

**SITUATING WOMEN IN THE DIASPORIC NARRATIVES OF  
SELECT NOVELS BY GOAN DIASPORA WRITERS**

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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, "Situating Women in the Diasporic Narratives of Select Novels by Goan Diaspora Writers" is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the Discipline of English at the Sheno Goembab School of Languages and Literature, at Goa University under the supervision of Dr. Anjali Chaubey and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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### COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation report “**Situating Women in the Diasporic Narratives of Select Novels by Goan Diaspora Writers**” is a bonafide work carried out by **Ms. Samilla Mayura Vaz** under my supervision in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Masters in Arts** in the Discipline of English at the Shenoj Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University, Goa-403206.



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## CONTENTS

<b>Declaration by Student.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Completion Certificate.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Chapter One: An Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Aim and Objectives.....	1
1.2 Definition, Themes, Characteristics of Diaspora.....	3
1.3 Discourse on Goan Diaspora.....	5
1.3.1 Main Motifs in Goan Diaspora Literature.....	5
1.3.2 Goan Identity.....	7
1.4 Role of Goan Women Writers in Diaspora Writing.....	8
1.4.1 Feminist Criticism.....	8
1.4.2 Diaspora Studies Within Feminist Research.....	12
1.5 About the Authors.....	13
1.6 Review of Literature.....	15
1.7 Research Methodology.....	20
<b>Chapter Two: Diaspora Through a Feminist Perspective.....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	22

2.2 Exploring the Stronghold of Patriarchy.....	22
2.3 The Loss of Sexual Agency and the Endless Pursuit of Love.....	25
2.4 Marriage and Oppression .....	32
2.5 Goddesses, Mistresses and Witches.....	37
2.6 Women and indentured labour.....	41
2.7 Men as Victims of Patriarchy.....	43
2.8 Sisterhood: means to self-reclamation.....	45
<b>Chapter Three: The Melancholy of Goan Identity and Longing for Home .....</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	50
3.2 Goan Identity.....	51
3.2.1 Defined by Colour .....	51
3.2.2 A Goan Hybrid Identity.....	54
3.2.3 Defined by the Intimacy Shared by an Indian and a Goan.....	57
3.2.4 Language of Familiarity.....	58
3.3 Saudade: Not all who Wonder and Wander are lost.....	59
3.4 Alienation and Homemaking.....	65
<b>Chapter Four: Hauntings of Colonization .....</b>	<b>70</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	70
4.2 History becomes stories.....	71
4.3 Ghosts of the Pasts.....	75
4.4 In the Name of Empire, Wealth and Religion.....	77
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Works cited .....	87
Urkund Analysis Result.....	92

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# CHAPTER ONE

## An introduction

### 1.1 Aim and Objectives

Essentially, this dissertation aims to understand the experiences of Goan women far away from home. The diaspora women writers reflect the feminist perception in their writings, which are crucial, urgent, and relevant in today's world and can leave a long-lasting impression on the reader's mind. In testing the hypothesis, a detailed study of the novels: *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas, *Saudade* by Suneeta Perez da Costa, and *Sisterhood of Swans* by Selma Carvalho has been made by paying close attention to their narrative techniques and how they play an important role in portraying the common themes of identity and longing for home.

The early writings produced in Goa and the intense interest in literature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sparked several debates on local issues. One of the main concerns was the Goan identity, which suffered due to the transition of power from Portuguese rule to the Indian Government. These literary works, which mainly consisted of short stories or poetry, were primarily published in periodicals and had a broader readership and impact than novels. Male authors wrote about the Goan people, who belonged to the subaltern group and portrayed the difficulties they faced during and after Portuguese rule. Women were often depicted in the background, while male writers highlighted their love for Goa in their novels. Male writers effectively blended both Portuguese and Indian cultural influences, but it's essential to recognize the impressive literary works of Goan women writers that are often overlooked.

Today, Goa has a distinct position on the map of India, but the issue of migration is always present in the background. When people choose to migrate, they abandon an economic system in which they were both producers and consumers. The initial wave of migration that Goa experienced was when the poor and middle-class individuals were frequently compelled to leave to overcome the economic challenges at home. This practice led to a society in which men were absent, and women had to fend for themselves and their entire households. This situation did give women control over property and other familial matters, but it also made them navigate society without the support of their fathers or husbands. As a result, they were often disregarded, and their decisions were viewed as insignificant.

