



Diasporic Consciousness: Family, History, Identity, and Language in Selected Poems by

Sujata Bhatt

Sadia Nazir¹, Mahnoor Sher²

ABSTRACT

The present study looks into the selected poems by Sujata Bhatt; “Partition” (2000), “A Search for my Tongue” (1988), and “A Different History” (1988), with special reference to Clifford’s ‘Diasporic Consciousness’. It aims at exploring the several different aspects of selected poems by Bhatt, such as family portraits, displacement, language, identity, history and endeavors to confirm these to the theoretical framework of ‘Diasporic Consciousness’ put forth by Clifford (1994). A close reading technique is undertaken in order to analyze the selected poems by Bhatt through the lens of Diasporic Consciousness. Moreover, this close reading method contributes to investigate the reasons behind Bhatt’s employment of the aforementioned concepts in the selected poems. The article follows a qualitative research methodology to inquire the notions of family portraits, dislocation etc. keeping in view Bhatt’s tendency towards diasporic consciousness and its portrayal in her poetry. Hence, this study is an attempt to have a deeper insight into the traumatic experiences of an Indian layman during and after the Partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947. By presenting an account of the diasporic sufferings due to Partition 1947 in selected poems by Bhatt, this study retains its social significance for its universal relevance and validity of the concept of diaspora. It holds its importance in literature because it helps the readers easily comprehend the diasporic hardships of people like Bhatt by relating them to the major political movements in many other countries around the world, that caused their country folks to experience the same dilemma of being diasporas e.g. Afghan, Iranian, and African diasporas.

Keywords:

Diasporic Consciousness,
Diaspora,
Family,
History,
Identity

¹BS Scholar, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, Pakistan, Email: sadianazeer33@yahoo.com

²BS Scholar, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, Pakistan, Email: kmahi6771@gamil.com

INTRODUCTION

Yemini and Berthomière (2005) cite Safran (1991 & 1999) to define the term diaspora: “expatriate minority communities: 1 that are dispersed from an original “center” to at least two “peripheral” places; 2. that maintain a “memory,” vision or myth about their original homeland; 3. that “believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host country;” 4. that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return when the time is right; 5. that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland, and; 6. of which the group’s consciousness and solidarity are “importantly defined” by this continuing relationships with the homeland (p. 264). “The term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement” (Clifford, 1994, p. 308).

From the abovementioned definition, it can be interpreted that Diasporas make people feel dissociated from their homelands, thus invoking in them the feelings of exile, alienation and displacement from their origins and roots. All their lives they struggle to find their place in both the native land and the foreign land. This paper also investigates the same diasporic phenomena but in terms of what Bhatt considers as the tragic experiences of being a diaspora herself and having witnessed her country folks facing catastrophe of Partition 1947.

Clifford (1994) defines Diasporic Consciousness as:

“Experience of loss, marginality, and exile... are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement. The Constitutive Suffering coexists with the skill of survival: strength in adaptive distinction...Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension” (p. 312).

Clifford’s definition suggests that ‘Diasporic Consciousness’ is the state of being aware of one’s scattered identity. Since the Diasporas can identify themselves neither completely with the host communities (Safran, 1991) nor with their native communities, hence, they are caught in a terrible condition of suffering from loss of their roots (Newland & Patrick, 2004, p. 1) and at the same time trying even harder to survive in a new land. The same concept is brought into focus in selected poems of Sujata Bhatt within the parameters of Partition 1947 with respect to the ideas of family, history, language and identity. Her selected poems can be called an epitome of diasporic consciousness as they shed light on the individual’s efforts to survive with his/her hyphenated identity.

‘Family’ denotes the ideas of belonging, close associations, love, memories, and most importantly one’s roots. In diasporic context, the notion of family serves a significant purpose since the whole family structures and relationships are ruined as a consequence of diasporic exile and migration (Sorensen, 2007, p. 156). For this reason, the present study analyzes the terms ‘family’ and ‘diaspora’ as closely interlinked for the impact of Partition 1947 played a vital role in the distortion of several family structures. Even if not distortion, those families bore great physical and psychological torture of being away from their history and homelands. In selected poems of Sujata Bhatt, she also talks about how families of Indian subcontinent went through a whole lot of trouble, loss of history, home and blood relations. Diasporic migration most often leads to the migrants being distant and away from their roots and the good old days they spent

with their families, around relatives and friends. Migrating to an alien country means leaving their family history behind. Bharali and Dash (2017) substantiate this by stating that “dislocation and experience of homelessness and rootlessness ignite an irresistible sense of nostalgia in the mind of the diaspora for the lost paradise (p. 33)”. This proves that diaspora families always endeavor to retain their history alive through the memories of past and this is what Bhatt also discusses in her poetry. Additionally, she enlightens the readers about the constant strive of diasporas to search their position in this world.

