of food in the immigrants' day- to-day life by describing the traditional food of India and Africa. For instance, in the novel *No New Land*, Vassanji explains how the consumption of *pork* influenced Nurdin's life.

> He ate a piece and it was good. Even before he had finished swallowing it, as it was going down his gullet, everything inside him was echoing the after taste, crying, "Foreign, foreign." Yet it did nothing to him…. He pretended shock, and Romesh comforted him. "See, you're the same. Nothing's happened to you. Forget pork, man, I was not supposed to eat *meat*. Even egg. I'm supposed to think you're dirty. You think they are dirty. Who is right? Superstitions, all."….The pig, they said, was the most beastly of beasts. It ate garbage and faeces, even its babies, it copulated freely, was incestuous. Wallowed in muck. Eat pig and become a beast. Slowly the bestial traits—cruelty and promiscuity, in one word, godlessness—overcome you. And you became, morally, like *them*. The Canadians (Vassanji 1991: 127).

> "There is nothing wrong with tasting, you know. From what I know of the Quran, only getting intoxicated is forbidden." Nurdin knew the argument. It was the latest among the educated Dar crowd before they too relented…. "You could have three or four beer easily without getting drunk" (ibid: 143).

Food is a "…peculiarly powerful semiotic device" (Appadurai 1981: 494), which not only represents the immigrants' culture, but also encodes "histories of resistance, accommodation, and cultural exchange in context marked by racialism, violence, expulsions and inequality" (Ojwang 2011: 68). Food is associated with the immigrants' religious, social, cultural, and political life. Vassanji's works often show how food and eateries act as metaphor for political, social, and cultural inequalities engendered by the dominant community. For example, in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, a cafeteria indicates not only the different periods of the country, but also explains the social changes taking place, "[t]he cafe had once been a hangout for European teenagers; now tourists and locals of all races overflowed out of its wide doors" (Vassanji 2003: 152).

> Lakshmi Sweets was always bustling at midmorning, Indian families having stopped over in their cars for bhajias, samosas, dhokras, bhel-puri, and tea, which they consumed noisily and with gusto. By comparison our end was sedate, orderly: a few vehicles parked, a few rickety

> white tables outside Arnauti's occupied by Europeans on a good day. My father and mother always ordered tea and snacks from Lakshmi, and my sister and I could go to Arnauti's, where we were allowed a corner table outside, though not our black friend Njoroge, who with quite a straight face, head in the air and hands in his pockets, would proudly wander off (ibid: 7).

There is a famous saying that, 'you are what you eat', and it often proves the case of the immigrants. Immigrants are not only identified by their physical appearances, but also recognised by their traditions such as dress, food habits, and others aspects. For example, in *No New Land* the character Jamal identifies a community by the smell of the dishes. Vassanji uses food as a symbolic representation of the immigrants in his works.

> At a little after nine in the morning Jamal would descend in an elevator, clutching close to him an old black briefcase. If you happened to be with him and wondered out loud, or silently with a sniff, to inquire where the smell of samosas was coming from this early in the morning, Jamal would give a louder sniff as rejoinder and agree forcefully: "These Pakis! Cooking twenty–four hours a day!" He might grin with his large mouth, brushing with his fingers his shiny black moustache in amusement (Vassanji 1991: 71).

The description of Indian and African traditional food often appears in the works of Vassanji. He explores Indian dishes such as *chappati, bhajia, samosa, dhokra, bhel-puri, keer, vadapav, ladoo, jilebi*, etc. According to Gunew**,** "the notion of multiculturalism as food is often the most benign version of accommodating cultural difference in various national contexts" (2000: 227).

> The cookers at Sixty-nine are on, full blast. Saucepans are bubbling, chappatis nest warmly under cloth covers, rice lies dormant and waiting. Whatever one thinks of the smells, it must be conceded that the inhabitants of Sixty-nine eat well. Chappatis and rice, vegetable, potato, and meat curries cooked the Goan, Madrasi, Hyderabadi, Gujarati, and Punjabi ways, channa the Caribbean way, fou-fou the West African way. Enough to make a connoisseur out of a resident, but a connoisseur of smells only because each group clings jealously to its own cuisine. And the experienced can tell, sniffing the air in the lobby, what Gulshan Bai's tiffin is today, for the sixth floor is a popular stop at this hour (Vassanji 1991: 65).

And African dishes such as *ugali, suya, Jollof rice, fufu, mafe, egusi,* etc.

> Waiters hovered deferentially behind him, tourists gawked at him. For lunch he had oxtail soup, which he grimaced at, and shepherd's pie; Rose and I had maize-meal ugali, a local

> staple cooked specially for the benefit of tourists. You can get better ugali at the kiosks down the road, he told us in good humour (Vassanji 2003: 271).

Traditional food not only works as a preserver of the immigrants' tradition, but also builds relationship between the diasporic communities. As Ojwang said, "[o]n the one hand, what the immigrant Indian characters in the literature eat or drink may indicate their resistance to the dominant systems that try to assimilate them, while on the other hand it may act as a sign of their capitulation to undesired cultural influences" (2011: 68). In Canada, immigrants are often influenced by the host culture due to inescapable circumstances. However, by following their own tradition the immigrants try to retain their own culture in the host country.

2.3.4 Tradition

Tradition is strongly connected with the life of the diasporic community. The immigrants' culture encompasses customs and traditions of their country of origin. Majority of the immigrants embrace their own tradition and try to retain their tradition in the host country. Dress, marriage, music, festivals, rituals, etc. are mainly associated with tradition. Vassanji's writing is mainly concerned with the traditions of the Indian community. Tradition passes from generation to generation. In one of his interviews, Vassanji says, "[y]es, culturally my roots are in the Khoja tradition. I grew up hearing bhajans about Brahma, Saraswati, Harishchandra, Yudhishtira in the Khano prayer house" (Reddy 2007).

> Even now, even here in this Canadian wilderness, I cannot help but say my namaskars, or salaams, to the icons I carry faithfully with me, not quite understanding what they mean to me. But I am convinced they represent some elemental force of nature, some qualities of it, like gravitation and the electric force and all other entities conjured up for us by scientists from our mundane existence (Vassanji 2003: 20).

As a member of the traditional Khoja community, Vassanji gives more importance to the traditions of his community. The novel *The Assassin's Song* is the best example of how tradition is inseparable from individual life. This is the story of a young ambitious Indian man and his ancestors, who travel far from their homeland. The protagonist Karsan Dargawalla is the son of Saheb, who is the spiritual guru and follower of Nur Fazal. Nur Tejapal, the father of Karsan wants his son to continue

their tradition by becoming the Saheb of the shrine, but Karsan is not interested and wants to become a famous cricketer.

> My father was the Saheb—the lord and keeper—of Pirbaag, the Shrine of the Wanderer, in our village of Haripir, as was his father before him, as were all our ancestors for many centuries. People came to him for guidance, they put their lives in his hands they bowed to him with reverence … I often wished my distinction would simply go away, that I would wake up one morning and it wouldn't be there. I did not want to be God, or His trustee, or His avatar—the distinctions often blurred in the realm of the mystical that was my inheritance. Growing up in the village all I wanted to be was ordinary, my ambition, like that of many another boy, to play cricket and break the world batting record for my country. But I had been chosen (Vassanji 2007: 2).

Karsan's father's wish makes him escape from home, settle in North America, and be away from the family clutches, a dream soon lost for Karsan. After his father's death, Karsan returns home and continues as a Saheb of Pirbaag. In this novel, Vassanji narrates the experiences of exile and cultural conflicts of different characters, which belong to different periods. On one hand, the protagonist's ancestors try to keep their religious traditions, but at the same time, the successor and protagonist Karsan tries to escape from this responsibility, which is unachievable. So by narrating story of Karsan, Vassanji proves that tradition follows like a shadow of one's own.

> … I needed time to recover and to think. Whether I liked it or not, and whatever I decided to do with the status, I was now the inheritor of this ancient refuge, its Saheb. By now a defiance had also welled up in me, a strong desire to gather something from the debris and ashes, and construct a monument to Pirbaag. The precious library was gone, with the Saheb who had embodied its tradition, who had painstakingly and often in his own hand preserved its records, but I still carried some of that heritage in my memory, and on my tongue (ibid: 268).

> I would like to say then that Pirbaag never left me; and I, it. There is a partial truth to that; I only wish it were the entire truth, for it would pull the curtain over my personal life, obliterate its ache. But the truth is that I did find another life there, in North America, one of personal happiness and freedom; a second birth in which I managed to leave behind the manacle that had been Pirbaag, forget the sacred bol given to me by my father that tied me to my heritage and succession. But what did the Pir say, and my father reiterate?—every flower withers; and where's the cheek that does not fade, says the poet. It seems that Bapu-ji always won; but his was the cosmic truth of transience, therefore a truism, mine that of the small and personal joys that defy the grand design, but inevitably must confirm it (ibid).

Vassanji's characters not only represent a particular community, but also explore the customs and traditions of their belongings. In multicultural Canada, immigrants are very much conscious about their tradition, because it works as an important tool in constructing their identity. Vassanji deals with these issues by providing a detailed description of the traditional dress, marriage, festivals, and other aspects of the Indian tradition. Wearing traditional clothes is the key part of the Indian tradition. The Indian traditional dresses like *kurtha, sari, dhoti, shalwar-kameez, pyjama, pagadee, safa,* and others often show up in Vassanji's works.

> Sakina-dadi, as I had known her, like any Punjabi woman wore a shalwar-kameez and dupatta, spoke Punjabi fluently and perfectly, at least to my young ears, and cooked formidable kheer, karhi, and dahi-wada (Vassanji 2003: 37).

Indian festivals and *desi* games (*gilli-dandi* and *naago*) are the other significant aspects of Indian tradition evident in Vassanji's work. He not only introduces these aspects of Indian tradition, but also explains its importance against a historical background. For example, Vikram explains the importance of *rakhi* sent by his sister Deepa, "[a] package arrives from Deepa, couriered. It contains a box of Punjabi sweets and a rakhi. The letter is an elegant bunch of coloured threads, a couple of them silver. A sister presents a rakhi to her brother to affirm their closeness and his role as her protector. Deepa always took the greatest pleasure in tying a rakhi around my wrist, as Mother did in giving one to her brother Mahesh" (ibid: 121). Celebration of Indian festivals not only helps the immigrants to reinforce their identity, but also helps build relationship among immigrants in host country. With the festivals, came the thoughts of an intermingling of Indian cultures.

> Diwali is the day when Lord Rama returned victorious to Ayodhya, an enchanted place in far-off India, having defeated the ten-headed demon Ravana, way south on the island of Lanka. Rama was the pink god on the table in Mother's puja corner, and on the calendar of Lakshmi Sweets, on which he appeared with his wife Sita and the monkey god Hanuman. Lakshmi was the goddess of wealth and was also worshipped during Diwali. The sweet shop was owned by Gujarati banyas, those special disciples of the goddess, according to Papa, who would crawl on hands and knees even for a chavani, a fifty-cent coin. Mother often wished there was a Punjabi sweet shop around, like those at Bengali Market in Delhi. I did not understand how Bengalis could make Punjabi sweets and Gujratis could not. And besides, Mother did not think much of the dark Bengalis anyway (ibid: 82).

Vassanji not only explores Indian tradition, but also introduces the tradition of African countries. We can see a series of descriptions of African traditions in his work. Traditional African dresses such as *buibui, kanzu, kofia,* and *khanga* and folk dance and other rituals are often dealt with in Vassanji's works.

> About twenty Masai youths were performing a traditional war dance outside the Molabux residence, three doors down from ours….The dancers—tall and supple, the skin dark brown, the long hair plaited, combed back, and dyed red, multicoloured beads at the neck, the wrists, the arms, the pierced earlobes stuffed with more decoration, the red wool shawls only partially covering the torsos and waists—were arrayed in a line. They swayed to and fro and thumped the ground with their feet, to the rhythm of song and drum. Every now and then, suddenly and all together, they sprung high into the air, their bodies erect, their spears glinting, their teeth flashing in friendly smiles. Splashes of red and dark brown and white leapt up at the blue sky out of the dust (ibid: 59).

Marriage is one of the significant parts of tradition, which plays a major role in the retention of community tradition in the host countries. Marriage no longer remains a simple ritual, but represents the prestige and honour of the community. There is a strong tie between tradition and marriage. The immigrants' children are only allowed to marry within the same community. If they deny, they are opposed by their parents. For example, in the novel *In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram's sister Deepa wishes to marry her long time love Njoroge, an African boy. But this is strongly opposed by her Indian parents, who succeed in marrying her to an Indian boy from Africa. The immigrant's parents are more worried about society and feel that it is their duty to protect their tradition. Deepa thought

> [p]apa would have relented… for his darling Deepa. He would have accepted Njoroge as son-in-law; he had hardly been strong on tradition anyway. But it was Mother who still said. We have to think of the samaj, the community, don't we; the world watches us... (ibid: 233).

On the other hand, Deepa's father says,

> [i]s there anything wrong with the boy? Is he lame or blind, is he a drunkard or a gambler? A U.K. graduate, a handsome boy, of good caste and family—and you have the arrogance to refuse him like that?…What do you mean you will marry anyone whom you want?...We are not Europeans, remember that, we are desis, Indians**.** Proud Indians, we have our customs, and

> we marry with the permission and blessings of our parents! You will do as you are told, girl! (ibid: 185).

Arranged marriage is the basic characteristic of the Indian tradition. Indian orthodox families are very particular about customs and practices; so they do not get boy or girl from other people of other caste, though the religious community is the same. In Vassanji's works, it is often evident that Indian immigrant parents wish to marry their children within the same immigrant community and caste.[6] In the novel, *In between World of Vikram Lall*, Vikram speaks on the importance of same caste marriage: "[s]he did not seem to understand the seriousness of her offence, not to me but to the values of our times and people. We did not marry blacks or whites, or low-castes or Muslims; there were other restrictions, too subtle for us of the younger generation to follow; Hindu Punjabis were the strong preferences always. Times were changing, certainly, but Deepa in her typical impulsive way had leaped ahead of them" (ibid). In the same novel, the character Juma Molabux marries an African woman after converting her to his religion. These examples show how the caste factor works in the Indian marriage system.

> But his mother was such a beautiful Masai girl! There was a stunned silence, and then Dadi said quietly, Yes, Sakina-dadi was a Masai girl when Juma-dada married her long ago (ibid: 37).

> Meeting her eye, Juma Molabux made his decision, based upon his soul-searching of the previous, sleepless night. He was lonely, he had no family in the country and not much status, and he badly wanted a woman. Cohabiting with, or even marrying, an African woman was not entirely unheard of among Indians. And nothing in his upbringing forbade marrying someone from another community, or race, provided—I will marry her, but I must make her a Muslim (ibid: 38).

Immigrant children are often influenced by the host culture and try to embrace it. For example, Vikram's sister Deepa strongly opposes her parents' decision regarding her marriage and tries to run away from home. "How can you have doubts! If you stop loving me I will die! Let's run away to London, she pleaded, that's what Indian girls

[6] Caste is a way of social stratification in Indian society. The caste to which one belongs is determined strictly by birth and no other criterion. The respectability of the individual decreases down the caste hierarchy.

do to marry outside their community or religion. You're right, they will never relent!" (ibid: 206). Thus, retention of tradition and culture of the country of their origin becomes a controversial issue involving the first and second generation immigrants.

2.4. IDENTITY

Identity is one of the problematic concepts in modern world. According to Bauman, "if you recall that only a few decades ago 'identity' was nowhere near the centre of our thoughts, remaining but an object of philosophical meditation. Today, though, 'identity' is 'the loudest talk in town', the burning issue on everybody's mind and tongue" (2004: 17). Globalisation has brought revolutionary changes in the means of transportation and communication and made migration easier. So whenever man moves from one place to another, his/her identity also differs and it was questioned. Identity no longer remains personal it is interpreted and judged by others. So identity becomes one of the most debatable issues in the modern world.

Identity plays a significant role in the life of an individual. It is shaped by countless influences such as culture, tradition, religion, family, society, and so on (Parekh 2008: 11). The question of identity remained a bit hazy during the pre-colonial and early colonial time. Colonial power made people to have a strong sense of 'self' and the 'other'. After colonisation, the decolonised countries reconstructed their identity after a long struggle. Yet, many people struggled to get back their identity because they lived outside of their motherland. Writing is one of the important mediums, which brings out the reality of the society. So, writers from the minority community use their writing to bring justice to their community in a dominant world. Vassanji is one of the writers who belongs to a minority community and tries to retain his community identity in a multicultural Canada.

> I had to understand my origins, define my identity. I said I was a Tanzanian, an African; but what kind of African? I had a tribe—Indian. It was then that the Indian-ness I had been brought up with, defined by the small rituals, the stories, the devotional songs and spirituality—the miracles of flying holy men, awoke in me. That's who I was, my starting point; my raw data, if you will. But where did they fit? I started reading. I had had a communal Indian identity, Gujarati Khoja, but who had heard of them? I had first to find myself in historical and cultural India (Vassanji 2014).

Quest for identity is one of the important themes of Vassanji's multicultural fictions. Like his characters, Vassanji's personal identity is also discussed frequently, because his identity is not associated with any single nation. He is called by different names such as Canadian, East African, East African Asian, Indo-Canadian, Afro-Asian, and others. This community includes Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc., from different states of India, who later migrated to Africa and then to UK, USA, Canada, and other Western countries. For Vassanji, the question about his personal identity led to search for his belonging and write about his community. In his essay, Vassanji wrote:

> …when I left my home country, Tanzania, my city, Dar es Salaam—which was my world—and my community, the Gujarati Khojas, for the United States, I immediately felt a sense of being historically adrift. Who was I, beyond the superficial description of my passport? There was a need to orient myself in this larger world in which I found myself, to be rooted in a place, in a history, as everyone else around me, as everyone else in the world, seemed to be. Where and how did the small world I came from fit? I was now in the real world, the world I had read about in books and newspapers. The world of major historical events and figures: Vietnam, the World Wars, and back into European history; a world of great ideas—science, literature, music, philosophy. There was a comfort and confidence in belonging to a Western country and civilization that I myself could not possess. I had nothing to show. This anxiety was assisted in no small part by the prevailing North American obsession with identity and the youth movement—which found itself in a sea of new ideas, so that you were constantly challenged: who are you? And this anxiety, I hasten to add, came with the thrill of discovering the new world around me (ibid).

Identity is one of the significant preoccupations of an immigrants' life. In Vassanji's novel, the characters often engage with the issues of their identity in host countries. For immigrants, the identity question is not an easy one because they are usually marginalised. According to Vassanji, "[t]he marginalization of the non-European immigrant is concomitant to the marginalization of the world he or she comes from – a country and culture viewed as alien, backward, poor, and unhappy" (Vassanji 1996: 112). So, by narrating the story of the Indian immigrants, Vassanji gives voice to these marginalised communities in a multicultural Canada. In Vassanji's novels, the main protagonists are Indian immigrants to Canada from Africa.

> The creative writer therefore brings awareness, creates knowledge; subverts and challenges existing knowledge and established conventions; extends the boundaries of the hitherto known

> world. And often produces history, because in the process of writing fiction, one has to create context for the story to be understood. When I introduce a character, a reader might well wonder, who is this guy, why does he speak in a peculiar way, what is this Indian doing in Africa anyway. Isn't Aziz an Arab name, and why does he speak of Krishna? Where is this Tanzania anyway? It's not the same as an Englishman or a Frenchman writing. England and France exist in the world's imagination; the writer from there simply has to say Paris or London, or even St Germain or Regent Street, and no more. The parameters are set, a framework invoked, within which a story can be told and understood (Vassanji 2014).

Vassanji's novels centre around the historical migrations of his own community called Gujarati Khojah Ismailies.[7] He portrays his community by fictional name of Shamsis. For example, in *No New Land* the protagonist Nurdin Lalani belongs to the Shamsi community, whose ancestors migrated from India under the indenture system. Minority communities, especially from the Third World in Western countries, are always less identified and discussed. By narrating the story of his minority community, Vassanji tries to keep the narrative of his community alive in the Western society. For instance, in his novel, *The Assassin's Song* the protagonist explains why he writes about his community, "I, the last lord of the shrine of Pirbaag, must pick up the pieces of my trust and tell its story—and defy the destroyers, those who in their hatred would not only erase us from the ground of our forefathers but also attempt to write themselves upon it, make ink from our ashes" (Vassanji, 2007: 04). As a member of a small Muslim sect, Vassanji tries to negotiate his identity in a Western society. In his article, Asani says,

> … a small group of Muslims, the Khojah community, has had to redefine its identity several times in the 19th and 20th centuries in response to a complex variety of factors, some internal to the community and some external. The story of Khojah community negotiating its identity is a colourful and sometimes confusing one involving the courts of British India, murder and intrigue, excommunications and expulsions, and lots of money. It is the story of a community's identity, once consisting of multiple strands, being narrowed in its scope as it

[7]Khojah is a minority community within the Indo-Islamic sects. Nowadays, Khojahs generally identify themselves as Ismaili Shi'i Muslims of the Nizari Ismaili who followed Aga Khan as their Imam (spiritual leader). Khojahs have a long history; they originally belong to the Hindu Lohana caste, who converted to Islam between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries by da-c-is (missionaries) sent to India by the Nizari Ismaili Imams resident in Iran. The word "Khojah" was coined by one of the missionaries of Nizari Ismaili called Pir Sadr ad-din. The Hindu Lohana community belonged to one of the dominant Vaishnavite sects of India. As Vaishnavites, they believed in Shii Imam Ali as the tenth avatar or reincarnation of Vishnu. This syncretic community is influenced by both Hindu and Islamic religious practices and beliefs (Asani 2007).

> entered the modern world, so as to better fit spaces deemed appropriate by new cultural and religious environments (2001: 155).

Vassanji's community has a diverse background and has less scope in world history. By narrating the story of Karsan Dargawala and his ancestors, Vassanji opens an unknown world to the known one. This novel mainly focuses on two important issues: one is the historical conversion of the Hindu Lohana community and the other, exile and settlement of a mystic or sufi from Iran.

> Overlooking everything here, towards the father side of the compound was the grand mausoleum of a thirteenth-century mystic, a sufi called Nur Fazal, known to us belovedly as Pir Bawa and to the world around us as Mussafar Shah, the Wanderer. One day, centuries ago, he came wandering into our land, Gujarat, like a mentor from beyond, and settled here. He became our guide and guru, he showed us the path to liberation from the bonds of temporal existence. Little was known and few really cared about his historical identity: where exactly he came from, who he was, the name of his people. His mother tongue was Persian, perhaps, but he gave us his teachings in the form of songs he composed in our own language, Gujarati (Vassanji 2007: 03).

> We were descended, according to legend, from that first disciple of the sufi, his interpreter Arjun Dev of Afghanistan. This was our connection to history, to the larger world in time and space. It gave greater meaning to our life in this little village, and because of this special provenance we believed we had been endowed with the responsibility to give meaning and comfort to other lives (ibid: 49).

The history of the Gujarati Khoja Ismaili community is connected with the Assassins of Persia (present Iran), who belonged to the branch of an Ismaili sect of Shia Islam. Hasan-I Sabbah was the founder of Assassins, who built and trained a group of Assassins in the castle of Alamut from 10^{th} to 13^{th} century AD. The Assassins were one of the deadliest groups, and had killed Seljuk Turks and their allies, in opposition of expulsion from the kingdom. These clashes ended with a peaceful treaty between two leaders. But in 13^{th} century A.D. Mongol's intervention to Persia led to escape from Central Asia and take refuge in different parts of the world. Some of the assassins arrived in India and took refuge in the Gujarati kingdom.

> Nur Fazal the sufi, I concluded, had been an Assassin. Everything I read in the book in my hand seemed to confirm this. Could it be so easy? ....The Assassins, also called the Ismailis, were a mystical Shia sect who disdained the outer forms of worship and the Muslim laws of

> Sharia for inner spiritual truths. They operated from well-defended, hard-to-access mountain fortresses in western Iran, and they were loathed for their heresy and feared for their penchant for murdering their enemies with impudent and terrifying facility, either as defence against persecution or to intimidate through terror, depending on your viewpoint. The great Saladin is said to have checked for hidden Assassins under his bed before lying down to sleep. They were secretive but had an extensive network of followers, and are believed to have sent their *dais*, or missionaries, all the way to India to teach their esoteric brand of the Islamic faith (ibid 354 &356).

By narrating the story of characters, who belong to the Shamsi (Khoja Ismaili) community, Vassanji tries to bring his community in to mainstream society. Khoja Ismailies were always positioned at the bottom of the society, whether in India or Africa or Canada. It proves in the statement of Karsan's brother, who says "[y]ou know, Brother—when we reply sticks for sticks and swords for swords, we are always cut down because we are few and unorganized. It's the big thing that makes the difference—makes them scared" (ibid: 78).

Vassanji gives more importance to communities, who belong to African countries. He strongly opposes the world view against African countries. The main reason behind his concern over African countries is not only his belonging to that part of the world, but also disagreement and despair with the western descriptions of Africa as a country of slavery, uncivilized, poor, diseased, etc. His love towards African countries is often proved through his works. As he said, "'it's hard to explain what Africa means to me,'…'Tanzania was a more or less tolerant society and there were so many people from Indian-origin communities; we had our identity, but at the same time we grew up with their language'" (Singh 2012). He also accepts his passion over Africa in his interview when the question was asked about winning an award in the African Category.

> Well in one way the label is an honour because it means that it is an acknowledgement by my peers who are African writers; it's an acknowledgement of me as an African writer which is more important than an overall prize. I wasn't quite sure how I would be taken or accepted by the other Africans, but it seems that has not been a problem at all. On the other hand one doesn't want to be labelled as only an African writer of this book, only an Asian writer . . .Or, Canadian writer (Nasta 2008: 21).

> My father—proudly Kenyan, hopelessly (as I now think) colonial—went to India once, and brought back my mother (Vassanji 2003: 20).

By narrating the darker side of the African colonial history, Vassanji tries to explore the sufferings of Africans during colonial and post-colonial period. As Wong states, "[o]ne of the challenges that people of African descent continue to face from the days of slavery is the question of identity. Many of us still do not know who we truly are. This was largely done by design. The slave masters stripped Africans of their names, their languages, their culture and customs, and of their history. Not only this, but Africa has always been depicted as a negative place filled with savages and cannibals" (2017). Colonisation badly affected the life of Kenya's different tribes such as the Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, Kamba, Masai and others. Colonial administration in Kenya began with the declaration of an East Africa Protectorate in 1885. This declaration did not just curtail the freedom of tribes, but also affected their culture and tradition. The Masai community is one of the largest communities with a rich tradition.

> We used to laugh at the Masai as kids. We thought of them as dark exotic savages left behind in the Stone Age, with their spears and gourds and half-naked bodies; when one saw them on a street they were to be avoided, for they smelled so. Yet we were also in awe of them, we did not make open fun of them, for they were warriors, they hunted lions with those spears, didn't they. There was a belief among Indian traders that the Masai could not count; yes, they couldn't, some of them, not in Swahili, which was alien, and not in the foreign units of feet and inches, years and months, shillings and cents. And it was not only the Indians who disparaged the Masai. Country bus drivers were known not to stop for them, or when they did, to move all the other passengers up front so these red warriors with their odour could sit at the back by themselves (ibid: 61).

In the novel *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Vassanji narrates the story of Mau Mau rebellions, who revolted against the British Empire. As David Anderson said**,** "Mau Mau. The very words conjure up memories of something evil lurking in history's dark shadows" (2005: 01). Mau Mau is not only a revolt against colonial hegemony, but also an attempt to construct counter-hegemony (Alam 2007: 2). The Mau Mau revolution erupted in the early 1950s under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, who later became the first President of independent Kenya.

The rebellion started with the encroachment of Kikuyu's land from the British settlers. Due to the deceptive land agreements between Kikuyu and White settlers, Kikuyu tribes lost their land and became slaves in their own land and country. This exploitation turned into anger and people started to revolt against the British administration. The group of rebellion called Mau Mau started by killing the whites and their loyal kikuyus. This fight caused the death of a large number of Kikuyus as well as the Whites. Due to the Mau Mau movements, Kenya finally got independence in 1960s. Mau Mau is not just a freedom movement, but also a trove of painful stories. So, by narrating the story of characters such as Njoroge, Mwangi, Juma Molabax, and others, Vassanji explores the facts hidden in Kenya's history. He indicates the Indian contribution to the rebellion.

