

Exploring Societal Perplexes & Cultural Quandary in Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season*

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Abstract

Literature is a work of art blended with an aesthetic and artistic creation specifically in the written form. There are indeed many different kinds of literature around the globe, but Indian English Literature has its special qualities that make it stand out to readers. Indian English Literature is an amalgamation of various themes such as socio-historical, multicultural, and multilingual objectives. Amulya Malladi is an Indian women diasporic writer, she brings the concept of cultural dilemmas in her work. This paper investigates Amulya's second fiction '*The Mango Season*' and highlights the societal complications/ cultural confusions faced by the protagonist Priya Rao. Due to religious and cultural differences, the protagonist suffers a lot to decide between her love for her family and her love for her beloved. Cultural dilemmas are primarily the result of two living experiences that develop in one's own country and in the host land. '*The Mango Season*' is very naturalistic in its depiction of cultural confusions & societal norms faced by the protagonist who is well educated and graduated in the West while her parents are down-rooted in the Orient culture.

Keywords: diaspora, cultural conflicts, gender, caste discrimination, patriarchal & social chains, tradition

1. Introduction

Indian-origin author and diasporic writer Amulya Malladi have written seven novels. She attended Osmania University in Hyderabad, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Electronics Engineering. She has a master's degree in journalism from Memphis University in Tennessee. Having lived several years in the United States of America, Amulya presently resides in Copenhagen, Denmark. She is a high-profile diasporic Indian writer in English who is noted for her novels *A Breath of Fresh Air*, *The Mango Season*, *Serving Crazy with Curry*, *Song of the Cuckoo Bird*, *The Sound of Language*, *A House for Happy Mothers* and *The Copenhagen Affair*. Amulya's works have been translated and interpreted into eight different languages Dutch, German, Spanish, Danish, Romanian, Serbian, and Tamil.

2. Indian Diasporic Writings

Indian Diasporic writings in English has its own significance in world literature. Diasporic literature acts as a means for the dissemination of facts and helps in finding a solution for many complications in life. To look at it in a positive light works by exiles & exile literature constitute virtuous understanding. It has an amiable bond, and it aids in expanding ethics, merits and popularity. They also help in re-rooting ones cultural, traditional beliefs and values.

Toynbee's major apprehend statement expresses the psychological need to succeed in an economic nook of a migrant individual:

"In the life of a diaspora, its psychological self-isolation would prove impossible if those who practised it did not, at the same time, develop on the economic plane a special efficiency in the exploration of such economic opportunities as had been left open to them. Almost uncanny opportunities for economic specialization and a meticulous observance of jots and titles of traditional law are a diaspora's two main devices for providing itself with artificial substitutes for impregnable frontiers or military prowess". (Cohen 2008, 98)

3. Review of Literature

Many researchers have analysed the writings of diaspora writers from different perspectives. Recently, Indian Diaspora writing has become an emerging field in academic research. Many researchers have analyzed the writings of diaspora writers from different perspectives. Tushar Nair (2020), in the article titled “Exploring the Raise of Indian Diaspora Writing in English” discussed the evolution and growth of Indian Diaspora writing in English. He said that Indian migrants settled in different parts of the world in the form of indentured laborers. The first-generation Indian diaspora writers from Kamala Markandeya to Salman Rushdie and the second-generation writers from V. S. Naipaul to Rohinton Mistry have reflected on the themes of rootlessness, nostalgia, loss of identity, reinventing oneself, and alienation as the major themes in their writings. Tushar also highlighted the various theorists of the Indian diaspora and their definitions in Indian English literature. The first Indian diaspora book was written by Sake Dean Mahomet titled ‘*Travels of Dean Mahomet*’ and the first diaspora novel was ‘*Rajmohan’s Wife*’ written by Bakim Chandra Chatterjee (1834). The contemporary diaspora writers namely Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Vikram Seth, Amulya Malladi, and Amitva Gosh have made stupendous contributions to diaspora Indian Literature.

Uma Gandhi and Haritha (2018), in the research article titled “Indian Diaspora Literature in English” examined the significance of Indian Expatriate Literature in English. It focused on the lives of the expatriates and their physical and psychological turmoil in the settled land. Indian diaspora writing concentrated on the issues like the quest for identity, cultural shock, plurality, and multiculturalism. It also discussed the origin of the term “diaspora”, which was associated with Jewish dispersal. In the modern period, the expanded meaning of diaspora referred to the voluntary or involuntary migration of people. In the era of globalization, the term ‘Diaspora’ raises the question of ambivalence, assimilation, acculturation, and loss of identity. The diaspora literature also focused on the immigrant's crisis and renovation, longing to reclaim the lost native land. This paper also highlights how the term ‘nation’ and ‘identity’ played a vital role in the investigation of the ways of living life and human existence in the host land. The old generation Indian expatriate writers like G.V. Desani, Santa Rama, Nirad Chaudhuri, and Ved Metha, hardly ever recorded their practices gone since India as exiles. While these authors were not in India, they documented what it meant to be an Indian. The first-generation novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, and Salman Rushdie portrayed Indian characters and their psychological disturbances as their major themes in their writings. Desai’s *Bye Bye Blackbird* and Markandaya’s *Nowhere Man* portray how cultural injustice in contradiction of India in the United Kingdom in the 1990s isolates the characters and deepens the experience of alienation Mukerjee’s *Wife* and *Jasmine* portrays the life of Indians in USA. The second generation expatriate writers like Amitav Ghosh, Amit Chaudhuri, and Sunetra Gupta reveal the positive aspects of dislocation in their writings. These writers face the dilemma of dual identities.