This study offers an understanding of the way’s displacement (caused by “violations of human rights” i.e. Partition 1947) and internal conflicts of a country effect people’s lives and their outlook towards the world. People turning into Diasporas lack the homely feelings, their cherished origins, and suffer the loss of identity. Their whole life become a struggle to seek a place in the world where they will be wholly accepted and welcomed. The partition of Indian subcontinent led the people to go through the same kind of displacement and tragic migration which ultimately resulted in diasporic victimization. Bhatt being a diasporic poet also writes about this diasporic victimization and consciousness in her poetry by relating this calamity to Partition 1947. About displacement, Anne (2007) also claims that “Displacement denotes not merely the movement or removal of persons from one place to another, but is also suggestive of up rootedness, so that a displaced person is deprived of ‘place’, his/her place taken over by other people of forces (p. 20)”. Her thesis cites Cohen and Deng (1998) who define displacement as a “Forced removal of people from their homes through..., internal strife, systematic violations of human rights and other causes... (p. 20)”.

An individual’s cultural identity is not confined to the individual himself but is connected to the whole community he/she lives in. The notion of identity, therefore, is like a bargain or settlement where a person needs to accept others and in return, get to be accepted as well. Abdulbari (2013) argues that “Identity...refer to the way people define themselves or are defined by other individuals (p. 391)”. According to Clifford (as cited in Abdulbari, 2013) “Identity is conceived...as a nexus of relations and transactions (p. 392)”. However, the diasporic identity lacks the aspect of ‘acceptance’ in the concept of ‘identity’ mainly because of the language differences. Lourdes (2008) writes, “One repeatedly encounters poignant stories of having to forget one’s language in order to assimilate or acculturate to a new environment. Sadly, this forgetting often includes losing one’s roots. (p. 66)”. Same is the case with majority of the Diasporas who are unable to identify themselves with their ancestral and host community. They find it difficult to speak the language of their homeland, hence retaining ties with their roots, in a strange land which expects the diasporic immigrants to communicate in the dominant language of their host countries. The Diasporas keep on oscillating between belonging to either their domestic land or the foreign one. Such fluctuating identities cause the Diasporas to question their position in the world. The same query, doubt, and sense of loneliness is found in Bhatt’s poetry where she, through her characters, ponders over the predicament of dual identities that the Diasporas are stuck in.

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to find:

- Explore the traumatic effects of Partition, 1947 on Indian families in “Partition” (2000) by Sujata Bhatt
- Investigate the consequences of diasporic migration in form of loss of native language of Indian Diasporas in “A Search for my Tongue” (1988) by Sujata Bhatt
- Highlight the brutality caused by the colonial politics of language in 1947 in “A Different History” (1988) by Sujata Bhatt

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jaya (2017), in her study, defines the term ‘diaspora’ and then proceeded with the description of how the Indian diaspora writers contributed to the literary field. She discussed the major themes of diasporic writing which include isolation, immigration, and cultural dislocation. Jaya (2017) introduced Jhumpa Lahiri as one of the most prominent Indian Diasporic authors and spoke of one of her novels entitled as *The Namesake* (2003). Also, she stated how the Indian Diasporas, in Lahiri’s novel, try hard to fit in in a new environment and a new culture. She further delineated instances of the difficulties they encounter while living in their host country. Few of these instances include the loneliness and alienation the novels’ characters feel in different stages of their lives in America.

Moreover, Jaya (2017) claimed that the Indian diasporas in America are mostly fighting to seek a balance between their collapsing identities, both the native and the foreign one. She outlines both the sides of the picture Lahiri (2003) painted in her novel. The drastic picture of the hardships Bengali Indian family bear after migrating to America as a result of Partition 1947 and the picture of the family getting all settled and living a refined and decent life in America presents a contrast in Lahiri’s (2003) novel. This contrasting depiction and the contrasting effects on the family members unveil how Partition 1947 and diasporic identity changed the lives of many immigrants back then. Jaya incorporates this thought into her study through a brilliant critique of the novel’s characters, their dialogues, their inner thoughts and processes.