Throughout history, men are praised for their elevation from all their frailties, and to dive into the unknown world with pomp, but very little is written about women who may face the same weaknesses, however, are often ignored. Initially, the studies were focused on working men. Goan men migrated to better their economic situation but were deeply rooted in traditions. It is high time to examine the feminist concerns that need to be addressed, related to women who left Goa with their husbands or by themselves, questioning the changing roles that women face by not just being a Goan far from home but by existing as a woman whose experiences are much different from man. Especially through the lens of diaspora women's writings in particular, to understand the cultural lines, those that intersect or deviate from the ideas expressed by diaspora writers. Therefore, it is important to explore the texts written by women about women and their motherland Goa to highlight the traces of the colonial enterprise that may linger in the cultural and linguistic consciousness shared by women belonging to the Diasporic community, ready to address the remnants of Portuguese reign in their writings about Goa. This research paper aims to shift our attention from male writers



and their great works on novels and focus on women's writing in English in the novel form. Whether writing at home or abroad, all Goan women writers become part of the Goan literary tradition because a familial or historical relation with Goa is reflected in their novels. It is necessary to establish and remap Goa's place in the world not just as a formerly Portuguese colony, or the smallest of states in the Indian territory but to imagine Goa's central role in the global transcultural network made certain by women's perspectives.

## **1.2 Definition, Themes, and Characteristics of Diaspora**

The noun 'diaspora' is derived from the ancient Greek language 'dia' and 'speirein' meaning 'to spread, disperse or to be separated.' The term is used to describe or to show any large migration of refugees, language, or culture. Sociologists use the term 'Diaspora' to refer simply to the process of learning and absorbing culture, making it synonymous with socialization. It was originally used to refer to the exile of the Jewish people. Later, the term was also used for ethnic groups, such as the American or African people that were displaced. This gave the term a broader meaning, each genre tends to have some defining details, and so does diaspora in the arena of literature. Hanif Kureishi, a British Asian author state, "The only way I could make sense of my confused world was to write" Diaspora literature is based on the idea of a homeland and it deals with the themes of discrimination and assimilation, orientalism, and identity crisis, alienation and displacement, hybridity and generational gap. It is a study of what is taken with one, of what is left behind, and of what is transformed. The bond with the homeland eventually leads to a historical understanding of their homeland, which often takes the form of personal memories. Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature- Migrant Metaphors* (2005) John McLeod in *Beginning: Post-colonialism* (2012), Pramod K.Nayar in *Post-Colonial Literature* (2008) and in other critical

writings in post-colonial literature have come out with different definitions and about the characteristics of diaspora writings. Diaspora is a process of people migrating frequently from one place to another for various reasons. Migrations have resulted in building up a diasporic community that shares a common collective memory, a sense of rootlessness, vision, or myth about their homeland, often accompanied by pain and suffering. Most diasporic discourses are shaded by the ideology of post-colonialism. The diasporic writers maintain the diasporic consciousness to sustain the idea of a physical 'home' that has been forever lost. The expression of longing and nostalgia for the old homeland is a common motif in much of the literature. They aim to understand national discourse living in the West and the language used to express nationalism often remains native. Whereas, the hybrid narratives of diaspora writers link the diverse memories, and experiences to the individual experiences of identity. A hybrid identity is created through the interaction between the outer and the inner domains. The hybrid writer approaches the world with an aesthetic eye, giving new shapes and meanings to it, knowing that language can be malleable.

Many writers are brought up in the West. Some are afresh immigrants, while others are second-generation immigrants. These are called expatriate writers who pen about their cross-cultural heritage. The word expatriate is coined in the Latin language, 'Ex' means 'out of', and 'Patria' means 'country'. The expatriate writers are not entirely aware of the happenings in their homeland and thus go on to find pleasure in reminiscing and fantasizing about home. Unlike the hybrids, some cannot fully accept the identity of homeland nor can they embrace the new present identity in which the individual is placed. The feelings of the uprising are those of alienation, and unwanted agony, found in many Goan works. The present conflicting generations will try to change the forms and shapes, while the older generation would want to carry forward

with the same old traditional values of the homeland. While some individuals accept the hybrid identity, others remain alienated from the new cultural setup. The loss of a home and the loved one back in the homeland shows that there is no fixed home for a diaspora to belong to. This is due to the clash between homes, identities, cultures, politics, and many other factors that helps to reconstruct the formation of a hybrid identity that belongs to none in particular and cannot be accepted in all. Alienation is a state of feeling of being strange in a place thought to welcome one's presence. The Collins dictionary defines it as "the state of being estranged from someone or the length of time for which you are estranged."