Suganya. R and Selvaraj. K (2021) in the research article entitled “Representation of Cultural Patterns and Women Suffering in the Novel *The Mango Season*” by Amulya Malladi analyse the cultural distinctiveness of every human being. The researchers have focused on the struggles of a woman in a traditional and modern society and commented that the younger generation wants to live modern way of life. While the older generation wants to stick on to the traditional way of life. The researchers also discussed the portrayal of cultural displacement and struggles of women for their liberty and individuality in the family and modern society. The article broadly investigates the woman characters who try for empowerment and freedom from cultural struggles. The researchers comment that the characters in *The Mango Season* replicate the present-day Indian culture and point out how the protagonist brings empowerment in her life and also in the life of other women. The novel also echoes the joys and sorrows of human life and the researchers discuss the reality of the Indian society that has been effortlessly depicted in the novel.

Karthika. C and Gangadhara. T (2015) in the article titled “Memories, Desires, and Identities in Amulya Malladi’s *The Mango Season*” discourses on the characters' traditions, memories, desires, and identities. The researchers specifically discuss the central character Priya who is caught between the homeland and the host land cultures, leading to conflict with her. The article also examines the loss of home, longing for homeland, missing relationships, and memories of the past and its values depicted in the novel. The researchers have concluded that the protagonist, Priya faces all these problems in her life but she lives in a hybrid identity of being an Indian American.

Özmen and Cengiz Karagöz (2021) in the research article entitled “Diasporic Representations of the Orient: Re-Orientalism in Amulya Malladi’s *The Mango Season*” examines the novel concept “Re-Orientalism” of Lisa Lau. The researchers have construed that post-colonial studies can configure and analyze the modern culture as well as the artistic and literary growth in the global scenario. The researchers have pointed out that Orientalism helps to analyze literary works and their importance. They have also majorly focused on the novel *The Mango Season* and the themes of the writer Amulya Malladi. The article investigates how the concept of Orientalism was executed by the Oriental author Amulya Malladi. The researchers have traced the protagonist and the narrator as an observer who considers her country as a destination but she was unable to settle even in her own country with a state of felicity.

Amit Saha Shankar (2009), in the article entitled “Exile Literature and the Diasporic Indian Writer” explored the aspects of diaspora Indian writing in English and discussed the handful of Indian diasporic writers by discussing the writers both from the classic diaspora and the contemporary diaspora. Indentured laborers were taken as an example for the old diaspora and IT technocrats were taken as example for the modern diaspora. The dislocated positions were often termed as exiles. Amit states From this concept, we get the term "exile," which may be used to a wide range of nomadic authors in search of inspiration and new material for their works. The illustration was taken through the work *The Oxford Book of Exile* written by John Simpson. Simpson points out that the word ‘exile’ plays a dual role it is a redemptive experience as well as the dreadful experience for the migrants. The exile writers deliberately attempted to justify one end and they unconsciously longed for the other. Sometimes the exile writers moved to other countries by oppressive reign. The work of two Russian writers namely Gorkey and Solzhenitsyon’s *The Gulay Archipelago* dealt with the communist power faced by the writers and focused on the themes like ethnic segregation and racial discrimination during the period of World War II which compelled the writers to move out of their countries. Thomas Mann got experience from the refugee in Chicago and wrote their experiences in his works. The refugees moved to Herman Hesse in Germany and discussed their uprooting. These writers benefitted from the freedom of speech from their exile but they couldn’t forget the shock of their original explosion. Franz Kafka’s short story *The Departure* portrays the hero’s psychological turmoil in the exile land. Similarly, the poet T. S. Eliot explores the theme of rootlessness in his poems. Joseph Conrad was born in Poland and spent his childhood, his family was exiled to northern Russia. Indian writers in English like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan wrote about the colonial domination and the injustices of the British rule in India. The Indo- African English writers namely Ken Saro, Wole Soyinka, and Ben Okri migrated to different nations and remained in the exiled state hence their writings portrayed their psychological sufferings. The Indian expatriate writers born before independence were G. V. Desani’s origin is Kenya he lived in the US. Kamala Markandaya was born in India and settled in Britain. Indian diaspora in the Jewish sense has been denoted by the scattering of people, but it is also an evacuation of the population at a certain point of time. The diasporic Indian writers depicted the life of immigrants who settled abroad.