Chetia and Dash (2017) talked about the hybrid and diasporic identities in Rushdie’s novels by discussing the notions of cultural dislocation, migration, home, roots, and the consequent alienation it causes among the Diasporas. They suggested that identity and home are no longer confined to one meaning or one geographical place respectively. They brought into light the fact that the notions of one’s home and identity continue to take on different meanings with the passage of time. Chetia and Dash (2017) also reflected upon the tragic and painful process of becoming a diaspora along with the nostalgia and longing for home and native community. They cited Rushdie and other diasporic authors to define what it feels like to be a diaspora and bear the harsh outcomes of it.

The dilemma of being an insider and outsider at the same time is the most difficult point in the lives of Diasporas since they live in a foreign community knowing the fact that they might never be wholeheartedly accepted in their host community nor could they identify themselves fully with their homelands (Chetia & Dash, 2017). They argued upon the ideas of exile, cultural displacement, and identity crisis by investigating Rushdie's novels; *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), and *Shame* (1983) and asserted that just because some of the diasporas fit in or adopt the traditions and cultures of their host countries does not actually mean that they belong there. Fitting in a whole new surrounding and feeling a sense of belongingness to a place are two entirely different phenomenas (Chetia & Dash, 2017). Their study concluded with the idea that the diasporic migration gives rise to a marginalizing attitude towards them which is tragic and unfortunate for the people who already suffer from the loss of their homelands and native communities.

Kumari (2014) studied Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage* (1995) by focusing the ideas of racism, marriage, economic differences of countries and divorce etc. She talked about the importance of understanding the concept of transnationality and contended that the term diaspora has been used with different meanings throughout the years. After reflecting on the four phases of diasporic consciousness, Kumari (2014) declared that currently many women writers dominate the post-colonial literature with their works on diasporic themes and immigrant experiences. Divakaruni's life as an Indian diaspora in America integrates a struggle of striving to adjust in an alien land and seeing the discrimination of blacks in a land of whites (p. 60).

In her short story collection entitled as *Arranged Marriage* (1995), Divakaruni composed the tales of the courage and exploitations of Indian diasporic women who are caught in between two worlds– the native and the foreign. This work won Divakaruni several awards due to its exceptional narration of the depression, desertion of the native culture, abusive treatment of diasporic women as well their audacity in dealing with such marginalizing attitude in America. Kumari (2014), in her study, gave relevant examples of Divakaruni's women characters from *Arranged Marriage* (1995) who faced the fears of leaving their homelands, parents, and friends because of them being bound in relationship of an arranged marriage. Moreover, Kumari (2014) also emphasized Divakaruni's realistic portrayal of the thoughts of Indian diasporic women living in America, who did not want to back to India, their homeland, because of the strict and conservative society for women.

This showed how the experience of diasporic migration was all different for every person. For some, it was confining and depressing meanwhile for others, it was liberating. Divakaruni's attempt to represent the immigrant experiences also involved the racist treatment of Indian Diasporas at the hands of Americans which ultimately resulted in shattered beliefs and questioning one's own identities. She further stressed how Divakaruni wrote about the third condition of Indian diasporic women characters where neither did they feel liberated initially nor did they feel lonely in America. Rather they went through a process of slow and eventual evolvement and gradually started accepting and loving their host country, the opportunities and the new prospects it offered.

This amazing feminist account of women's life, troubles, and misfortunes in America describes that life as a diaspora is extremely bitter at first. However, it becomes relatively easier with time

once the Diasporas resolve their inner conflicts of belonging to either one of their two identities and cultures.

Kaur (2018) examined the most common problem of Diasporas in general and Indian Diasporas in particular. She states the characteristics which classify the diaspora which include living outside their territories, possessing a myth of their native land, its history, an inherent desire of eventual return to their homelands, sense of alienation in a foreign country, and last but not least they aspire to work for the benefit and betterment of their home countries.