> … an uproar began outside the third house from ours, as Corporal Boniface and the second European officer staggered from the back door, pushing out someone who, though dark as an African, was known to most people in Nakuru as Saeed Molabux, nicknamed Madrassi and the son of a pre-eminent Nakuru family. He was thrown violently on the ground. He shouted something defiantly at the officer, the herded crowd of servants stirred into a collective murmur. Provoked, the officer, the corporal, and other askaris converged on Saeed, raining rifle butts and kicks on his back as his body curled up on the ground like a worm and he tried to shield his head with his raised elbows. Behind, at the doorway of the house, his mother Sakina-dadi, my dadi, and his sister Amina were all shouting incomprehensibly (Vassanji 2003: 34).

Identity construction is a task of constant engagement for immigrants outside the homeland. As Colt said, "identity construction is achieved by the acceptance and overcoming of the challenges brought about by the process of adjustment to new socio-cultural context" (2017: 3). Indian immigrants faced peculiar problems or challenges in establishing their identity in African counties. After completion of indentureship, a large number of Indians refused to go back and settled in various parts of Africa. Vassanji says,

> [e]ven in Africa, although we were Africans, we were also Indians. We were brought up as Indians. We grew up speaking two Indian languages—Cutchi and Gujarati—and we also understood Hindi from the movies we watched. And then we were also brought up speaking Swahili and English. We had all of this within us. In my generation the schooling was entirely in English and there was a very strong tendency to look down upon the Indian connection.

> This was a colonial mentality. So even the teachers who came from India and had an Indian accent were laughed at. Of course, some of the teachers were really no good! We did not see India as a big country with an ancient civilization. We thought we were rather sophisticated compared to the Indians. But once I went to the US, suddenly the Indian connection became very important: the sense of origins, trying to understand the roots of India that we had inside us. There was also a very strong religious tradition from Gujarati we had absorbed through psalms or songs. The Indian connection became so strong that I studied Indian history and I took Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania and seriously started translating Gujarati material into English. This was medieval stuff, so you needed a knowledge of how languages develop through Prakrit and so on—of philology. I, in fact, studied that when I was in Deep River, a small place in east of Ottawa and north of Toronto. I had a lot of free time in that small place that I spent in translating Indian material, Indian philology. It is a very strong part of me (Kanaganayakam 2008: 21).

Globalisation and modernisation has made different identities to come into rapid contact with each other, whether individuals or groups. Today, identity no longer remains personal, but represents a culture, religion, place, tradition, and country of origin. For immigrants, their status in the host country makes them not only to look into their past, but also think about their current position in society. According to Bauman, "[t]he politics of identity… speaks the language of those who have been marginalized by globalization. Yet many of those involved in postcolonial studies emphasize that recourse to identity should be considered an on-going process of redefining oneself and of the invention and reinvention of one's own history" (2004: 7).

2.5 NOSTALGIA

Home, roots, motherland, past, memories, history, nostalgia, and other words/themes can often be found in the discussions on Vassanji's multicultural works. M.G. Vassanji is one of the very few writers who has "…written about the multiple displacements of African Asians: their migration from India, alienated life within East Africa, and sometimes, eventual departure for Europe or North America where the sense of alienation continues" (Ojwang 2013: 21). Colonisation and globalisation has moved people to multiple geographical locations in large numbers. These movements evoke nostalgia among the immigrants. The word "[n]ostalgia (from *nostos* return home, and *algia* longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never

existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (Boym 2001: 01). As an immigrant writer, Vassanji's works focus on the notion of belonging and attachment of the homeland. According to Nadia Lovell, "[b]elonging to a particular locality evokes the notion of loyalty to a place, a loyalty that may be expressed through oral or written histories, narratives of origin as belonging, the focality of certain objects, myths, religious and ritual performances, or the setting up of shrines such as museums and exhibitions" (1998: 01).

> Emigration from a small, isolated place or existence – a haven, if you will – into the West, into the larger, increasingly interacting world, creates the pressure to define or rediscover oneself; to write one's history, to give oneself a respected place in that world. This is a matter of pride and self-worth, a matter of inner security and stability. It is less true now than it once was, because with the growth of electronic mass media, there is a lesser sense of being adrift (Vassanji 2014).

Belonging is not just a physical relationship with a place, but a connection of the feelings, sentiments, and emotions of individuals or groups. Belonging functions through the remembrance and construction of past memories of the homeland. The immigrants' belonging is one of the significant and complex issues in multicultural Canada because it encourages the retention of culture and tradition of the homeland, while questioning their loyalty towards their adopted nation. Even in this complex situation, immigrants support and give more importance to their country of origin.

> Whatever I write – and this must be true of other writers – my concerns reappear in one form or another. History, memory, and identity are a dominant concern. For a person who's gone away from his roots, memory is of crucial importance. (The first word of my first book happens to be "memory"). But the idea for a novelist is not only to remember, but to go beyond: what to do, how to cope with memory. Also, I did not think in terms of shifting genres. I had an idea, a speculation, and simply went ahead and produced a story. It took a long time, during which I wrote other books (Interview The Punch 2017).

Nostalgia is not only connected with past life, but also helps immigrants to reshape or reconstruct their life in the host countries. As Boym said, "[n]ostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future. Consideration of the future makes us take responsibility for our nostalgic tales. The

future of nostalgic longing and progressive thinking is at the centre of this inquiry. Unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (2001: 04).

2.5.1 Home

Homeland is one of the important and complex issues in multicultural Canada. Immigrants are often targeted due to their strong connection to their country of origin. The immigrants' attitude towards their country of origin is different from their adopted country. By describing places of origin, Vassanji explores the importance of homeland in an immigrant's life. As a resident of Canada, Vassanji gives equal importance to both India and Africa. For Vassanji, "[h]ome is many places. Toronto is where I come back to, where I have the security of a bank account and a house. When I'm in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, I feel at home, I speak the language and people don't think I'm from elsewhere. It's the same in India, there is an ease of communication and I feel that these are my people" (Rohleder 2016). His emotional ties with both his homelands have helped him to create the characters belonging to India and Africa. A small excerpt from his video interview is as follows:

> Steve Paikin- One of the things we want to explore during the course of this conversation is the issue of citizenship and you have an interesting background because you're from that part of the world but home for decades now has been this part of the world and I wonder how to What extent do you feel more at home in Tanzania as opposed to Canada?
>
> Vassanji- I don't think you can compare, its just like comparing two kids and I mean it is not one or the other, its just what inside you, in many ways is Toronto not even Canada. Toronto is a place where I know which I know completely and where I feel the safest; but you know the place where I grew up, I am very fond of it; you know sometimes I tell people its like going back to visit your mother, I mean just because you moved away that your mother is not gone away you go there.. she grown old you don't complain that.. she is old, she is yours. so in that way you know things that are part of you and that you know you grew up with, that feed you and nurtured you and that don't disappear (Paikin 2015).

Most of Vassanji's novels have their settings not only in Canada, but also in India and Africa. Even though the protagonist is a resident of Canadian cities, he/she no longer

belongs to Canada in terms of citizenship. This nature of writing shows how Vassanji as well as his characters are obsessed with their country of origin, like Vikram Lall in *The In-between World of Vikram Lall*, Karsan Dhargawal in the *Assassins Song*, and Nurdin Lalani in *The No New Land*. The novel *In-between World of Vikram Lall* opens as below:

> MY NAME IS VIKRAM LALL. I have the distinction of having been numbered one of Africa's most corrupt men, a cheat of monstrous and reptilian cunning. To me has been attributed the emptying of a large part of my troubled country's treasury in recent years. I head my country's List of Shame. These and other descriptions actually flatter my intelligence, if not my moral sensibility. But I do not intend here to defend myself or even seek redemption through confession; I simply crave to tell my story (Vassanji 2003: 01).

For immigrants, home is a significant part of their life whether it is for worse or for good. Even though they have left their home a long while back, their feelings towards it never changes. As Vikram Lall says at the end of the novel, "there is something immeasurably familiar in the feel of the cool Nairobi night that tells you you are home, that for better or worse, this is where you belong" (ibid: 382). It does not mean that they never accept their host country as home, but rather see the host country as a physical home constructed of materials and not feelings. The relationship with home is expressed by Vassanji in his interview: "[w]ell I try to blend in totally and I speak the language and I speak it in a certain way and I don't give myself away because I don't like being a foreigner in a place where I grew up" (Paikin 2015).

2.5.2 Past

Past is always constructed through memory, history, narrative, and the myth of an individual or group. As Said states, "[n]ational identity always involves narratives – of the nation's past, its founding fathers and documents, seminal events, and so on" (2000: 177). Vassanji's narratives have multiple pasts. These pasts help the characters to construct their life in the present understanding themselves. Genetsch says Vassanji is one among some important writers who use the past in this specific way: "[i]t is striking that immigrant writers such as M.G. Vassanji, Neil Bissoondath, Rohinton Mistry, and also Michael Ondaatje, Nino Ricci, and Joy Kogawa do not simply negotiate identities in a globalized world by exploring Canada and its multicultural

society but also come to an understanding of themselves by directing their attention to their respective countries of origin and working through their past and histories" (2007: vi). The recollection of his communities' past helps Vassanji to reconstruct his community in multicultural Canada.

> I believe, in my obsession with historical truth and the quest for origins, however uncertain or illusive they might turn out to be. I hold no illusions about exact truths; but I do find the search absorbing and, as in a scientific quest, there is always something to learn. This is what the main characters is some of my work set out to do; what they discover, about the past and more often about themselves, is of course for the novel itself to discover (Vassanji 2014).

For Vassanji, the past is inseparable from individual life; it follows him as a shadow and starts any number of new beginnings. For instance, in the novel *No New Land* the protagonist Nurdin makes an unsuccessful attempt to come out of his past life. By narrating the past life of immigrant characters, Vassanji explains how the past life of the immigrants and their ancestors helps to reconstruct or reshape their present life in host countries.

> We are but creatures of our origins, and however stalwartly we march forward, paving new roads, seeking new worlds, the ghosts from our pasts stand not far behind and are not easily shaken off. An account of Nurdin Lalani's predicaments must therefore go back in time and begin at a different place (Vassanji 1991: 9).

2.5.3 Memory

Over the past decade, the interest over the study of memory has gained a huge momentum (Said 2000: 175). Memory is one of the significant parts of an individual's life, as Luis Bunuel said, "[y]ou have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all, just as an intelligence without the possibility of expression is not really an intelligence. Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it we are nothing" (1983: 5).

Memory plays an important role in the life of immigrants. It is the repertoire of experiences of immigrants and also explains how the community life is constructed in host and adopted countries. Memory is not just an experience or oral story of oneself,

it is also an account of the social, political, and economic narratives of the countries one has been in. For instance, the experiences of indentured labourers project the colonial condition and development of both Indian and African countries. So narrating the memories of characters, Vassanji explores the life of indentured labourer in relation to the mainstream society. The journey from India to East Africa is one the significant parts of the Indian diasporic history – of how close or how far they were, from the home of their memory.

> My grandfather as I had known him at home was simply Dadaji, father of my father, a kindly old man with close cropped white hair who had been born in faraway India in a faraway time, who had a certain past from which he pulled out partly recalled and perhaps exaggerated stories on Sundays when the mood struck him, the dada who after giving the children candies took a nap in the armchair in our sitting room. His mouth would hang partly open, he snored. But on these strolls with Juma-dada another person came out from inside him like a genie. I wished I could understand all that they said. But they spoke in a fluid Punjabi too quick for my ears, and the words and phrases I grasped were often alien to me (Vassanji 2003: 63).

Memory plays a key role in the preservation of immigrant tradition in the works of Vassanji. "Memory can create the illusion of a momentary return to a lost past; its operations also articulate the complex relationship between past, present and future in human consciousness" (King 2000: 11). In host countries, immigrants get fewer opportunities to explore their culture and tradition; so immigrant writers like Vassanji create an opportunity by narrating memories related to pre-migration or past life.

> Rajat's Toy Store was selling masks for the festival, depicting the faces of the main heroes and demons of the Ramayana story. And so on a Saturday in the parking lot of our shopping centre. The great battle began for the liberation of Sita and the conquest of Ceylon. I was the only possible Rama. I was Indian, this was my story**;** I had a name to match, Vikram for victor (Vassanji 2003: 8).

Memory works as it explores the fact or truth of an incident even as it is highly political. As Said states, "[m]emory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority. Far from being a neutral exercise in facts and basic truths, the study of history, which of course is the underpinning of memory, both in school and university, is to some considerable

extent a nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a desirable loyalty to an insider's understanding of one's country, tradition, and faith" (2000: 176).

According to Narula, "[t]he South Asian writers, who have migrated to Canada, negotiate the maze of memory and experience to re-create and re-shape their new identity" (2005: 64). Vassanji's narrative highlights the memories of immigrant characters, which not only defines the immigrants' identity in a host country, but also helps reconstruct their culture in multicultural Canada.

2.5.4 History

History is one of the significant engagements of Vassanji's narratives. For Vassanji, history is not just a past event, but it represents particular community or the country. According to Gill, "[t]he reconstruction of his community's history is not the only concern of Vassanji. As a writer he wishes to understand his present and sees it as his duty or locate displaced and the other marginal communities in shifting power relations" (2010: 231). History plays a key role in the construction of a country's image at the world level. In his interview, Vassanji explains the importance of history:

> … it is Western history in its dominant, exciting movements that we read about, here in Canada, that we find in the bookstores. We read about medieval Europe, classical Europe, modern Europe and America; the nth book on Lincoln; the nth on a world War. And why not? There is always more to learn, there is always a need to re-examine, to reinterpret. And it is this Western history that is taught to our children here in Canada: both of my children did Canadian history in lower classes, and in the higher grades had a choice between European and American history. But not Asian or African history (Vassanji 2014).

Vassanji's obsession with history makes him write about his communities and its pasts. As he says, "…what I write and how I write depend on my personality, my history and memory, the place and culture I grew up in. My obsession with history comes out of my circumstances; history, which I cared little about in school, was a source of my early frustrations when I was older-because I didn't seem to have it. It is now my interest and my hobby. Obviously it finds itself reflected in my fiction" (ibid). By narrating the story of both the old and new generations of his communities, Vassanji presents the historical moments associated with a particular period. There are several important historical events mentioned in the novels, and the most important

are the journey of indentured Indian labourers, British and German rule in colonial Africa and India, African nationalisation, expulsion of Indians from African countries, birth and development of the Ismaili community, and exile in Western countries.

> [H]istory is not all academic; it is also memory, it is myth, it is creative. It is not only writ large, it is also writ small. Many of us learned about other places through novels and movies. Books were a window to the world; for many people they still are. Not the historical tomes often written in jargon, but literature. It has been said that "history [is] a human product to which literature and myths bear legible witness" (George Steiner). You could find out about English life by reading Jane Austen, and about nineteenth century London from Charles Dickens; you could read a host of other novels and learn about England. These are not histories as such but ways of knowing about people and places; they may not be strictly factual but they can be starting points to discovery. They create lasting impressions, they create empathy. So much so that we have the phenomenon of literary tourism (ibid).

Vassanji's narration of history gains importance not because of huge information on historical events, but because he explores historical events unwritten and hidden. He gives more importance to oral histories experienced by people than to the written. Due to political and other circumstances, much of history does not find a place in the history books. For example, murders, rapes, and brutal mental and physical tortures against Mau Mau rebels, their wives and children have not been written because these are unimportant people from the Third World.

> In Africa, at least the part where I come from, there is currently no room for history. The past slips away as smoothly as grains of sand go through the fingers to fall into oblivion. If you compare the number of books published annually about Africa, even including those by non-Africans, and how many about a typical country in the West, the situation is truly depressing. When you don't write about yourself, you remain unknown. And when you are unknown, you don't exist; or you exist as caricature (ibid).

The narration of history creates a platform for individuals to expose one's communities or country to the dominant or mainstream world. Due to various reasons, the history of the Third World has not been explored much and even if it has been, most of the time in wrong ways. For example, much of the developing world projects as a country of starvation, dirty, uncivilized and so on. This affects not only the image of the Third World, but also creates problems for immigrants who come from that part

of the world. Most of the times immigrants are marginalised in host countries due to wrong assumptions about their country of origin.

> Literature tells us not only about others, it also tells us about ourselves. In a world getting smaller and smaller – so small that we are threatened with extinction, we are told; so small that we wish we had not told others about us and continued to live quietly in our havens – but we know it doesn't work like that. If you don't let others know about you, they discover you on their own terms: as backward and savage, as dying and diseased, as not having culture and being joyless. If you ask people on a Toronto street what they know of Ethiopia, I'm sure many would conjure up pictures of starvation. A big deal was made of the Ethiopian famine in the 1980s. That is the sum total of Ethiopia that many people know. By the same token, many of us formed pictures of Germans and Japanese from the caricatures of American movies. And Native North Americans were simply bloodthirsty Red Indians. Lawrence Durrell did not give the Arab view but the European view of Alexandria (ibid).

Assertion – to the level of exhibition of their own community – is one of the needs of the immigrants in multicultural Canada. This is done by Vassanji through continuous narration of the immigrants' past, memories, and history of the country of origin. His works not only narrate the history of India and Africa, but also try to eradicate wrong perceptions about these countries. By doing so, Vassanji tries to do justice to the marginalised communities and help preserve their own tradition in a multicultural world.

2.5.5 Longing to Return

Most immigrants settled far away from their homeland were not happy. Different circumstances and situations had made them leave their country. Yet, in some way, they would like to connect with the country of their origin. Even a symbolic hyphen that indicates their identity could give them some succour. As Vijay Mishra says that all diasporas are unhappy in their own ways, "[d]iasporas refer to people who do not feel comfortable with their non-hyphenated identities as indicated on their passport. Diasporas are people who would want to explore the meaning of the hyphen, but perhaps not press the hyphen too far for fear that this would lead to massive communal schizophrenia" (2007: 1). Having arrived at a different place, a host country, one would contemplate what was it that made them seek a new home.

> What makes a man leave the land of his birth, the home of those childhood memories that will haunt him till his deathbed? I received a warning telephone call late one morning, left home that night with my heart in my mouth; but for Indians abroad in Africa, it has been said that it was poverty at home that pushed them across the ocean. That may be true, but surely there's that wanderlust first, that itch in the sole, that hankering in the soul that puffs out the sails for a journey into the totally unknown? (Vassanji 2003: 17)

Nevertheless, longing to return is a common desire for immigrants. As Johannes Hofer (who coined the word Nostalgia) said, nostalgia defines "… the sad mood originating from the desire for return to one's native land" (quoted in Boym 2001: 20). Longing to return is a strong desire, which continuously haunts the immigrants, especially those belonging to the first generation. The first generation immigrants have a strong bond with their homeland. For instance, in the novel *No New Land*, the protagonist Nurdin and his father both express their desire to return to their homeland.

> On a stone bench in Dar, at Oyster Bay overlooking the Indian Ocean, two men would quietly sit every afternoon enjoying the cool breeze and each other's company. They were in high spirits and chatty enough when they arrived, but the vastness of the ocean and the rhythm of the wind and the waves and the rustle of the leaves overhead soon drew them in separately, lulling them to stillness, until each man sat motionless, contemplating the expanse in front of them and what lay across it: the land of their birth which they had left a long time ago, to which even the longing to return had been muted, although memories still persisted (Vassanji 1991: 10)

> From above, in the plane, as they left the desert of Egypt and Africa behind and flew over the flat, grey and brown wintry fields, neat roads, the orderly rows and squares of staid brick or stone houses, the spires, Nurdin felt a certain foreboding, felt vaguely that he was making a crossing, that there would be no return**.** Face glued to the window, he watched the world below come alive to the morning's first light: this is Europe. He should make the best of it (ibid: 33).

The longing to return is caused by a sense of loss. Most of the immigrants fail to reconstruct the life which they desired. Vassanji explains exile in his interview with the medium of Vikram's mother: "[h]is mother is the real exile, who lost her home in what is now Pakistan and who now lives in Kenya. Vikram and his father belong to Kenya. But for me, exile is essentially loss. People leave for different reasons and

then get trapped or caught in a place which becomes theirs but is not quite theirs. That is the sense of exile" (Bower et al. 2011: 4).

> When Rama's exile was the subject of the stories, it was never far from our consciousness that Mother and her brother shared a deep sense of exile from their birthplace, Peshawar, a city they would never be able to see again because it had been lost to Pakistan. And since Peshawar was the ancestral home also of my dada Anand Lal, the rest of our family could somehow share in that exile, though not with the same intensity (Vassanji 2003: 85).

Belonging is very strong and deep rooted. As Lovell said, "[h]ome is emphasised as a place of return, an original settlement where peace can finally be found and experienced, even after death" (1998: 2). Most immigrants not only desire to return, but also wish to end their journey in their homeland. This is often evident in Vassanji's works; for example, Vikram's grandfather denies coming to Africa due to the fear of death away from his homeland. Vassanji expresses the importance of returning to homeland with the character of Vikram Lall. "For Vikram Lall, Kenya is his country, it's the colour of the earth and the feel of the night and the air—you know it's yours, it's you, this is where you would like to be buried. He sees his father growing old there. He also goes back for some kind of moral redemption, to settle his scores, and knowing that he is not going to a living death in exile somewhere on Lake Ontario" (Bower et al. 2011: 5). Vikram Lall contemplates during his return journey from Canada to Kenya,

> I wonder, not for the first time, if I made the right decision, returning. By all the measures of practical common sense that I can summon, it was a foolish decision. But I could not have lived out the rest of my days an escapee from my world. I had to come back and face it—though I still await to emerge safely from this weird underground… Ultimately I will have my say; and I will make my peace with my world (Vassanji 2003: 396).

Longing to return is a common desire of the immigrants, which is mostly difficult to achieve unlike the above case. The return is not easy due to various reasons such as family commitments, financial conditions, job security, opposition from children and other reasons. Vassanji's works often have characters who live in a dilemma. Vikram Lall's mother, on the other hand, is not fortunate enough to make a final return to her homeland, India, as she desires.

> Mother had visited her homeland twice since her father's death, and there was little doubt …that India was calling her, that she was ready to end her African sojourn and return finally home. What kept her in Kenya for the time being were her children, Deepa and I, and our own children. She had already been on a few religious pilgrimages in India, and the mother who had returned to us was one who had come to terms with her growing years (ibid 2003: 315).

The longingness to return is the indicator of the relationship between the immigrants and the country of origin. This relationship not only explores the emotional attachment towards home but also explains the role of home and its tradition, culture, history, etc., in immigrants' life. In an interview, Vassanji expresses this as he spells out what he thought as he wrote the ending. "I think he gives the answer several times, once when he's on the train going north and he's looking out and he says that he realises how much he belongs, and this reflects very much what I was thinking when writing the ending. He belongs there" (Interview Bower et al. 2011: 5).

> Do I belong here – in this wonderful country where the seasons are orderly, days go past smoothly one after another? This cold moderation should after all be conducive to my dispassion? No. I feel strongly the stir of the forest inside me; I hear the call of the red earth, and the silent plains of the Rift Valley through which runs the railway that my people built, and the bustle of River road; I long for the harsh, familiar caress of the hot sun (ibid: 371).

2.6 RACIAL DIFFERENCES

> "The blacks kicked us out, now the whites will do the same…. Where do we go from here?" (Vassanji 1991: 103).

The above question is common for immigrants who migrated to Canada from East Africa. Racial discrimination is one of the problems in multicultural Canada. Promotion, recognition, appreciation, and understanding are the main objectives of the multicultural policy; but in reality, the policy is said to have failed in its real purposes. The main reason is the lack of interest of both the government and the native Canadians. Even in multicultural Canada, immigrants are considered as marginalised and outsiders. As a member of the immigrant community, Vassanji throws light on the darker side of Canadian society in his novels. Vassanji does not oppose either the multiculturalism policy or Canadian society; but he criticises the treatment of immigrants from the mainstream society.

Vassanji's *No New Land* is the best example of how immigrants are being systematically marginalised in multicultural Canada. This novel mainly focuses on the initial settlements of Indian immigrants from East Africa. The ancestors of Nurdin Lalani, the protagonist, had migrated from India to East Africa during the colonial period. As supporters of the British and German rule in colonial Africa, second wave of indentured settlers had established a business with the marketing of Indian *desi* products. But this friendly relationship with the White settlers resulted in the expulsion of Asians by the African nationalists in independent Africa. Thus, the political uncertainty and economic crisis caused the migration to Canada.

Nurdin Lalani of the novel migrates to Canada too. After the initial excitement, Lalani and family started realising that life in Canada was not easy. This saga started with the difficulty in getting a job. Most of immigrants, who belong to Third World countries desire a good life. But they soon realise that reality was far different from their imagination. These initial experiences create a fear of the future, which is difficult to overcome.

> After their initial excitement, the days of wonder when every brick was exotic and every morning as fresh as the day of creation, came the reckoning with a future that they'd held at bay but was now creeping closer. They had come with a deep sense that they had to try to determine it, this future, meet it partway and wrest a respectable niche in this new society. First the man of the house had to get work befitting his status. But try as he might, Nurdin Lalani could not find a job. The first few rejected job applications he took in stride: a few disappointments only to enhance the sweetness of eventual success. But the pattern persisted, and slowly in his mind the barest shadow became discernible, of impending despair, the merest possibility of a jobless vista ahead, but nonetheless frightening (Vassanji 1991: 43).

Nurdin and his wife were denied jobs even though they had sufficient experience. There are two major problems faced by immigrants in Canada: one is lack of job opportunities and two, even if a job is available, it would be a menial one. This situation not only make the immigrants economically weaker, but also affect their social status in the society. The demand for 'Canadian experience' and 'language skill' slowly, steadily and systematically marginalises the immigrant community.

> "I know I don't have Canadian experience," he breathed hotly and with emotion on the phone, "but how can I get Canadian experience if you don't give me a chance? I've sold shoes for

> eight years! Eight years-". "Perhaps you were overqualified, sir." That was a new one. Overqualified. Good for laughs, and it got many (ibid: 48).
>
> [A]fter a few months, she had been dismissed. "Your English," the doctor had said vaguely. A "Canadian" was duly installed. "I brought so many patients," she said. Which she had, and in revenge she soon sent word around that the doctor was unreliable. Later she taught Gujarati, part time, at the Heritage Languages Program in a school, and money was scarce (ibid: 66).

There are two major instances of racism in *No New Land*. The first concerns a minor character, Esmail, who belongs to the East African Asian Shamsi community. While he is returning from work, he is initially discriminated and beaten by white boys at the Toronto subway station. There are two reasons behind this: one is the ideology of supremacy and the other being that natives consider immigrants as competitors for their jobs and other political and social positions.

> The three louts had come up behind Esmail and began their abuse. "Paki!" one of them shouted joyfully. Esmail turned towards them, looking frightened. "What do you have there, Paki? Hey, hey? Paki-Paki-Paki…." they leered, they jeered, crowding in on him in front, behind him the subway tracks. … Esmail, punched in the stomach, had been thrown down and was crying in horrible, pathetic moans, "Save me, save me, I have done nothing." People shouted encouragements: "Get up! Stand up!" But Esmail couldn't get up (ibid: 96).

Esmail's incident raises fear among other immigrants, and poses questions on their safety in Canada. The immigrants are worried about repetition of these oppressive incidents in Canada. In the novel, the immigrants say, "[h]ave we come to the right place after all.. If they had wanted money, yes. Anything political, yes, riots, yes, they were understandable. But this, public humiliation, by kids. And where had they learned this hatred? Not from their parents? not from their elders? - that was hard to imagine. How can you send the children to school, to play, to the supermarket, how can you let the girls out?" (ibid: 103).

After the attack, Esmail returns to East Africa and becomes big artist whose paintings were rejected in Canada. This incident not only indicates the failure of Canadian multiculturalism, but also explains the treatment of immigrants in host countries. Vassanji strongly opposes this failure of multicultural policy by calling it 'multivulturalism' (ibid: 111) in his novel.