Vithal Rao (2015), in the article titled “Diaspora in Indian English Literature and its relevance in 21st Century” analyzed the term diaspora in the context of Indian English Literature in significance to the twenty-first century. Indian diaspora is divided into two diverse divisions: The old and the new diaspora. The old diaspora has become new through remigration, while they remigrate, they undergo a few transformations. The works of Samuel Selvan’s *Cane is Bitter* (1957) and V. S. Naipaul’s *The House of Biswas* (1969) explain the experience of the Indians abroad. This article also highlights the Indian diaspora writers settled in various parts of the world. Raj Kumari Singh is the first Indo- Caribbean poet in expatriate literature. Harold Somy Lado’s work *No Pain like this Body* depicts the struggles of Indians in Trinidad. Ahamed Aesop is an Indo-South African novelist who voiced the authoritarianism of colonizers in his writings. In Shiv Naipaul’s work, *Fire Flies* narrates the post-indentured culture. In 1993 K. S. Maniam’s work *The Return* is a semi-autobiographical novel that explores the Indian diasporic experience in Malaysia. *Haunting the Tiger* depicts two kinds of diasporic experiences representing the life of a tiger and a chameleon. The Chameleon is a metaphor for the ‘new diaspora’ and the tiger for the ‘classic diaspora’. Many South Asian expatriate writers felt doubly displaced in the settled land. Bharathi Mukherjee’s award-winning novel *The Tiger’s Daughter* deals with the immigrants returning home. The protagonist in the novel returns home after her seven years of stay abroad. The protagonist narrates her hardships like battling separation, marginalization, displacement, and cultural crisis. In the novel *Tara*, the protagonist comes back to India after her wedding. She left India as a migrant to America and married an American man and recollected all her memories of her own culture in India. Tara discusses her struggles of being caught between the two worlds. Anita Desai’s second novel *The Inheritance of loss* deals with two major characters namely Biju and Sai. Sai’s grandpa hired an Indian immigrant named Biju to work for him in the United States. Sai’s grandfather hates Indian customs and traditions. All the characters in the novel struggle to find their own identity. Biju, Sai, and his grandfather lived on two different poles. Biju followed the Indian class system on the other hand Sai’s grandfather completely followed the western living style. Racism, cultural crisis, and domination seem to be a continuous process where each factor is interconnected to the other.

Giri Bed Prasad (2007), in the paper titled “The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Between Theory and Archive” argued that Indian diaspora literature and the post-colonial theories contributed largely to the understanding on the importance of Indian diaspora writing. Vijay Mishra the prominent post-colonial theorist says that the indentured experience of the laborers had retained the unrelieved sorrow and disturbance in Indian diaspora communities. Mishra’s studies tracked post-colonial literary studies since the 1980s. His essays ‘*Post (-) Colonialism*’ and ‘*What was Postcolonialism?*’ discuss the effects and impact of the term post-colonialism and these works were co-authored with Bob Hodge, which signified Mishra’s interest in post-colonial criticism and theory. His other noteworthy works include *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora: ‘Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary’* which deals with the indentured Indian diaspora experiences and the displacement struggles of the migrant during the pre-world war and post-world war period. In the first chapter Mishra dealt with the ‘Grimit Ideology’, the word Grimit means agreement and the term ‘Grimit Ideology’ indicates a ‘sign’ that signified the experience of the ‘old’ Indian indentured diaspora in the form of a theoretical template, and a brief account of Indo- Fijian

society. The indentured plantation laborers from Fiji went as agreement workers to work in the plantation fields in the other countries. In the second and the third chapters he discussed the works of V. S. Naipaul and compared him with other Indo-Caribbean writers. He titled the chapter as ‘Traumatic Memory, Mourning and V. S. Naipaul’ where he discussed the fiction and non-fiction of Naipaul. He argued his points with references to the works of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Jacques Derrida, Ruth Lays, and Cathy Caruth. In the fourth chapter, Mishra analyzed the old and new Indian diaspora, the history of the old and new diaspora, and its evolution. He analyzed the works of prominent classic and modern diaspora writers and their works. First on the list was Salman Rushdie, a detailed analysis of the novels of Rushdie like *The Midnight's children*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, and *The Satanic Verses* was done where he dealt with the question of nationalism and the exile quest in these novels. In the next two chapters, he investigated an extensive area of cultural archives created by Indian diasporic writers of different generations, and their ethnic backgrounds and ideologies were analyzed. The works of Sri Lankan Canadian writers of mixed Tamil provenance writers namely Shyam Selvadurai and Michael Ondaatje and East-African writers like M. G. Vassanji, Neil Bissoondath, Yasmin Ladha, dealt with the concept of marginalization, sense of unbelonging which became the core themes of their writings. In the last chapter titled “The Law of the Hyphen and the post-colonial Condition”, he observed the works of second-generation Indian diaspora writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharathi Mukherjee, Monica Ali, Hanif Kureishi works and these writers' explained the meaning and their ideas of hyphen in the word post-colonialism. Mukherjee had indicated the hyphen for cultural transformation and assimilation, while Jhumpa Lahiri and Kureishi inspected the sufferings and trauma of migrants. Different diaspora writers and their notable works were brought to light in this study.

