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## **The Ruminations and Polemics of the World of Women in Anita Rau Badami's *Tamarind Mem* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart***

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### **Abstract:**

This paper is an endeavor to see how women saw and felt when their general surroundings all of a sudden changed. The target of the paper is to draw out the trauma of the immigrants who are snooty by the nostalgic and superb past in their alien land. Immigrants hold social stuff of their country with them through their memory. They experience subaltern status in the host land and the writers of diaspora like Anita Rau Badami and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni offer voice to them.

Anita Rau Badami is an Indo-Canadian writer who is the author of four remarkable novels. Her novels deal with the complexities of Indian family life and with the social hole that rises when Indians move toward the west. Her first novel *Tamarind Mem* manage self-contradicting sentimentality, of her Indian sensibleness depicting her recollections of her past days, portraying the descriptions of Indian local life.

Divakaruni is a South Asian diasporic poet, short story writer, novelist, and essayist. She depicts the exile of young women living in the U.S, who battles hard to continue self-personality in fluctuating outsider culture. Divakaruni's second novel *Sister of My Heart* shows a reasonable delineation of connection and sisterhood between two sisters Anju and Sudha. This paper depicts the problems experienced by the migrants because of separation, a feeling of anxiety yearning for, home and country; sentimentality and memory and thereby struggling for identity in the select novels of Anita Rau Badami and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Trauma, Subjugation, Oppression, Identity, Hardships.

**“To all those women—strong enough to be heroes: fair enough to be ladies.”**

**-Robert Fannery**

Reminiscence for home is the pith of Diaspora. Today, diverse cultural societies are the consequence of worldwide migration. Diasporic writing catches the dangerous issues and the worries experienced by the immigrants. Indians, who move to different nations exceptionally, The United States of America, Canada, England, Australia, Africa and numerous others nations, structure the diasporic network and the compositions which mirror these topics are set under one heading called “Writings of the Diaspora.”

There are stunning works by some of the mainstream diasporic novelists, for example, V.S Naipaul, Kamala Markandaya, Salman Rushdie, Bharathi Mukherjee, Amitav Ghosh, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Rohinton Mistry, Meena Alexander, Sunitra Gupta, Manju Kapur and some more. The feeling of nostalgia is frequently observed among the separated and uprooted individuals in the vast majority of the diaspora composition. To list a few *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali, *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Llahiri, *Disappearing Moon Cafe* by Sky Lee, *Sister of my Heart* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and *Tamarind Mem* by Anita Rau Badami.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a prolific author of many award-winning novels. She was born in India and lived there until 1976 after she left Calcutta and went to the United States. She proceeded with her training in the field of English by accepting a Master's degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, and a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. A portion of her works are *The Reason for Nasturtiums* (1990), *Black Candle* (1991), *Arranged Marriage* (1995), *Leaving Yuba City* (1997), *The Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* (2005), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *Shadowland* (2009), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *The Forest of Enchantment* (2019). Divakaruni is known for her cautious investigation of the settler's experience, especially that of South Asian women. Divakaruni writes to join individuals by pulverizing myths and stereotypes.

Anita Rau Badami is a Canadian essayist most popular for her honor winning novel, *The Hero's Walk* (2001). Born in the eastern town of Rourkela in 1961, Badami spent her youth

floating around India as her dad, a mechanical engineer and train designer, was moved much of the time. Since her parents both talked diverse Indian tongues, English was the connecting language for the family. Badami moved to Canada in 1991 from India. In India, she went to Catholic schools since they offered a high caliber of training all over India and was appropriate for her since her dad was moved much of the time. She began composing stories as a young lady and distributed her first when she was just 18. At the University of Madras, she earned a B.A. in English and afterward considered Social Communications Media at Sophia College in Bombay. After she moved to Canada with her better half she learned at the University of Calgary and earned an M.A. in Creative Writing in 1995. Her MA composing venture turned into her first novel, *Tamarind Mem* (1996) which manages connections in Indian families and the social issues when people travel to another country. In the US release, the title was changed to *Tamarind Woman*. Some of her works are *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (2006), *Tell it to the Trees* (2011). Her books contract with the complexities of Indian relations presence and with the abstract break that rises when Indians move toward the west.