> The incident at the Yonge and College subway station marked a new beginning in the lives of the Dar immigrants. For one thing, the outrage expressed officially, though perhaps too piously, by police, newspapers, and ordinary citizens decided once and for all that the line had been overstepped, that this was beyond tolerable limit. Toronto the Good would not have it. It brought home, to everybody, the fact that the immigrants were here to stay, they could not, would not, simply go away (ibid: 107).

Another major instance of racism is the rape charge against Nurdin, who tries to help a Portuguese-Canadian girl at the Ontario Addiction Centre. In the Ontario rape incident, the Portuguese girl misjudges Nurdin because of his skin colour and accuses him of rape attempt. Even though there is clear lack of evidence, the society believes the girl's allegation and treats Nurdin as a rapist.

> "RAPE!" she cried. "He's trying to rape me!"
> "There he is – you shameless man!" …. "I'm not going to serve this rapist!" she said, turning away (ibid: 179)
> "I thought in this country a man was innocent until proved guilty," said Romesh, to no one in particular.
> "Where he comes from, both his hands would be chopped off," announced Mrs. Broadbent. "Yes, and" "And his marbles too," added Romesh. The West Indian cook served Nurdin (ibid: 180).

> "…he had approached her with the purest of intentions, had shown concern. He had heard long ago that in America you did not touch a person even if they were dying and needed help. Why should Canada be different. He should have known better (ibid: 181).

This incident shows how immigrants are discriminated by their skin colour and belonging. This is one of the biggest obstacles faced by immigrants in integrating in to Canadian society. In the above dialogue Mrs. Broadbent's claim shows the mentality of native Canadians towards immigrants. In his interview, Vassanji speaks about racism in Canada, "[i]mmigrants are human and if you belong to them you tend to laugh with them. We make fun of ourselves... The racism is implicit... You are looking at a people who are really self-sufficient within themselves, and I suspect many Indian communities are like that. They don't care very much if you don't think much of them. It is a community with a sense of where it is going. And it is not a very militant community either." (Interview Kanaganayakam 2008: 30).

> He got in and remained seated alone all the way, even when most of the seats were taken and some passengers stood. This happened often to him. Racism, the word kept intruding into his mind and he kept pushing it back. On what basis racism? It could be my face, dark, brooding, scowling, cratered. Perhaps I look like a bum. Professor Nanji? What we have become: suspecting racism, but never certain, touchy as a raw wound, blaming innocent people and letting the guilty walk smugly away because you can never be quick enough with a reply. Feeling angry and frustrated afterwards. I should have said this, if only I had said it ... the next time.... (Vassanji 1991: 93)

Racial discrimination is one of the evils of society. Immigration and racism are both associated with each other – only the place or the country would determine the nature of it. Despite Canada's policy of promoting multiculturalism, the mainstream discourse still continues to be hegemonic against the immigrants. Vassanji argues for a more fool proof execution of the multicultural policy, narrating the experiences of racial discrimination against the minority, which might suggest the failure of Canadian multiculturalism.

2.7 CONCLUSION

For Vassanji, literature is not just a narration of the characters' story, but an exploration of the cultural, historical, social, political, and other conditions of a community. According to him, a creative writer capable "to bear witness; to give his or her place a life, a humanity, a status in the world; tell its stories, its jokes; dissect nicknames, evoke forgotten streets, recreate personalities; to go to a village and make a universe out of it, something universal out of its peculiarity, despite its differentness, so that thousands, if no more, people can empathize with and learn from it. We are all peculiar in our own way, and yet the same" (Vassanji 2014).

Vassanji's works mainly focus on the immigrants' continuous efforts in constructing and establishing their identity in a multicultural society. There are two important obstacles faced by immigrants to retain their culture and thereby, assert their identity – one is domestic and the other is non-domestic (originating in the host society). The multicultural policy adopted by government is not accepted by the native Canadians, and this is one of the biggest drawbacks of the policy. This causes different kinds of discrimination against the immigrants. The second problem is the changing behaviour

of the immigrants' children – they are often influenced by the host culture, rather than their home culture. As Nurdin mentions, "[t]he children were well on their way, "Canadians" now, or almost" (Vassanji 1991: 116). This is the biggest concern for immigrant parents overriding the loss of their culture and tradition. "We are desperate for guidance, they said. Life here is full of pitfalls. Children come home from school with questions we can't answer. And want to celebrate Christmas" (ibid: 68).

As a representative of the immigrant community, Vassanji takes the responsibility of working on home culture on his shoulders which is made possible by a policy such as multiculturalism. Vassanji is never against Canada; he expresses this very clearly, "[w]e are essentially exiles, yet our home is Canada, because home is the past and the present, as also the future. We belong to several worlds and Canada has given us a home, an audience, a hospitality, a warm embrace. We get a category all to ourselves because there are so many of us" (2006).

Chapter III

HYPHENATED DIASPORA AND MULTICULTURALISM: NEIL BISSOONDATH AND MULTICULTURAL CANADA

"But no policy can be written in stone; no policy is immune to evolution"- Bissoondath (1994).

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the previous chapter, we analysed the importance of multiculturalism in immigrants' life. Immigrants in Canada strongly believed that multiculturalism as a policy not only helps retain their culture but also protects group rights, religious and cultural freedom, and ghettoization of minority communities. However Bissoondath and other leading critics[8] of multiculturalism strongly oppose multiculturalism and the policies resulting from it which, in their view, result in the loss of individual freedom, cultural and racial discrimination, marginalisation of minority communities, and decline of Canadian values. Bissoondath strongly condemns the transition of old traditional Canada into a new Canada, where diversification is more important than being homogeneous. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section of this chapter explores the importance of individual rights. The second section examines the reasons and effects of cultural differences. The third and final section discusses the role of immigrants and multiculturalism policy in the construction of homogeneous society where Canadian values are glorified.

3.2 NEIL BISSOONDATH

Neil Devindra Bissoondath, the son of Sati (nee Naipaul) and Crisen Bissoondath, was born on 19 April 1955, in Trinidad, where he lived until the age of eighteen. After his high school education, at St. Mary's College, he left Trinidad in 1973 to attend York University, Toronto. After earning his degree, he worked there as a teacher. Bissoondath has been living in Canada since 1973, and is considered by the literary world as both a Trinidadian and a Canadian writer. Bissoondath "is one of the several Caribbean writers who felt that they could achieve their literary potential only

[8] Some of these critics of multiculturalism have been discussed in the introductory chapter.

be leaving their native lands for the metropolitan centres of Europe and North America" (Nelson 2010: 29).

Bissoondath has published six novels: *A Casual Brutality* (1989), *The Innocence of Age* (1993), *The Worlds Within Her* (1999), *Doing the Heart Good* (2002), *The Unyielding Clamour of the Night* (2005), and *The Soul of All Great Designs* (2008). He has also published two collections of short stories, *Digging up Mountains* (1987) and *On the Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows* (1991). His essay collections are: *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (1994) and *Postcards from Hell* (2009). "Bissoondath has never regretted his decision to migrate to Canada, but the aspect of the immigrants' experiences in Toronto that absorbs him in his fiction, particularly his most recent stories, is the unrelenting feelings of alienation and marginality" (ibid).

3.3 INDIVIDUAL VIS-À-VIS GROUP RIGHTS

The issue of identity is the central theme of multicultural society. Individual rights and freedom are the basic principles of democratic societies. There is no doubt that Canada is one of the biggest democratic countries in the world. However, multicultural policy raises the question as to whether Canada can equally give importance to individual liberty of the citizens. Bissoondath is one of the leading critics of multiculturalism who vociferously argues for liberal individualism and strongly opposes the multicultural policy which helps to preserve identity of each ethnic and racial group. Bissoondath and other liberals "advocate a culturally neutral state, where citizens deal fairly with each other and the state deals equally with all, regardless of how we conceive our ends. They believe in universal rights and citizenship, and maintain that the promotion of minority group rights restricts individual rights and freedoms and erodes the norms and practices of responsible citizenship" (Guo 2008: 144). Protection of individual rights and freedom is one of the major problems in the multicultural societies. Liberals believe that "government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty" (Girvetz et al, 2017). Bissoondath

criticises Canadian government for the adoption of multicultural policy which turned against individual liberty.

After World War II, the issues related to minority rights gained importance. The demand for special rights for immigrants, ethnic or religious minorities, and indigenous groups resulted in the emergence of different groups. Liberals, nationals, and other critics of multiculturalism presented their own arguments against special rights for the minority communities. Multiculturalists and liberals are increasingly in clash over issues such as individual rights, cultural and religious choices, and political representation. Liberals support fair treatment of every individual with different beliefs and values who have to live together in the same society. But multiculturalists reject the idea of fair treatment of the individual which affects the rights of minority groups (Barry 1997). Bissoondath in his interview expresses his views on individual freedom:

> I recognize that I've been lucky in the life that I've had. I recognize that there are people who don't have the freedom to construct themselves or remake themselves, but I do think it's possible to say that I will not be constrained by certain things that don't speak to me as an individual human being, and that I will reject certain things because I don't think that they are right, and I will acquire other values. That's a kind of freedom, and I've been lucky enough to have that freedom (Kruk 2004: 56).

Some proponents of group rights argue that the group-specific minority rights not only preserve culture, religion and other aspects of minority communities but also protect individual members of their community. But liberals reject this argument and advocate universal human rights which protect individuals irrespective of affiliation to any community or country. Kymlicka and other multiculturalists argue that traditional human rights standards are simply unable to resolve some of the most important issues of cultural minorities such as language selection, regional boundaries, education, political power, integration, cultural integration, citizenship and others. Hence, they strongly believe that to resolve these issues, minority communities need to supplement with traditional human rights principles with a theory of minority right (Kymlicka 1995: 5).

Ayn Rand, Russian-American philosopher and developer of Objectivism expresses her views thus: "Objectivism holds that man exists for his own sake, that he must neither sacrifice himself to others nor sacrifice others to himself and that his highest moral purpose is the achievement of his own happiness. In politics, Objectivism stands for laissez-faire capitalism, which means the separation of state and economics; as a corollary, we hold that men must deal with one another as traders, exchanging value for value, with no one being told that he must sacrifice for the sake of others or of the state" (Podritske and Schwartz 2009: 15). The idea of Objectivism is strongly criticised by the defenders of Conservatism and Nationalism. Even the critics of multiculturalism who are against Objectivism support Ayn Rand's idea of individual freedom. For instance, Bissoondath in his interview expressed his view on the importance of personal freedom, which is often upset by external factors when it comes to minority groups - "… they would come and suck all the air from around you. It was extremely claustrophobic. It was the kind of society where privacy was *not* valued at all. Before the demands of family and friendship, your own individual, personal life did not matter. I'm not a joiner, I've never been a joiner. And that's part of it as well. I would never belong to a political party, and in the same way, I don't want to belong to any large extended family which will put demands on you" (Kruk 2004: 60). He elaborates in another context:

> [t]he issues made me wary: I neither joined the Black Students' Federation nor revisited the Jewish Students' Federation lounge. I learned instead to keep my distance from the tables that would have welcomed me not as an individual but as an individual of a certain skin colour, with a certain accent, with a certain assumed cultural outlook—the tables that would have welcomed me not for *who* I was and for what I could do but for *what* I was and for what they presumed I represented. I had not come here, I decided, in order to join a ghetto (Bissoondath 1994: 23).

In Bissoondath's fictions protagonists are the critical examples of the liberal individualism. The main characters such as Pasco, Danny, Lorraine Neuman (*The Innocence of Age*), Yasmin, Shakti (*The Worlds Within Her*), Alec, Sumintra, Kelly (*The Soul of All Great Designs*) and others demonstrate the concept of individualism irrespective of the community to which they belong. According to Bissoondath, in the novel *The Soul of All Great Designs* the major characters Alec, Sumintra and Kelly

represent the idea of individual freedom. Alec is a successful interior designer "… who is convinced early on in his professional career that the only way he can achieve success is to fabricate an identity for himself, one so tenuous and fragile that the slightest misstep can destroy it, along with everything he has worked so hard to achieve" (Bissoondath 2008). Alec, born to blue-collar suburban parents, left the house to construct his own independent life which is encouraged by his parents. "My mother put her hand on my knee. 'We didn't say anything before because we didn't want you to feel we were pushing you out. We were hoping you'd decide to move out on your own, but we'd have stayed here as long as you wanted to'" (ibid: 38). Here Alec's parents' decision to leave their son to lead independent life denotes the basic aim of liberal individualism. Alec's individual freedom allows him to construct his own identity which is required for his professional success. At the end of the novel he is successful in maintaining two important secrets which may cause hassle in his personal and professional life.

Sumintra is another protagonist who is the daughter of Indo-Canadian parents and maintains different identities to balance two worlds. She covers up all her secrets with different identity masks. For instance, she is uncomfortable with her Indian name Sumintra which is named in memory of her aunt who died in the Air India bombing. She prefers the name Sue which is in close connection with Canadian culture. Sumintra says, "Kelly calls me Sue. Sometimes I think I prefer that name. It's easier to deal with" (ibid: 105). Sumintra's multiple identities expose the negative shade of multiculturalism in a liberal individual society. Sumintra's character often illustrates Bissoondath's accusation of multiculturalism which is problematic for individual liberty or personal freedom. As a member of Indo-Canadian family, Sumintra not only fails to come out of the stringent restrictions but also ends her life in a tragic way. On another occasion Sumintra and her mother have an argument about Kelly's independent life:

> 'Why doesn't Kelly live with her parents instead? She will save her money, no rent to pay, like you.'... "That's her business, Mamu. We're not students anymore, she's got a full-time job. Besides, maybe her parents don't want her living with them." "Why not? What's wrong with her?" "What a question, Mamu! Kelly's my friend. There's nothing wrong with her. It's

> just the way things are here. They're not like us, the kids living with the parents till they get married. It's just a different way of doing things, that's all" (ibid 122).

Kelly-Ann is another major character and friend of Sumintra who not only represents Canadian society but also is a classic example of liberal individualism. Kelly leads a successful independent life without any restrictions. Like other Canadian teenagers, Kelly engages with many boyfriends for one night stand to fulfil her sexual desires which is not possible for Sumintra. In Sumintra and Kelly, Bissoondath portrays two contrasting characters that represent two different communities in Canada in his novel *The Soul of All Great Designs*. Sumintra's life is completely in contrast to Kelly's even though both have similar goal and desire. As a member of an immigrant family, Sumintra is bound to her own community restrictions, but Kelly, as part of the mainstream society, leads her life by her own choice. Sumintra faces opposition from her parents when she chooses English literature instead of Architecture. Her mother strongly disapproves her move, "… shaking her head in that sorrowful way that suggests an immutable pain, how it was too bad that Sumintra had chosen to leave architecture — already bad enough: no doctor or biologist or geneticist for them — for English literature and wasn't it wonderful that Kelly had stuck with it and was doing so well" (ibid: 81). For immigrant parents, daughter's education is important for marriage proposals, not for individual happiness. So they give more importance for what community expects than what the individual wants.

Sumintra's attempts to rebel against the system, though unsuccessful, give a voice to other girls of the community. Another Indo-Canadian character Rima who is the schoolmate of Sumintra, is sent back to India as she fell in love with a white guy. Sumintra expresses her opinion on this, "[w]hy couldn't they just let her alone? It's her life. Seems to me the best way to live your life is to know and accept yourself, then just go on from there" (ibid: 133). Sumintra's father, Manohar justifies this action:

> "They had to protect the family's honour. It is not like here. A child does something bad and the parents can still hold their heads high." … "It is known in our community, daughter, that some families have gone much further than Mr. and Dr. Prasad. A man can be driven to physical violence against those he loves most when they betray him. Usually it is hushed up.

> We hate to wash our dirty laundry in public. But that dirty laundry must be dealt with. Mr. and Dr. Prasad dealt with it in the most humane way possible. Nobody can fault them for that, daughter" (ibid).

Sumintra and Rima are the main victims of immigrants' community life. Sumintra's struggle does not end with her fight for education, it continues even with her marriage proposal which ends with her life. Her struggle between two different cultures shows the attitude of immigrant parents towards host society. Immigrant parents restrict their children to mingle with people of other community, especially white children. They have a fear of losing their own culture and community, which this leads to many abortive marriages and ends with differences. For instance, Sumintra's parental pressure for marriage makes her take wrong step in her relationship, which ends in her murder. Thus, these instances show how community life adversely affects individual freedom.

According some feminists like Susan Okin, the politics of group identity raises the question against the decent treatment of women in multicultural societies. They express their concern over the provision of group right for the minority culture, which treats female members as a subordinate class. The dominant ideas and practices in the communities deeply offend on gender equality which is problematic for the general welfare of the female members (Okin 1999). A leading political theorist, Okin writes how multiculturalism substantially limits the capacity of women of the minority culture, "[b]y *feminism*, I mean the belief that women should not be disadvantaged by their sex, that they should be recognized as having human dignity equal to that of men, and that they should have the opportunity to live as fulfilling and as freely chosen lives as men can" (ibid: 11).[9] She observes, this equality of opportunity is difficult to achieve in a multicultural context.

> [O]n closer inspection, multiculturalism resists easy reconciliation with egalitarian convictions. After all, some cultures do not accept, even as theory, the principle that people are owed equal respect and concern (of course, no culture fully practices the principle). Moreover, tensions with decent treatment for women seem especially acute. In some contemporary cultures we see practices — including differential nutrition and health care, unequal rights of ownership, assembly, and political participation, unequal vulnerability to

[9] Emphasis in the original.

> violence, and the denial of educational opportunities — that appear to fly in the face of the idea that women are entitled to be treated as equals. Such tensions become especially clear when we consider a controversial proposal endorsed by some multiculturalists: to provide cultural minorities with "group rights" as a way to preserve those minorities from undue pressure on their ways of life (ibid: 4).

Okin expresses her concern over the increasing demands for the group rights in liberal societies which pay little or no attention to the private sphere. There is a huge difference between individual freedom of immigrant women and other Canadian women. Canadian women enjoy more freedom than the immigrants as there is no restriction from the community. In the novel *The Worlds Within Her* Bissoondath's protagonists Shakthi and Yasmin represent two different worlds where treatment of individual freedom differs. An Indo-Caribbean, Shakti was born in a poor Hindu family and got married to Mr. Vernon Ramessar, a converted Presbyterian–Christian. Her struggle starts with the marriage that happens for the status, not for love. She never tastes the freedom when she is in her husband's house at Caribbean island. She is restricted from everything by the husband, and family members who expect her to behave like an 'obedient' Hindu bride. After the murder of her husband, and lots of humiliations by community members, she migrates to Canada with her daughter Yasmin. Shakthi's new independent life in Canada exhibits the value of freedom for women in domestic life. She succeeds not only in raising her daughter, but also in providing an independent life. Yasmin represents the Canadian women who lead a life of their own choice. Finally Shakthi's contrasting life shows how group rights adversely affect.

> I am not a final product, Mrs. Livingston. I am a process. As are you. As is everyone. It is to me the most unsettling, and most reassuring, truth about what young people today call "identity." My dear, I haven't got *an* identity. None of us does. What a great tragedy that would be, don't you think? (Bissoondath 1999: 417). [10]

Opposition to legalization of same sex marriage in Canada is another example of how multiculturalism operates in the issues of individual rights. Many religious groups in Canada such as Sikhs, Muslims, Jews and some minority Christian groups argue that same sex marriage not only violates their religious beliefs, but also leads to

[10] Emphasis in the original.

deterioration of society. These kind of pressures not only put law makers in trouble, but also negatively impact on sexual minority communities. Gay rights movement in Canada achieved victory in the issue of same sex marriage under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms act, which represents the core value of Canada. But opposition to same sex marriage indicates the fear of losing Canadian values (Reidel 2008).

As Bissoondath said, "[t]he multicultural society has tended to diminish the role and autonomy of the individual by insisting on placing individuals within preconceived, highly stereotypical confines. It has confused the positive role that ethnicity — one's racial, cultural and historical background(s) — can play in creating the fullness of the self (Bissoondath 1994: 212). Bissoondath is concerned about the loss of individual freedom, a fundamental requirement of every individual. He also expresses his dissatisfaction about immigrants' attitudes that defend group rights and demand for the same. In the novel *The Innocence of Age,* the immigrant character Montgomery blames government for the individual freedom. "Fock, man, Pasco. The law? Sometimes I does t'ink this country crazy, you hearin' me? I make the girl, my wife bring her into this world, and now we ain't have the right to straighten her out the way we want? The law should learn to keep its nose out o' people business" (Bissoondath 1993: 213). The following lines further illustrate the immigrants' response to the idea of individual freedom.

> "Is no joke, fellas." Montgomery went serious. "The girl stayin' out till all hours. Goin' out when she want, comin' in when she want, no explanation thank you. Say a word to her and she lettin' fly 'bout her liberty. Her fockin' liberty! Her brother take to callin' her Liberty Bell, because he say she all crack up. The wife and me, we try everything. We try reasonin', but the girl like she have no reason. We try crackin' down, but she slip out when we wasn't lookin' and din't come back till next mornin'. The wife even get to the point of layin'a hand on her. And the child —" Montgomery paused, swallowed hard. "The child lay a hand right back." He shook his head at the memory. "Well, I never see nothing like that, a child raisin' a hand to her own mammy" (ibid: 126).

Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism strongly believe that abolition of multiculturalism policy renders justice to the individuals of minority communities, especially weaker sections such as women, LGBTs and other oppressed communities.

Bissoondath hopes for the positive changes in the Canadian society. It shows in his statement, "[h]istory, roots, the various people we have been, are today and will be tomorrow all come together to offer a definition of the self. They form a personal complexity that derives from but is not beholden to any particular set of values, events or circumstances. They are the knowledge of unspoken wisdoms that can free the individual to be him or herself and, so, insofar as possible, unassailable" (Bissoondath 1994: 26).

3.4 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Preservation of cultural identity is constantly debated in multicultural societies. Culture plays an important role in the life of immigrants. Immigration is not only the physical displacement of immigrants, but it is also the displacement of their language, religion, tradition along with them. Immigrants try to build their own community, who share common language, interests, foods, customs, common beliefs and values in a host country. They believe that culture is an essential component of preserving their own identity in host countries. But this is strongly opposed by Bissoondath who says, "[c]ulture is life. It is a living, breathing, multi-faceted entity in constant evolution. It alters every day, is never the same thing from one day to the next. Stasis is not possible. A culture that fails to grow from within inevitably becomes untrue to itself, inevitably descends into folklore" (ibid: 81). Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism not only oppose transportation of culture but also oppose polices which accommodate immigrants' culture in adopted countries.

> Culture is a complex entity shaped in ways small and large. A preference for coffee over tea or beer over wine. Movies over books or sitcoms over documentaries. Free-trade over managed trade or insularity over adventurism. Change through negotiation or change through arms. Nothing is inconsequential. Culture must be measured in its minutiae. The very breath of a people must be appreciated, or else that people and their history are trivialized, reduced to the most common of denominators: stereotype (ibid).

Bissoondath and other critics worry about the rise of linguistic, religious, cultural and racial diversity in Canada that threaten the identity of the country. The biggest challenge faced by Canadians today is if the cultural differences should facilitate integration or hinder the process?

3.4.1 Language

Most of the immigrants believe that language is one of the important markers of their cultural identity. Immigrants from non-English speaking countries are more culturally distant from Canadian way of life. To maintain these differences, immigrants attach a higher importance to their own language rather than the native languages. Immigrants yearn to 'preserve' their language. An important reason behind the preservation of language is the threat of its erasure in the course of time because of the non-transmission of the language to the next generation. Immigrants are worried about inclusion of their language into the category of 'endangered language'[11] or 'moribund language' which refer to the decline of native languages or even that 'linguicism'[12] might come into play. According to Hornberger, "[l]anguage rights, or linguistic human rights, have taken on increasing urgency worldwide in the light of the twin threat posed by the loss of a vast proportion of the world's linguistic resources—the endangered languages—and by the growth of world languages like English" (1998: 450).

Immigrants in Canada are also worried about the decline of aboriginal languages, which, they think, could be a related phenomenon. Mary Jane Norris expresses her concern over the decline of aboriginal languages – "[o]ver the 20-year period from 1981 to 2001, most Aboriginal languages… experienced long-term declines in their continuity… Among endangered British Columbia languages like Haida and Tlingit, for example, continuity levels declined to practically nil by 2001; indeed, each of these languages currently has fewer than 200 first language speakers… several larger viable languages like Cree and Ojibway saw steady long-term declines in continuity over the two decades" (Norris 2007: 23). Therefore immigrants give more importance to retention of their languages and demand for supportive policies.

[11] Endangered, where the youngest fluent speakers tend to be young adults, and there is a disjunction in passing on the language to children, especially in the school but even in the home environment (Moseley 2007: xi).

[12] Linguicism is discrimination based on language or dialect: linguistically argued racism. It is also known as linguistic discrimination. The term was coined in the 1980s by linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, who defined linguicism as "ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Nordquist 2017).

But one of the chief accusations posed against immigrants in Canada is that the heritage languages are the biggest hurdle in the development of the country. So, most nationalists not only oppose heritage languages but also criticise linguistic policies, which support languages of immigrants. As Jim Cummins says, "[a]ssimilationist policies in education discourage students from maintaining their mother tongues. If students retain their culture and language, then they are viewed as less capable of identifying with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language of the society" (Cummins 2001: 16).

Unlike other immigrant writers, Bissoondath is less passionate about ancestral or parental language. He accorded less importance to his mother tongue, Hindi. He embraced English and French languages as his core languages. His mastery on English shows the passion about adopted languages. "My attachment to them is strong and passionate. They have made me what I am, have provided me with a way of looking at the world, of exploring and understanding it. Perhaps most important of all, they have given me the means of expressing what I see. For in being a writer, in engaging through my imagination, the varied elements of familial experience, I am linked to my maternal grandfather and to all of those faceless, nameless people who came before" (Bissoondath 1994: 81).

> Within three generations, then, the language of my great-grandparents had all but disappeared, and along with it had gone a way of life: dependence on the land, religious belief. We felt no sense of loss, no tincture of regret, no romantic attachment to a language that no longer served the purposes of our circumstance. And those of my parents' generation who still clung to the distant past — the few women who wore only saris, the few men who went to India in search of wives — came to be viewed as eccentric and foolish (ibid: 79).

As he said, "[a]ll this has come, in great part, through a refusal to brood over the loss of one language and its cultural baggage and a willingness to fully embrace another. English, then, is not for us a borrowed language but an acquired one, as fully part of my families today as Hindi was a hundred years ago: the distinction is vital" (ibid: 81). Bissoondath too uses vernacular words though very sparsely and sometimes sarcastically too, as quoted below:

> When Sumintra was younger, her mother had wanted to teach her how to cook their foods: Samosas and pilaus and various curries, chapatis and *parathas*, the sweet *rassgulla* and *chaler payesh* that her father — and, by extension, Sumintra's future husband—relished (Bissoondath 2008: 207).

> I can still hear her voice calling me to the dining room that morning. *Beti! Beti!*... Beti? It means "daughter" in Hindi, I think. That's what I was always told (Bissoondath 1999: 93).

Instead of using vernacular languages, Bissoondath assigns strong vernacular accents to immigrants' English based on their mother tongue. For instance, Montgomery's accent in *The Innocence of Age*, "I believe in good ol'-fashion discipline, Pasco. Beat the shit out o' them if you have to. The boy learn his lesson back home from his granny when he was small-small. One step out o' line and bam! Bottom burnin' like pepper. But the girl—Man, lay a hand on that one and she screamin' 'bout rights. What rights a harden sixteen-year-ol' girl have, eh, Pasco? You could tell me? You should hear her. Is the law, is the law!" (Bissoondath 1992: 212). He gives more importance to French and English language as those languages represent Canadian identity.

3.4.2 Religion

Immigrants believe that religion plays a vital role in contending with different challenges and difficulties faced by immigrants in host country. So immigrants, along with their demand for the recognition of their religion, also demand for exceptions to follow their own beliefs and practices in the mainstream society. For example, Sikhs in Canada have sought exemption in turban and dagger (*Kirpan*s) issues, Muslim women in hijab issues, opposition of same sex marriage, among many others. These recognitions and exceptions are strongly criticized by Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism.