### **1.3 A Discourse on Goan Diaspora**

Goan literature is like the famous Goan sweet called Bibinca, a multi-layered coconut milk-infused pudding, Goan Diaspora is one such layer that makes us aware of creative writing and the sense of awareness of the plurality of Goa. The work of art illustrated the post-colonial Goa with its evolving outlook, which is essentially a blend of Goan multilingual tradition and modernity. It reveals the views of the new generation in the diaspora who longed to understand the inherited traditional Goan values along with the imbibed foreign culture. Trans-national and trans-continental in nature, the authors like Vimala Devi, Margaret Mascarenhas, Selma Carvalho, Ben Antao, Suneeta Perez da Costa, and many other Goan writers try to capture Goa with its strengths and frailties.

#### **1.3.1 Main Motifs in Goan Diaspora Literature**

Many of the Goan writers have Goa as the main theme of their narrative and by constructing a vast scenery of experiences as a Goan around the world. The writings prove that Goa is not only a multicultural society, like the rest of India but also a

markedly transcultural society that extends, beyond its geographical boundaries. Eusebio L. Rodrigues believes that Goans as a group have always felt comfortable in the West, however, Goa will always remain the homeland. According to Robert S. Newman, “the experience of Diaspora, of being a total stranger in a strange land, has quintessentially been a Goan experience.” The literature appears to be divided into two ideal perspectives: the Saudosista Approach and the Critical approach.

The concept of Saudosista, which refers to a longing for one’s homeland, is a common theme in literature, often featuring idyllic village life, family and the *casa grande*. Life far away from home, whether in a migrant community or alone, can lead to feelings of alienation, dislocation and fragmentation, it produces what Paul White defines as “an erosion of certainty” since living miles away as well as being amidst a new community or culture creates gaps in their individual’s cultural identity as the migrant becomes alienated both “from old norms and new contexts.” That’s the reason why most of the diaspora literature is autobiographical, a mode to relieve their aching for home. Goan migrants turn into writers as a way to keep in touch with Goa because it gives them the illusion of being still rooted in their country of birth even after they become geographically and culturally detached from it. Their writings often describe the motives for leaving their homeland, as well as the challenges they face when trying to assimilate into a new culture.

In contrast to narratives that portray Goa in an exotic or nostalgic light, for the Western audience, the Critical narrative focuses on the harsh realities of life, such as poverty, exploitation of lower castes, and the degradation of women. People start moving between alternating feelings about their home, host country, and cultural identities. Because migration is often related to marginality in the new world. It is an experience that reflects not only the personal ordeals but also the difficulties in relation

to his/ her own culture. This type of literature deals with both the actual physical voyage across continents and with the character's psychological voyage as the migrant crosses geographical and personal boundaries. The individual is alienated because of economic, political, or cultural reasons that force an individual to move to find better prospects abroad. The feeling of alienation may pass down to the next generations. This is why second-generation Goan writers also make the migrant's experience one of the main themes of their literature.

### **1.3.2 Goan Identity**

Goan identity is a complex issue and a concept that is always evolving. Even Goans themselves cannot agree on a definition of who is Goan. A.K Priolkar says, "Anyone, whatever his present whereabouts, whose forefathers have been domiciled in Goa, at any time in history and who is aware of his connection and cherishes and values it," in other words, it includes those of Goan descent or those who hold other citizenships are also Goan, especially in the literary community. The concept of a 'Goan Identity' has been highly shaped by the colonial experience in Goa. Nonetheless, there exists a separate Goan identity that is evident in the diaspora literature and is widely discussed by Goan writers. The question of who am I? Where do I belong? Am I a Westerner? Am I a Goan or a Portuguese? are the questions that haunt the diasporic. Identity is a complex issue and has as much to do with the person as it has with her surroundings, so it is not always sufficient for a diasporic, especially the colonial diasporic to own his /her identity and adopt a new one. Goan identity has undergone many changes as it has been ruled and dominated by all types of rulers, from the Hindu kings to the Muslim Bhadshahs, to the Portuguese colonial power. Goa under the foreign rule accepted the Portuguese traditions as part of their culture and made it their

own. We realise that culture and identity are not static, today Goans are in a continuous process to redefine themselves more and more in the ever-changing world.