Badami's first novel *Tamarind Mem* manages clashing nostalgia, of her Indian reasonableness depicting her recollections of her past days, portraying the portrayals of Indian residential life. She prevails with regards to weaving a story of nostalgia, investigating the ceremonious Indian life at the same time rich and agonizing. The novel is set in India and portrays the tale of one family, basically a group of females bound in a family through bliss and distress. 'Dadda', the dad and spouse are away from the greater part of his time as he is an engineer with the Indian railroads. Children Kamini and Rupa are left to the consideration of their mom Saroja, who is constantly exposed to state of mind swings. Small-time workers and the maid Linda deal with the children. Saroja, who wants to be a specialist, is compelled to get hitched by her folks. Badami features the need for a marriage for a lady in the expressions of Saroja's mom, "a lady without a spouse resembles sand without the waterway. No man to ensure you and each shrewd breeze will blow over your body" (158). Badami brings up the conventional conviction, "A lady's satisfaction lies in marriage" (159).

Saroja's battle for studying medicine is every woman's craving to get her own space for herself. She is hitched to a man a lot more established than her who can't satisfy her sentimental dreams. Saroja doesn't get an agreeable life after her marriage. Her failure makes her a harsh tongued lady. She is only a bundle enveloped by silk and gold given to the outsider for

the sake of marriage. Her wedded life is a quiet war for her. Saroja's marriage life is unaffectionate and uncommunicative, and she feels as though she lives in an "immense silence" (204). Saroja, with a demeanor of solid distinction, gets a solid corrosive persona and talks unsympathetic and impactful words that she is nicknamed as the tamarind mem.

Kamini who celebrates her Dadda's accounts in childhood gets apathetic in her adolescent, for whom she laments when she relates it while concentrating abroad; gazing at the snow banks from the windows of her storm cellar suite reviewed her youth encounters. This is what Jasbir Jain expresses in *Writers of Indian diaspora: Theory and Practice* "Yet this multiplicity of 'homes' does not bridge the gap between 'home of origin': and 'world'" (12). The novel is portrayed nostalgically from the point of view of Kamini who attempts to re-investigate the past and attempts to comprehend the unbending life her mom Saroja lived in India and why she turned out to be so sharp and brutal.

The severe and hierarchic situation in Indian families is depicted by Badami delicately in the novel and Kamini obtains numerous bits of knowledge about her kin in India. Kamini moves back to the present and portrays the climate states of a stinging, solidifying cold Canadian city where even the traffic sounds are stifled by the day off. The snowcapped mountains looking like silver cones don't cut her dejection down. Kamini portrays the unpleasant and harsh cold and her disconnection and aloneness in Canada. She believes "she is buried alive in her burrow slowly feeling sad, distressed and disconnected from her relatives" (111). The novel holds swinging back to the past in India and returns to the present in Canada as recollections of India continues gnawing into the truth of detachment in Canada.

Kamini reflects when she is nine years of age, they move to Ratnapura and there she turns out to be neighborly with a Nigerian which her mom doesn't allow and prevents her from meeting him due to his race, his shading and furthermore in light of the fact that he is an outsider. In Canada, she comprehends these encounters all the more intensely and subsequently, she recalls distinctively how her mom got her far from an African. Kamini and Roopa grow up into little youngsters, and Saroja begins focusing on their outside appearance. She doesn't permit Kamini to play in the sun that may obscure her skin. Badami portrays racial separations and skin shading predisposition that is found in the local space in India and speaks to scenes that show how these social discernments influence characters. Moms take care that young girls are not

tanned in the sun to keep their reasonable spot in the public arena, as a lighter skin chooses the social position and has become a social fixation. Disguised prejudice is a piece of the Indian families and social progressive systems are based on skin shading and it is this reality that isn't regularly discussed, which is molded by Badami. The skin shade of Indians makes it hard for them to adjust with the white Canadians, and this attention to race uplifts the effect of comparative issues in India

The topic of cultural identity has started to haunt Kamini. The word cultural identity has gotten heterogeneous and cross breed. Critic Stuart Hall says: "Towards Excellence: There are at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many others, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common... cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past... Cultural identities... undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play of history, culture and power'" (Chakravarty 79).

Consequently, it very well may be seen that even Badami's Saroja and Kamini have numerous issues in the novel they can satisfy their wants toward the end of the novel.