Kaur (2018) refers to Sidhwa's writings and her experience of witnessing Partition 1947 at a very young age. She illustrated the frame of mind Sidhwa had at that time with all the emotional trauma and the horrifying incidents, killings happening during that historical event. Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988) demonstrated the unpleasant and disturbing picture of Partition 1947 where the protagonist, under the influence of the scary and shocking killings, became a murderer himself (Kaur, 2018). Sidhwa, through *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), establishes herself as a true diaspora retaining the characteristic loyalty and sincerity to her homeland with the help of her diasporic consciousness (Kaur, 2018).

Besides Sidhwa, Kaur (2018) also mentioned Rushdie as a major diasporic author whose *Midnight Children* (1980) had been a huge success. Kaur (2018) referred to Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988) and the controversy it provoked resulting in Iran and United Kingdom breaking off their relations. She argued how Rushdie, being a diaspora, found himself in a position where he had to survive his suffering— living in exile in a foreign land along with the death sentence issued against him.

In addition, she talked about the displacement, identity crisis, and rootlessness Rushdie's protagonist faced in *Midnight Children* (1980), struggling to find a place to live while moving between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Also, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971), *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), and *The In-between World of Vikram Lall* (2003) are other significant post-colonial narratives of diasporic sufferings by Mukherjee, Lahiri, Vassanji which Kaur (2018) investigated in her study to reflect upon the predicaments the diasporas bear in order to survive in this so-called multicultural and welcoming world.

METHODOLOGY

Diasporas around the world, about their dual and inconsistent lives. The qualitative methodology is embedded with this theory which helps in giving a deep insight into the lives of diasporic characters and narrators in selected poems of Sujata Bhatt. The theory states that the Diasporas are and have always been trapped in an unending excruciating struggle of positioning themselves in their host communities and identifying themselves with their native countries. Being fully aware of their position in the alien land, they take pains to survive their suffering.

The qualitative methodological technique delves into the theory and plays a crucial role in thoroughly familiarizing the readers with the notions of family, history, identity, and language under the umbrella term 'diaspora'. The adopted methodology, aligned with the theoretical

framework, helps the researcher in successfully investigating the ways Bhatt elaborates upon multiple concepts in her poetry by incorporating her diasporic consciousness. Clifford (1994) states the unfortunate and saddening status of the diasporas who feel tormented and isolated meanwhile remain strong and positive for the ray of hope that one day they might overcome their suffering. This theoretical framework is appropriate and applicable to selected poems of Bhatt because of the compatibility and correspondence of the concepts the author and the theorist discuss. Conducting the study with the lens of qualitative methodology well-assisted the researcher by giving her a chance to comprehensively analyze all the intricacies employed in Bhatt's poetry, which in turn allowed her to extract the satisfactory results. Embedding qualitative methodology with diasporic consciousness makes the study more emphatic and meaningful by giving the researcher an opportunity to explore the multi-faceted and deep-rooted ideas in the selected poems.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The very first poem by Bhatt that this work takes under consideration is "Partition" (2000). This poem conforms to Bhatt's desire to pass on to the readers the disastrous effects of Partition 1947 on her family member— her mother. She states in "Partition" (2000):

"She was nineteen-years-old then/And when she stood in her garden/She could hear the cries of people/Stranded in the Ahmedabad railway station" (p. 3).

These lines depict the trauma Bhatt's mother went through only when she was "nineteen". At such a young age, she although stood in a "garden" but all she could hear was "cries" of people. These cries prevented her to enjoy the beauty of her "garden-might be symbolic of India, her once beautiful homeland which was now surrounded by mournful cries, as if a paradise turned upside down.

By giving the contrasting sensual imagery of "garden", "cries", and "Ahmedabad railway station", Bhatt paints a realistic picture of Partition 1947 and the horrors it brought along. Her Diasporic Consciousness produces in her writings the true sense of lamentation and melancholy since she is aware that neither could she do anything to save her country from division nor could she stop the cruelty that was happening at that time, but her pen poured down her mother's experiences in a deep tragic way that shows how her consciousness of being far away from her country was killing her from inside. Keeping in view Bhatt's mother's experience of Partition 1947 as a woman, Ali's (2019) illustration of traumatic effects of this event on Indian women in general reads:

"The trauma of women needs a special mention. They are more vulnerable than men, potentially more accessible, easy to harm and undoubtedly more coveted. Caught in the midst of Indian partition, they became a doubly displaced entity, which lost more than a home and a country and became at once a refugee and an outcast. Their agony was augmented by the question of honour, both of family and religion, if abducted and taken to camp of the enemy. The greatest trespass of honour and boundary is the birth of children to these abducted women, particularly in as traditional a society as India" (p. 5).