> The Multiculturalism Act suggests no limits to the accommodation offered to different cultural practices, so that a few years ago a Muslim group in Toronto demanded, in the name of respect for its culture, the right to opt out of the Canadian judicial system in favour of Islamic law, a body of thought fundamental to the life and cultural outlook of its practising members. In the opinion of their spokesmen, this right should be a given in a truly multicultural society…. how far can multiculturalism be taken? Can Canada accommodate citizens whose

> loyalties do not encompass its long-established legal system? It is a sensitive topic (Bissoondath 1994: 139).

Half of the Canadians are not much worried about their religious status, even though majority of the native Canadians have the religious backgrounds in Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, etc. As Bissoondath says in his essay, "[t]he argument often made in favour of considering Canada a Christian country is that over 90 percent of Canadians, when asked, describe themselves as Christian. It is an impressive figure, but it may be less monolithic than it appears: if necessary, I could describe myself (because of my family, because of my background) as Hindu, but this does not mean I believe in or would insist upon Hinduism" (ibid: 59). But growing number of immigrant population and implementation of supportive policies are leading to serious examination of religious effects on Canadian mainstream society. Natives believe that recognition and exemptions of religious practices have given rise to religious intolerance in Canada.

Canadian multiculturalism policy ensures celebration of religious freedom to immigrant communities. But natives worry about the decline of religious faith, which was once the central tenet of the Canadian society. Religion and religious influences are weakening over a period of time. For instance regular church attendance in Canada was around 40 percent in 1980s but it dropped down to 20 percent in 2015 (Reid and Kurl 2017). It is strongly felt that the decline of Christianity leads to the dominance of other religions which causes the division of the Canadian mainstream society, and overwhelming response to religious freedom of minority communities in government policies raises the question of survival of Canadian mainstream culture.

Bissoondath was basically a Hindu, converted to Christianity. Being a first generation immigrant, unlike other contemporary immigrant writers, he hardly describes religious and cultural identities. Though his characters have a cultural and religious identity of their own, it is not highlighted to the extent other first-generation immigrant writers did. Bissoondath, being a hard-core critic of multiculturalism, believes that giving an exclusive religious and cultural identity to his characters would set a wrong trend – as far as negotiations between literature and society are to be credited – and pose a threat to national identity and security.

3.4.3 The Simplification of culture

Cultural identity is established as a core value of modern society. But now a days, the idea of culture is in crisis. As Eagleton writes, "… 'culture' has veered upon its axis to mean almost exactly the opposite. It now means the affirmation of a specific identity – national, sexual, ethnic, regional – rather than the transcendence of it. And since these identities all see themselves as suppressed, what was once conceived of as a realm of consensus has been transformed into a terrain of conflict. Culture, in brief, has passed over from being part of the solution to being part of the problem. It is no longer a means of resolving political strife… instead, it is part of the very lexicon of political conflict itself" (Eagleton 2000: 40). In the context of Canada, the rise in the immigration and supportive policies therein have led to the situation of a cultural conflict in the society.

Bissoondath's statement, "[n]o consequence of multiculturalism policy is as ironic — or as unintended — as what I would call the simplification of culture" (Bissoondath 1994: 82), presents a situation where culture rather becomes a thing to be showcased. According to him, culture has its own values and historical importance; but multiculturalism policy poses a threat to this complex idea of culture. In his interview he expresses his concern on changing values on culture, "… 'culture' is a most complex creature; in its essence, it represents the very breath of a people. For the purposes of multiculturalism, the concept has been reduced to the simplest theatre. Canadians, neatly divided into 'ethnic' and otherwise, encounter each other's mosaic tiles mainly at festivals. There's traditional music, traditional dancing, traditional food at distinctly untraditional prices, all of which is diverting as far as it goes - but such encounters remain at the level of a folkloric Disneyland" (Bissoondath 1998). He expresses his concern over the changing nature of culture which becomes nothing but commodity. He strongly criticises the cultural festivals which display different cultures only to entertain commercial audience, who never bother about the history, language, literature, the past and present of the exhibiter's community. Ethnic festivals turn into fantasy rather than the knowledge hub due to the modified display of culture which has hundreds, or even thousands of years of history.

> Implicit in this approach is the peculiar notion of culture as commodity: a thing that can be displayed, performed, admired, bought, sold or forgotten. It represents a devaluation of culture, its reduction to bauble and kitsch. A traditional dance performed on a stage is not a people's cultural life but an aspect of it removed from context, shaped and packaged to give a voyeuristic pleasure. It is not without value, but value on par with the reproduced treasures of Tutankhamun sold in every sad store on the continent (ibid: 83).

Bissoondath blames multiculturalism policy which never allows appreciating other culture looking into a deeper appreciation. The superficial taste leads to the tangible experience of the presence of the 'others', leading to a divisive impulse in the society, sometimes causing the growth of even hatred between different cultural groups. As Bissoondath writes, "[m]ulticulturalism, with all of its festivals and its celebrations, has done — and can do —nothing to foster a factual and clear-minded vision of our neighbours. Depending on stereotype, ensuring that ethic groups will preserve their distinctiveness in a gentle and insidious form of cultural apartheid, multiculturalism has done little more than lead an already divided country down the path to further social divisiveness" (ibid: 90). Canada is facing many internal conflicts; these conflicts could be dormant or even 'silent' but create huge differences in finally creating a harmony of the society.

3.4.4 Racism

Racism is one the most debatable issues in the present society. At present, racism is bound up with hasty definitions, indolent generalizations, and a disordered analysis which have resulted in the division of society (Rattansi 2007). In early days, the idea of racism is closely associated with race, but now it is tied with skin colour, cultural elements, religion, economic, political and other social issues. These issues have not only diversified the concept of race but also become subject to various conflicts. Ali Rattansi says:

> [m]any commentators argue that the justification of hostility and discrimination on grounds of culture rather than race is mostly a rhetorical ploy to get round the taboo around racism that has gradually been established in the Western liberal democracies. There is, they contend, a new 'cultural racism' that has increasingly supplanted an older biological racism. 'Islamophobia' has been identified as one of the most recent forms of this new racism (ibid: 8).

Racism is not easy to define; this is large and complex issue. Racism is evident in most of the countries, where different ethnoracial groups are situated; it is not limited to Canada alone. Bissoondath expresses his discomfort on accusation of Canada as a racist country. He strongly defends Canada and points out that the darker side of the humanity could be seen anywhere. "The comment was once made that racism is as Canadian as maple syrup. History provides us with ample proof of that. But perspective requires the notation that racism is also as American as apple pie, as French as croissants, as Indian as curry… It's an item on every nation's menu. Racism, an aspect of human virulence, is exclusive to no race, no country, no culture, no civilization… But an orderly and civil society requires that the inevitable rage evoked not blind us to the larger context" (Bissoondath 1994: 188). Bissoondath strongly opposes politicising the word racism and manipulation of the society.

Bissoondath has a contrasting opinion about racial ideology; according to him "Racism" remains a dirty word in Canada. "It must be kept that way" (ibid: 191). To achieve this goal he suggests the modification of individual thinking. Nowadays people openly describe themselves as racists and defend it with patriotism. Bissoondath's treatment of racism is completely different which often proves in his works. In the novel *The Innocence of Age* the minor characters, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Bird are from Grenada and are the best example of how racism is being politicised in Canada. Montgomery, who works in post office, believes that he is exploited by his white union representative who complained against consumption of drinks on duty hours. This accusation leads him to commit physical attack on the white representative. Montgomery later is strongly convinced that he is the victim of racism when white police arrest him on the charge of physical attack. Montgomery's life tragically ends with the shoot out of Toronto police at his own door step. This incident fuels the controversy about racism against Blacks in general in Canada. There are demands to politicise this issue magnifying it as general racist attack. Montgomery's son does not approve of such a move and tells friends of his father,

> "I've told 'em to fuck off, I don't plan to be anybody's victim. My sister, she likes that, eh? She likes being told she's a victim. I dunno, Mr. Pascal, it's all turning real weird. These people, they won't leave us alone. They see a racist under every bed. One of 'em even told my

> sister that having white skin automatically means you're racist. Guilty until proven innocent. Well, just saying that is racist, if you ask me. They say they're on our side, but there's only one side as far as I can see, and that's *their* side. If they didn't have us, I don't know what they'd do. They'd be nobodies. Well, I want no part of it. I have a life to live" (Bissoondath 1992: 306).

There are contrasting opinions expressed by different groups of people over racism in Canada. Whites generally accuse blacks of the misconception over their treatment against them. They strongly believe that non-whites fail to adjust and maintain distance from Canadian mainstream society. The case of Albert Johnson, a black Jamaican immigrant who was shot to death by Toronto Police in his home on August 26, 1979 is one of the examples of how racism in Canada is seen by different perspectives. Toronto's Black community staged protest against death of Johnson and demanded for an independent enquiry. They strongly believed that Johnson's death was caused by racial intention and not by the mental illness of victim. But after investigation it was proved that police officers involved in death were not guilty. In 2015 another similar incident raised the same question regarding how racism is perceived. Andrew Loku, a refugee from South Sudan was killed by a police officer, who claimed the victim rushed to them with a hammer. In this case also police officer was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Bissoondath strongly criticises the multiculturalism policy which, in his opinion, fosters racism and marginalisation. Many critics of racism argue that multiculturalism and other anti-racism policies have negative influence on racial discriminations between majority and minority communities. As Bissoondath said, "[t]rue racism is based, more often than not, on wilful ignorance and an acceptance of and comfort with stereotype. We like to think, in this country, that our multicultural mosaic will help nudge us into a greater openness. But multiculturalism as we know it indulges in stereotype, depends on it for a dash of colour and the flash of dance…" (Bissoondath 1994: 190).

3.5 NATIONALISM

Native Canadians are proud of their country and its reputation around the world. But at the same time a good number of them express their concern over losing nation's

values by immigrants day by day. Natives demand for the adoption of Canadian values and way of life by immigrants for the construction of a homogeneous society. But this becomes harder due to lack of interest towards assimilation by immigrants. There are 7.5 million immigrants living in Canada, representing 21.9 % of total population of Canada, and thus they play a major role in the cultural, social, economic and political development of Canada (Statistics Canada 2016). Therefore, critics of multiculturalism believe that, assimilation of immigrants is the only solution to the retention of Canadian values.

Sense of belonging (to the previous home/country) is one of the main barriers to assimilation. Most of the immigrants believe that belonging is the anchoring of their life, so their loyalty mostly lies with their source country. As Rubenstein said, home is "[n]ot merely a physical structure or a geographical location but always an emotional space, *home* is among the most emotionally complex and resonant concepts in our psychic vocabularies, given its associations with the most influential, and often most ambivalent, elements of our earliest physical environment and psychological experiences as well as their ripple effect throughout our lives" (Rubenstein 2001: 2). This is strongly criticised by Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism. As Bissoondath said, "… to view their ancestral land as their homeland was to wilfully distance them, to make them marginal to the Canadian context" (Bissoondath 1994: 120). He opines that the sense of belonging not only prevents immigrants from integration into the host country, but also separates them from the mainstream society.

Bissoondath's dissatisfaction about belongingness often is evident in his works. Most of his works not only have distinct Canadian settings but also deal with non-Caribbean or non-Indian subjects. For example the novel, *The Innocence of Age*, is mainly concerned with the relationship between Pasco Taggart and his son Daniel who are Canadians by birth. As Frank Birbalsingh writes,

> "Pasco and Danny Taggart are dyed in the wool Canadians whose every movement or syllable is deeply rooted to the city of Toronto. The Action of *The Innocence of Age* reflects the author's total mastery of the physical geography and architecture of Toronto, its spirit and atmosphere, speech, culture and all. No doubt, much of this Bissoondath inherits from his student days, in Toronto, in the 1970s. At any rate, it says a great deal about his power of

> observation and narrative skills that Bissoondath's portrait of Toronto loses nothing in comparison with other long-admired depictions of the city by native-born Canadian novelists like Morley Callaghan and Margaret Atwood, or the Barbadian-born Austin Clarke whose trilogy of novels …offer perhaps the most authoritative fictional study of multiculturalism and racism in Toronto, in the second half of the twentieth century" (Birbalsingh 2005: 87).

Sense of belonging, longing to return, and nostalgia are common themes of immigrant writers' narratives. These writers often express their emotional attachment to home by narrating the story of immigrant characters. But Bissoondath and writers of his ilk have an opposite opinion towards home country. As a Trinidad-born writer of Indian descent, he glorifies neither Trinidad nor India. He expresses his dissatisfaction about home – "[g]rowing up in Trinidad was for me, on both the social and personal levels, an exercise in dissatisfaction. But it was not so for everyone" (Bissoondath 1994: 16). Bissoondath's statement shows his opinion towards the source country. In Bissoondath's works, West Indian immigrant characters play relatively minor roles who represent negative shade of author's belonging. In the novel *The Innocence of Age*, an Indo-Caribbean character named Sita immigrates to Canada for the fulfilment of her financial commitments. She expresses her place as "[w]here I come from …people does kill for some tomatoes or some dasheen. American dollars, Canadian dollars — that mean something. But our money only good for buyin' a plane ticket out o' that place. Can't buy nothin' else with it. Is why I come up here. We use all that wo'thless money to buy one plane ticket" (Bissoondath 1992: 177). Like other illegal immigrants, Sita also fails to construct her life in Canada. Instead, she is sexually and economically exploited by her boss Simmons and returns to her native empty handed.

According to Bissoondath, immigration is successful only when immigrants adopt host country. But some immigrants fail to adopt their host country; and such a failure puts their life in trouble. In Bissoondath's works, many immigrant families are not only unhappy with their condition but also keep their lives in trauma. For example in the novel *The Innocence of Age*, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery Bird who migrated from Grenada fail to adjust to the Canadian culture. But this leads their rebel daughter turn into prostitute. In his essay, Bissoondath writes about his views on Trinidad:

> [f]or a long time now, I have thought of Trinidad as simply the place where I was born; the place where I got my early education; the place where my parents died. After half a lifetime away from the island, I have no emotional attachment left, and my interest in its events is no different from my interest in events in China or Russia or Botswana: analytical, intellectual. I miss nothing, am prey to no nostalgia. I have neither axes to grind nor scores to settle. When I am travelling abroad, when I feel myself in need of comfort, security, familiarity, it is this country — its air, its sounds, its smells, the textures of its light — that I long for. It is here, everywhere, that I find the comforts of home: in its ungraspable vastness, its diversity of geography, its climate and peoples, its yet unformed face, which is itself both a warning and a possibility (Bissoondath 1994: 25).

Bissoondath is not against the immigrants is but concerned about the attachment towards the country of origin. According to him, attachment towards home country not only restricts immigrants to assimilate but also leads to marginalisation of minority communities in host country. Bissoondath and other critics argue that integration of immigrants is possible only when newcomers change their attitude towards home country. Bissoondath says "[m]y own roots are portable, adaptable, the source of a personal freedom that allows me to feel "at home" in a variety of places and languages without ever forgetting who I am or what brought me here. My roots travel with me, in my pocket, as it were, there to guide or succour me as need be. They are, in the end, the sum of my experience, historical, familial and personal. They are, in the end, my sense of self" (ibid: 26).

Bissoondath's works often narrate the successful story of immigrants who adopted life on lines of Canadian mainstream society. In the novel *The Worlds Within Her*, the protagonists Mrs. Ramessar (Shakthi) and her daughter Yasmin are the best examples of how assimilation helps the immigrants to construct successful life in Canada. Like Bissoondath, these characters claim to be more Canadian rather than being Caribbean-Canadian. Yasmin's marriage to a white Canadian and Shakthi's cultural transformation show that losing sense of belonging helps immigrants to lead comfortable life in Canada. Yasmin's dialogue shows how Canada is safer than the Caribbean, **"**[m]om always said she chose to leave because it would have been dangerous for us to stay." …. "Was hard to tell. Maybe yes, maybe no. So I opt for prudence, nuh. The Canadians were very accommodating. More than the British.

Hardly surprising. Things moved fast" (Bissoondath 1999: 78). Bissoondath further opines on the importance of assimilation:

> [w]e can change homes. We can grow attached to new places, new people, new ways of doing things and looking at the world. What we cannot do, indeed, what we must never attempt to do, is forget the homes of the past, for they too have shaped us. I was born a Trinidadian. I was brought up a Trinidadian. But that was a long time ago. I am no longer Trinidadian. I have not been Trinidadian for many years. I do not share the hopes, fears, joys and views of Trinidadians. I am not familiar with the thoughts that move them, the ideas that stir them (Bissoondath 1994: 27)

Bissoondath in his works, never accords importance to the sense of belonging as he opines that it never allows immigrants to experience positive side of new country. Most of the time immigrants live in illusion which costs them a lot. So he suggests immigrants can succeed only when they embrace host country without preconceived notions. This could be done by the rejection of hyphenated identity.

3.5.1 Hyphenated identity

Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism strongly criticise the hyphenated identities of immigrants. "The hyphenated identity is a term that implies a dual identity. It evokes questions regarding which side of the hyphen the person belongs to, giving the impression that the person is oscillating between two cultures" (Khilay 2014). Immigrants are commonly referred to with the source country taking first half of their label – for instance Indo-Canadian, Black-Canadian, Indo-American, Afro-American, etc. Immigrants believe that hyphenation not only makes roots of their home country stronger but also helps to claim their position in source country.

> Too much of this, not enough of that: it is a problem. There are people of African descent, born in the Caribbean, immigrants to Canada, who describe themselves as African-Canadians, a phrase now deemed more acceptable than "coloured" or even "black."… I am uncertain, then, as to the precise meaning of phrases such as African-Canadian or Italian-Canadian or Greek-Canadian, particularly when applied to people whose experience of these foreign lands is most likely historical, touristic or anecdotal: what conclusions are to be drawn from them? Their principal effect, I would suggest, is not to define the word "Canadian" but to mark a distance from it, the hyphen that links them a sign of an acceptable marginalization (Bissoondath 1994: 117).

Bissoondath rejects the concept of 'hyphenation'. According to him, hyphenation separates immigrants from mainstream society, and it also prevents immigrants to become Canadian which is helpful to construct a homogeneous society (ibid: 118). In his essay, he expresses his dissatisfaction about labelling him as 'Indian-West-Indian or Indian-Trinidadian-West-Indian or Indian-Trinidadian-West-Indian-Canadian' (ibid: 119). Bissoondath argues that each individual is unique, hence treating everyone under same umbrella results in the dissatisfaction of the individual. He explains these differences with examples of fellow writers who emigrated from India.

> Each of these people and I can claim a certain similarity, but we must also acknowledge vastly different contexts, contexts that have shaped personalities sufficiently dissimilar to render the ethnic category, beyond certain superficialities, essentially useless. Selvon remained a Trinidadian all his life….Kureishi, in manner and imagination, is nothing if not British. Mukherjee has embraced the exuberance of America, while I prefer the quieter pleasures of Canada... Nor does ethnicity guarantee anything in a complex world. Samuel Selvon, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Hanif Kureishi and I are all writers, all of the same "ethnicity" to a certain extent, all ethnically "South Asians," all "Indians." Yet I suspect that, as a group, we are at least as dissimilar as similar. Selvon and I were both born in Trinidad, but of different generations and with lives that have followed very different paths to different cities in the same country. Mukherjee, born in Calcutta, found Canada an unhappy place and has built a more satisfying life in the United States. Mistry and I both moved to Toronto from elsewhere and share the experience (with many others) of living and writing in that city. Kureishi, born in England of Indian parents, lives in London: we met once, shook hands, found we had little to say to each other (ibid: 104).

Bissoondath finally suggests that immigrants should embrace host country. He also suggests that every immigrant in Canada should adopt Canadianness, but it is only possible when their attitude changes towards home country. Bissoondath deliberates with regard to the nationality of his daughter who lives in France, "[a]nd what of my daughter's homeland? Does she have two, India and France? How much time must go by, then, how many cultural changes are required, before one's homeland is no longer that of one's ancestors? Is there a moment when one stops being, in the eyes of others, an alien, an exile, an immigrant?" (ibid: 121). Thus, Bissoondath points towards an infinite possibility of complex identities, where anchoring one's source country or home becomes impossible.

3.5.2 Values

'What is a Canadian?' is one of the important questions often raised by critics in the debates related to national identity. There is always a problem with national image in Canada. Bissoondath says, "it was puzzling to me that Canadians were struggling with self-definition, as if they keenly felt the lack of a national image — an image that, like all stereotypes, would be useful only to bigots and bad comedians" (ibid: 20). The main reasons behind these changes are not only greater tolerance and recognition of immigrants but also some supportive government policies such as Multiculturalism Act and others. Bissoondath accuses that "multiculturalism has failed us. In eradicating the centre, in evoking uncertainty as to what and who is a Canadian, it has diminished all sense of Canadian values, of what is a Canadian" (ibid: 71). Government plays a major role to promote national values, national symbols and national building, but in Canada it often fails to attract immigrants to absorb Canadian values.

Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism strongly express their fear of losing old Canada, which was once dominant and now battered. The rise of immigration and divided loyalties pose a threat to Canada's unity. As Bissoondath says, "[d]ivided loyalties reveal a divided psyche, and a divided psyche, a divided country" (ibid: 124). They find lack of whole hearted commitment of immigrants to the new land, which causes uncertainty for the country. Many new comers in Canada desperately look for job, and even after many years they continue to view Canada as job hub and it is followed by their children who still see Canada in the eyes of foreigners. For instance, in the novel *The Innocence of Age* the Caribbean-Canadian character Montgomery immigrates to Canada only for job security even though he likes America the most. He fails to embrace Canada, and ends his life tragically. He talks about his decision over the reason behind migration as:

> Montgomery sighed, belched into his cupped palm. "Pasco, my friend, I respec' the way you feel, believe me, but you have to understand that the day I pick up and leave home, the country I was goin' to wasn't important, only the job was. That's what I come here for, the work and the money, not the place" (Bissoondath 1992:9).

Many critics argue that the weakening of 'national citizenship' is an important reason behind the rise of problems Canada. William Kaplan strongly criticises Canadian attitude towards citizenship, "[i]n many countries citizenship is seen as a great prize and is treasured by those privileged enough to possess it. In Canada this is not the case. Canadian citizenship has never been a source of national unity and strength … Citizenship is a concept with even greater potential than a flag or a national anthem. Unlike our race, our ethnicity, our language, our religion, or any other personal or group characteristic, citizenship is a status that everyone in the community can, in theory, equally enjoy. As such it is a concept with promise and power" (Kaplan 1993: 3).

Citizenship not only implies individual rights, responsibilities, and opportunities but also claims loyalty and commitment from every citizen of the country. In general immigrants share their loyalty with two countries which adversely affects the commitment towards host country. As Bissoondath says, "Canadian citizenship is frequently seen not as a means of committing oneself to the country but simply as a way of abandoning it with an assurance of safety" (Bissoondath 1994: 132). Citizenship plays a vital role in the development of country's values. Kymlicka says, "citizenship is now being described as an important value and identity. The public promotion of the value of citizenship, and its internalisation by individuals, is said to play vital role in ensuring 'cohesion' and 'integration' (2003: 195). But most of immigrants are least bothered about commitments. However, citizenship investiture ceremony, Bissoondath says, should be a public display of commitment. "Just as a marriage ceremony is the public celebration of a love that already exists, so citizenship ceremonies must be the celebration of a feeling of national pride and belonging that already exists" (Bissoondath 1994: 218).

> Citizenship, whether through birth or naturalization, implies belonging. It implies a basic commitment of intellectual and emotional loyalty. It is a thing of value. And yet, in recent years, the diminishing value of Canadian citizenship—the creation of the hyphenated Canadian with divided loyalties, the perception that immigration policy now permits the rich to buy their way into the country, the idea that citizenship is a matter of rights and not of obligations—means that the opposite has also come to be true (ibid: 132).

Citizenship plays an important role in construction of national identity. Therefore, many nationalists believe that citizenship promotes the national commitment which is essential for the present multicultural Canada. Even though Canada is divided by race, culture, and religion, the only factor which makes Canada unite is national commitment. Hence the natives expect fully pledged national commitment from the immigrants.

Nationalism is one of the basic factors which helps boost Canadian values and make Canada stronger. But practice of nationalism is one the biggest challenges faced by the country. As Miller says, "… ideas of nationality are the conscious creations of bodies of people, who have elaborated and revised them in order to make sense of their social and political surroundings, and we [Canadians] too are involved in this process. We cannot properly distance ourselves from it and treat nationalism as a force of nature that afflicts others but not ourselves" (1995: 6).

National identity becomes one of the dominant issues in contemporary politics. National identity claims individual's belonging and his loyalty towards the nation. Most people believe that national identity is a significant part of their identity, which offers special power and opportunities to them. It is also believed that nationality serves valuable goals, including social justice, individual rights and freedom, religion, democracy, and the protection of culture. Nationalists argue, this could be achieved only by the cooperation of all the citizens of Canada. According to Alexis De Tocqueville, "[i]n order that society should exist and, a fortiori, that a society should prosper, it is necessary that the minds of all the citizens should be rallied and held together by certain predominant ideas; and this cannot be the case unless each of them sometimes draws his opinions from the common source and consents to accept certain matters of belief already formed" (Tocqueville 2013).

Bissoondath expresses his concern about transition of new Canada from the old one. He writes, "[a]s a society, we have gone from one defined by colonialism through reference to the British crown to one seeking definition through references to self; from a society of almost uniform colour to one that is multi-hued; from a society that was of almost uniform religion to one that is multi-faithed. The traditional notions of

Canada, then, representing the centre of the nation's being are being challenged, even effaced, by the need for transition — a need created, to a large degree, by multiculturalism" (Bissoondath 1994: 45). These transitions not only raise question against the power of the nation but also reason for fear over the loss of Canadian values.

Bissoondath's *The Innocence of Age* is concerned with conflicts between old and new generation, where old generation stands for traditional values and the new generation, for material life. The protagonist Pasco Taggart stands for old fashioned, leisurely life and human values and his son Daniel (Danny) is a ruthless and ambitious modern day businessman who goes to any extent to achieve success. This novel also talks about various problems in Canadian society such as immigration, multiculturalism, racism, cultural conflicts, and old age problems among others. The difference between Pasco and Danny begins with the renovation of their house. Pasco opposes Danny's proposal of renovation of the house which he claims, is for business profit. Pasco wishes to retain the house for his dead wife Edna, because he believes that the house is not just a building. It is a place of memories, which they share together. But Danny ignores these emotional sentiments and calculates value of the house as per real-estate estimate. This attitude of Danny shows the changing scenario of the Canadian society. Growing number of immigrant population creates demands for the real estate business, where money becomes more important than other values.

> It was Danny's job to prepare the ground for Mr. Simmons's manoeuvrings, sifting out the undesirables, the troublemakers, the welfare cases. The boss didn't care what colour they were, what language they spoke, where they came from. What he mostly wanted to know was whether they could afford to pay and how desperate they were to find a place. The rest he could handle — indeed, insisted on handling — by himself (Bissoondath 1992: 78).

Bissoondath paints rather a grim picture of the multicultural Canada. For him, it leads to heartless behaviour devoid of any compassion. Danny's opposition to Pasco's free food service to the prostitutes and homeless people shows the loss of humanity in a multicultural world. Multiculturalism, Bissoondath would argue, reduces everything into business and creates gaps among people. Pasco has a strong relationship with his friends, who belong to different communities which represent the diversity of Canada.

But Danny strongly opposes his father's meeting with old friend and he thinks it's a waste of time and money. "Friendship; "C'mon, Dad, friendship's just another word for networking." "I don't believe in making money off my friends." "When they're in here eating and drinking they're your customers. Everybody's a client, Dad. That's what leads to profits, and profits are what business is all about" (ibid: 103). Danny's only wish is to achieve success like his boss Mr. Simmons who is a real estate agent in Toronto and who is another representative of the materialistic world with no value for relationships. Bissoondath compares Danny's city with that of his father suggesting the changes that have taken place during a generation's time:

> [h]is father's city was a staid and musty place, rundown and fraying at the edges, a place of the aged and the marginal where a future was nothing more than the faint traces of yesterday's fantasy. But his city — the new city — was a bright and shining arena. It sparkled with glass and chrome and spinning, multi-coloured lights. It surged forward to a symphony of cars and trucks and heavy machinery. Danny had once shared his vision with his father. In his father's city, he had pointed out, problems were obstacles. But in his city, problems were opportunities. And his father, with the anger that seemed to come so easily to him, had denounced his arrogance (ibid: 108).