Divakaruni's works relate two unique kinds of universes, especially about Indo-American battling for harmony in America. Her homesickness for birth land blended with dread in the amazing area makes her hard to conform to the new condition. The novel *Sister of My Heart* is an outright case of a diasporic novel wherein she is recalling one's own nation and along these lines reproduced a custom that has isolated physically however rationally reminds one's character. It is an extended rendition of her previous short story *Ultrasound* in the *Arranged Marriage*. This novel twists around two Indian young girls Anju and Sudha who are grown up by three bereaved ladies called Aunt Pishi, Gouri and Nalini and how their life changed after marriage and the past mystery.

In the novel *Sister of my Heart*, the protagonist in the story are the two sisters Anju and Sudha birth around the same time opening their eyes to the disastrous passing of their dads likewise siblings of a similar family Gopal and Bijoy individually, on a ruby investigation venture. Sudha stays in India while Anju flies to America with her significant husband Sunil, a

computer scientist. Anju is cheerful in her marriage, and she is anxious to go to America when Sunil depicts America. It appears to be practically stunning like the pixie realm. "You can be anything in America, Angel". (16) that is unique for Anju he says energetically. It isn't just the idea or the desire for Anju yet all who are non-outsiders. "You can be what you want". (16). Marriage has changed Anju in sudden manners, where she feels everybody as an intruder. She actually felt being a diaspora.

Frederick Monika has named the diasporic network as "Trishanku". This word she has taken from Indian folklore. To her, this uneasy draw between two culture is much the same as Trishanku's curse.

"Trishanku wanted to reach heaven in his mortal state. He enlisted the aid of sage Viswamitra who propelled him skyward with his yogic powers. But Heaven refused him to enter, saying that only those who have left their body can enter heaven. He was sent back, but earth refuses to accept him now, saying she would grant entry to no-one once they left the earth. Viswamitra, meanwhile seeing this as a challenge to his own yogic powers, kept Trishanku in motion" (5).

The separation doesn't separate them genuinely yet just physically as the correspondence goes on through letters. Sudha encounters a conventional Indian daughter in law yet needs to escape from her husband other on the risk of her little girl's introduction to the world. Anju feels the requirement for her genuine help and furthermore allows to Sudha's tormenting divorce. She chooses "I want to bring Sudha to America". (18) Sudha visits America with the want to make a life for herself and her girl Dayita. Divakaruni pursues the pattern, shows America as the place where there are openings and a lifeline from challenges.

The way Divakaruni has mirrored the way toward wedding and colorful Indian food additionally center on the custom of India which is rich and changed. Anju says, "The ceremony is going to continue for a long time - the putting of sindur on the woman's forehead, the recital of more mantras, the official giving away of the bride, the recital of even more mantras". (158)

Divakaruni has blended the celebrated pieces of America just as the Indian popularities like Kanchipuram silk, All India Radio, or Akasbani Kalikata, Tanjore works of art where Anju gladly says "There's nothing like our Indian fabrics" (114).

Divakaruni embeds the custom of Shasthi Puja and the sit tight for the Bidhata Purush, a custom which appears to have developed from old Puranic fantasies: “They say in the old tales that the first night after a child is born, the Bidhata Purush comes down to earth himself to decide what its fortune is to be. That is why they bathe babies in sandalwood water and wrap them in soft red malmal, the colour of luck. That is why they leave sweetmeats by the cradle ... If the child is especially lucky, in the morning it will all be gone”. (3)

The profoundly conventional marriage customs of India are given moment subtleties: “It is the day before our weddings, and the house is filled with frenzied activity. Hordes of men are at work stringing up lights and setting up an enormous tent on the lawn. In the courtyard behind the kitchen, hired cooks bustle around huge clay nuns, constructed for the occasion, where curries and dhals are bubbling. The air is pungent with the aroma of mustard fish and tomato chutney, for many of our out-of-town relatives has arrived already and must be fed”. (146)

She delineates the magnificence of India and Indianness and womanhood in her works on migrant experience on outsider shores. This novel weaves accounts that are lavishly finished with the subtleties of divisions made among custom and innovation, or opposition and acknowledgment in a diaspora circumstance.

The beautiness of women and the Indianness can be seen in both the novelists. The idea of home, country and social character of belongingness to the spot of parentage doesn't stay from individual to person. It is delightfully depicted in the novels. In spite of the fact that the characters are ostracized, however, they additionally get migrated in another setting which offers them new difficulties and they defeat with their inward quality and expectation

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