#### **1.4 Role of Goan Women Writers in Diaspora Writing**

Women writers of Goa are moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. We see them individually, bursting out from their caterpillar stage and spreading their wings, ready to take flight as a beautiful fully formed butterfly. As writing has traditionally been a male territory in Goa, and however clichéd this statement may appear, women who dared to write in the pre-independence era are the only forerunners of local female literary creativity. Today, Goan women writers are excelling in various genres, including poetry, short stories, autobiography, children's literature, novel, historical studies essays memoirs, and non-fiction. Goan women today, particularly of the twenty-first century are expected to walk hand in hand with their, counterparts in the rest of India. Despite the fact that women have been objectified and victimized in Goan literature by male writers, the diaspora writers share a bond through personal and collective experiences, with a focus on roots and women's issues. While Goan displacement is a recurring theme in Goan literature, there is very little written about individual Goan women who migrate, in hopes of fulfilling their dreams, often compelled to remain uneducated and work as maids in the homes of wealthy white families.

##### **1.4.1 Feminist Criticism**

Feminism can best be understood as a political perception based on two fundamental premises that gender difference is the foundation of structural inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematic social injustice, and that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced

by the cultural construction of gender difference. According to the Oxford Companion to Philosophy (1995): the term “feminism” has its origins in the French word, *féminisme* coined by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The first recorded in English was in the 1890s when the word was used to indicate support for women’s equal legal and political rights with men. The term feminism slightly differentiates according to different authors, according to Haslanger (2012), “feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms” Brunell & Burkett (2017) define feminism as, “the belief in the social, economic and political equality of sexes.” The feminist movement had its phases as the first wave was around 1848, which was focused on legal equality and challenging the ‘cult of domesticity’ that claimed that the home was the only place where women could exist. While the outer urban hotspots were for men and if a woman chooses to cross that line, she was termed ‘unladylike’. The second wave was from the 1960s to the 1990s focused on women’s reproductive rights. The third wave is characterized by the advent of the internet which helped carry forth feminist concerns more globally. The fourth wave is the one currently progressing carrying with it similar ideas of the earlier movements.

The beginning of the movement was led by powerful writings about women both by men and women, among these, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) and John Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869), Virginia Woolf’s well-known novel *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). The feminist discourse throughout history has endeavoured to resist the brutal attack of patriarchy and hegemonic structures. For centuries, women have been suppressed position of what the critic Simon de Beauvoir (1987) calls “the other” to man. Women as a segment of the population, have always been victims of

injustice, inequality, and social stigmatization. They have suffered severely at the hands of men of society. By analysing the novels by diaspora women writers from a feminist perspective I attempt to identify and analyse feminist issues in terms of gender discrimination, women's position in society, patriarchy, gender roles, and political and social factors as presented in Goan fiction.

This study will explore how men dominate and suppress women's voices in our society. Women are often forced into relationships or marriages by their parents. Or sometimes it is the woman's choice to be in a relationship, that degrades and humiliates her role as a wife and a woman. Most of the time physical and psychological assaults go unreported.

Patriarchy is another aspect of feminism which is a system of social construction that is headed and dominated by men. This study helps to understand how women are made inferior. There are some aspects of the novels which show the role of patriarchy in society. It is clear that feminist criticism is an effort to interpret the text and to know more about the image of women throughout the text. There are as many feminisms as there are women. Liberal feminism, Cultural/difference Feminism, Postmodern Feminism and Radical Feminism. Undoubtedly within and outside these categories, there are other classifications that perhaps deserve more recognition than they have been given, such as Marxist Feminism, Lesbian Feminism, and French Feminism.

In modern Radical Feminist Theory- the roles of women are more liberating, and the focus is on the subordination of women as its primary concern. Reveals how men exercise practices such as sexual harassment, rape, prostitution as well as childbearing, and housework. The focus is on sexuality, mothering and the evolving gender roles. They assert that it is not the biological fact that women have children that are the cause



of women's oppression but, rather the cultural structure of mothering and sexuality that defines women's position in society. They also try to break down the presentation of a woman as a witch who has both qualities of victim and heroine; the witch is seen as a symbol of tyrannical abuse and oppression and at the same time a symbol of triumph, self-actualization, and great power.

Liberal Feminism could be regarded as the mother of all feminist thought. Nursed in the cradle of the social contract theories of Rousseau and Locke, and nineteenth-century European liberalism propagated by philosophers such as John Stuart Mill, it primarily focuses on the autonomy of the person and the rights of the individual. The early research tried to bring to light the neglect of women, perceived as their husband's or fathers' chattels. Liberal Feminism was also the source of the second-wave movement in the 1950s and 60s. Liberal Feminism applies liberalism to gender equality and claims that the suppression of women lies in their lack of legal and political rights. This type of feminism perceives that women's freedom can be achieved only by putting an end to discrimination in sectors of education, and other work matters. Although liberal feminism deals with equality and justice, it does not always respond properly to the real experiences of a pregnant woman. To do so liberal feminists will have to change the scope of liberal philosophical theory to see the unequal level from which women must move forward in order to align themselves with their male counterparts.