In “Partition” (2000), Bhatt chooses to pen down her mother’s encounter of Partition, rather than employing any fictional character might be to add a realistic touch to the narration. Her diasporic consciousness allows her to identify with the heart-wrenching tale of her mother’s early years in India in her poetry. Another significant instance suggesting Bhatt’s diasporic consciousness in “Partition” (2000) can be:

“She felt it was endless— their noise—/A new sound added to the city./Her aunt, her father’s sister,/Would go to the station everyday/With food and water—/But she felt afraid,/Felt she could not go with her aunt—/So she stood in the garden/Listening (p. 31)”.

While adhering to the notion of ‘family’, it is important to notice Bhatt’s incorporation of the other member of her family contributing to spread a little positivity among the chaotic surroundings of Partition. Her aunt used to take food and water to the victims of the horrible episode of Partition 1947. As Clifford (1994) asserts in “Diaspora” that the “Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension”, in the same way, Bhatt seems to interweave the ideas of agonies faced by the people of her country due to Partition yet at the same time she employs an optimistic image of people helping each other, feeling each other’s pain and distress. This way Bhatt retains the quality of being a diaspora and its consciousness for she illustrates both the sides of the picture; lamenting over the turmoil of the country and seeking comfort in the idea of humanity.

These lines also exhibit an equally significant point i.e. on one hand she shows a woman (her mother), fearful, worried, who “Felt she could not go with her aunt” due to the unfavourable circumstances. On the other hand, Bhatt mentions a woman, (her aunt) daring, fearless of what might happen if she steps outside of her home to help those in need. This might be symbolic of her unconscious inclination to reflect the diasporic consciousness of “Constitutive Suffering” that “coexists with the skill of survival” (Clifford, 1994). Likewise, she delineates the characters in “Partition” (2000) in the same way by presenting both the constitutive suffering more in her mother and the skill of survival possessed more by her aunt. Another key point relating to Bhatt’s integration of the concept of family’s suffering through her diasporic consciousness can be traced in the lines from “Partition” (2000), “Even the birds sounded different/And the shadows cast by the neem trees/Brought no consolation...And each day passed with her/Listening to the cries of the people.”

Here she endeavours to reveal her mother’s reminiscence of the time in her homeland where the trees offered shadows of relaxation and comfort thereby, securing people from the hardships conferred upon by fate. Residing in a strange land, away from her ancestral home, her mother must have felt nostalgic about the good days of her life in India.

However, Bhatt quickly shifted the tone of her poem from positive note -- “shadows” of comfort and safety to negative note -- “no consolation.” The purpose of this technique might be to sustain the originality and ingenuity of the narrative of Partition 1947 shown in her poem through the memories of her mother. By keeping up with her diasporic awareness, Bhatt might be attempting to demonstrate the dreadful time span of 1947 in India when all kind of sounds she could get exposed to were the “cries of the people” instead of the pleasant chirping of birds. Also, she talks about the home her mother longed for while living abroad. Bhatt’s mother’s diasporic longing

and love for her homeland can evidently be seen in Bano's (2014) work who quotes Rushdie, "It may be that...exiles and emigrants expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt...who is out of country and even out of language may experience this loss in an intensified form. It is made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his being present in a different place from his past, of his being elsewhere (p. 4)".

Important to realize is another point raised by Bhatt in "Partition" (2000) which clearly projects her diasporic sentiment of belongings to her homeland, "How could they/ have let a man/Who knew nothing/ About geography/ Divide a country?" Bhatt, turning from her mother's narration to her own viewpoint puts a rhetoric yet striking question. She mourns the division of her motherland at the hands of selfish politicians which led her family ties severed with her homeland whereas several other families to ruins. Dalrymple's (2015) statement validates Bhatt's viewpoint as he denotes about Partition 1947, "...violence on the streets between Hindus and Muslims began to escalate. People moved away from, or were forced out of, mixed neighborhoods and took refuge in increasingly polarized ghettos. Tensions were often heightened by local and regional political leaders (n.d.)".