The novel *The Innocence of Age* ends with the realisation of Danny's rejection of materialistic life. He learns lesson from his own business tycoon Simmons who is attacked by Sita and goes to coma. Finally Danny's favour to Sita shows that humanity is greater than the materialistic life which is being swept away in the strong waves of multiculturalism. The dialogue between Pasco and his friends indicates the hope of old generation, "Cruise said, "Teenagers. Rough times, man. But don't forget, in the end the seed always comes down near the tree."…. "Unless," Pasco said, "the wind happens to blow real hard at the wrong time"" (ibid: 126).

Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism find two solutions to bring back Canadian values and make Canada proud. First one is the integration of immigrants in mainstream Canadian society, and second one is the abolition of multiculturalism and other supportive polices. Bissoondath projects himself is a good example of successful immigrant, who achieved success by embracing Canada as his home country. It is often proved in his writings whether in essays or in fictional works. He is depicted as the true worshiper of Canada and Canadian values. In his essay, he

describes things that are positive about Canada – "[i]t was in the simplest of things (fire trucks that arrived within minutes of a call and not five or six hours later) and also in the grander things, well-kept secrets (outside the country) such as the Canadian commitment to a social safety net and the Canadian zeal for peacekeeping duties in dangerous parts of the world" (Bissoondath 1994: 19).

Bissoondath suggests immigrants to expose themselves to the new country which helps to remove the deep sense of alienation and bitterness. In his interview, he speaks about the reason behind immigrants' sense of alienation – "[a] lot of people, though not all, do go through that. I am one of the lucky ones who did not have that distress, but a lot of people do, and I find them fascinating. They seem so caught up in their past that they never have the time to look around properly at their new society. This leads to bitterness, to a sense of betrayal, all of which comes more often than not from not being able to let go of the past. I find that fascinating, which is why I have written about it so much" (Norgaard 1989). He also speaks about the challenges faced by immigrants during the time of transmission to new society. In his interview, he suggested some solutions:

> I'm not saying that you should forget where you've come from or who you are. But you should be careful that your own personality is not frozen by the little group into which you've inserted yourself because it's so comfortable. Part of immigration is uncomfortable, and I suppose it is only human to flee from that. But dealing with the discomfort can help you to achieve what you dreamt of achieving when you first immigrated. This new society holds the promises that you came for in the first place (ibid).

There have been major changes in immigrant settlement patterns since late 20th century. Along with large proportion of immigrants, their attitude towards the host country also differs. There are wide differences between old and new immigrants. Earlier waves of immigration understood the importance of integration and learnt native language, culture and values. Bissoondath writes about earlier waves of immigration, "people searching for a haven, for a life to replace the one they had lost, they could not be expected to have been concerned with the easy and ingrained injustices that did not directly affect them. As with all refugees, of far greater concern would have been the battle to secure a future, at a time when the country was sliding

into depression. For the moment, it was survival that mattered; the questions of public policy that would concern the sons in later years were an intellectual luxury ill afforded" (Bissoondath 1994: 35). In contrast to old generation, new generation immigrants concentrate on construction of their own ghettoes which leads to division of society. Government's promotion of multiculturalism policy is indirectly patronising division, and gives way for more damage to the society. Bissoondath accuses politics behind the implementation of multiculturalism policy which prevents immigrants to adopt host country. Bissoondath argues:

> [i]n the end, immigration is a personal adventure. The process of integration that follows it is a personal struggle within a social context that may make the task either more or less difficult. Multiculturalism in Canada has the latter effect but it may matter very little, because integration — the remaking of the self within a new society with one's personal heritage as invaluable texture — is finally achieved in the depths of one's soul. Many Canadians, like me, have simply ignored multiculturalism, by living our lives as fully engaged with our new society as possible, secure in the knowledge of the rich family past that has brought us here (Bissoondath1998).

Bissoondath, among others, expresses his dissatisfaction against the government decision on implementation of multiculturalism policy which is more political than social. According to Bissoondath, "activist governments, motivated by a vision not just of what society is but what it should be, are not content just to follow. They will seek, as much as possible, to engage a predetermined ideological agenda, establishing social and legislative programs designed to nudge (or shove) society in directions they deem laudable" (ibid: 35). Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the prime minister, initiated a federal policy which changed the nation forever. Critics believe that Trudeau was an opportunist who looked for temporary political advantages and used multiculturalism policy for his political game. His promotion of multiculturalism not only denied the bicultural nature of the country but also succeeded in keeping Francophone community out of power (ibid). So this development resulted in the loss of trust in multiculturalism policy and led for its criticism.

> … multiculturalism boosted into the limelight not as a progressive social policy but as an opportunistic political one, not so much an answer to necessary social accommodation as a response to pressing political concern. If the emphasis on federal bilingualism had seemed to

> favour francophone Quebec at the expense of the rest of the country, enhanced multiculturalism could be served as a way of equalizing the political balance sheet (ibid: 40).

Ethnicity is often associated with multiculturalism. According to Bissoondath, to certain extent, the idea of ethnicity and multiculturalism can help. "Ethnicity is the classification of human being by race, religion, language, cultural traditions and other traits held in common. Notions of ethnicity allow academics and social engineers to order, and so more easily study, the vicissitudes of human race. They can, to a point, be useful" (ibid: 99). But the idea of ethnicity is constantly changing; it is more associated with race and political power. As Bissoondath says ethnicity is like a futon mattress; it can provide comfort, but sometime it becomes lumpy and irksome. Ethnicity, once the pride of the individual now turned disastrous for individual happiness. In multicultural societies, people formed their own ghettos on the basis of their ethnicity. This not only separates the ethnic minorities from other communities but also leads to the various kinds of discriminations. There are increasing numbers of cases of discrimination on the basis of skin colour, gender, race, religion, culture and others that degrade the value of ethnicity.

3.5.3 Towards abolishing multiculturalism?

Abolition of multicultural policy is important as much as integration of immigrants in Canadian mainstream society. To achieve this, there is a need of continuous evolution of multiculturalism policy. Bissoondath and other critics not only expose the problems with this policy, but also express concern over the damages it may create in future. In his essay Bissoondath says, "[i]t is a policy which has been quietly disastrous for the country and for immigrants themselves" (Bissoondath 1998). He often expresses the fear over the changes that took place in Canada in his works. For instance, in the novel *The Soul of All Great Designs*, the protagonist tries to shift from his parents' house to an independent house, but he faces difficulties to find a small apartment. Narrator accuses transmission of traditional city into a materialistic one:

> FINDING AN APARTMENT turned out to be tougher than I'd imagined. Over the years, the city had achieved success beyond its dreams. The big, clean, safe, prosperous, slightly provincial city I'd grown up in had become immensely rich, a powerhouse of economic activity fuelled by banks, businesses, the stock exchange, major-league sports teams and the

> burgeoning beehive industriousness of hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants. A new energy had come to the place even as the old sense of a city that worked began to shred. Certain neighbourhoods were no longer safe after dark and policemen had to wear flak jackets while out on patrol. Now the summer light was dulled by a layer of brassy smog, the commute home took two hours rather than thirty minutes and random shootings were no longer loathsome events from distant elsewhere. All that was simply part of the price to be paid for living in a city where all manner of desire could be satisfied, where tinted-window stretch limousines prowled our streets, where the black-tie-and-evening-dress crowds shelled out hundreds of millions for cultural centres and the extravaganzas of one kind or another needed to fill them. In this new and slightly manic city, the only thing stronger than the smell of exhaust fumes was the smell of money — and it was that money, which could buy beauty, that I was going after (Bissoondath 2008: 26).[13]

For Bissoondath, transmission of the Canadian city is not a good sign for development of country. Accommodation and promotion of immigrants' demands lead to different social, political, and economic crisis. According to nationalists, growing number of transnational migrants[14] and multiculturalism have become the biggest hurdles to the construction of nation-state. As Schiller and others write, "[k]ey to nation-state building as a political process has been the construction of a myth that each nation-state contained within it a single people defined by their residence in a common territory, their undivided loyalty to a common government, and their shared cultural heritage. In the past immigrants were forced to abandon, forget, or deny their ties to home and in subsequent generations memories of transnational connections were erased" (Schiller et al., 1995: 51). Maintenance of transnational network with source country questions the loyalty of immigrants and lead to marginalisation from the mainstream society.

Transnational migrants, critics argue, who maintain diasporic identity have minimal interest in nation building in the host country. Generally these migrants look for the construction of their own ghetto and claim political power, which helps them to form independent groups in host societies. As a result of transnationalism, many ethnic and political associations came into existence that try to hold physical and emotional link

[13] Emphasis in the original.

[14] Transnational migrants or transmigrants are those persons who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state (Schiller 2003: 105).

with home country. These ethnic associations represent both defensive and offensive functions. It may benefit the diasporic communities in order to fight against discriminations, promotion of their culture, religion and other values. But it allows source country to involve in host country's affairs which may disturb political, social and economic systems of the host countries.

> Diasporas can exert pressure on their home government from abroad, free from political threats and fear of retribution. And they can lobby their host country to put pressure on their home government to endorse policies ranging from human rights and governance reform to favourable international trade policies and security guarantees. Diaspora politics is seductive and populist. And governing parties can ride the wave of new immigrant support for generations. But it's a dangerous game. By playing the diaspora card, Canada's leaders are opening up the country to exploitation by other countries looking to disrupt our internal affairs, using diasporas to lobby or influence our leaders or bring their conflicts here. Most Canadian governments have understood, correctly, that our own security needs, both domestic and international, rest on policies that advance the interests of many diverse groups, not just a few. After all, Canada functions on civic nationalism, so it makes sense it upholds that same principle abroad (Carment and Samy 2012).

Canada's multiculturalism policy often raises the question whether it allows diasporic communities to construct their own identities in contrast to national identity. Many instances often substantiate these claims, for instance, from January 2009 to May 2009 various demonstrations against Sri Lankan Civil War took place in various cities in Canada. Tamil-Canadians support LTTE and its refugees and demand for intervention of Canada, America and other world leaders. In 2009 Cambodian-Canadians protested in Ottawa, to condemn the lifting of Mr. Rainsy's immunity, Toronto Greeks' protest rally for Macedonia's name dispute over the change of its name, etc. These demonstrations, protests and arguments lead to fear of immigrants' continuous attachment towards country of origin. Immigrants' concern about the source country directly affects international affairs of Canada and it could sometimes lead to war and other security crises. So nationalists and natives blame Canadian government which allows diasporic communities to engage with these activities.

Most of the western countries (except Canada and Australia) not only rejected the concept of multiculturalism but also proclaimed that it would be a failure. There is a

long term debate in European countries over multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, "defined as a programme for giving recognition to ethno-religious groups and their cultures, has failed and is instead leading to the entrenchment of separate communities with corrosive consequences for trust and solidarity". There are two reasons that affect the integration of immigrants in the context of Europe. "[F]irst, when immigration becomes too "irregular" and disorderly; and second, when receiving communities and their institutions fail to consistently engage in incorporating newcomers, while simultaneously ignoring immigration's effects on the prospects of other marginalized groups" (Papademetriou 2003). But in Canada the reason behind the failure of integration is totally mystified. Because Canada and Australia are the only two countries who have large number of immigrant population which is fostered by supportive immigrant polices. Even after the implementation of much debated multiculturalism policy, Canada still faces integration and other immigrants-related problems. Many critics present their own arguments over the failure of multiculturalism and its policy.

There is a strong allegation against multiculturalism that, it never allows immigrants to become 'a Canadian'. Immigrants qualify as Canadian only through their official citizenship, but they are recognized as and remain immigrant, visible minority, people of colour, multicultural communities and so on. These permanent labels never allow immigrants to think beyond the separation and embrace Canada as a home country. In her book Himani Banerjee expresses her concern over Canadianness. "I was not to be a "Canadian." Regardless of my official status as a Canadian citizen, I, like many others, remained an "immigrant." The category "Canadian" clearly applied to people who had two things in common: their white skin and their European North American (not Mexican) background… There were two colors in this political atlas—one a beige-brown shading off into black and the other white. These shades did not simply reflect skin colors—they reflected the ideological, political, and cultural assumptions and administrative practices of the Canadian State" (Banerjee 2000: 64). Banerjee's statement exposes the politics behind the implementation of multiculturalism policy which not only marginalises the immigrants, but also denies political power.

Multiculturalism policy also affects psychologically creating a feeling of belonging (home) and alienation. Marginalisation from the main stream society makes immigrants look into their own communities both inside and outside the nation. This gradually turns into a deep sense of belonging and creates a huge gap between natives and immigrants. The marginalised people demand for special rights against the suppression by majority communities, which lead to racial and other discriminations. In her essay, Banerjee writes how multiculturalism politics entered into the lives of immigrants: "[a]s the state came deeper into our lives — extending its political, economic and moral regulation, its police violence and surveillance — we simultaneously officialized ourselves. It is as though we asked for bread and were given stones, and could not tell the difference between the two" (ibid: 90). Multiculturalism politics turns immigrants on demand for recognition of their culture and other identities.

As Charles Taylor said, equal recognition is one of the essential parts of democratic culture. According to him, "[d]emocracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders" (Taylor 1994: 27). He further says, "[e]qual recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it, according to a widespread modern view... The projection of an inferior or demeaning image on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that the image is internalized. Not only contemporary feminism but also race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are undergirded by the premise that the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression" (ibid: 36). However, it may be noted that the immigrants are less worried about recognition of civil rights or other issues than the cultural, individual or group identity of immigrant communities.

Immigrants consider that the preservation of their cultural values is the prime duty of a multicultural society. They assume it is only possible by extending special focus on their group rights that protect their culture and other aspects of the community. To fulfil this need, they demand recognition through multicultural and other supportive policies. The demand for recognition was encouraged by many natives because they

feel it gives justice to the minorities who belong to oppressed communities. But nationalist and other critics of multiculturalism started to question when the demands turned into cultural imperialism. The growing number of population not only lead to extension of demand for recognition, but also crossed its limitation. Every country is constructed on the basis of their own history, values, religion, culture, and other fundamental ideas but the growing number of immigrants' demands, critics opine, strongly challenge the Canadian identity.

Richard Gwyn, in his book *Nationalism without Walls* (1995) writes about losing values of Canada, "Canada's national consciousness has been ground down in-between two millstones. The upper one is the effect upon us of the global economy, and particular to us, the effect of continental free trade. These have worn away most of the walls that once kept us at a distance from the rest of the world and its systems, practices, and values, which, no matter whether positive (the free-market rules) or negative (the polarizing incomes), challenge our national distinctiveness. As for the lower millstone, it is made up of the effect upon us of both our own historic internal divisions of regions and language … Added to these, the new faultlines created by the "identity politics" of ethnicity, race, colour, and gender" (Gwyn 1995: 14). Gwyn, Bissoondath and such other thinkers believe that Canada no longer remained what it was, the concept of nation-state simply faded away. According to Gwyn, nationalism is one of the core characteristics of old Canada. Canadians denied to unite with United States in 1877, which is the prime example of Canadianism (ibid: 17).

> …we are among the few peoples in the world who, given a chance to become Americans, have chosen not to. The characteristic that really distinguishes Canada from all other UN members is that we aren't really a nation-state at all. We possess all the conventional accoutrements: A national government and parliament, armed forces, and a seat at the General Assembly marked by a placard and a maple leaf flag. Rather than a nation-state, though, we are really a *state-nation*. Our state has formed us and has shaped our character in a way that is true for no other people in the world (ibid: 18).

Ethnic homogeneity plays an important role in old Canada, even though ethnically distinct aboriginals exist. But today the ethnicity itself is a trouble to Canada where it restricts Canadian to engage with history, tradition and other aspects of old Canada. Gwyn expresses his concern over the citizens who turn into consumers. He argues,

"[w]e are no longer sovereign citizens of a collective community; we are consumers looking after ourselves while residing in it. Only profit and loss matter. All the rest is bureaucracy, or special-interest groups, or sentimentalism" (ibid: 32). Ironically in Canada, multicultural groups practise monoculturalism instead of multiculturalism. So this leads to division of society which makes natives to engage in hatred and fear against the multicultural groups.

> My point is simple, but it is one usually ignored by multiculturalism and its purveyors — for to recognize the complexity of ethnicity, to acknowledge the wild variance within ethnic groups, would be to render multiculturalism and its aims absurd. The individuals who form a group, the "ethnics" who create a community, are frequently people of vastly varying composition. Shared ethnicity does not entail unanimity of vision. If the individual is not to be betrayed, a larger humanity must prevail over the narrowness of ethnicity. To preserve, enhance and promote the "multicultural heritage" of Canada, multiculturalism must work against forces more insistent than any government policy. If a larger humanity does not at first prevail, time and circumstance will inevitably ensure that it ultimately does (Bissoondath 1994: 107).

Bissoondath and other critics of multiculturalism also suggest how to get rid of these problems. Bissoondath writes, "[t]he ultimate goal, then, is a cohesive, effective society enlivened by cultural variety: reasonable diversity within vigorous unity. We already have the first. Now we must seek the second, even if that would mean — as it must — a certain diminishment of the first. What remains to be decided is whether we have the will, individually and collectively, to summon a new vision — or whether we wish to continue, as we have been, purchasing the illusions of this "false and nation-sapping god" (ibid: 224). Bissoondath's dream of cohesive society is only possible when multicultural groups come out of their limits, and involve in the nation-building. As we discussed earlier, government has an equal share in the upbringing of this problem, so Bissoondath suggests government to keep out the politics of multiculturalism and issues related to immigrants and work for the development of homogeneous society.

> The Multiculturalism Act is in many ways a statement of activism. It is a vision of government not content to let things be, determined to play a direct role in shaping not only the evolution of Canadian — mainly *English*-Canadian — society but the evolution of individuals within that society as well. As a political statement it is disarming, as a

> philosophical statement almost naive with generosity. Attractive sentiments liberally dispensed — but where, in the end, do they lead? (ibid: 42).[15]

As Bissoondath says "[i]t may be time for the cow of multiculturalism to be stripped of its holiness" (ibid: 44). He strongly believes that, a deep evaluation of multiculturalism is much required in the present society. Because, "multiculturalism has served neither interest; it has heightened our differences rather than diminished them; it has preached tolerance rather than encouraging acceptance; and it is leading us into divisiveness so entrenched that we face a future of multiple solitudes with no central notion to bind us (ibid: 192). But some purveyors of multiculturalism try to restrict others from the evaluation of multiculturalism by projecting them as anti-nationals. So this attitude not only affects individual's life but also problematic for the future of Canada.

> Canada has long prided itself on being a tolerant society, but tolerance is clearly insufficient in the building of a cohesive society. A far greater goal to strive for would be an *accepting* society. Multiculturalism seems to offer at best provisional acceptance, and it is with some difficulty that one insists on being a full — and not just an associate — member of society. Just as the newcomer must decide how best to accommodate himself or herself to the society, so the society must in turn decide how it will accommodate itself to the newcomer (ibid).[16]

Bissoondath in his essay expresses his concern over the lack of the idea or the vision of unity in the multiculturalism document – "… how far do we go as a country in encouraging and promoting cultural difference? How far is far enough, how far too far? Is there a point at which diversity begins to threaten social cohesion? The document is striking in its lack of any mention of unity or oneness of vision. Its provisions seem aimed instead at encouraging division, at ensuring that the various ethnic groups whose interests it espouses discover no compelling reason to blur the distinctions among them" (ibid: 43). Multiculturalism negatively impact on younger generation of Canada. Cultural differences restrict young generation to mingle with each other; it leads to the various kinds of discrimination and turn out to be the biggest threat to the country.

[15] Emphasis in the original.
[16] Emphasis in the original.

> Heritage belongs first and foremost to the individual. It seems to me possible to instruct an individual child in his or her cultural heritage without erecting ghetto walls by engaging in communal endeavour. Emphasizing the "I" and de-emphasizing the "we" may be the only way to avoid the development of cultural chauvinism the idea that "we" are superior to "them," and the chasms that result. It is possible to shape a child whose outlook is informed by the knowledge of a certain cultural, familial past, by pride in a Canadian present and by hope in a Canadian future (ibid: 213).

In conclusion, Bissoondath suggests, immigrants should leave behind their past and embrace the host country, only then they can expose to new life and adopt it. As he says, culture is one of the important parts of individual's life, but at the same time one should accept the changes and move to the next level. He strongly believes that immigrants play a key role in the development of country and at the same time it is their duty to enhance the pride of Canada. To construct the strong nation, preservation of its values, tradition, religion and other aspects are very important which is only possible when all citizens respect and take the responsibility to protect it.

> Despite the varying pasts that have shaped us, we are all in the final analysis Canadians, with a common country and common interests that can, if permitted, lead to a common future… With this as a guiding vision, whatever may come after multiculturalism will aim not at preserving differences but at blending them into a new vision of Canadianness, pursuing a Canada where inherent differences and inherent similarities meld easily and where no one is alienated with hyphenation. A nation of cultural hybrids, where every individual is unique, every individual distinct. And every individual is Canadian, undiluted and undivided (ibid: 223-224).

3.6 Conclusion

Multiculturalism is one of the most controversial and debatable issues in Canada. It has both supporters and opponents, but the surprising fact is that some immigrants too oppose multiculturalism and its policies. Bissoondath, one of the leading critics of multiculturalism exposes the negative aspects of multiculturalism and its policies through his works. His strong accusation against multiculturalism is that, it divides the society and causes the downfall of Canadian values. His attachment towards Canada and Canadianness is often evident in his fictional works. Most of his protagonists

belong to Canada and also represent Candian culture and values. It is totally in contrast to some of the Indo-Canadian writers such as Rohinton Mistry, M.G. Vassanji and others who write about immigrants who belong to the writers' home country.

Bissoondath's essay' *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*, and novels, The *Innocence of Age, The Worlds within Her* and *The Soul of All Great Designs* not only expose the drawbacks of multiculturalism but also showcase the importance of Canadianness and Canadian values. In this chapter we have presented detailed arguments of Bissoondath against multiculturalism and its policies, and how Canadianness works against the division of society caused by cultural differences.

Chapter Four

BEING CANADIAN: MULTICULTURALISM AND SECOND GENERATION INDO-CANADIAN WRITERS

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Immigrant's children are often referred as a cultural bridge between immigrant parents and the host society. Second generation are one of the diverse populations in Canada who often share common features of being bicultural by upholding both heritage and mainstream cultural identities. There are many push and pull factors that influence the cultural travel between two different societies. Among this, multiculturalism and related policies influence more on second generation's day-to-day life. Despite the pressures from their community and host societies, second generation have succeeded to embrace both cultures. This balancing act is the theme of second generation writers who face the same predicament in their personal life. This chapter is divided into two main sections, apart from introducing the authors initially. The second section of this chapter explores the cultural diversity among second generation. The third one deals with the influence of the multiculturalism policy on second generation and the importance of integration.

4.2 SECOND GENERATION INDO-CANADIAN WRITERS

The second generation writers, who were born and brought up in Canada to Indian origin parents, are continuing the tradition of Indo-Canadian writings by producing large number of works. Priscila Uppal, Ranj Dhaliwal, Shaun Mehta, Vivek Shraya and other writers have largely focused on life and experiences of younger generation in the present Canadian society. We shall limit our discussion to illustrations from the above four writers in this chapter. Priscila Uppal is an internationally renowned poet, fiction writer, essayist, memoirist, and playwright who was born in Ottawa in 1974 to Indian immigrant Avtar Uppal and Brazilian mother Teresa Catharina de Goes Campos. She has published ten books of poetry: *How to Draw Blood from a Stone* (1998), *Confession for a Fertility Expert* (1999), *Pretending to Die* (2001), *Live*

Coverage (2003), *Ontological Necessities* (2006), *Winter Sport: Poems* (2010), *Successful Tragedies: Selected Poems 1998-2010* (2010), *Traumatology* (2010), *Summer Sport: Poems* (2013), *Sabotage* (2015). Her novels are *The Divine Economy of Salvation* (2002), and *To Whom It May Concern* (2009). The memoir is *Projection: Encounters with my Runaway Mother* (2013). Collection of short stories is *Cover before Striking* (2015). The play is *Six Essential Questions* (2014), and a critical study on elegies, *We Are What We Mourn* (2009). Her works have been translated into French, Italian, Croatian, Latvian, Greek and Korean. In 2010 she was CANFund poet-in-residence during the Vancouver Olympics and Paralympics. In 2014 she was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Time Out London (U.K.) called her *"Canada's coolest poet"* (Uppal). Anita Kushwaha was born in Ottawa, Ontario, and raised in Aylmer, Quebec. She has published three novels, *For the Love of Cupcakes* (2013), *The Escape Artist* (2015), *and Side by Side* (2018).

Ranj Dhaliwal was born in Vancouver in 1976. He grew up and continues to live in Surrey, British Columbia. He has published two novels, *Daaku* (2006), and *Daaku: The Gangster* (2011), the first works of fiction dealing with the issue of Indo-Canadian gangs in British Columbia's Lower Mainland. Shaun Mehta was born and raised in Toronto. He has published five novels, *Divya's Dharma* (2004) *Illuminated Shadows-I* (2014), *Illuminated Shadows-II* (2015), *Illuminated Shadows-III* (2015), and *The Seven Vows* (2017), and a short story collection, *A Slice of Life* (2001).

Vivek Sharya was born in Edmonton to Indian parents originally from Bengaluru. She is one of the prominent faces of the Indo-Canadian LGBTQ community. Her first book of poetry, *even this page is white*, won a 2017 Publisher Triangle Award and was long listed for CBC's *Canada Reads*. Her debut novel, *She of the Mountains* (2014), was named one of *The Globe and Mail's* Best Books. Vivek Shraya is an artist whose body of work includes several albums, films, and books. Vivek's 2017 album with Queer Songbook Orchestra, *Part-Time Woman*, was included in CBC's Best Canadian Albums of 2017. A four-time *Lambda Literary Award* finalist, Vivek was a 2016 Pride Toronto Grand Marshal, and has received honours from the Toronto Arts Foundation and The Writers' Trust of Canada (Shraya).

4.3 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Immigrants encounter various challenges in their day-to-day life. Among those are cultural differences, religious intolerance, racial discriminations, and dearth of economic and political powers. Immigrants experience these problems in both domestic and public life. Their life in adopted countries is not as easy as that in their home countries because there are many major and minor issues which place immigrants in dilemma as well as hardships in finding solutions for those impediments. The assimilation or integration of the second generation or younger generation immigrants is one of the major challenges faced by immigrants in host society. In multicultural Canada, in addition to immigrant parents, who worry about their children's cultural dislocation, even the young generation struggles to bond with specific culture. Indo-Canadian is one of the largest ethnic communities in Canada, which often expresses its concern over these issues and makes continuous effort to solve the problems.

Many researchers have conducted detailed surveys on the problems faced by second generation immigrants. Cultural conflicts within and outside the community are a common phenomenon in Canada. According to Lay and Nguyen, immigrants in new country may experience day-to-day hassles in the on-going process of acculturation; especially younger immigrants "… may experience conflict between their parents' cultural values and expectations and those of the host culture. living in "two cultures," younger immigrants, particularly those from more collectivistic cultures with their emphasis on ingroup harmony, may also face special problems in interaction with their ethnic ingroup peers" (Lay and Nguyen 1998: 173).

Indo-Canadian community is one of the most ethnocultural populations in Canada. Different generations of Indo-Canadians express varying degrees of interest and commitment to the cultural tradition of their country of origin. These differences are often evident in the works of first and second generation writers. First generation or immigrant parents have a strong attachment with the culture of their home country (except in some cases, on lines of Neil Bissoondath). But the second generation or immigrants' children, who are born in Canada, face a different set of challenges when

it comes to aligning with cultural practices. Writers such as Priscila Uppal, Ranj Dhragawala, Vivek Shraya, and Shaun Mehta, also unfold cultural and other internal conflicts of their day-to-day life in Canada even as they narrate stories of second generation.