Marxist Feminism accommodates the view that "the inferior position of women is essentially due to the class structure of society" (Chandrakala Padia, *Feminism, Tradition and Modernity*, p.14). This approach tries to uncover phallogentrism in order to install feminine consciousness to counter the suppressed narratives of women's experiences from various histories. Among many critics, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak powerfully addresses the exploitation of labour in the 'Third World' and accuses

Western Feminism of ignoring the plight of women in the Third World countries. Feminist discourse has been spread in the different spheres of culture, history and sexuality. Including, Lesbian Feminist Theories in the 1970s, Queer Theories in the 1990s linked to race, Nationality and Ethnicity.

#### **1.4.2 Diaspora Studies Within Feminist Research**

A feminist perspective on diaspora studies has brought a lot of new insights as feminist research deals with the concepts such as diversity, hybridity, and queerness. The perspective is also very relevant today because the diaspora community has been far-reaching the borders of different nations. The main question which arises in this context is whether diaspora provides agency to women who emerge from a nationalistic narrative into a transnational experience or whether women find themselves further marginalised in the new society owing to factors of ethnicity, colour, and race beyond the challenges of gender. While women have traditionally been identified with the nation and glorified as the custodians of cultural heritage, the role they played in the process of travel and migration to a new land needs to be investigated. Within the narrative of nationalism, women were always seen as pure, chaste bodies homemakers, and relations with family values even in new geographical locations, come to be problematized within feminine contexts. As it limits the inquiry in the other sectors where women too play an equal part. Within the nationalist narrative, women have been viewed as the arbiters of social morals. Feminist diaspora scholars examine the ways in which patriarchal structures in both the home and host countries impact migrant women.

Another important development within the diaspora studies of feminism has been the inclusion of queer studies within the diaspora. Queer diasporas are nothing but to

study the conditions of geographical mobility and produce new experiences and understanding of sexuality and gender identity. Gayatri Gopinath's path-breaking study of queerness within the diaspora highlights sexuality and nation, pointing to the fact that traditional feminism does not adequately address the way in which nationalism is based on heteronormative sexualities. He argues that there is not much research that examines female alternative sexualities. Unfortunately, the archive of diaspora seems to be filled with patriarchal structures for situating gender identities.

### **1.5 About the Authors**

Margaret Mascarenhas was a transnational writer who wrote in multiple languages and had an independent and fierce spirit. She was an independent curator of Indo-American origin with a background in comparative literature at UC Berkeley. She received her training in Indian Art from art historian Dr. Saryu Dhoshi, with whom she worked as an assistant editor for several years. Her debut novel *Skin* successfully placed her at the forefront of Goan diaspora discourse. *Skin* has been described as a "story of a contemporary woman who traces her cross-continental family diaspora which originates with the Portuguese slave trade in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century." The novel has been translated into Portuguese and French. Her next novel *The Disappearance of Irene Dos Santos* was set in Venezuela, where she grew up. Was selected for the Indie Next List and was a Barnes & Noble Discover Pick in 2009. Her collection of poetry was published as *Tirage- Casualties of Love and Sex* in 2013. She contributed Numerous beautiful essays to different journals and anthologies. Mascarenhas was a founding director of Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts and Blue Shores Prison Art Project in Goa. She divided her time between the US and Goa until her death on 14 July 2019. She was not afraid of anything, not even death. And had expressed a desire to

“haunt” her loved ones as either a Goan Kingfisher or a glittering firefly, after she passed away.

Suneeta Peres da Costa is an Australian author of Goan heritage, and adds to the diasporic tradition with her writings. Her novel *Homework* was published by Bloomsbury in 1999, and her mesmerizing novella *Saudade* was released in March 2018, shortlisted for the 2019 Prime Minister’s Literary Awards and the 2020 Adelaide Festival Awards for literature and was also a finalist in the 2020 Tournament of Books (USA). She has published widely across the genres of poetry, essays, fiction, non-fiction, and plays. Her focus is on the legacies of Portuguese colonialism and the Goan life. She writes beautifully with a such measure in the moments shared by the characters in her writing allowing the readers to observe in a very intimate way, the awakening to a sense of independence from the forces trying to capture them. She manages to embellish and entice you to fall in love with her writing.