To sum up, it can be said that Sujata Bhatt's "Partition" (2000) is the true embodiment of the feelings of her own and other the diasporic families who are still confronting the haunting reminders of dislocation and homesickness due to Partition 1947.

The second poem to start with is "A Different History" (1988) in which the notions of history of cultural diversity and formation of identity through language are investigated. Bhatt states that "Great Pan is not dead; /he simply emigrated/to India. /Here, the gods roam freely" With the help of her diasporic memory and consciousness of not being a part of her motherland, she sheds light upon the days before Partition 1947 when Indian subcontinent was celebrated for its wide variety of cultures and sects living together in harmony.

In this poem, she combines the images of Greek god, "Pan" and Indian goddess "Sarasvati" in order to unveil before the readers, the picture of true peace, tolerance and acceptance that was once so in vogue in India. She focuses more upon the reverence people bestowed to knowledge, literature, and books irrespective of their religion or culture. They accepted each other's existence with such modesty that great care was taken in order not to disrespect or commit a "sin to shove a book aside/with your foot," or a sin to "slam books down/hard on a table" or "disturbing Sarasvati" and so on.

People at that time were considerate of one another without any shadow of hatred or enmity based on the difference of their cultures or religions. That, claims Bhatt, was in fact, "A Different History" (1988) she witnessed before coming to realization of her diasporic state. She might be yearning for the loss of that forbearance and open-mindedness of people of subcontinent before Partition 1947. This tragic historical event took away the positive image of India and sowed the seeds of bitterness among people with such affirmation that the current generations are bearing the consequences of that hatred.

Here, Adwani and Raviya's words can be cited who pointed out, "what we really are"; [and], since history has intervened - "what we have become" (2018). Adhering to Clifford's (1994) definition of Diasporic Consciousness that describe diasporas living the "loss and hope as a defining tension." This diasporic loss in "A Different History" (1988) can be taken in the context of loss of peace languages were once associated with. Also, the "hope" might be taken as Bhatt's inner desire to make her readers aware of the central role of language in shaping their identities, either into oppressors or into victims. She proposes a rhetoric query, "Which language has not been the oppressor's tongue? Which language truly meant to murder someone?" Through these eye-opening lines, Bhatt might aim to convey a food for thought to the readers about how languages were perceived, during 1947, as spreading violence.

By asking this rhetoric question, she might be emphasizing the fact that it is not the language that evokes in humans the element of barbarity but human instinct itself could not bear to see its language, heritage being looked down upon or marginalized. Therefore, Bhatt might be recalling the inhumanity and ruthlessness people directed towards each other on linguistic basis during Partition 1947. Away from her homeland, Bhatt is more sensitive to the killings and hatred of people of different cultures towards each other which made human relations so worthless that even as minor as a linguistic difference became a cause to deplore a person at that time. Bhalla (1999) in his "Memory, History, and Fictional Representations of the Partition" writes about Reza's Aadha Gaon's description of how linguistic differences led to the rise of hatred among Hindus and Muslims of India during 1947. He states, "Aligarh students, who insist that Urdu is the language of the Muslims, and the claims of the Hindu politicians that Hindi is the language of their tribe,...They dismiss English contemptuously as 'gitir-pitir',...They know that to abandon their own language, which carries the secret lore of their lifetime, is to become defenceless; to erase the memories enshrined in their language is to live like 'mohajirs'...."Lord in heaven, have mercy!" exclaimed Saiyda's mother, gently slapping her cheeks in repentance, "Have they started writing the name of Allah and the Prophets in that wretched Hindi now?" "I've heard of Urdu, Arabic-Persian but what's this language that's come up now".

Abdulbari's (2013) idea justifiably contended that 'identity is used to describe the way groups...are defined by others on the basis of...ethnicity, religion, language, and culture'...' On one hand, this passage from Bhalla's research article reveals the linguistic hostility aroused among people of subcontinent in 1947, on the other hand it also claims that the Shia Muslim women at that time used to: "Sing nauhas...not only for the sacrifice of Imam Hussain, but also for the ordinary men, women and children exiled and slaughtered during the partition." (Bhalla, 1999). This also conforms to Bhatt's demonstration of ideas regarding the role and purpose of language. It can either instill hatred in the hearts or love and humanity. It can either lead one to violence or to mutual care and recognition. She might be attempting to detach the negative projection of a language as "oppressor's tongue" as well as denying the role of language as "to murder someone".