4. Role of Hinduism in Indian Diaspora Writing

Hinduism is one of the most celebrated religions like other religions in India and its neighboring countries. Its reputation and principles are greatly seen in the Thevaram, the Thiruvagam, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Abirami Anthathi songs. (Vijay & Vijay Kumar, 2022). Pratap Kumar (2003), in the study entitled “Study of Diaspora Hinduism: Some Theoretical Issues” discussed the perspectives of Hinduism in Indian diaspora writing. He says that when it comes to Hinduism, the traditional texts written in Sanskrit are incomprehensible. The clear meaning of Hinduism can be understood only through reading the classical transcribed texts of Hindus. This paper also highlighted the Indian immigrants in South Africa. The indentured immigrants were divided into two groups, the Tamil, Telugu-speaking laborers, and Hindi-speaking laborers, they were shipped from the southern part of India to different parts of the countries to work as laborers and the people were distributed and transported from two major ports. The Tamil, Telugu-speaking laborers were shipped from Madras port whereas Hindi-speaking laborers were shipped from Calcutta port. The people who were taken from Madras port between the late 80s and the beginning of the 90s had not mentioned the caste of the people. Up to 1877 Hindus who traveled to Madras were listed under the generic term called “Gentoo”. From 1878 ships that traveled from Madras port had lists containing the details of the people, from then onwards it was easy to find out exactly which caste group came from the Southern part of India during the beginning of the migration. During this immigration, the last names of the South Indian groups were indicated by caste. On the other hand, the people who traveled from Calcutta port mentioned the details of North Indians and their caste background. These careful investigations helped to understand how mobilization occurred among the South African Indians. Hindus in North India and South India shared a similar cultural milieu, these can be identified by observing the festivals of different cultures celebrated by the migrants in the settled lands. Theorists' ideas on Hinduism were observed and the researcher said that it is difficult to categorize the Hindu community as north and south Indians based on their cultural variations, moreover when it comes to real religious practice, Telugu people are more similar to Tamilians in terms of culture. In general, Hindus give preference to Vaishnava religion over the Saiva religion; at present in South Africa the Hindu community are divided into four different language groups such as Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and Gujarati. From 1860 till 1911 a small number of Bhramins came to South Africa and temples appeared in South Africa after a few years of their arrival. Indentured Indians built many temples in South Africa like the Umzinto temple (1864), the Isipingo (1870), and the Tongaat (1880). The Hindu temple in South Africa reflected a wide variety of Indian traditions. The architecture of the old Natal temple in South Africa reflected the shape of the South Indian temple. The settled Hindus continued their religious activities and celebrated the rituals mostly on Saturdays and Sundays. Diaspora Hinduism is an exemplified experience of the Hindus in South Africa; they preserved their traditions which had continued to follow and had flourished in India.

Chetan Bhatt and Parita Mukta (2000), in the research article titled “Hinduism in the West: mapping the antinomies of diaspora nationalism” discussed the aspects of Hindutva in the west and the theories, and empirical themes related to Hinduism and the Indian diaspora. The Hindutva movement emerged in the mid-1920s. It dealt with ethnicity, nationalism, religion, racism, and fascist thoughts and ideologies. The study also analyzed a detailed analysis of how Hindu nationalism can alter numerous current arguments about “race,” “ethnicity,” “hybridity,” “multiculturalism,” “diaspora,” caste, gender, and “Aryanism” were useful in interpreting the ideologies of Hinduism in India. To know about the Ethnicity and Racism of South Asian diasporans the study of the ideologies of Hindu nationalism played a prominent role. The South Asians

migrated to the West and their impact created a rapid change in the diaspora. Hindu Civilization became very important during the emergence of Aryanism. Aryans were the indigenous people of India who later migrated to the rest of the middle-East and Europe. The original homeland for Aryans was India. Hindutva and its ideologies have been increasing these days and it can be deliberately seen among the South Asian communities in America, United Kingdom, Eastern and Southern Africa, Canada, and Caribbea. Authors like Sarhadi Raj, and Searle-Chatterjee in their writings had attempted to map the difference between Diaspora Hinduism and Hindutva. Searle-Chatterjee criticized many British sociological and anthropological writings on Hinduism in expatriate writing. Hindutva activists such as Rajagopal, Mathew, and Prashad traced the multifaceted forms of relocation of urban elite employees and students who migrated from India to the United States of America.

Marion O' Callaghan (1998), in the article entitled "Hinduism in the Indian Diaspora in Trinidad" surveyed the migrated Indian indentured laborers to Trinidad from 1845 till 1917. In the early 1868 Indian migration reached the proportion of 40 percent. Migrants moved from Madras to Trinidad to work in the plantation fields but the early migration before 1866 was not successful. Later 50-70 percent of Indian migrants migrated from Punjab, Orissa, Oudh, Nepal, and Bengal to the plantation fields and the majority of the Indian migrant population settled as permanent settlers in Trinidad. The Indian migrants' population in those places reached 14,3939 in Trinidad and 29,448 members alone reached their homeland India whereas the remaining population settled in Trinidad as permanent settlers. By 1918 Indians were approximately 34% and by 1920 it raised to 40% percentage. The Indians were not Hindus completely and 10.3 percent of Catholics and Pentecostals and others. Due to the advent of indentureship, it became clear that if an Indian Christian marriage takes place the couple should adhere to the regulations of their community, and the responsibility for the registration of the marriage would fall in the hands of the minister or pastor. Moreover, the non-Christian wedding ceremonies would not be valid unless they are registered by the guardian or associated directly with the immigrants' registry. It is strictly followed that marriages of Muslims and Hindus were not legally valid and the descendants of such illegal unions were called illegitimate. "Marry under the bamboo" is a common phrase followed in Trinidad. Hindu marriages were held only under the bamboo tree and it was considered a social stigma. When it came to the question of caste it was highly debated and the ideas were opposed by Hindu scholars, particularly in India. Indian diaspora due to its rise of ethnic movements in the 1930s and 1970s Pan Africanism, and Pan Indianism came into power in Trinidad. Worshipping different deities was more prevalent in Trinidad and was practiced by different groups: the ideologies of Hinduism and worshipping methodologies were taught to the people in Trinidad. The upper-class Hindus worshipped their goddess with wine and meat but it was considered impure and it was not a part of their own religious identity. Hinduism in Trinidad was always considered a majority religion, but Christianity was dominant. Hindus in Trinidad had a remarkable belief that in schools they reinforced satsangs, pujas, and yagnas with songs and sermons. Ramayana of Tulsidas was widely accepted by Indians outside the Hindu community as it was one of the popular epics and played a vital role in Hinduism. Hindus in Trinidad recreated the aspects of Hinduism in the Indian diaspora.