4.3.1 Language

Language is one of the integral parts of immigrants' life. For immigrants, language no longer remains only a medium of communication, but also represents their cultural identity. Most of the immigrant parents in Canada desire to pass on their ancestral language to future generations. But some studies suggest that transmission of ancestral language is very difficult feat to achieve. There are many obvious reasons behind these problems such as, influence of host languages, discrimination of minority languages, minimal usage of ancestral language, to name a few (Turcotte 2006). Shrinkage of heritage language compelled immigrant parents to be apprehensive about the future of the language, thereby pressurising their children to carry it on to next generations.

Conservation of heritage language is not an easy task for the second generation in bilingual Canada. There is a huge difference between the first and second generation when it comes to the matter of exposure to ancestral languages in their day-to-day life. Compared to immigrant parents, their children's usage of mother tongue, in both public and personal lives, is considerably less. This is considered as one of the major challenges in preservation of the mother tongue. Even after implementation of several heritage language development programmes by Canadian government, many institutions fail to provide adequate platform to the immigrant children. The central reason behind this failure is the lack of commitment and main-stream attitude towards minority languages. Jim Cummins comments in his article on the irony of heritage language teaching, "… major goal [of heritage language teaching] is to promote proficiency in the heritage language, leading ultimately to bilingualism or trilingualism. By contrast, remedial or compensatory programmes may employ the heritage language as a temporary medium of instruction but the goal is usually monolingualism in the majority language" (Cummins 2006: 283).

The immense pressure of linguistic and cultural conformity from parents and society have caused adverse influence on immigrant children, who are distancing themselves from the heritage language (Lee and Oxelson 2010). Public platforms such as school, mall, park, playgrounds, party, club, restaurants and others play a key role in transmission of mother tongue into host languages. Engagement with non-community members in day-to-day life prompts young Indo-Canadians to embrace more of native culture rather than the home culture. Despite external influences, immigrant parents lay continuous efforts on teaching mother tongue in their homes. For instance, in the novel *Divya's Dharma*, narrator explains how Divya learns Hindi with the help of Bollywood movies:

> Despite being born and raised in Canada, Divya could understand Hindi from a childhood of watching a myriad of Hindi movies with her mother, an obsessive fan of Bollywood. All of the movies that her mother watched were subtitled in English, and spending three hours a day watching an Indian movie had given Divya the ability to understand most common phrases. Her ability to speak was another issue, and although she could put sentences together and be understood, any Indian would instantly realize that she was a NRI, a non-resident Indian. (Mehta 2004: 26)

As we discussed in earlier chapters, elements of vernacular languages play a major role in first generation writings. The usage of vernacular elements helped writers to earn considerable literary acknowledgement and to a lesser extent, play a role in asserting the cultural identity of their community. In contrast, second generation writers hardly employ vernacular words in their writings. For instance, in Ranj Dhaliwal's (2011: 1) *Daaku*, the protagonist's family seldom exchanges dialogues in Punjabi even though they belong to an Indian orthodox community. Like Dhaliwal, Vivek Shraya and Shaun Mehta (Mehta 2017: 5387) hardly use vernacular languages except in conversations among members of the family not more than a couple of times in the whole novel.

The minimal usage of vernacular vocabulary in second generation writings reflects the status of Indian languages in multicultural Canada that exposes the dominance of English and French in the life of young generation Indo-Canadians. In the novel, *To Whom It May Concern*, the protagonist Hardev Dange's son Emile's view on English language speaks about the perspective of younger generation on language: for them,

many a time, it is just the question of choice. “She is French, like his mother; this reminded him of the years of torturous sessions he had endured to learn the language. Thankfully, his father had never attempted to teach him or his siblings Hindi. *English is difficult enough,* he thinks. *We can’t agree in English so why would* we *agree in other languages?* And French is too lyrical for his tastes; he prefers the harsher sounds of English, how they seem precise, accurate, not exaggerated or ornamental” (Uppal 2008: 43).[17] Indo-Canadian parents often express their discontent about the usage of some abusive words in public, and caused them to worry about the influence of language on their children. For instance, in the novel *Divya’s Dharma* the dialogues between Divya and her mother show the parents’ concern on language influence, “[y]ou could have warned me, Mama. I may have taken an exchange in a country that celebrated my birthday by *not* kicking my ass!” “Language, Divya, language,” she admonished. “Sorry, Mama” (Mehta 2004: 144).

Immigrant parents express their concern about the disappearance of vernacular languages within the community life. In second generation writings, most of the characters that belong to the community exchange their dialogues in English, in contrast to the first generation Indo-Canadians. The latter believe that their heritage language is the indicator of their cultural identity, and preservation and transmission into future generation is the fundamental duty of their life. To accomplish this, immigrant parents try to find different solutions such as teaching heritage language at home, sending their children to schools that teach heritage languages, encouraging speaking heritage language at home.

4.3.2 Religion

Religion is one of the major concerns in the inter-generational conflicts between the first and second generation. Immigrant parents strongly believe that, religion and religious practices are the pillars of their community which strengthen the community identity in host society. Therefore, they consider observing their religious practices such as temple visits, idol worship, chanting hymns are some of the primary duties of their daily life. In contrast, immigrant children are least bothered about their

[17] Emphasis in the original.

engagements with religious practices. Due to the influence of host society, where religion is considered insignificant, immigrant children maintain distance from the religious practices.

In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, Hardev's children express their view on religious practices contrasted to that of their father. Monique's offer to meet her mother on the occasion of Christmas is rejected by Emile for he does not believe in religious practices. "I don't care for holidays,' he told Monique. "They don't mean anything to me. I'm not religious. I don't see why I should celebrate something I don't believe in" (Uppal 2008: 41). In contrast, Hardev's treatment of the holy water from the river Ganges shows the generational differences in Indo-Canadian community. "I've used three vials, one on each of my children, when they were born. I doused their foreheads with the water, said a little prayer for their future. My boy would call this superstition, but he'd be wrong. There is a vast difference between superstition and tradition, fear and respect. Now I have only two bottles left. Birendra is the oldest and the first to marry, so I will give one to her for her own children. The other I'm saving for when my number comes up" (ibid: 49).

> 'Not just any water. Water from the Holy River Ganges. In India. My father told me that no matter where I travelled in life, I should keep a bottle of water from this sacred river with me. It's an Indian tradition, one of the few I still practise. Five vials left India with me. I hoped for five children' (ibid).

Despite the decreasing concern on religious practices from second generation, immigrant parents continuously strive to convert their non-religious children into religious ones. This transmission is not easy for immigrant children; so to resolve this, immigrant parents make their children involve more in religious activities such as temple visits, religious programmes, discourses, etc.

4.3.3 Tradition

Apart from religious practices, Indian traditional food, dress, dance, music, festivals and marriage practices are integral parts of the Indo-Canadian community. These traditional fronts play a major role in the preservation of Indo-Canadian cultural identity in the multicultural Canada. The first generation Indo-Canadians continuously

strived to retain these traditions by practising and teaching their children. However, due to the changing societal condition and external influences, second generation are refashioning their practices in their own way. As Jasmeet Sidhu writes, "… some teens have found successful ways to fuse the two cultural influences in their lives, for example incorporating Indian fashions into everyday Western clothes or listening to remixes of Bhangra songs to rap beats, many others experience a cultural disconnect" (2008).

The second generation, though never reject Indian tradition altogether, imbibe it according to their comfort and convenience. When it comes to the matter of dress, they follow both the traditions and modify the taste according to their needs. In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, Birendra's preferences of western dress over the Indian traditional *sari* symbolizes the views of second generation on their parents' tradition. Birendra says, "[l]eather gloves. Wool shawls. Silver rings, turquoise earrings. Wine openers. 'Mom, I won't. But a sari? That's not my culture'" (Uppal 2008: 69). But in the end she agrees to wear the *sari* only for her fiancé Victor. "Wedding reception: red sari, red shoes, red rose in her hair. It's true she wasn't excited by the idea at first, and kept putting off dealing with it, pretending she wasn't getting the hint as her mother left magazine photos of South Asian brides on the kitchen table, but when she mentioned it to Victor, he argued in its favour. He teased that he would love to have two brides instead of one — his French Catholic bride at the church, and his Indian one at the reception" (ibid: 294). Birendra's dissatisfaction about *sari* indicates the second generation changing attitude towards Indian tradition. In the novel *Divya's Dharma*, description of Divya's costumes reflects the preferences of young Indo-Canadian immigrants:

> [a]lthough both her parents were Indian — born in Punjab after Partition — there was no doubt that Divya was a foreigner. With her baseball cap, shorts, T-shirt, sleek running shoes, and a Canadian emblem stitched on the back of her backpack, she knew that attaining obscurity among the masses that jammed the railway station of Bangalore was hopeless. Even if she had been in a sari, like the hundreds of women passing her, one word with her accent would betray her true origin (Mehta 2004: 26).

Second generation are influenced by western music and dance; they often switch to Indian music and dances with their own modifications and fusions. Cultural refashioning is often evident in the works of second generation writers. In novel *Daaku*, Ruby and his Indo-Canadian gang prefer bhangra remixes in the parties and clubs, "[w]hen it gets dark we start listening to bhangra remixes, some girls show up, and the partying really gets under way. My hands are in the air, moving up and down and I'm drinking beer like it's water. I'm having a blast" (Dhaliwal 2011: 177).

Due to the influence of host society, second generation lack of interest in celebration of their festivals too. While they cheerfully participate in festivals like Christmas and Halloween, their interest diminishes when it comes to Indian festivals. As Lalonde and Guguere write, "[a] conflict between the two sets of cultural norms of the bicultural individual is more likely to be evidenced when the two cultural identities of bicultural individuals are simultaneously salient to the individual, when these identities evoke two sets of norms that are incompatible and when the individual feels some commitment to each set of norms. Finally, a conflict is more likely to occur in a situation that begs the individual to follow only one of the two sets of norms" (Lalonde and Giguere 2008: 58).

In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, children's excitement in celebration of Halloween represents the importance of celebration of Canadian festivals in the life second generation. "He enjoyed taking the boy and girl door to door in costumes their mother made; one year the boy was a skunk — what a tail she constructed out of cotton balls and a hanger! — and the girl loved her pink princess costume best, parading around the house, up and down the few stairs for days before the holiday. He relished the time spent chatting briefly with the neighbours, trading winks and chuckles as the made-up creatures fumbled with pillowcases and plastic pumpkin carriers, fake blood and glitter on hands and faces, waiting to tear open a chocolate bar or toffee kiss" (Uppal 2008: 48).

Food is one of the integral parts of Individual's life. According to Bessiere, food serves two important purposes; first, "'… the eater becomes what he consumes.' Eating is the integration or adoption of the qualities of the food you eat. On the other

hand, 'the eater becomes part of a culture.' Both food and cooking, as they are culturally determined, place the eater in a social universe and a cultural order. Eating habits are the foundation of a collective identity and, consequently, of alterity" (Bessiere 1998: 24). Food plays a key role in the retention of tradition for the first generation. For instances, in the novel *She of the Mountains*, the protagonist's father found her mother's love in traditional Indian food, "Sundar could taste the absence of his mother's love in the food. The roti was bitter, the pilau dry, and, no matter how hot the food was when served, the warmth and taste of the sun was gone. But he kept eating, hoping to find to her love once more" (Shraya 2014: 59)**.** But traditional food is replaced by the Canadian food in the life of second generation. In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, the description of Pizza indicates the importance of Canadian food in second generation's life. "Pizza won every time. A good choice, he admits. There's a pizza place on every block in the city, and it can be delivered every single day of the year, right to your home." (Uppal 2008: 3). Due to the influence of host society, Indian traditional food gains less importance among young Indo-Canadians and they prefer Canadian food items such as *Poutine, Nanaimo bars, smoked salmon, butter tarts, sandwiches and steaks, Peppercorn steaks, fries*, etc.

> 'What food do you think the bank likes best? Pizza, probably. Like everybody else.' 'On garbage day those workers leave all kinds of pizza boxes on the curb. Every week more than the last!'…. 'I never liked Pizza…. I never met anyone who didn't like pizza. Other immigrants in the department from all over the world, the Balkans, Trinidad, Argentina, China, they could cite the exact date and time of their first taste of pizza, and list the toppings. I'd smile, nod, try to look dreamy and say, *Oh yes, I hear you, it was the same with me*, but it wasn't' (ibid: 47).

Ceremony of marriage is one of the major indicators of immigrants' tradition. Immigrant parents strongly believe that marriage not only represents the cultural identity of the community but also strengthens the relationship between the members of the community. Hence, most of immigrants proclaim that, the selection of the partner is a family affair, where parents are the final decision makers. In contrast, western individuals would believe that selection of a mate is an individual's personal choice; romantic love and companionship are more essential than the parental consent (Nesteruk and Gramescu 2012). These opposing opinions with regard to selection of a

partner not only lead to conflicts between two generations but also compel immigrant parents to express their concern and apprehension about their cultural identity.

The custom of arranged marriage is part and parcel of Indo-Canadian community tradition. But, due to the influence of native culture, there is a gradual shift from arranged to love marriage. The shift in the attitude of the second generation in defiance of the traditional marriage pattern resulting in independent mate selection, same sex marriage, and interracial marriages give rise to intergenerational conflicts which give rise to more stringent restrictions on immigrant children (ibid). These conflicts are restricted not only to domestic life, but also become one of the major issues for debate among the community. Both the generations express their own stance vis-à-vis these issues – this is often represented in Second generation writings.

In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, the protagonist Hardev Dange's elder daughter Birendra's views on marriage reflects the second generation' attitude towards arranged marriages. After dating with a few individuals, Birendra finally gets engaged to Victor, who belongs to large business family and plans for marriage without the consent of her parents. "Birendra lifts her left hand and something twinkles in the red chandelier glow. 'A toast! Victor wanted to make the announcement, but I wouldn't let him. Dad, Victor has asked me to marry him! Or I asked him, or we asked each other, really… Anyway, I can't remember how it went exactly, but we both said *Yes, Yes!* The wedding will be in May!'" (Uppal 2008: 8). This dismays Hardev Dange, who expects his approval for her love.

> … he's assumed that one day the children will marry, but in his head he spends time with these suitors first, gets to know them, the child asks his permission, for his opinion and blessing—in the case of the boy, asks if his father approves of his choice—before anything moves further, certainly before a date is set. He never imagined his daughter would ask a young man to marry *her*, without her father's permission, without her father's advice. Yet here is this man, this Victor, whom he's met for the first time—the first time!—today, this stranger standing in the middle of his dining room in dress slacks and a Polo shirt, blue eyes twinkling like the girl's diamond, towering over them all as if he owns the place (ibid: 9).

Multiple dating is one of the common features of second generation, that is intensely condemned by immigrant parents. The latter desire that their children bind with a

person who is selected by them. In the novel *Divya's Dharma*, Divya's parents try to control her movements, "[o]nly last year had she been permitted to date, and her parents had reluctantly conceded after much negotiation and under strict guidelines. The only reason they had even allowed her to go on an exchange program was because she was traveling to their homeland. They wanted her to love the people and traditions as they did, to become more cultured in order to make a better Indian wife when they found her an appropriate match" (Mehta 2004: 226). In contrast, second generation have multiple dates. For instance, in the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, the character Monique "… sought out people from other cultures. She'd dated guys whose families came from Japan, Egypt, and Cuba" (Uppal 2008: 81). In another instance, one of the Indo-Canadian characters from the novel *Daaku* talks about the multiple but simultaneous relations his sister has:

> "… [S]he's got a boyfriend and two more boyfriends, which she doesn't call her boyfriends, but her lovers. She sees them at different times of the day. Yeah, this one brown guy she sees before he goes to work in the morning and then the other one comes by in the afternoon. Her real boyfriend works and takes her out for dinner at the end of the night and they fuck after that. Me and Geoff sit outside her door and listen and laugh. She makes all these weird noises and so do the guys. My mom would kill her if she found out" (Dhaliwal 2011: 74).

Marriage with other race and religion is one of the major concerns of immigrant parents. As Soodabeh wrote, "[f]or Indo-Canadians, marriage is an important cultural element. Maintenance of traditional Indian values prevents the practice of dating, as is common among the other Canadians. As in India, arranged marriages are more prevalent among Indo-Canadians. Parents arrange marriages with their specific caste/ethnic community" (Salehi 2007: 14). Due to the engagements with host society, the number of interracial marriages is gradually increasing and this bothers the immigrant parents regarding the future of their children. For instance, in Mehta's *The Seven Vows*, the protagonist Anand's marriage with his Canadian girlfriend not only creates differences between his mother Biji and wife Elizabeth but also makes her to intensely think about her son's future.

> Elizabeth had wanted a seven-tier wedding cake that cost over two thousand dollars. Anand had meekly sided with her, avoiding his mother's protests at the unnecessary extravagance and expense. Biji argued that they didn't even need such a cake if they were to have a simple

> ceremony in a *mandir*. Anand had confessed that it was Elizabeth's dream to be married in church and have a large reception. Once the shock had subsided, Biji pleaded for a dual ceremony to respect both religions. Elizabeth adamantly refused and Anand remained silent. It was then that Biji realized that she had lost her son to a woman who cared far more about her selfish whims than their family and tradition (Mehta 2017: 1970).

Thus, the major concern of immigrant parents is the loss of their culture and traditions, and they would presume, their grandchildren are born with confused identity. In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, the discussion between Birendra and her Canadian mother-in-law about Birendra's children-to-be demonstrates the problem behind the interracial marriage. The mother-in-law displays a progressive mentality in proclaiming the progeny to be without religion. "Why confuse the children with so many religions? I think it's important for us to be honest with each other about these things early on, before it's too late. These things can strain family relations. You say your sister paints and draws?... Good. Teach them art. Religion is false hope, darling. It's good to know a few of the stories for culture's sake, but in the end all churches are Churches for Dummies. Join the yacht club'… I'm glad that's settled. No religion for the children" (Uppal 2008: 280). On the other hand, such a proclaimed stance would not be possible for the Indo-Canadian community.

The growing number of interests towards same sex marriages results in discontent toward younger generation. Due to the influence of Canada's open society, many second generation come out of their orthodox family set up, and show interest in partners of the same sex. This has intensified the anguish of the first generation, who already feel the pressure of loss of their culture. For instance, in the novel *The Seven Vows*, Anand's sister Tejal's relationship with Isabella is strongly opposed by her mother Biji and is considered silly. She thinks it is because of the strictness imposed on her daughter that she turns to lesbianism.

> "It's true," Tejal said, gazing tenderly at Isabella. "I love Iz with all my heart. She's my everything."
>
> Biji placed a spoon of chickpeas in her mouth, chewed and swallowed. "You are not a lesbian." … "No one in this family is like that," she said sharply, pointing her spoon at Isabella. "No one, How dare you corrupt and confuse my daughter."

> Biji scoffed "You know nothing. You're still a child discovering and learning, at a stage where it is common to…" "…experiment. I may disapprove, but I understand that such phases, sometime and unfortunately, happen." "Do you know what sort of dangerous diseases are out there for people who…" "Look, I know its my fault for pushing you to only study and not have fun. Perhaps I was too strict on you. If we relax the rules, are more open-minded, and introduce you to some nice suitable boys, I'm confident these silly thoughts will cease" (Mehta 2017: 6910).

Most of the immigrant parents oppose love marriages due to two reasons – first one is the fear of losing their culture, and second one, growing number of divorce cases in such marriages. Immigrant parents have strong confidence in 'love after marriage'. Therefore, their undeterred conviction is with arranged marriage. Immigrant parents believe that family values are ignored in love marriages, and there is a lack of bonding between couples which result in broken relationships or marriages. However, the second generation writers defy the idea of 'love after marriage'. In the novel *To Who It May Concern*, Birendra presents the view of second generation against arranged marriages and parents' expectations. She thinks "[w]hy is marriage automatically paired up with children in people's minds? Many married people have no children. Many married people with children should never have had them. Divorce rates have been worse, so why are people so determined to bring more children into the world, into broken, unhappy marriages?" (Uppal 2009: 281). In the novel *The Seven Vows*, the male character Anand gets divorced from his marriage with a Canadian and looks for a new alliance from the Indian sub-continent. In his search for a relationship, he comes across the character Bavana, who has a very practical and straight forward approach to marriage. She says,

> "[i]f we get married, you'll have to sponsor me for permanent residency, yes. As my sponsor, you are legally responsible for me for three years. During that time I will help raise your child and manage your home. In exchange, you permit me to study. After three years, if you and I aren't satisfied with our marital arrangement, I become a Canadian citizen and go my separate way. If we are satisfied, we stay together."
>
> "What about love?"
>
> She scoffed. "You're intelligent enough to know that love has nothing to do with an arranged marriage" (Mehta 2017: 2664).

The second generation writings demonstrate how immigrant parents face complications such as same sex marriage, interracial and love marriage of their children, selecting grooms for daughters, etc. The immigrant parents strongly believe that practice of arranged marriage helps to retain their social and religious tradition and strengthen family's position in the multicultural society (Nesteruk and Gramescu 2012). Despite host culture's influence, immigrant parents put continuous efforts to restrict their children from the influence of the host society. But these efforts push immigrant children into dilemma, where they are unable to find solutions. This results in intergenerational conflicts.

4.3.4 Indo-Canadian Womanhood

Priscila Uppal, Anita Kushwaha and other second generation women writers shed light and give voice to the Indo-Canadian women who are often projected as weaker section of Indo-Canadian community. The works of second generation women writers deal with both domestic and external challenges faced by the Indo-Canadian women. For instance, in Anita's novel *Side by Side*, the protagonist Kavita encounters a series of problems which make her life hell. The novel is a journey into an immigrant Indian family through a dead man's sister, Kavita, as she struggles with not only her own grief but that of her parents. Her marriage teeters on the edge of its own death, too, as she attempts to work her way through the stages of grief ten times over. She faces several hardships and emerges stronger and wiser. She finds herself in shame on many occasions of her life after the death of her brother. She bears her burden alone, but after hitting her lowest point, she knows she needs to find a better way of coping. Desperate for connection, she reaches out to a bereavement group, where she meets Hawthorn, a free-spirited young man with whom she discovers a deep connection through pain. After being blindsided by a devastating marital betrayal, she wonders if a fresh start is possible in the wake of tragedy. Hawthorn treats her with empathy and she also learns to empathise with herself. Her healing journey truly begins then (Kushwaha 2018)**.**

In another of her novels, *For the Love of Cupcakes*, Kushwaha delineates the character of Priya Patel. Priya Patel struggles to be independent and earn her

livelihood. She wants to become a baker. However, working as an assistant baker at Sugarplum Fairy Cakes does not provide the glamourous life she wanted to live. Priya tries to impress her boss Helen Bouffant, with her creativity on tradition recipes. However, she is made to clean up toilets and other errands instead of applying her skills in culinary exercises. When she is blamed for a major mistake, she finally has the courage to leave the job to start her own cupcakery. With the support of her husband Arj and best friend Mae, she decides to start her own cupcakery. However, just as much as Priya wants to succeed, she happens to see Helen again in a charity bake off with a grand prize of $10,000. Helen will stop at nothing to see her fail. When things begin to suspiciously go wrong, Priya must figure out fast who is behind it all before her cupcakery becomes nothing but a distant memory. With everyone a suspect and fingers pointing in all directions, fights ensue, friendships are tested and a marriage hangs in the balance, all while Priya clings on to her dream of cupcakery that might cost her everything (Kushwaha 2013).

Priscila Uppal's novel *To Whom It May Concern* has women characters who show independence as individuals. Hardev Dange, the male protagonist, happens to be a weak character. His wife Elizabeth lives separately from him since he is ailing. She looks after the two daughters and brings them up as independent individuals. One daughter gets married and the other one prefers a live-in relationship. However, both the daughters go for their own choice of partners without the parents' intervention and live independently (Uppal 2008).

Thus we can see that the women writers in the second generation depict independent women characters that are at home in the Canadian context. Despite this fact, there is no opposition to the multiculturalism policy among these characters that would urge them to follow their own traditions. The reconciliation between the openness of the Canadian society and the traditional compulsions of multiculturalism policy is achieved among these characters.

4.4 SECOND GENERATION INDO-CANADIANS AND INTEGRATION

Substantial amount of research on multiculturalism, acculturation, assimilation, accommodation, integration, and transculturalism over the past decade has proved that

the cultural conflict is one of the major concerns among various communities and generations. Implementation of various policies and programs itself created more conflicts instead of remedies. Therefore, effects of multiculturalism policy in Canada raise the question if it is the solution or the cause of the various problems faced by immigrant communities. The opinion regarding the multiculturalism policy varies from the first (except some) to the second generation. This is often evident in the works of first and second generation writers.

Multiculturalism has become an integral part of Indo-Canadians' life in Canada. Engagement with various cultures and at the same time, retention of their own culture is a challenge faced by these communities in their daily life. But these challenges vary from first generation to second generation. Second generation face pressure from the mainstream society as well as their immigrant parents to adopt respective cultures. In order to balance this, "… second-generation adolescents adopt a variety of strategies in dealing with their dual cultural environment. For some, the primary ethnic group serves as the most potent identification. Others adopt a more assimilatory position or view themselves as members of two cultural worlds, switching identification according to the situation" (Rosenthal 1987: 178).

Second generation are wedged between two cultures and contrasting societies. There are many push and pull factors that influence on their day-to-day life. These factors are often evident in the works of second generation writers. The protagonists of these writers generally belong to Indo-Canadian community, who often try to assimilate with the host country, but their efforts end only in partial success. Despite cultural transformation, second generation struggle to become part of Canadian mainstream due to racial, economic, political, social, cultural and other discriminations. On the other side, engagement with their own community and parents' influences compel them to remain a member of their own hyphenated community.

4.4.1 Racial Discrimination

Racial Discrimination is one of the major concerns of the second generation. According to The Ethnic Diversity survey, "[v]isible minorities[18] were more likely than others to say that they felt uncomfortable or out of place in Canada at least some of the time because of their ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion" (Statistics Canada 2002). According to Reitz and Bannerji, second generation may experience racism which is more pronounced than their parents because of their craving for social acceptance, economic opportunity and equal participation in mainstream society (Reitz and Bannerji 2007). Report of General Social Survey (2014) shows how visible minorities become the victims of racial discriminations.

> In 2014, one in five (20%) visible minorities reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the past five years, a significant difference from the non-visible minority[19] population (12%). Of the visible minorities who had experienced discrimination, 63% believed that they were discriminated against because of their race or skin colour, and 63% said it was because of their ethnicity or culture. The remaining reasons included sex, physical appearance, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, language, or other reasons. Both visible and non-visible minorities most frequently reported the work environment and banks, stores or restaurants as the places where they had experienced discrimination. Further, visible minorities were twice as likely to feel discriminated against when dealing with the police (13% versus 7% for non-visible minorities) and three times more likely to experience discrimination when crossing the border into Canada (General Social Survey quoted in Simpson 2018: 6).

Racial discrimination has not only turned out to be one of the hurdles for adoption of mainstream society, but also bred platform for hate crimes. As Arthur and others wrote, **"**cultural plurality becomes a liability for immigrant youth when confronted with intolerance. Young people realize that to identify with another ethnicity not only risks making them perpetual "outsiders," but it may also bring prejudicial and

[18] "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese, etc." (Simpson 2018: 4).

[19] "persons who gave a mark-in response of 'White' only, and persons who gave mark-in responses of 'White and Latin American,' 'White and Arab' or 'White and West Asian' only…. This category also includes Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) persons" (Simpson 2018: 4).

discriminatory action upon them" (Arthur et al. 2008: 70). In the novel *Daaku*, transformation of the protagonist Rupinder Singh Pandher (Ruby) into a gangster exposes the negative shade of the white society. Ruby's school experience provokes him to involve in violence and divert his mind to criminal activities rather than focus on education. "I kept having trouble at school and eventually had to learn to fight. This was risky because if I fought I would get a beating from my father when I went home. So, most of the time I would take the beatings from the kids and cry it off. I didn't once go and tell. While most kids would run to their teachers, I thought that was the wrong thing to do. My mind was working like a criminal's now — deal with it yourself was the mentality" (Dhaliwal 2011: 8). Some other incidences in the novel expose the exploitation of white kids in the school levels. For instance:

> One time my mom packed me a lunch of roti with margarine smeared on it. I was outside, going to play soccer with the roti rolled up ready to eat. One of the older kids approached me with a few of his friends. He asked what I was eating. I told him. He laughed and said that normal people eat sandwiches for lunch, not Hindu food. I smiled because I didn't know what else to do. He smacked the roti out of my hand. They all laughed. I was scared and was trying not to show them, so I laughed as well. The kid then kicked my roti and it flew about five feet away. They called me a turban-twister and raghead. I just stared at the ground waiting for my beating. This time, however, they just left me alone (ibid).