In short, Bhatt, in "A Different History" (1988) underlines the role of language that can greatly determine what one becomes in the long run. She beautifully combines the concepts of history, identity, and language in this short poem by seeing it through the lens of her diasporic consciousness. Finally, this paper deals with a significant poetic work "A Search for my Tongue" (1988) penned down by Bhatt that cannot go unnoticed when it comes to talk about the identity

crises the diasporas all around the world are facing due to the loss of their language. Since Bhatt herself migrated thrice, and has a knowledge of more than two languages, her diasporic awareness and consciousness of being displaced or dislocated is very much evident in this poem. The displacement from her motherland eventually led to the displacement of her mother tongue as well. She writes, “You ask me what I mean/by saying I have lost my tongue./I ask you, what would you do/if you had two tongues in your mouth...and if you lived in a place you had to/speak a foreign tongue,/your mother tongue would rot, rot and die in your mouth”. These lines propagate her sentiments of grief over the distortion of her identity which was the outcome of her migration from India to United States at a very young age.

As highlighted by Anne (2007), “Displacement denotes not merely the movement...of persons from one place to another, but is also suggestive of uprootedness...” similarly, Bhatt also identifies herself with the displaced people. Her displacement from her homeland paved way for her displacement of her home language. Bhatt in this poem, is in “Search for my tongue” (1988) and hopes to preserve it in a strange land. Being a diaspora, she goes through the “suffering” that “coexists with the skill of survival” meaning she, at the same time is mourning the loss of her mother tongue and endeavouring to retain it, prefer it over foreign languages, and strengthening her belief in the strong roots that keeps her mother tongue very much alive in her heart. She once mentioned in an interview that, “I was devastated in New Orleans when I realised that I had to speak English since no one spoke Gujarati, Marathi or Hindi - the only languages I spoke at the time...I was very angry and resistant...I continued to speak Gujarati with my parents” (As cited in “Sujata Bhatt in Conversation with Vicki Bertram”).

This shows her difficulty in trying to learn a foreign language to fit in a foreign culture and people. She went through the coping up with the conflict in languages she had to speak at home and in the academic circle. Although, “Search for my Tongue” (1988) voices out the fear of the death of her native language. However, her uprootedness from India did not cause the complete downfall of her mother tongue in a foreign culture. Her efforts to preserve her ancestral language did not go in vain as she argues, “it grows back/...grows longer, grows moist, grows strong veins,/ it ties the other tongue in knots,/...pushes the other tongue aside/...Everytime I think I’ve lost the mother tongue,/ it blossoms out of my mouth.”

In a word, it can be said that Bhatt’s poetry has a special place in diaspora literature because of her skillful incorporation (in her poetry) of the troubling experiences of growing up in a country whose air was filled with smoke and blood during partition 1947. She manages to accomplish to pass on to her readers the narratives of strenuous lives of people like her– the diasporas, who (as a result of events like Partition 1947) spend all their lives trying to make it through the arduous journey of being distant from their motherlands. They always try to find home in new countries while hoping to return one day to the land of their ancestors which were once acknowledged for peace and embracing of new culture, religions, or languages. Bhatt, voices out through her poetry, her fancy and great admiration for the endurance of ethnic inclusiveness and multiculturalism in India which is now lost somewhere between the stemmed abhorrence and hostility of its people. She remains successful in highlighting the language issues faced by the diaspora around the world, laments over the loss of their native languages yet delivers the message of hope in keeping their mother tongues alive.

Bhatt knows of her scattered identity, of her diasporic consciousness, yet does not give up and tries to reconcile it by Clifford's (1994) "skill of survival." In her attempt to fit in a strange community, she had to adapt to everything that culture that community possessed, including its language. In a nutshell, surprisingly Bhatt not only remained successful in retaining her mother tongue but also achieved a key milestone of promoting it through her poetic works. As in "Search for my Tongue" (1988), she employed verses in her mother tongue, Gujarati, hence giving importance to it.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that changing of gender influences the gender specific features of language. The present study concludes that the selected poems of Sujata Bhatt, in terms of Clifford's (1994) Diasporic Consciousness, has effectively captured the notions of family, displacement, identity, history and language in the context of Partition 1947. Bhatt as a diaspora tried her level best to keep up with her identity but did suffer loss of part of it in the process of 'moving people changing places'. Her selected poems can be inferred as an integration of several vital ideas related to Partition era embedded within her diasporic awareness. In all the three selected poems, Bhatt presents both sides of the picture to the readers— the good one and the bad one.