Selma Carvalho is a British-Asian writer whose work explores the themes of migration, memory and belonging. Her debut novel *Sisterhood of Swans* was shortlisted for the Women Writer’s Prize (India), between 2011-2014, she headed the Oral Histories of British-Goans project funded by the HLF and archived at the British Library. She has been nominated in numerous literary contests notably Fish, Bath, London, Short Story, New Asian Writing, and winner of the Leicester Writes Prize. The novel probes into the life of immigrant women who want to do better in life but are pushed down by the men in their life. The narrative is imbued with loneliness, socio-cultural shocks, and assimilation, the hunt to uncover distant roots and the new unknown alien world they are residing in. Selma’s writing arises by traversing the world of the immigrant Indian community in London, mostly focusses upon the anxieties and their side effects as experienced by a second-generation immigrant. Her other famous

books are *Into the Diaspora Wilderness* published by Goa 1556 in 2010, and A collection of Short stories forthcoming from Speaking Tiger India in 2022.

An attempt has been made to analyse their presentation of Goan women living new lives in Western countries, as their depiction of the institution of marriage and man-woman relationships in the diasporic setting. These novels attract attention by virtue of the fact that they act not only as an indication of their enormous literary potential as storytellers and character painters but as a compass pointing to the women-centric direction their other works have taken.

## **1.6 Review of Literature**

The enterprise of ‘diaspora’ being central to this study, several books and research papers on diaspora studies particularly those which focus on the lives of women, inhabiting those communities, such studies are utilized for this research work.

Simone De Beauvoir’s *Second Sex* (1987) is a seminal work of feminist criticism. This work outlines the despicable subordination of ‘women’ as ‘the other’ to ‘man’, thus reducing her to being the ‘second sex’. Jane Freedman (2002) outlines the various strands of Feminism: Liberal, and Marxist Radical, and discusses each in the light of concepts pertinent to feminist studies such as sexuality, rape, mothering, reproduction, pornography, and others. Likewise, Benstock, Ferriss, and Woods’ *A Handbook of Literary Feminism* (2002) is a ready reference book for scholars working on feminism as it outlines not just the background and historical growth of feminism, but also enlists approaches to women’s text through valuable critical intersections. A precise understanding of the theory of Feminism is provided by Susan Heckman in her essay “Feminism” which appears in *The Routledge Companion to Feminist Theories* (1998) edited by Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. Contemporary Feminist theories, their varied

practices, and approach are multidisciplinary in nature. New perspectives to understand feminist issues with specific reference to ‘language’ and ‘sexuality’ are probed in detail by Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick’s *Language and Sexuality* (2001). This work brings together relevant theoretic debates on sexuality, gender, and power. Likewise, of the Indian writing on Feminist Criticism consulted for this study, Chandrakala Padia’s *Theorizing Feminism* (2001), needs to be mentioned. This book challenges the monolithic assumptions of Western feminist criticism and the inherent androcentric bias.

The research paper “A STUDY OF WOMEN DIASPORA” published in the year 2017 in the issue of IJCRT Journal (International Journal of Creative and Research Thoughts) explains Indian Diaspora literature. It analyses diasporic writings as the mode to connect the past and the present and forges new notions of transnational identities. It opens spaces for new expressions of transnational global culture. The paper focuses on the writings of the Indian Women Diasporic writers such as Bharti Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee- Divakaruni, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Uma Parmeshwaram, Kamla Markandya, etc.

The next paper, “WOMEN AND THEIR ROLES IN DIASPORA: A STUDY” was published in EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, attempts to define the discourse of diaspora and its prominence with its sole focus on women, as a representative of the pure “nation.” The paper tries to change the course of history by shifting the literary penchant of the male Indian Diasporic writers and focusing on women’s role in constructing “global Indianness.” The paper aims to understand how the experiences of Indian immigrant women play an important role in cultural globalization. The paper refers to a number of texts written by female diaspora authors

like Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Uma Parameshvaran, and many others.

Joao Roque Literary Journal published a paper in 2017, written by Christopher Larkosh, Associate Professor of Portuguese, at UMass Dartmouth. The paper titled “Thinking Goa in the World through English Language Women’s Writing.” The research was carried out with the intention to look at the ways that Goans in general, and diaspora women writing in English in particular, can help understand Goa’s unique place in the world. The paper sets the stage for the discussion by analysing the three distinctive novels by female diaspora writers; *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas, *Into the Diaspora Wilderness* by Selma Carvalho, and *Beautiful Thing* by Sonia Faleiro. It concludes by stating that women’s perspectives continue to play an indispensable role in the ever-expanding set of alternatives called human consciousness.