Ajay Kumar Sahoo (2005), in the article titled "Hinduism in the Diaspora" analyzed Indian immigrants abroad and Hinduism avatars in Indian diaspora writing. In Indian diaspora writings, the Indian social activists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Vivekananda ironically linked the Indian community and its identity with Hinduism in their writings. The wide spread of Indian cultures transversely South East Asia can be drawn long back to the 5th century BC. The Indians emigrated to different countries in the late 18th century and this trend continued until the early 20th century and the indentured laborers were exported, under a contract-based system. It is estimated that thousands of Indians have relocated to South and East Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, and the Caribbean. The two main harbors of embarkation were Kolkata and Madras and the majority of labor-recruiting areas were Madras Presidency comprising districts of the Bhojpuri region and the people whose languages were Tamil and Telugu along with the people of North Bihar and Eastern U.P were welcomed into the colonies, when they arrived at the destined places as laborers. They were recruited for at least five years. During the late 18th century after World war II there were a lot of changes in the migration process. World war II migration was directed toward developed countries, and the large-scale migration of Hindus happened during World war II when people moved towards developed countries like the UK, USA, Canada Australia, and New Zealand. In the contemporary period, the Hindus migrated to West Asian Countries like United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia the migrant's quest for their identity became a major issue today in the global context. Since migrants' diaspora identity plays a major role. Ajay Kumar pointed out that the Indian diaspora had seen a rise in population, and different groups had raised in India over the past several decades. In the contemporary context, migrants emphasize on Vedantic values in addition like charity and anti-materialistic ideas. Immigrants abroad were identified with ethnic origin. In the Indian Diaspora, the priestly and popular form of Hinduism and the emerging hybrid immigrant variants such as Caribbean people were largely represented in the writings.

5. Backdrop of the Novel

Amulya Malladi's *The Mango Season* is her second novel, which was published in 2003 and is set in southern India over the course of a few days. The story opens with Priya Rao narrating her thoughts and worries about going back to her

hometown of Hyderabad in India. Priya is a 27 year old woman who has worked as an IT expert in Silicon Valley for the last three years. She has resided in the United States for the previous seven years. The narrative is told from Priya Rao's perspective, in the first person. She comes back to her homeland during her summer vacation which is a special season in India known as the mango season. She has been living in the US for the past seven years and she returns to India to face the major chaos in her life. She is frightened to tell her orthodox Brahmin family that she has been engaged to an African American named Nick Collins, who currently lives in America. The novel narrates the ancient customs and rituals, deep-rooted prejudices, caste systems, local culinary recipes, and the Indian tradition. Priya's parents: her mother, Radha (Ma) and her father, Nana- adhere to a conservative and traditional Telugu Brahmin caste system and they have faith in arranged marriage and are completely against love marriage. Priya opts to keep her wedding engagement with Nick as a secret from her family for as long as possible. When Priya returns to India she gets stuck between the two cultures and finally opens the secret that she has been engaged to an African American named Nick Collins.

6. Discussion and Analysis

The novel, *The Mango Season* presents the impression of the societal bewilderment and cultural ambiguities in the protagonist's life. The protagonist Priya is from an Orthodox Telugu Brahmin family. Priya is enigmatic, and philosophical and adores Western culture. Indian society has always been viewed as rigid with conventional ideas and tradition while reading the novel. *The Mango Season* readers can identify the Indian societal, traditional, and cultural practices. The novel is unique in describing the cultural confusion of the characters and the plot revolves around the protagonist Priya. Priya is a 27 year old woman she goes United States of America to do her master's at AM University and works near Silicon valley. During summer vacation she plans to return to India after her 7 year of stay in San Francisco, United States of America. She hesitates to go and her inner psychological disturbances are revealed when she plans to return to India. Priya's dilemma "I didn't want to go. I had to go. I had to go. The twin realities were tearing me apart" (3). For the immigrants, the plural identity causes a confused awareness of where they are and to whose identity they belong. Priya lives with her love Nick Collins, who is an American. She marries him but due to her strict tradition bound family, she keeps her marriage a secret from her parents. Priya is deeply conscious of Nicks's ethnicity and race Hindus from an orthodox Brahmin family are very strict in their religious values and do not let their children marry the other ethnic race. *The Mango season* clearly illustrates how ethnicity, religion, and culture played a vital role in the marriage process in India. Edward Said, the prominent culture theorist and the author of the book *Culture and Imperialism* discussed the relationship between 'culture' and 'Imperialism'. According to Said (1993) "culture is what a society is best known and thought for and it is an ordered system of meanings and symbols" (25). Priya comments on the western way of life she lived with Nick Collins after seven years, when she comes to India to reveal her love to her parents. She states "when first came to the United States, if anyone had told me I would be dating, living with engaged to an American, I would have scoffed seven years later. I wore a pretty little diamond on my finger and carried in my heart the security only a good relationship could provide" (2-3). Priya is lured by the Western culture and she forgot the strict rules which her parents instructed her when she came abroad.