Ruby's childhood experiences of racism urged him to become the leader of an Indo-Canadian Gang in Toronto. He accuses the society for his transformation, when his assistant Mike questions about the system's influence on his career, "[y]ep. I was on the basketball team, I ran track and I had a 3.5 grade point average. Now I've got a 3.0 in stealing cars. I did have a 4.0, but I get busted every once in a while" (ibid 145). In the end, Ruby is shot by other gang members, and ends his journey in tragedy. Indo-Canadian gang war is one of the major concerns of Indo-Canadian community in Canada. In British Columbia itself, 34 South Asian victims (most are Indo-Canadians) in gang-related homicides are reported between January 2006 and March 2014 (Mall 2014). These hate crimes not only cause the death of the youth but also turn into the biggest threat to harmony in society. Dhaliwal expresses his deep concern toward young Indo-Canadians, who are involved in gang war, drugs and money:

> [t]his story of Ruby Pandher is fictitious, but there are Daakus in this world and they too, are at war over drugs and money. In the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, there have been countless lives taken due to the underworld war over drugs in the Indo-Canadian community, and those lives cannot be brought back. To most they are headlines that will be forgotten, but to their families they are lost. They will be remembered with sadness as the young men who didn't have a chance to start life (Dhaliwal 2011).

Racism has spread to every nook and corner of the Canadian society; it has not even left out marginal communities. There is no doubt that Canada is one of the favourite destinations of sexual minority communities. Despite government accommodation, non-white sexual minorities face various kinds of discriminations in their daily lives. The members of minority, of LGBT communities encounter unfair treatment from both within and outside the communities. In her interview, Vivek Shraya says, "[b]eing a queer person from a minority group has its baggage, some of it unexpected… one of the biggest challenges of being brown and queer is navigating racism in queer communities" (Bhattacharya 2016). She also expressed her unscrupulous experiences in gay bars in Edmonton, "[t]he ways gay people treated brownness as exotic or foreign ... for me, layering of queerness and race became complicated" (Bhandari 2016).

> That fear — one faced by immigrant and refugee men in an unfamiliar gay community — is nothing new. Just as gay men from North Bay and Moose Jaw flocked to Toronto in the 1970s to live free and open lives, a new generation of gay men from south Asia and the Middle East have been drawn to Canada in the last 20 years for the same reasons. The new arrivals may revel in Canada's acceptance, but they are still vulnerable — still suspicious of authority, reluctant to attract attention, perhaps too eager to fit in. And perhaps too trusting of a gentle-looking older man who appears harmless (Graham 2018).

In Shraya's novel *She of the Mountains*, the nameless gay, who is the protagonist, experiences humiliation by friends and other classmates due to his complexion and sexual status. This distances him from the society and "[h]e stopped going to class regularly and was silent when he did attend, his hands rolled into fists in his lap even if he knew the answers. He stopped signing up for extracurricular activities, stopped spending so much time with his mother, and stopped seeking pleasure altogether. His world was reduced to bare necessity. Home was where he slept and ate, and school was where he learned" (Shraya 2014: 25). These narratives not only denote the

immigrant children's unsuccessful efforts to integrate with the mainstream society but also rejection from it, especially when they were perceived as 'deviant'. The nameless gay in the novel confronts whiteness everywhere, which overpowers every other feeling, including the intimacy with his girlfriend.

> White was almost every interaction he had, and through this relentless exposure, he learned to value it, serve it, aspire to it, his white bedroom walls plastered with white famous faces. This was where the true power of white resided. But something unexpected happened when he placed his brown next to hers, something that white worked so hard against (ibid: 66).

The growing number of hate crimes in Canada impels sexual minority communities to think about their life securities. The case of serial killer Bruce McArthur, a 66 year old white gay, who murdered eight people from Toronto gay village – six of them belonging to South Asian and Middle Eastern community – exposed the racial discrimination within the LGBT community. Haran Vijayanathan, executive director of the Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention (ASAAP), strongly criticised the discrimination against the brown community by majority communities. He was also disappointed with police authority who took the case seriously only when Dean Lisowick, one of two white victims, was reported missing. Tom Hooper, a York University historian condemns the police action and says, "[f]or both gay men in the 1970s and queer people of colour today, the police have been enforcers but not protectors. Isolation, combined with a fear of police, has marginalized members of our community and made them more vulnerable to violence" (Graham 2018).

After 11/9 attacks in New York, the crime rate raised ominously in most of the western countries. It also affected Muslim communities in Canada. In Priscila Uppal's *To Whom It May Concern,* the Middle Eastern immigrant Mohab Adnan exchanges his dissatisfaction on changing perception about him with Emile, "'[a]fter 11 September, I've become catnip. There's *cachet* in fucking a Muslim now.' Mohab confesses all this in the Market over soup-and-sandwich specials. 'If I had a close friend in the program, they wouldn't keep on me, I think. You work hard, I've seen your girlfriend bring you lunch at the library. There are times I feel like I must have come here from the other side of the universe'" (Uppal 2008: 74). Thus, racial discrimination and hate crimes against visible minority communities not only create a

gap between minority and mainstream societies, but also turn into major hassles in integration of second generation immigrants.

> Some would argue that the post-9/11 U.S. experience has limited bearing on the Canadian context — but the distinction may be less pronounced than one might think. There are signs of weakening cohesion in Canada, too. For example, a 2006 poll found that 48% of Canadian respondents supported sending government agents to infiltrate the Muslim community, whereas 62% supported giving the U.S. any information they requested about Canadian citizens whom they suspect of being terrorists. More broadly, a 2008 poll indicated that 30%of respondents believed accommodating the ethnic and religious diversity of immigrants weakened our sense of national identity. The same poll also noted that 45% thought immigrants hold on to their customs and traditions too long when they come to Canada, and 61% agreed that Canada makes too many accommodations to visible minorities. Yet, at the same time, about 88% of respondents believed that Canada was welcoming of visible minorities (McDonald and Quell 2008: 37).

Regardless of rejection from individual members of mainstream community, the second generation attempt to accomplish success in political, social and economic fields with the help of Multiculturalism policy. As John W. Berry writes, "[m]arginalized youth are in a very difficult position, experiencing substantial discrimination and attaining poor psychological and social outcomes. Public policies that encourage and support balanced relationships and competencies in intercultural situations are thus superior to other arrangements that may be proposed by politicians or practised by public institutions" (Berry 2008: 53). Therefore, in order to achieve individual goal, second generation embrace multiculturalism policy which is supported by their parents. Constant efforts from the immigrant parents and rejection of mainstream society urge second generation to blend with, and be a part of both the cultures and societies.

4.4.2 Indo-Canadian Community

Ethnic identity is one of the integral parts of immigrant communities. Immigrant parents believe that retention and preservation of their ethnic identity is one of the prime duties of their life. They believe preservation is only possible when it is carried forward by younger generations. However, preservation of ethnic identities is a tough task for second generation due to their engagement with host society. In spite of

various challenges, parents try to influence their children by engaging them in different activities – by teaching heritage language, celebrating festivals, practising religion and traditions, indulging in community activities and so on. These efforts are often evident in the works of second generation writers, who constantly feel an Indian connection:

> [d]espite their Canadian citizenship and sense of inclusion within Canadian society Indo-Canadian youth feel a connection to India and are sustaining transnational networks. Migrant youth … have a link to their parents' homeland that is more than just symbolic. It is real in the sense that these individuals maintain communication across national borders, and they identify with their parents' homeland and express this identification in their daily lives. Second generation migrants from India are embedded within a social field created by cross-border connections between Canada and India, and their identity is constructed through a series of material and symbolic flows across the borders of these countries. Second generation Indo-Canadians are engaged in frequent phone calls, email correspondence and annual visits to India and this transnational communication activates the transnational social field and shape their identification processes (Somerville 2008: 23).

In Priscila Uppal's *To Whom It May Concern*, the protagonist Hardev Dange's efforts towards amalgamation of family denote the immigrant parents' view on family and relationship among the members. The Indian born Hardev Dange, who works for the Canadian International Development Agency, meets with an accident in the worksite and is confined to a wheelchair for fifteen years. After the accident, Hardev's wife leaves him with her two daughters leaving his son behind. Apart from the accident, his dreams about construction of good family also end. The idea of family is only restricted to holidays and other special occasions. But his desire to reconcile with his family never realises – "Hardev still yearns for his family to be like other families on Ashbrook Crescent" (Uppal 2009: 3). However, Hardev's children desire to lead independent life without connection of family members. Emile's dilemma about the concept of family:

> [w]hile Emile is certain that he loves his father, his sisters, and his mother, he can't even say for sure whether they are his family, or if family is essentially a good thing, something to be celebrated in and of itself. Besides a last name, they share very little common vocabulary.

> *What is a family,* he thinks, *but a series of lies and misunderstandings, of broken promises, unfulfilled expectations, of pretending to belong when you don't*? (ibid: 304)[20]

Like Emile, his younger sister Dorothy also shares same view about family, "[w]e're all forced together. Like everyone in the world, really. When we're born, we don't get to choose where, we don't get to choose our parents or our siblings. We don't even get to choose our fucking names, so we're forced into this elaborate collage called a family, or a neighborhood —" (ibid: 113). Another sister, "*Birendra Dange is a French-Canadian, South-Asian mix, which means not much to her except that it accounts for her black hair and brown skin and her perfect French scores in high school. She's wanted her whole life to be someone else, somewhere else*" (ibid: 26).[21] She never wants to be part of her family. Even after her marriage, she doesn't want to stay with her in-laws; instead she loves to travel the world along with Victor, her fiancé.

> 'Keeping *you* away from my family? This isn't about you! This has to do with me. *Me!* I want my family kept away from *me.* In fact, it's my New Year's reso-fucking-lution! I don't want you becoming buddies with my brother or spending afternoons playing chess with my father. I don't want you planning cottage trips with Dorothy and my mom. I want to escape these people, don't you understand? I want to get out of here! Travel the world with you! Only you!' (ibid: 156)

Notwithstanding differences with children, Hardev's efforts to reunite members of his family, meets with only partial success with Dorothy's return to home, "[o]ne must enjoy it as long as one can, as long as the house is still in his name and his children can still meet here, even if they don't understand what it means to be a father, or appreciate that a father's advice and blessing are important in life" (ibid: 12). Pricilla Uppal's narrative delineates desire and dilemma of the first and the second generation, respectively. To deal with these plights, immigrant parents desire to educate their children about their roots and its values. Therefore, they organise family gatherings and other private functions to develop deep connection with their family members. In the novel *Divya's Dharma*, the protagonist Divya, a Canadian born to Indian parents, was sent to India to understand and learn her parents' culture and tradition. In Ranj

[20] Emphasis in the original
[21] Emphasis in the original

Dhaliwal's *Daaku*, the protagonist Ruby's mother enrols him in a Punjabi school to learn her community culture.

> I would steal as I pleased and did whatever I wanted, either by myself or with a friend, at home, school and even at the gurdwara, the Sikh temple. My mother enrolled me in Punjabi school with my brothers and sisters. She thought this would be good for us, a taste of culture. I would find ways to amuse myself while at the temple because I didn't want to be there (Dhaliwal 2011: 9).

Yet, the first generation Indo-Canadians involve their children in community activities as much as possible. To make this possible, they form many associations. These associations are active in organising discourses, festivals, cultural events and other concerned socio-cultural activities. Enormous number of Indo-Canadian organizations situated in various places of Canada and serve different sorts of activities. Such organisations are *The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute*, *India Canada Association* (ICA), *Gujarati Cultural Association* (GCA) *of Ottawa*, *Vishva Shakti Durga Mandir Association*, *Mahatma Gandhi Peace Council of Ottawa (MGPCO)*, *Kannada Sangha Ottawa***,** *The Indo-Canadian Business Chamber (ICBC)*, etc. These organizations along with community services also work as a bridge between Indian and Canadian mainstream society. Vision of ICA organisation:

> [t]o contribute significantly to the preservation, awareness and promotion of Indo-Canadian cultural heritage in the Ottawa-Gatineau area and to be an active participant in the affairs of interest to our extended community, association and its membership (ICA).

Immigrant parents these efforts not only helpful to retain their culture but also helps to strengthen their family bond between their children. Tonks and Paranjpe's studies on Canadian born youth propagate dual influence on immigrants' children, "[the] members of first generation are often involved in building institutional structure to protect and preserve their cultural identities: churches or temples, art organisations, schools, clubs, and so on. Multiculturalism will not go very far unless the finer aspects of their ancestral cultures, often preserved at a great cost of sweat and toil by the first generation, are passed on to the next…The second generation immigrants of all backgrounds benefit from our schools, media, literature, arts, and host of other sources in the developing the "Canadian" part of their identities. On the other side, at

home and through the “ethnic” institutions created by their forebears, members, of the second generation get to develop an ethnic aspect of their identities. The dual cultural upbringing at home and outside helps develop hyphenated identities like Scottish-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian and so on” (Tonks and Paranjpe 1999: 2).

At the same time statistics of the Canadian census shows that there is a stronger adherence of children to their families. As Boyd and Park say, “[y]oung adults today are also more likely than in previous decades to be still living in the parental home. According to the most recent Canadian Census of population, in 2006, more than two out of every five (43.5%) of the 4 million young adults aged 20 to 29 lived in the parental home compared with slightly more than one in four (27%) 25 years earlier, in 1981” (Boyd and Park 2008: 42). This study also includes the immigrant population who form more than one fifth of the Canadian population and indicates the immigrant parents’ determination on preservation of family relationship.

4.4.3 Canadian Multiculturalism and the Second Generation

Cultural diversity is one of the integral features of multicultural Canada. The growing numbers of immigrant population and the multiculturalism policy continue to shape Canada further as a multicultural society. With the help of multiculturalism policy, majority of second generation immigrants often share the feature of being bicultural (Lalonde and Giguere 2008: 58). Regardless of cultural conflicts, second generation work as a bridge between immigrant parents and host society. Second generation often share values, culture, tradition, and other aspects of both the societies. These features often appear in the works of second generation writers.

Integration is one of the primary motives of multicultural policy. According to Berry, “[i]ntegration can only be "freely" chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity... This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions to better meet the needs of all groups now

living together in the plural society" (Berry 1997).[22] As is said, integration is only possible when both societies mutually accept each other.

Integration is one of the important themes of second generation writers. The narratives of second generation writers such as Priscila Uppal, Shaun Mehta, Ranj Dhaliwal and Vivek Shraya, engage in depicting the relationship between immigrant parents, their children and their engagement with dual society. Though the setting of the novels is Canada, the protagonists and major characters belong to the Indo-Canadian community. The narratives in the novels, *To Whom It May Concern*, *Daaku*, *The Seven Vows* and *The She of the Mountains*, illustrate the life of Indo-Canadian protagonists, Hardev Dange, Ruby, Anand Verma and the nameless gay in Canada, respectively. In contrast, Shaun Mehta's *Divya's Dharma* not only has Indian setting but also explores the different shades of an Indian's life.

> The first leg of the journey from Mumbai to Goa had been quite pleasant. Divya had taken a first-class ticket. She even had a fascinating conversation with a kind Hindu woman with whom she shared the air-conditioned compartment. Divya had loved brushing up on her Hindi. Most importantly, she had slept soundly during the trip, and arrived in Goa refreshed and excited to explore the tropical surroundings of the former Portuguese colony. Once reaching Goa, Divya started her adventure of India in luxury. After spending two days in a five star hotel in Panaji, relishing the beauty of the beaches and consuming countless tasty coconut and cashew spirits called Fenni, Divya decided to truly experience her parents' native country by taking a second-class sleeper to Bangalore. It was a sixteen-hour journey that had turned into an endless nightmare (Mehta 2004: 20).

Like first generation writer Vassanji, Mehta expresses his concern about his ancestral land India by throwing light upon various problems which trouble the Indian society. Divya's initial experiences in Bangalore uncover another face of the country, "[b]efore leaving Canada, she had read many articles on how Bangalore—known as the 'Garden City'—was considered the Silicon Valley of the East... But as Divya drove past six naked children begging a man in an expensive business suit for money, she did not see any of that. Instead, what she saw was a country trying to project itself one way to the world while desperately trying to mask its countless problems" (ibid: 32). Despite her cultural exploration and her initial days in India with her husband

[22] Emphasis in the original

Aslam Khan, Divya encounters several problems which turn her life into misery. Through the narrative of Divya's life, Mehta exposes casteism and its politics in India. Casteism is one of the major concerns of the Indian society where Dalits are suppressed and exploited by upper-caste people. The murder of Divya's husband Aslam Khan and Ladha's family who belongs to Dalit community indicate the serious threat posed by the caste politics in India. Oppression is perpetrated

> "[b]y keeping most of our children illiterate and ignorant, by preventing us from electing members of our own caste into power, often violently, and by constantly demeaning and threatening us. Oppression and racism are their weapons. Many Dalits simply tolerate and accept their place in society, believing they have earned their fate by some terrible deed they did in their past life, that this is their karma. They believe if they are good in this life, then they'll move up the social hierarchy when they are reincarnated, perhaps being reborn in upper-caste families themselves" (ibid: 269).

Mehta's engagement with issues related to India shows emotional attachment of the writer with his ancestral country.

On the other hand, the second generation writers being more of Canadian than Indian, evidently write about Canada with lots of regard. They often delineate the issues related to country of origin. Priscila Uppal's *The Divine Economy of Salvation*, narrates the story of Sister Angela, an Ottawa nun who seeks refuge in religious life to escape from her past crime in a Catholic boarding school. By narrating the story of Canadian teenage girls (The Sisterhood), Uppal displays her affection for Canada. She writes "[t]he only day I didn't like to work was Canada Day — a national party with strangers out on Parliament Hill, dancing to rock concerts and cheering on acrobats tossing and eating fire, open bottles of beer and wine and glow-in-the-dark necklaces and headgear; red maple leaves everywhere; I guess I felt more Canadian than part of a family" (Uppal 2013: 196). In the novel, *To Whom it May Concern* Hardev's concerns on Canada reflects second generation writers' vision on Canada. "Hardev is reminded of his own citizenship test, how Isobel helped him learn basic French for it, and how proud he felt singing 'O Canada!' in a room full of fellow fresh-faced official Canadians, waving the paper flags the volunteers gave them once they were told they had passed" (Uppal 2008: 185). In another instance, Hardev explains the importance of Canada to Rodriguez as, "[t]he idea is that the more you know about a

country, the more that country becomes like family, like home, and the more likely you are to care about that country, want to celebrate it, protect it, fight for it. Now, let's see what you've learned. Where does the name 'Canada' come from?" (ibid: 186).

> Her father was so proud of her those two summers, his daughter teaching visitors about Canada's history, he was sorry when she quit to make more in tips as a waitress in a sports bar. She didn't have the heart to tell him that most people on her tour couldn't care less about Canada's history; they wanted to admire the marble floors and the staircase to the clock tower, wave at Mounties, and fawn over feral cats in ramshackle multiplex wooden cat houses (ibid: 61).

Thus, among the second generation, it is possible to see the commitment towards both India and Canada. Sometimes, they deal with cultural icons/phenomena from both the cultures simultaneously that indicates the grooming of an individual in such a set up as though they are part of a collage. For instance in the novel *She of the Mountains*, Vivek Shraya narrates the story of a Canadian born nameless gay and Indian goddess Parvathi simultaneously. Both these characters represent different cultural communities which share varied values, ideas, and practices. The story of the Canadian nameless gay indicates the culture of Canadian open society – independent life, same sex marriage, relationship within queer communities and so on. In contrast, Parvathi's story indicates the cultural facets of Indian society such as family life, religious myths and so on. Second generation writers thus juxtapose their home culture and the host culture through their works.

The second generation writers' engagement with dual society also deals with ups and downs of the integration phenomenon. Due to strong connections with the country of origin, first generation are less worried about their integration with host society. In contrast, second generation continuously strives to assimilate with host country. Many studies show that second generation immigrants are fascinated by multiculturalism and related policy which works as a bridge between the mainstream society and them and thereby, helped integration. Mehrunnisa Ali, in her studies present three reasons for the immigrant children to embrace multiculturalism –

> "[f]irst was their understanding that Canada's policy of multiculturalism had enabled their parents to come here from countries where they had lacked economic opportunities, political freedom or personal safety. Having visited or heard stories about their parents' countries of origin, the youth figured that Canada had improved their life chances by accepting their parents as a part of its multicultural mosaic. The second reason youth valued multiculturalism was because of the opportunities it created for them to engage with people and artefacts from many different cultures. The third, and possibly the most important reason for the youth's appreciation of multiculturalism, was a structure of feeling that they were not judged by their peers on the basis of their race, religion or ethnicity and that diverse people got along fairly well in Canada" (Ali 2008: 88**)**.

The works of second generation writers often denote the immigrant children's desire of integration with Canadian mainstream. In the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, Hardev being a first generation, helps his children integrate with Canadian society. Notwithstanding cultural differences, Hardev is fascinated towards Trudeau's multiculturalism policy which protects his children's future. "It's not about being South Asian. You know how your father feels. He's always told you, you're not half-Indian half-French, you're full Canadian. This is about something different. Hope. Hope for your future" (Uppal 2008: 69). Hardev's opinion on Canada indicates the importance of multiculturalism policy in an immigrant's life.

> … deep down, he knows he can't complain. *I'm a Trudeau man,* he has always said. He raised his children to speak English and French. To watch hockey. He bought them Golden Books and blue jeans and hung up Christmas stockings for them. Why would Birendra all of a sudden want to wear a sari at her wedding, even if it is expensive, elegant and hand-stitched with bits of gold, even if as a father he often imagined how glorious it would look on his beautiful daughter, like a fine bottle of red wine in a crystal decanter? (ibid: 120).

Like Uppal, other writers Dhaliwal, Mehta and Shraya often express their support to multicultural Canada in their works. Second generation's interest towards Canadian mainstream society, also indicates immigrant children's dissatisfaction about their parents' country. For instance in the novel *To Whom It May Concern*, Hardev's children do not show much concern about their father's home country. Hardev says, "[y]ou never cared about anything Indian before! Not one thing. You never asked me to tell you any stories about India. Not one, ever! You never asked me one question about it! You kids! I tried, I tried so hard to give you all everything, everything I

could!" (ibid: 295). There are many reasons behind the dissatisfaction among the immigrant children such in terms of family life, parents' interference, lack of individual freedom, community norms and conditions, discriminations within the community, social status of immigrant parents in host society, among others. They also find that a strong ethnic attachment with their community adversely affects their relationship with host society. In the novel *She of the Mountains*, the protagonist talks about the expectations of her community which adversely affect a 'pure' life – an individual.

> In the beginning, there is no he. There is no she. Two cells make up one cell. This is the mathematics behind creation. One plus one makes one. Life begets life. We are the period to a sentence, the effect to a cause, always belonging to someone. We are never our own…. If given the choice, we would stay here forever, sleeping. Pure and golden potential. But outside, they wait for us, sing to us, name us. They sculpt expectations we will not live up to, imagine medals we will not win, dream of highways we will not build, and hope for reformations we will not make (Shraya 2014: 7).

Multiculturalism plays an important role in the process of integration. According to Berry, "[t]he integration strategy can only be pursued in societies that are explicitly *multicultural*, in which certain psychological pre-conditions are established. These pre-conditions are: the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive "multicultural ideology"); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups; and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups" (Berry 1997: 11).

However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, multiculturalism is also cursed for being divisive and problematic. Multiculturalism, "[o]nce seen as a fair-minded, idealistic vision that Canadians could be proud of, is now commonly blamed for a host of social ills: civic apathy, loss of identity, gender inequality, fragmentation, ghettoization, even racism and terrorism. Whereas multiculturalism was once seen as good for immigrant and good for Canada, it is now a lose-lose proposition" (Adams 2009: 1). This accusation is generally expressed by critics of multiculturalism and nationalists as seen earlier. Generally says every story has two sides like that there is a contrast opinion articulated by immigrants and other native Canadians who support

diversity and integration of immigrants. According to them, multiculturalism is not only central to Canadian's sense of themselves and their country but also contributes positively to the sense and feeling of national identity. According to survey on proud of Canada, multiculturalism had climbed to second place in 2006, compare to tenth place in 1985 (ibid: 2). These studies indicate that multiculturalism as a policy is consolidating its place in Canada over a period of time. Ali's studies on second generation immigrants denote the significance of multiculturalism in their life:

> … second generation youth … strongly believe in the ideology of Canadian multiculturalism. They do so because their friends and neighbours, with their varied skin colours, languages and accents, religions, and countries of origin represent a multicultural Canada to them. They notice the proliferation of "ethnic" symbols in their surroundings and believe their existence signifies an inclusive society. They hear their parents' narratives of gratitude to Canada for providing them greater security, equity, or access to free health care and school education, and consider themselves fortunate to have been born here. Within the confines of their micro-environment they do not experience racism because most people with whom they interact on a regular basis are also racialized immigrant or their children. The youth see their racially and ethnically diverse schools and neighbourhoods as examples of Canada's inclusive multiculturalism (Ali 2008: 91).

Despite the challenges "… of respecting cultural differences while fostering shared citizenship, conferring rights while demanding responsibilities, and encouraging integration but not insisting on assimilation" (Kunz and Sykes 2007: 3), multiculturalism is there to stay. Second generation youth value it highly because of the opportunities it created for them to engage with people and artefacts from many different cultures. Multiculturalism plays an important role in the life of those who believe that multiculturalism in Canada discourages racism and social exclusion, and promotes justice and equality. Unlike Vassanji and Bissoondath who have contrasting opinions about integration in Canadian society, second generation writers propagate the same in their own strong ways.

4.5 Conclusion

Culture plays an important role in the life of immigrant communities. It works as a bridge between people even as it causes disputes among individuals. Most among the immigrant communities believe that culture is the soul of their identity in the host

society. Therefore, they provide utmost importance to conserve it. Immigrant communities have to confront the irony of facing a continuously growing number of varied immigrant populations, even as they are the beneficiaries of the effects of the same cause – multiculturalism. Second generation have reconciled with multiculturalism as a policy and negotiate their way to find solutions to the contradictions and conflicts born out of it, embracing both cultures. These balancing acts are the themes of second generation writers Priscila Uppal, Anita Kushwaha, Vivek Shraya, Ranj Dhaliwal, and Shaun Mehta who delineate the challenges faced by their generation with their own experiences. Despite the critics of multiculturalism propagating that there is no future for multiculturalism policy due to its inherent problems, the works of second generation prove that a continuous negotiation with the cultural and social dynamics of multiculturalism policy is the way ahead which allows them to embrace Canadian society.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

"All diasporas are unhappy, but every diaspora is unhappy in its own way…. Diasporas are both celebrated and maligned" (Mishra 2007: 1). The term diaspora itself denotes scattering or dispersion which defines the immigrants' condition. Generally, the members of non-diasporic communities (form the home country) have a lot of misconceptions about diasporic communities and assume a rosy picture especially regarding their life style, standard of living, limitless opportunities, relationship with host society, etc. However, growing number of research in diaspora studies uncovers the problems faced by immigrant communities in host society. In this thesis, we have attempted to focus on the life of Indian diasporic community in Canada through select Indo-Canadian writings.