In 2018, the Interdisciplinary Journal of Portuguese Diaspora Studies published a research paper titled “Gossiping about Ayah: Migration, Diaspora, and Anxieties at Home in Karmelin,” which examines the representation of Goan ayahs in the recent history of Goa. The paper uses Damodar Mauzo’s novel *Karmelin* (1981) as an example, which depicts the life of Goan ayahs in fiction or non-fiction often reinforcing sexist and patriarchal views. It also explores how Goan men and some upper-class Goan Women feared that ayahs might violate various boundaries related to sexuality, religion, caste, morality, and society. The paper seeks to critically analyse the text by challenging past rumours and scandals surrounding ayahs in the diaspora.

This paper called Women as Transmitter of Progressive Knowledge in the novel *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas, was published in the Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed Research Journal called *Anchor* in 2020, by Fr Agnel College of Arts & Commerce,

Pilar -Goa. The research discusses the nature of women as transmitters of progressive knowledge in the diasporic novel *Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas. Research articles published by UNESCO on Indigenous women and their transmission of intangible cultural heritage were chosen as secondary materials for the study.

The book *Hindu- Catholic Engagements in Goa; Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity*, published in 2014, by Alexander Henn, aims to scrutinise the engagements between Hindus and Catholics in Goa and other parts of India as a way to understand the role that religion plays in the transformation of old and the emergence of new cultural differences at the historical intersection of colonialism and modernity. Thus, Henn uses Goa's history as a hotspot to study religion, colonialism, and modernity. He combines historical and anthropological approaches and challenges modern anthropological theory related to Syncretistic religious practices.

The book, *Exploring Gender in the Literature of the Indian Diaspora* published in 2015 by Sandhya Rao Mehta is a collection of critical essays that are located at the intersection of gender and diaspora studies, to explore the multiple ways in which gender is expressed and explored or written about or interpreted in Indian diaspora literature. Referring to iconic works from the Indian diaspora such as V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*, this anthology also includes chapters on Attia Hosain, Abha Dawesar, Amulya Malladi, Anita Rau Badami, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Kiran Desai. Some of the essays also use other South Asian writers such as Monica Ali and Bapsi Sidhwa to compare the diasporic experience in similar settings. The process of exploring queer spaces through characters for whom matters of emasculation and feminisation remain significant markers of selfhood seems to be central to the book. This collection is divided into three sections. The first section, entitled "Reading



Gender”, includes essays that reflect the way in which writers of the Indian diaspora are trying to redefine the meaning of a nation in relation to gender. The second section entitled “Writing Gender”, brings together multifarious ways in which women occupying marginal spaces within the diaspora transform, define and reflect themselves through the tropes of labour, cooking and clothing. The third section of this anthology is entitled “Performing Gender”. Accompanied essays that speak to the ways in which gender is explored, lost, created and re-created within imaginary space allow for the exploration of sexualities. Thus, this book attempts to bring together varied ways in which we can examine gender in Indian diasporic Literature. Allowing fresh perspectives on the role of gender and allowing for newer interpretations of texts that are famous or not so famous.

The analysis is performed upon three novels as being representative of the Diasporic fiction genre.

*Skin* by Margaret Mascarenhas

*Skin* is a novel published in 2001, is a multi-generational saga spanning about four centuries and set mainly in San Francisco, Goa, and Paris. It portrays many generations of life of women, who have collectively stood for each other in times of celebrations, challenges, and turmoil. The novel is a perfect example to understand how history and fiction are twinned together to bring out feminine qualities which ultimately make women agents of change.

*Sisterhood of Swans* by Selma Carvalho

A blistering feminist text published in 2021, explores the life of female protagonist Anna-Marie Souza, a second-generation Indian immigrant of Goan heritage, which is plagued by the complexities around the desire to belong and yet the inability to fully

embrace the possibilities a place offers. The novel gives an entirely convincing picture of a restlessness stemmed not only from the inescapability of ethnic alienation, being a Goan in Horton, but also from the inevitable suffering of women who like swans look out for a soulmate but it is only disappointment they are fated for.