Hindus strictly adhere to the cultural norms and doing against their own culture is considered a sin. Priya was against her conventional values and she goes beyond her culture. She marries an American man which was not an oriental culture and it was considered an act of doing against society. But Priya's parents forced her to marry an Indian Brahmin man named Adarsh. Priya had a conversation with Adarsh at the bride-seeing ceremony and she came to know that he had dated a Chinese woman two years ago after having three years of relationship with her he broke the relationship and returned to Hyderabad. Both Priya and Adharsh had a similar past, they both had done against their culture and tradition. In the end, Priya disclosed her secret, she revealed the truth to her family "that [she's] in love with an American...showing them the winking diamond on [her] finger (Malladi165). India has always viewed marriages as a positive institution, but love marriages had long been frowned upon. In the age-old days, the desire and choosing of the couple for marriage were governed by parents, the parent's selection was considered the best in those days, and women were enslaved and forced into marriage according to their parent's selection. India's society had changed over time. It was considered a great change. The social hierarchy in Indian society had grown increasingly complex. In this novel, Priya's parents forced her to marry Adarsh but she refused to. When Priya planned to go shopping in her home town her mother instructed her not to wear western clothes, but she refused to listen to her mother. Indian clothing system is unique and simply typical. Indian women wear saris and young girls wear salwar kameez which makes them look traditional. When Priya she comes back from the US, she completely adopts the Western culture and acts against Indian culture. However, in the beginning when she moved to the US she hated the American culture and later she got absorbed into the Western culture gradually, especially pop music and lyrics of the United States. She was against the old-fashioned ideas of her grandfather when he talked about patriarchal ideas. For instance, Priya's aunt gets pregnant for the third time, and she already has two female kids but the third time her grandpa is expecting a male heir to continue the family lineage and bond. She says that she has lost both physically and emotionally in India. She struggles between two cultures, the occident, and the orient culture. She

comments “LIFE SOUNDS EXTREMELY CLAUSTROPHOBIC” (19). Finally, the novel ends with Priya’s own decision of leaving her culture and clinging the hands of Nick Collins. She does not hesitate to leave her parents and she goes to the United States and lives with the love of her life. In the contemporary period, the immigrant’s attachment to their own culture and homeland is diminishing. Though Indian women are strong in their traditional values, with the impact of Indian Cultures, these values are losing their importance, and the immigrants live in-between spaces, neither attached to their own culture and native land nor the settled culture.

(A) Culture

Priya, the protagonist, left her home in India at age twenty to attend Texas A&M University to major in computer technology. When Priya got ready to go abroad for her studies her parents assigned her a handful of strict rules to be followed: they restricted her not to eat beef, not to go for outing much, to save money for her dowry, and above not to marry a foreigner. The protagonist Priya in the prologue narrates how she was brought up in a traditional orthodox Indian Brahmin family and how she hated few Indian conventions, she comments:

“Even though I was raised in a society where arranged marriage was the norms, I always thought it was barbaric to expect a girl of may be twenty-one years to marry a man she knew even less than the milkman who, for the past decade, had been mixing water with the milk he sold her family”. (Malladi 2003, 8)

Priya makes her mind to get away from the old-fashioned ideas and hates arranged marriage. She goes to the United States of America to study her degree in computer science. After completing her studies she finds a job in Silicon Valley, continues her job as an engineer at United States. She hates going to her native land, India and hence gives reasons to her family for many years, nearly seven long years. Finally, Priya has come to a conclusion and realises that she can no longer keep her secret. So Priya decides to visit India and she gets mentally prepared to reveal to her parents about Nick Collins an Afro-American, with whom she has been living together for more than three years in America. She states:

“I didn’t want to go because as soon as I got there, my family would descend on me like vultures on a fresh carcass, demanding explanations, reasons, and trying to force me into marital harmony with some “nice Indian boy.”

I had to go because I had to tell them that I was marrying a “nice American man”.” (Malladi 2003, 8)

Priya adores her culture, faith, moral values, and the virtues and vices of her motherland, India. She used to think from the perspective of Indian culture and says that in India if an unmarried couple live together they are considered as offenders.

“When Nick first suggested we move in together, my answer had been an unequivocal “no.” Unmarried couples living together was exactly the kind of thing I had been raised not to do”. (Malladi 2003, 111)

Priya was born and brought up in an Indian society where Indians believed themselves to be ethically strong to the Westerners. She reckons that orient culture and ethics are more higher when compared to the occident one. Priya was against western values because she believes that Eastern culture is superior to Western culture.

“Growing up, the West and Westerners were almost surreal beings. It was a given that “they” had different morals and values than “we” did and “we” were morally superior”. (Malladi 2003, 166)

Priya returns to India and visits her grandparent’s house during summer time and takes part in the rich tradition of Mango Season. In India Summer season is a grand ritual which is called mango season. Usually during Mango season Indian women harvest mangos, tattle, make fun, take decision for weddings, and they also indulge in the process of preparing the mango pickle, especially it is an Indian delicacy and the protagonist Priya grew up amidst these traditional practices. Priya and her brother Nate both associate eating mangoes with happy childhood memories. Each chapter of the novel features a different Indian mango dish. Mango Pappu (lentils), Rava laddoo (sweet balls), Aloo Bajji (potato fritters), and Avakai (South Indian Mango Pickle) are all examples of classic Indian dishes (fried potato). The central function of food in traditional Brahmin culture is described at length in the novel.