The literary works of Indo-Canadian writers throw light on the life of Indian diasporic community in Canada. These works are one of the important sources with regard to Indo-Canadian studies. But, today unfortunately the number of works produced by Indo-Canadian writers is dwindling (Huggan 2008)**.** Despite the growing number of population, Indo-Canadians feel marginalised in Canada. This applies equally to the Canadian literary world as well. Most of the minority writers face a lot of hardships to get publishers for their works. Latent racial discrimination, immigrants' issues, marginal engagement of the writers with core Canadian experiences, and such other issues have made Canadian mainstream literary society relegate Indo-Canadian writers. The latter do not come to limelight that is enjoyed by Canadian writers. Despite all these issues, the support of multicultural department of Canadian government has gone a long way in helping Indo-Canadians establish their own literary community (Parameswaran 2003, Narula 2005). The personal travails of these writers in terms of various discriminations, alienation, lack of recognition, quest for identity, cultural differences, nostalgia, longing for return, are articulated through their works. There is also a huge difference between first and second generation writers in dealing with these issues

Differences with natives and their marginalised status compel Indo-Canadians to ponder about their identity. The first generation immigrants, due to their deep attachment with home country, are more bothered about the Indian part of their identity than the Canadian part. This approach of the first generation fuels conflicts between themselves and natives. However, surprisingly this attitude faces resistance from some members of their own Indo-Canadian community. For instance, the first generation writer Bissoondath strongly opposes the hyphenated identity which includes his parents' country. Bissoondath's dissatisfaction about home country and inclination towards Canadian open society prompts him to assimilate with Canadian society. In Contrast, Vassanji enjoys this very same hyphenated identity which often refers to him as South Asian, East African, East Indian, or Indian. There are several factors that influence the immigrants' attitude towards host country and its policies. The experiences in host and home country play a major role in the construction of immigrants' identity in host society. Despite citizenship, both Vassanji and Bissoondath position themselves as representatives of two different identities: one, decidedly Indian oriented and the other, equally decidedly Canadian oriented, respectively. Like first generation, second generation or immigrant children too have dual identities. But their identity qualitatively differs from that of their parents, as they have Canadian status by birth. Yet, their socio-cultural being and praxis make them an inseparable part of their parents' belonging. Hence in this case too, the label Indo-Canadian is well suited for the second generation. However, they have to endure challenges towards recognition of their identity in the mainstream Canadian society.

Natives, on the other hand, believe that the growing number of immigrant population not only makes the multicultural Canada further multicultural, but also dilutes the native cultural values. This concern hampers the appreciation of other cultures. Thus, reinforcing one's own cultural values could translate into an effort to dominate other cultures. Natives' discontent regarding the immigrant culture is endorsed by Bissoondath. Vassanji's views support cultural differences and demand recognition in a total contrast with the views of Bissoondath. While the first generation relishes cultural differences and considers it as a matter of pride for their community, the second generation encounters a lot of impediments due to it. The cultural differences

turn into cultural conflicts, affecting immigrant children. To come out of this conflict, second generation finds solace by embracing both the cultures. Second generation also makes continuous efforts to be more Canadian by integrating with the mainstream society. But this effort stays rather not so successful due to various apprehensions such as cultural differences, fear of competition, job opportunities, etc. on part of the natives. Rejections resulting from such apprehensions enforce them to stick with Indo-Canadian label and rather be supported by Multiculturalism policy. All these issues occupy substantial part of the works of second generation writers.

Generally Canada is referred to as an immigrant nation. Very few countries in the world accommodate immigrants with recognition and status. For instance, in 2018, Canada accommodated Syrian refugees with open arms when they were rejected by many countries. Prime Minister Trudeau's greetings to the Syrian refugees, "Welcome to your new home" and "You are safe at home now", signifies the Canadian government's attitude towards immigrants (The Guardian 2015). Multiculturalism policy is another feather of Canadian pride, which has become the voice of the immigrants in an internationally depressing scenario. Indo-Canadian community got recognition and protection from the numerous problems because of this policy. Despite the opposition from a handful of Indo-Canadians who are in favour of Canadian identity, the majority of them embrace multiculturalism and its policy measures, and even consider the latter as their biggest strength in their life in Canada. The engagement with issues related to multiculturalism over a period of time from first through second generation writers shows how multiculturalism has become part and parcel of Indo-Canadians' life.

5.1 Directions for Further Research

Diasporic writing is not just a simple corpus of literary work; it is part of the life of immigrants. Diasporic studies or literature is one of the prominent areas of research and academics in the contemporary academia. First and second generation writers introduced Indian culture to Canadians and vice-versa. Diasporic writers feel a sense of alienation from both the societies: from the home society, due to the physical distance and ideological differences; from the host society, due to the cultural

differences and conflicts that we have seen above. However, there are some writers who are lost in the pages of history without recognition; some more writers still languish unrecognised. The studies on these diasporic writers who are less acknowledged uncovers certain other, less-discussed issues related to the diaspora. For instance, the studies on second generation writers' works help us understand the nuanced approach to the multicultural society and the inner world of immigrant children which is less exposed to the mainstream society.

Recognition is important for every individual and/or community. History has proved that ignorance or marginalisation of communities results in serious problems to the society. Growing number of immigrant population creates demand for recognition throughout the world. But these demands mostly fall on deaf ears and also stand immigrants in nasty position. In Canada, however, despite non-cooperation from the natives, many government policies and programs have provided opportunities for the immigrants to lead peaceful life. So multiculturalism policy works as armour for the life of Indo-Canadians in Canada. Currently, multiculturalism is studied more through the lens of social sciences. However, it would do good to make studies on multiculturalism multidisciplinary. In doing so, literature has to take a greater role in identifying the subtle, nuanced and less expressed issues through which prejudices, hatred and ill will perpetrates against communities and individuals. Such states of mind can not only be explored through literary writings but can also be identified *in* them. So a heightened research in multiculturalism on literary axis should work towards detoxifying multiculturalism and related policies and thereby, orienting the individuals, communities and peoples towards a more egalitarian experiencing of the contemporary world.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Bissoondath, N. (1989). *A Casual Brutality*, Penguin Books, Canada.

--. (1991). *On the Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows*, Minerva, London.

--. (1994). *Selling Illusions: The cult of multiculturalism in Canada*, Penguin Books, Canada.

--. (1998). "Multiculturalism: No place like home." *New Internationalist*, https://newint.org/features/1998/09/05/multiculturalism, (Dec. 25, 2015).

--. (1999). *The Worlds Within Her*, William Heinemann, London.

--. (2002). *Doing the Heart Good*, Scribner, UK.

--. (2005). *The Unyielding Clamour of the Night*, Bloomsbury, New York.

--. (2008). *The Soul of All Great Design*, Cormorant Books, Canada.

Dhaliwal, R. (2006). *Daaku*, New Star Books Ltd, Canada.

Mehta, S. (2004). *Divya's Dharma*, Author House, Canada.

--. (2017). *The Seven Vows*, (Kindle Version), Author House, Canada.

Kushwaha, Anita. (2013). *For the Love of Cupcakes*, Take Two Publishing, Canada

--. (2018). *Side by Side*, Inanna Publications Toronto.

Shraya, V. "About: Biography." https://vivekshraya.com/about (Feb. 16, 2016).

--. (2014). *She of the Mountains*, Arsenal Pulp Press, Canada.

Vassanji, M. G. (1989). *The Gunny Sack*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi.

--. (1991). *No New Land*, McClelland & Stewart Ltd, Toronto.

--. (1994). *Book of Secrets*, Canongate Books Ltd, Edinburgh.

--. (1999). *Amrika*, McClelland & Stewart Ltd, Toronto.

--. (2003). *The In-Between world of Vikram Lall*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi.

--. (2004). "Am I a Canadian writer?" *Canadian Literature*, 7-13.

--. (2007). *The Assassin's Song*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi.

--. (2012). *The Magic of Saida*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi.

--. (2014). "So as Not to Die." *M G Vassanji: Essays on His Works*, Guernica Editions, Canada.

Uppal, P. "About." https://priscilauppal.ca (Jan. 5, 2016).

--. (2002). *The Divine Economy of Salvation*, Penguin Books, Canada.

--. (2009). *To Whom It May Concern*, Penguin Books, Canada.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Adams, M. (2009). "Multiculturalism ain't broke." *Canada Watch*, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies of York University, 1-5.

Alam, S. M. S. (2007). *Rethinking Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Ali, M. (2008). "Second generation youth in Toronto: Are we all multicultural?" *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 87-89.

Ali, M. A. (2008). "Second-Generation youth's belief in the myth of Canadian multiculturalism." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 40(2), 89-107.

Anderson, D. (2005). *Histories of the hanged: Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire*, W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, London.

Appadurai, A. (1981). “Gastro-politics in Hindu South Asia.” *American ethnologist*, 8(3), 494–511.

Armstrong, J. A. (1976). “Mobilized and proletarian diasporas.” *The American Political Science Review*, 70(2), 393-408.

Arroyo, J. (2016). “Transculturation, syncretism, and hybridity.” *Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought*, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben. Sifuentes-Jauregui and Marisa Belausteguigoitia, eds., Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 133-144.

Arthur, N., Chaves, A., Este, D., Frideres, J. and Hrycak, N. (2008). “Perceived discrimination by children of immigrant parents: Responses and resiliency.” *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 69-74.

Asani, A. S. (2001). “The Khojahs of South Asia: Defining a space of their own.” *Cultural Dynamics*, 13(2), 155–168.

--. (2007). “The Khojahs of Indo-Pakistan: The quest for an Islamic identity.” *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 8(1), 31-41.

Bandia, P. (1996). “Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in African Creative Writing: Some insights for Translation Studies.” *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 9(1), 139-153.

Bannerji, H. (2000). *The dark side of the nation: Essays on multiculturalism, nationalism and gender*, Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., Toronto, Ontario.

Banting, K. and Kymlicka, W. (2006). *Multiculturalism and the welfare state: Recognition and redistribution in contemporary democracies*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Barry, B. (1997). “Liberalism and Multiculturalism.” *Ethical Perspectives*, 4(2), 3-14.

Barry, B. (2001). *Culture and equality: An egalitarian critique of multiculturalism*, Polity Press, UK.

Berry, J. W. (1997). “Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation.” *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 5-68.

--. (2008). “Acculturation and adaptation of immigrant youth.” *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 50-53

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, Polity Press, UK.

Belsey, C. (2005). “Textual analysis as a research method.” *Research methods for English studies*, Gabriele Griffin, eds., Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 157-174.

Bessiere, J. (1998). “Local development and heritage: Traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas.” *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38(1), 21-34.

Bhandari, A. (2016). “A transwoman of Indian origin is making Canada look hard at racism and homophobia.” *Scroll*, https://scroll.in/magazine/817901/a-transwoman-of-indian-origin-is-making-canada-look-hard-at-racism-and-homophobia, (Jan. 5, 2016).

Bhattacharya, A. (2016). “Indo-Canadian activist Vivek Shraya pushes gender and creative boundaries.” *Hindustan Times*, https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/indo-canadian-activist-vivek-shraya-pushes-gender-and-creative-boundaries/story-ipXXOe8Y4zACEnLKAtXtZM.html, (Nov. 16, 2017).

Birbalsingh, F. (2005). *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: Neil Bissoondath: Indo-Caribbean-Canadian Diaspora*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Bower, R., Osborne, D. A. and Ross, O. (2011). “An interview with MG Vassanji.” *Wasafiri*, 26(2), 3-7.

Boyd, M. and Park, S. Y. (2008). “Who lives at home?” *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 42-46.

Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, New York.

Bray, T. L. (2003). "The commensal politics of early states and empires." *The archaeology and politics of food and feasting in early states and empires*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, New York, 1-16.

Braz, A. (2014). "The accidental traveller: Priscila Uppal's search for her fugitive Brazilian mother." *Ilha Desterro*, 67, 103-114.

Brulliard, K. (2008). "Bush welcomes new American citizens." http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2008/07/04/AR2008070402260_pf.html, *The Washington Post Company*, (Jan. 11, 2018).

Bunuel, L. (1983). "Memory." *My Last Breath*, translated by Abigail Israel, Fontana Paperbacks, London, 3-6.

Cameron, D. (2011). "PM's speech at Munich Security Conference." https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference, (Jan. 5, 2018).

Carment, D. and Samy, Y. (2012). "The dangerous game of diaspora politics." *The Globe and Mail*, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-dangerous-game-of-diaspora-politics/article544912/, (Mar. 29, 2018).

Cho, L. (2007). "The diasporic turn: Diaspora as a condition of subjectivity," *Topia*, 17, 11-30.

Colt, M. (2017). "Identity redefinition through the overcoming of cultural boundaries in Vassanji's *The Magic of Saida*." *The Independent Scholar*, 3, 3-12.

Craith, M. N. (2007). "Languages and power: Accommodation and resistance." *Languages, power and identity politics*, Mairead Nic Craith, eds., Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 1-20.

Crowder, G. (2013). *Theories of multiculturalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Cummins, J. (1992). "Heritage language teaching in Canadian schools." *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 24(3), 281-286.

Cummins, J. (2001). “Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education?” *Sprogforu*, 7(19), 15-20.

Eagleton, T. (2000). “Culture in crisis.” *The idea of culture*, Blackwell, USA, 35-51.

Fouron, G. and Schiller, N. G. (2001). “All in the Family: Gender, Transnational Migration, and the Nation-State.” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 7(4), 539-582.

Genetsch, M. (2007). *The texture of identity: The fiction of MG Vassanji, Neil Bissoondath, and Rohinton Mistry*, TSAR, Toronto.

Gill, S. S. (2010). “Politics of location: Locating home in M.G. Vassanji’s *The Gunny Sack*.” 2(4), 231-238.

Gillin, J. and Raimy, V. (1940). “Acculturation and personality.” *American Sociological Review*, 5(3), 371-380.

Girvetz, H. K., Minogue, K., Ball, T. and Dagger, R. (2017). "Liberalism." *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/liberalism, (Jun. 17, 2017).

Graham, D. (2018). “How alleged Toronto serial killer Bruce McArthur went unnoticed.” *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/23/bruce-mcarthur-toronto-gay-serial-killer, (Jun. 2, 2018).

Griffin, G. (2005). “Discourse analysis,” *Research methods for English Studies*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 91-110.

Gromov, M. D. (2014). “Facing the language border: Multi-lingualism in two novels of M. G. Vassanji.” *Swahili Forum*, 21, 60-75.

Gunew, S. (2000). “Introduction: multicultural translations of food, bodies, language.” *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 21(3), 227-237.

Guo, S. (2008). “Toward minority group rights and inclusive citizenship for immigrants: The role of a voluntary organization in Vancouver, Canada.” *Educating for human rights and global citizenship*, New York. 143-157.

Gutmann, A. (2004). *Identity in Democracy*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Gwyn, R. J. (1995). “L’Etat C’est Nous.” *Nationalism without walls: The unbearable lightness of being Canadian*, Toronto ON, McClelland and Stewart, 13-35.

Herskovits, M. J. (1937). “The significance of the study of acculturation for anthropology.” *American Anthropologist*, 39, 259-264.

Historyplex. (2018). “Cultural assimilation: Meaning and examples for better clarity.” https://historyplex.com/cultural-assimilation-meaning-examples, (Apr. 5, 2018).

Hornberger, N. H. (1998). “Language policy, language education, language rights: Indigenous, immigrant, and international perspectives.” *Language in Society*, 27(4), 439-458.

Huggan, G. (2008). “Canada: South Asian Canadian writing.” *Wasafiri*, 10 (21), 42-44.

Hutcheon, L. and Richmon, M. (1990). *Other Solitudes: Canadian multicultural fictions*, Oxford University Press, Toronto.

ICA. “Our Mission.” http://www.indiacanada.org (Mar. 25, 2016).

Jain, J. (2003). *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Jena, S. K. (2013). “Indian Literature: Diversity, nation and tradition.” *The Challenge*, 22(1), 1-5.

Kadekar, L. N. (2012). “Global Indian diaspora: A brief history.” *Global Indian Diaspora*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 19-131.

Kanaganayakam, C. (2008). "'Broadening the substrata': An interview with M.G. Vassanji." *World Literature Written in English*, 31(2), 19-35.

Kaplan, W. (1993). "Introduction." *Belonging: The meaning and future of Canadian citizenship*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 3-24.

Kelly, P. (2002). *Multiculturalism reconsidered: Culture and equality and its critics.* Polity Press, UK.

Khilay, S. (2014). "The politics of hyphenated identities." *Equity, diversity and inclusion*, LSE, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/equityDiversityInclusion/2014/06/the-politics-of-hyphenated-identities/, (Jan. 23, 2015).

King, N. (2000). "Memory in Theory." *Memory, Narrative, Identity*, Nicola King, eds., Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh, 11-32.

Kruk, L. (2004). "All voice belong to me: An interview with Neil Bissoondath." *Canadian Literature*, 180, 53-69.

Kunz, J. L. and Sykes, S. (2007). "From mosaic to harmony: Multicultural Canada in the 21st Century." *Policy Research Initiative*, Ontario, 1-23.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*, Oxford University Press, New York.

---. (2000). *Citizenship in diverse societies*, Oxford University Press, US.

--. (2003). "Immigration, citizenship, multiculturalism: Exploring the links." *The Political Quarterly Publishing Co. Ltd.*, 74(s1), 195-208.

--. (2007). *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the new international politics of diversity*, Oxford University Press, US.

Lalonde, R. N. and Giguere, B. (2008). "When might the two cultural worlds of second generation biculturals collide?" *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 58-61.

Lay, C. and Nguyen, T. (1998). "The role of acculturation-related and acculturation non-specific daily hassles: vietnamese-canadian students and

psychological distress." *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 30(3), 172-181.

Lee, J. S. and Oxelson, E. (2006). "'It's not my job': K–12 teacher attitudes toward students' heritage language maintenance." *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 30(2), 453-477.

Lovell, N. (1998). *Locality and belonging,* Routledge, London.

Mall, R. (2014). "34 South Asian victims in gang-related homicides January 2006-March 2014." *Indo-Canadian Voice*, http://www.voiceonline.com/34-south-asian-victims-in-gang-related-homicides-jan-2006-mar-2014-more-in-another-special-gang-article-on-friday/, (May 7, 2016).

McDonald, M. and Quell, C. (2008). "Bridging the common divide: The importance of both "cohesion" and "inclusion"." *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 35-38.

MEA. (2016). "Population of overseas Indians." *The Ministry of External Affairs.* Government of India, India.

Minister of Justice, "Canadian Multiculturalism Act." Government of Canada, http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-18.7/page-1.html, (Jul. 29, 2016).

Mishra, V. (2007). *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora,* Routledge, New York.

Moseley, C. (2007). "General Introduction." *Encyclopaedia of the World's Endangered Languages*, Routledge, Oxon, vii-xvi.

Naidoo, J. C. and Leslie, J. D. (2006). "Canada." *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian Diaspora*, Editions Didier Millet, Singapore, 327-335.

Narula, D. K. (2005). *South Asian Diaspora: Summer blossoms in winter gardens: History, memory and identity in Canadian fiction*, Creative Publications, New Delhi.

Nasta, S. (2008). "Interview: Moyez Vassanji." *Wasafiri*, 6(13), 19-21.

Nelson, E. S. (1993). *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, Rawat Publication, New Delhi.

Nesteruk, O. and Gramescu, A. (2012). "Dating and mate selection among young adults from immigrant families." *Marriage & Family Review*, 48, 40-58.

Nordquist, R. (2017). "Linguicism: Glossary of grammatical and rhetorical terms." *Thoughtco*, https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-linguicism-1691238, (Jun. 17, 2017).

Norgaard, A. (1989). "Niel Bissoondath: Up-and-Coming." *Aurora Online*, http://aurora.icaap.org/index.php/aurora/article/view/31/42, (Feb. 15, 2014).

Norris, M. J. (2007). "Aboriginal languages in Canada: Emerging trends and perspectives on second language acquisition." *Canadian Social Trends*, Statistics Canada, (83), 20-28.

Ojwang, D. (2011). "'Eat pig and become a beast': Food, drink and diaspora in East African Indian Writing." *Research in African Literatures*, 42(3), 68-87.

--. (2013). "The pleasures and tribulations of migration." *Reading migration and culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 21-45.

Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender, and the family*, Basic Books, Inc., New York.

--. (1998). "Feminism and multiculturalism: Some tensions." *Ethics*, 108(4), 661-684.

--. (1999). *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Ortiz, F. (1995). *Cuban Counterpoint Toboacco and Sugar*, translated by Harried de Onis, NC: Duke University Press, Durham.

Paikin, S. (2015). "M. G. Vassanji: A memoir of East Africa." (Video) *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOdL9sgb8go, (Mar. 6, 2015).

Parameswaran, U. (2003). “Home is where you feet are, and may your heart be there too!.” *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*, Jasbir Jain, eds., Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 30-39.

Parameswaran, U. (1985). “Ganga in the Assiniboine: Prospects for Indo-Canadian Literature.” *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature*, M. G. Vassanji, eds., TSAR Publications, Toronto, 79-94.

Papademetriou, D. G. (2003). “Policy considerations for immigrant integration.” *Migration Policy Institute*. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/policy-considerations-immigrant-integration, (Apr. 3, 2016).

Parekh, B. (2000). *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory*, Macmillan Press Ltd., London.

--. (2008). *A New Politics of Identity: Political principles for an interdependent world*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Park, R. E. and Burgess, E. W. (1921). *Introduction to the science of sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Podritske, M. and Schwartz, P. (2009). “Objectivism versus Conservatism.” *Objectively Speaking: Ayn Rand Interviewed*, A division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, 15-22.

Portes, A. (1997). “Immigration theory for a new century: some problems and opportunities.” *International Migration Review*, 31(4): 799-825.

Rattansi, A. (2007). *Racism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York.

--. (2011). *Multiculturalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Reddy, S. (2007). “M. G. Vassanji.” *Outlook*, https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/mg-vassanji/235391, (Dec. 25, 2014).

Redfield, R., Linton, R. and Herskovits, M. J. (1936). "Memorandum for the study of acculturation." *American Anthropologist*, 38(1), 149-152.

Reid, A. and Kurl, S. (2017). "Religion, multiculturalism and the public square." *Policy Options Politiques*, http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2017/religion-multiculturalism-and-the-public-square/, (Jan. 18, 2018).

Reidel, L. (2008). "Religious opposition to same-sex marriage in Canada: limits to multiculturalism." *Hum Rights Rev*, 10, 261-281.

Reitz, J. G. and Banerjee, R. (2007). "Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion and Policy Issues in Canada." *Belonging: Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, (3), 1-57.

Rhodes, S. (1997). "M.G. Vassanji: An Interview." *SCL/ELC*, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/SCL/article/view/8269, (Jul. 29, 2013).

Rohleder, A. (2016). "The in-between world of renowned writer MG Vassanji." *Forbes India Magazine*, http://www.forbesindia.com/article/think/the-inbetweenworld -of-renowned-writer-mg-vassanji/42213/1, (Aug. 24, 2016).

Rosenthal, D. A. (1987). "Ethnic identity development in adolescents." *Children's ethnic socialization: pluralism and development*, Jean S. Phinney and M. J. Rotherham, eds., Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Rubenstein, R. (2001). "Home matters: Longing and belonging." *Home Matters: Longing and belonging, nostalgia and mourning in women's fiction*, Palgrave, New York, 1-12.

Sahoo, A. K. and Kadekar, L. N. (2012). *Global Indian Diaspora: History, culture and identity*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur.

Said, E. (2000). "Invention, memory, and place." *Critical Inquiry*, 26(2), 175–192.

Salehi, S. (2007). "Building bridges: The role of the Indian diaspora in Canada literature review." *Centre for the Study of Democracy – Queen's University*, 1-30.

Schiller, N. G., Basch, L. and Blanc, C. S. (1995). "From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 68(1), 48-63.

Schwartz, S. J. and Unger, J. B. (2010). "Biculturalism and context: What is biculturalism, and when is it adaptive?" *Human Development*, (53), 26–32.

Sharma, J. (2013). "Theorizing diaspora and its literature for world peace." *Kafla Intercontinental*, 3, 1-9.

Sheffer, G. (2003). *Diaspora politics: At home abroad*, Cambridge University Press, UK.

Sidhu, J. (2008). "Second-generation Dilemmas." *The Star*, https://www.thestar.Com/opinion/2008/03/11/secondgeneration_dilemmas.html, (Jan. 5, 2016).

Simpson, L. (2018). "Violent victimization and discrimination among visible minority populations, Canada, 2014." *Statistics Canada*, 1-17.

Singh, J. A. (2012). "The past operates upon the present." *The Hindu*, http://www.thehindu.com/books/the-past-operates-upon-thepresent/article4058082.ece, (Jan. 13, 2015).

Smith, D. M. (2012). "The American melting pot: A national myth in public and popular discourse." *National Identities*, 14(4), 387-402.

Somerville, K. (2008). "Transnational belonging among second generation youth: Identity in a globalized world." *Journal of Social Sciences*, 10, 23-33.

Statistics Canada. (2016). "Immigrant population in Canada: 2016 Census of Population." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017028-eng.htm, (Nov. 21, 2017).

Statistics Canada. (2002). "Ethnic diversity survey: Portrait of a multicultural society." *Minister of Industry*, Ottawa.

Taylor, C. (1994). "The politics of recognition." *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 25-74.

The Punch. (2017). "M.G. Vassanji: Interpreter of memories." http://thepunch magazine.com/the-byword/interviews/m-g-vassanji-interpreter-of-memories, (Dec. 1, 2017).

The Guardian. (2015). "Justin Trudeau greets Syrian refugees arriving in Canada." https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/11/plane-carrying-syrian-refugees-arrives-toronto-canada, (Jul. 15, 2018).

Thurnwald, R. (1932). "The psychology of acculturation." *American Anthropologist*, 34(4), 557-569.

Tierney, S. (2007). "Cultural Diversity: Normative theory and constitutional practice." *Accommodating cultural diversity*, Stephen Tierney, ed., Ashgate Publishing Ltd., USA, 1-16.

Tocqueville, A. D. (2013). "Of the principal source of belief among democratic nations." *Democracy in America (Vol ii)*, Read Books Ltd.

Tonks, R. G. and Paranjpe, A. C. (1999). "Two sides of acculturation: Attitudes toward multiculturalism and national identity amongst immigrant and Canadian born youth." *Third National Metropolis Conference*, Vancouver, Canada.

Turcotte, M. (2006). "Passing on the ancestral language." *Canadian Social Trends*, 20-26.

Valpy, M. (1993). "A fear of losing the old Canada." *The Globe and Mail*, March 30, Toronto.

Wong, D. (2017). "Why our African identity matters." *Huffpost*, https://www. huffingtonpost.com/dwayne-wong-omowale/why-our-african-identitymatters_b_ 8947996.html, (Dec. 25, 2017).

Appendix I

Bio-Data:

Rajesh N. S.

Research Scholar

School of Management

National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal

P.O. Srinivasnagar Mangalore - 575025

Karnataka, India

Phone: +91 9916043766

Email: rajeshns29@gmail.com

Permanent Address:

Rajesh N. S.

S/O Shivappa N. M.

Lakkappa Lay-out

Kashipura

Shimoga - 577204

Karnataka, India

Qualification:

M. A. in English Literature, Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta, Shimoga, Karnataka, India, 2010.

List of Publications based on PhD Research Work

Sl. No.	**Title of the paper**	**Authors (**in the same order as in the paper, underline the Research Scholar's name)	**Name of the Journal/ Conference/ Symposium, Vol., No., Pages**	**Month & Year of Publication**	**Category***
1	Identity In Indian Diasporic Writing	Rajesh N S & Dr. Shashikantha Koudur	Defamiliarizing Identities in Postcolonial Literature	July 2013	3
2	Identity in Indian Diasporic Writing	Rajesh N S & Dr. Shashikantha Koudur	Eclectic Representation 3(1), 235-243	July 2013	1
3	Searching for New Land; Double Diaspora in M G Vassanji's No New Land	Rajesh N S & Dr. Shashikantha Koudur	International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities 3(2), 278-288	April 2015	1
4	Conceptualizing Multiculturalism: Reading of M G Vassanji's The Inbetween World of Vikram Lall	Rajesh N S & Dr. Shashikantha Koudur	Contemporary Discourse 7(2), 118-121	July 2016	1

*Category: 1: Journal paper, full paper reviewed

2: Journal paper, Abstract reviewed

3: Conference/Symposium paper, full paper reviewed

4: Conference/Symposium paper, abstract reviewed

5: Others (including papers in Workshops, NITK Research Bulletins,Short notes etc.)

Mr. Rajesh N. S.	Dr.Shashikantha Koudur
Research Scholar	Research Guide