"Partition" (2000) depicts fearful vs. courageous woman, "A Different History" (1988) displays past celebrated diversity vs. current linguistic oppression, and last but not the least, "Search for my Tongue" (1988) embodies the idea of mother tongue lost vs. mother tongue won. Being in a diasporic state ought not to necessarily end up in becoming otherized, isolated, and detached from one's origin. Like Sujata Bhatt, one can reclaim and retrieve his/her identity, language, history, origin, by living it, not abandoning it. Just as she did not do away with her heritage, did not give up her mother tongue, rather learnt more languages in order to strengthen her social position in a foreign world, in the same manner, diasporas in general might also be able to maintain their ties with their roots. All they need to do is to keep their origin and ancestry alive in their heart, soul, mind, by practicing it or else their identities will end up badly partitioned, their history lost, and they would be on an endless search for their tongues.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The selected poems of the present study could be further studied in comparison to the diasporic poetry of African, or Iranian literature which will likely expand the knowledge of the readers on the similarities of diaspora's life being a rough and bumpy ride despite the geographical differences. Bhatt's poetry could also be analyzed from the lens of different theories such as structuralism or critical discourse analysis given that her poetry is full of rich comparisons and figurative language which will lead to highly contributive studies to the field of English literature.

REFERENCES

- A Search for my Tongue. (1988). Bhatt Revision Notes
<https://www.scribd.com/document/433240768/Bhatt-Revision-Notes>
- Abdulbari, N. (2013). Identities and citizenship in Sudan: Governing constitutional principles. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 13(2), 21-37.
- Adwani, P. & Raviya, H. (2018). Diasporic sensibility and consciousness in poetry of Sujata Bhatt. *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 3(6), 1-10.
- Ali, R. A. (2019). Reshaping identities: Migration, dislocation and the trauma of refugees in the Punjab, 1947. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 56(1), 1-14.
- Anne, A. (2007). Diaspora and displacement in the fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)*.
- Bano, S. (2014). Diasporic consciousness as reflected in the novels of Salman Rushdie and Bapsi Sidhwa. *The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal*, 1(1), 1-7.
- Bertram, V. (2001). Sujata Bhatt in conversation. *PN Review*, 27(4), 24-41.
- Bharali, P. & Dash, B. C. (2017). Reclaiming root and reframing history: Diasporic consciousness in Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(1), 33-36.
- Bhalla, A. (1999). Memory, history, and fictional representations of the partition. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(44), 21-39.
- Bhandare, S. J. (2014). Diasporic consciousness in the select Chinese American novels. *Shodhganga*.
- Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. Further inflections: Toward ethnographies of the future. *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), 302-338.
- Chetia, K. & Dash, B.C. (2017). Search for diasporic identity in the novels of Salman Rushdie. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 22(8), 06-09.
- Dalrymple, W. (2015). *The great divide: The violent legacy of Indian partition*. The New Yorker magazine.
- Hawthorne, S. (2002). *Wild politics: Feminism, globalisation, and biodiversity*. Spinifex Press.
- Jaya, K. (2017). A study of immigration and diasporic sensibilities in the Novel of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*. *Asian Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, 1(1), 158-159.
- Kaur, G. (2018). Identity crisis of the diaspora. *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Literature*, 6(11), 251-258.
- Kumari, A. (2014). The matrix of diasporic consciousness in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage*. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 2(11), 59-64.
- Lourdes, R. C. (2008). The relationship between language and identity: The use of the home language as a human right of the immigrant. *REMHU - Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*, 16(31), 63-81.
- Newland, K. & Patrick, E. (2004). Beyond remittances: The role of diaspora in poverty reduction in their countries of origin. *Migration Policy Institute for the Department of International Development*, 3(1), 202-266.
- Sorenson, N. N. (2007). *Living across worlds: Diaspora, development and transnational engagement*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.
- Towards a World Unknown. (2014). *OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations)*, Oxford University Press.
- Yemini, L.A., & Berthomière, W. (2005). Diaspora: A look back on a concept. *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, 16(1), 262-270.