(B) Tradition

Priya and her mom plan to go shopping in their street in Hyderabad and she says that she wished to wear shorts but her mother restricts her not to wear the westernised clothes and she also says that people in India especially woman from the orthodox Brahmin family won’t prefer this type of clothing. She states:

“I would have preferred to wear a pair of shorts to ward off the tremendous heat but Ma instantly rebelled at the idea. “Wearing shorts in Monda Market? Are you trying to be an exhibitionist? We don’t do that here.”

Since I had arrived three days ago I had heard that many times. “We don’t do that here.” As if I didn’t know what we did or did not do. I was “we”.” (Malladi 2003, 12)

Priya procures a good and reputable job in Silicon Valley and she acts wild when she thinks of visiting India after few years of her stay there in America. She has been forced to visit her motherland. When Priya returns from America her

parents strictly warned her & insisted her to follow the traditional practices. She thinks of sharing a deep secret with her highly traditional Brahmin family which has forced the holy customs and ethnicities upon her. She states:

“Do not eat beef. (The sacred cow is your mother!)

Do not get too friendly with foreign people; you cannot trust them. Remember what the English did to us.

Cook at home; there is no reason to eat out and waste money.

Save money.

Save money.

Save money.

DO NOT FIND YOURSELF SOME FOREIGN MAN/ WOMAN TO MARRY”. (Malladi 2003, 10)

Apart from cultural disputes, Priya has to fight against gender discrimination, marginalization in her family to reach her goal. Priya struggles a lot in her family apart from cultural disputes and struggles to overcome gender discrimination & marginalization in order to achieve her goal. She deals with the accepted traditional rules and regulations which contain the assimilation of the host culture and she tries hard to mould herself as a typical Indian girl. Eventually she breaks all her margins of mores and gender & becomes victorious. Priya was compelled by her parents to follow Indian tradition in the mainstream but she broke all the stereotyped norms by gaining a new recognition for her. Priya was upset with their actions. She says: “I was prepped up for a fight like a homicidal but being made to do something against it will.” (Malladi 2003, 111) Priya’s denial to marry ‘good Indian man’ reveals her denial of entering into orthodox Indian society ensueing the customaries.

“Life would have been easier if I had fallen in love with a nice Indian Brahmin boy—even better if I hadn’t fallen in love at all and was ready to marry some nice Indian Brahmin boy my parents could pick out like they would shoes from the catalogue”. (Malladi 2003, 19)

(C) Patriarchal & Social chains Depression

Priya contemplates on her aunt’s life and gets anger with her aunt Lata for getting pregnant for the third time and hopes for a baby boy this time because she has two daughters already. At the same time Priya’s grandfather prays and hopes for a pure-blooded Brahmin boy to be born to take up his family lineage. She comments:

“They are hoping she will have a son and he will be the grandchild to carry on the family name.”

For an instant I wanted to tell her that she was mistaken, that Thatha was not such a chauvinist, or so old-fashioned, and then I remembered that he was all those things, that he was capable of asking his “pure-blooded” daughter-in-law to bear another child, to bear a son. Burgeoning hope crushed, I realized that he would never accept Nick; he would never accept even the idea of Nick and me. What was I going to do?” (Malladi 2003, 46)

In the book *Facets of Indian Diasporic Writings*, under the title “India of the Mind: Homeland and Diasporic Contingencies” Namrata Rathore Mahanta comments: In *An Area of Darkness*, V. S. Naipaul argues that “Anger, compassion and contempt were the aspects of the same emotion which were without value because they could not endure, and achievement could begin with acceptance” (Pradhan & Shukla 2016, 88). In “Naipaul’s India and Mine”, Ezekiel states his belief in the value of acceptance and says:

“I believe in anger, compassion and contempt, they are not without value. I believe in acceptance that incorporates all three, makes use of them I am incurably critical and sceptical. That is what I am in relation with India also. And to myself I find it does not prevent the growth of love”. (Pradhan & Shukla 2016, 88)

(D) Gender Discrimination

In the book review titled *Thinking the Difference: On Feminism and Postcolony* Anne Casting narrates on the gender issues and comments:

“The gender issue in a postcolonial context follows a tormented path, which colludes with the polemical history of the ethnocentrism of Western academic discourses and their universalist agenda. The ‘second wave’ of Western feminist critique concerned with identifying the ramifications of the patriarchal structures aiming at oppressing women as a whole, thus striving to identify a ‘main enemy’ and ‘unique type of oppression was rapidly subject to controversies within the ranks. Identifying a ‘unique enemy’ had the consequence of erasing all the specificities (whether social, racial, cultural, or sexual) of this oppression and, consecutively, of denying all other *cumulative* forms of oppression. Black Feminism, for example, denounced the universalizing elitism of such discourses, which are produced *by* and *for* the white, middle-class, heterosexual woman. Such criticism was crucial as it helped focus attention on identity...” (Castaing 2014, 2)

Thrusting cooking as a women's chore was unacceptable for Priya's niece Sowmya. "I'll just find a husband who can cook", "I said to her" (Malladi 2003, 37). She disgusted the very idea of plunging into the task of cooking to women as if it is gender oriented. As she lives in America, Priya ignores her original culture and lives her life the way she wanted to live in the United States.

7. Relevance of the novel to the scholars of Arts and Humanities

Culture is defined as the set of customs, traditions, and values of the society, community, and certain cultural groups or nations. It is also used to define definite practices followed within certain subgroups of the society. It includes languages, customs, dress codes, and systems of beliefs. Culture is derived from the Latin word 'cultura', meaning growing of civilization. In the modern era, popular culture is an emerging field in literature. Popular culture also known as 'pop culture' or 'mass culture' refers to the tradition of a particular culture. In the Western society, popular culture refers to the cultural products such as art, music, literature, dance, and film. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the term "pop culture" had been widely used and had been invented. The dominating group of customs, ideologies, and material goods in a society at any given moment. Religion is an organized belief, set of practices related to holy, sacred, and divine faith in God and supernatural beings.

India is a country with the most religiously and ethnically strong and diverse nation with cultural values. Religion and culture play a vital role in society and India is one of the secular countries with Hindus as a majority of the population. Indian culture is one of the most ancient cultures in the world. Indians are always strict in their cultural and religious values. In the contemporary period, the culture diminishes due to globalization, which raised the migration of people to various developed countries. Migrations have become a typical phenomenon in today's globalized world. People migrate in modern times for a variety of reasons, including job possibilities, medical care, and for higher education. People migrate to developed countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Canada. Globally, migration is influenced by social, political, cultural, and environmental conditions. In diaspora, people are very conscious of the roots of their origin and native. The word 'diaspora' originated from two Greek words, 'dia' and 'speirein'. The word, 'speirein' means 'to spread' and the word 'dia' means 'across'. Therefore, the term 'diaspora' means 'sow widely'. In the ancient period, the term is used to refer to the dispersion of Jews from the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In ancient Greece, the term diaspora meant scattering. When Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, it was mentioned for the first time in Septuagint in Deuteronomy 28:25.

Amulya's *The Mango Season* is the best example of a diaspora novel which exemplifies cultural and religious contradictions. The novel revolves around the central character Priya. *The Mango Season* explores Indian culture, tradition, and religious aspects. The protagonist's psychological turmoil is beautifully depicted by the author. She dangles between native culture and Western culture. When she was abroad with Nick Collins, she was exposed to different cultural domains. After seven years of stay abroad, Priya comes back to her homeland, India and views India from a different perspective. Priya narrates her incapability to accept herself with the Indian culture during her stay in India. She was acquainted with the occident culture and she finds oriental tradition and culture as hindrance to her life. When she was in a relationship with Nick Collins, she thought that she had escaped from the eastern culture of arranged marriage. The institution of marriage is given utmost importance in Indian life. In India, arranged marriages are socially accepted norms but Priya doesn't want to accept. She says that she is unable to marry a stranger. He states "It is like finding a job" (35). In occident culture, there are no hard and fast rules for marriage. Orients strictly follow culture whereas in the West there are no such rigid rules. Once a child crosses adolescent age, he/she has absolute freedom to marry anyone of their choice.

Through the character, it is explicit how the western culture attracts the orients. Priya was from a tradition bound brahmin family, bought up by strict traditional parents. She moved abroad for her master's with a handful of strict rules, her parents strictly instructed her not to eat outside food, to save money for her dowry, ought to wear traditional clothing but she followed none. She wears westernized clothes and goes on an outing in the late evenings. She goes beyond her culture: eating beef is considered a sin in an orthodox brahmin family, but Priya she eats beef and completely transforms herself into a Westerner. She gets influenced by the occident culture and tries to mimic the westerner's lifestyle and behavior.

The themes in the novel *The Mango Season*, are very beneficial for scholars working in Arts and Humanities specifically in Diaspora studies. It depicts how the immigrants are affected by the Western culture when they move from their homeland to settle in the host land. The theme of the novel also portrays the tradition followed by the orthodox Telugu Brahmin family in Hyderabad. She overcomes all the traditional practices and hates her tradition and appreciates the Western tradition higher than the Eastern tradition. The novel reflects how diasporans face religious problems. The scholars working in the field of migrant studies can understand immigrants' dual state of mind and adaptability. The scholars can also comprehend the similarities and differences between the two cultures and the psychological, physical, and social problems and disturbances faced by immigrants.

8. Conclusion

Priya overcomes all the hindrances that comes her way and succeeds in clenching the hands of the man of her love and moves on. Although time differs and it changes people but still in the east people have not attained their freedom. Especially Indian women need to struggle a lot to fulfil their dreams. They long and want their family to trust, love, accept and respect their uniqueness and individual identity. In spite of all her difficulties Priya faced in the society and her cultural shock she believed that her choice was correct & she never looked back. Finally she succeeded in her mission. Through the character of Priya one can learn, how to overcome our societal attitudes that act as an obstacles in the life of people and feel the experience of being trapped amid the two cultures; the east and west. Here the character Priya represents the social evolution of a woman. The protagonist stands as an epitome of salvation of Indian women over the societal issues on sexual, emotional and other behavioural grounds. Amulya makes her readers believe that everything is probable with strong will power & fortitude. The novel *The Mango Season* is an evocative journey of the emotion of women and displays the actuality of present- day Indian society. Women attempt to discover their position and self in society. This study is solely a qualitative analysis with a thematic approach. The future scope can be extended to the other literary works of the author.

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