*Saudade* by Suneeta Peres da Costa

It has a bold narrative, set in Angola. *Saudade* focuses on a Goan immigrant family caught in the rising conflict related to Goan identity in Angola. The title itself gives the readers a clear idea about the melancholy and longing for the lost homeland that continues to haunt the characters and especially the women in the novel.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

My research methodology would consist of close reading, interpretation and an in-depth analysis of the primary sources. I will also support my study with a significant number of critical writings which deal with the subject of feminine and female perspectives and books on sociology, culture and tradition, and colonial influence. My approach will thus be interdisciplinary. I also propose to consult various articles and interviews of the three writers to understand the feminine and the feminist perception. Using feminist theory towards women's writing, the post-colonial theory provides the concepts and perspective to approach Goan literature from a revisionist angle, aiming at its questioning, deconstruction, and reinterpretation. That is to say, that post-colonial theory provides the methodology to revise the limited approaches to Goan women's literature. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the texts written by women about women and their motherland Goa in order to highlight the traces of the colonial enterprise that may linger in the cultural and linguistic consciousness shared by women belonging to the Diasporic community.

To make any interpretations more significant and relevant, I have worked within the specific guidelines of diaspora and feminist theories. My primary attempt is to study the novels written by Margaret Mascarenhas, Selma Carvalho, and Suneeta Peres Da Costa. My study would also focus on the common themes of Goan identity, longing, alienation, and despair.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **GOAN DIASPORA THROUGH FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

“I came to the conclusion that feminism was just another “ism”. And all “isms” exist merely to divide and rule. So no, I am not a feminist. I am just a woman.”

- Margaret Mascarenhas, *Skin*

#### **2.1 Introduction**

As the incidence of crime against women continues in the world, the feminist discourse has acquired greater relevance than ever. Feminism has been for long a well-acknowledged critical approach and a handy analytical tool of its times. Margaret Mascarenhas, Suneeta Peres Da Costa, and Selma Carvalho have voiced out what it means to be a woman in the diaspora in a time of intense and incredible change. Yet, one cannot but admit the more things change the more they remain the same-especially regarding the majority of the population’s mindset which, even in the modern West, is firmly rooted in patriarchy. In a traditional society, women are proposed only to be good wives and mothers, to indulge only in private and domestic matters. Women are not allowed to have higher education; and if they are by any chance allowed, it is assumed that women are required more in supporting their part as wives and mothers. Sadly, many times women who lack education and exposure to the modern world, internalize patriarchy and blame themselves.

#### **2.2 Exploring the Stronghold of Patriarchy**

*Skin* illustrates the gendered dominance in accordance with imperial and native patriarchies. The underlying rebellion of the suppressed voices of thousands of women

that are hidden in the narrative structure seems to crawl out through the skin, as the novel's title implies, to demolish the patriarchal hegemonies. In her diary, Saudade recalls that when she left to do missionary work in Africa, Esperanca her mother, and a maid of de Miranda Flores household – had said “Our mothers live under our skin” (Margaret Mascarenhas, *skin*, 236). Her mother's parting words were meant to remind Saudade of the women in her family who suffered brutal abuse and violence because of the colour of their skin in the homelands of Africa. The words plainly meant that Saudade will always be a part of her daughter, Pagan, who was forcibly taken away from her. The duality between male/female, right/wrong, and dark/light along with education, female acceptance, subjugation, and victimization is challenged throughout the narrative. When one of the characters claims: “I came to the conclusion that feminism was just another ‘ism’. And all ‘isms’ exist merely to divide and rule. So, no I am not a feminist. I am just a woman” (Mascarenhas, 235). Yet the women in the novel are the ones who are empowered after every heartbreaking conflict ‘Everything originates in women’, says Livia, Pagan's aunt. They are all storytellers, daughters, mothers, the guardians of the talismans that they pass on to the next generation. The text reveals important nuanced differences in how the female characters respond to and narrate the ways in which the bodies of women become the sites and stakes in the war in the power struggle between men. The women characters are seen as the epitome of bravery and strength. Whereas, the men in the novel are brutal, perverts, lustful, and weak.

In *Sisterhood of Swans*, Anna- Marie strongly disagrees with her mother's view regarding a woman's role in society. Her mother Ines belonged to the generation of Feminist thinkers, who held out on marriage for as long as they could. They build careers and tried to make a place for themselves in the fast-paced world of men. They

didn't believe in the theory of soulmates. Whereas Anna cries out that her mother worships women whom she doesn't know, but is ready to condemn those women who are quite happy, to be just wanted by the men in their life. Anna firmly believes that she is 'not an ism' she is a woman who knows what she needs, what her body aches for, and can never feel ashamed of wanting the things she desires.

A close reading of all three novels with a feminist lens reveals three approaches to 'feminism' Liberal feminism, as portrayed by Maria Christina's mother in *Saudade*, is evident that the world she inhabits is highly patriarchal. She is subordinated by her father's brothers, then later by her husband. She dreams of a happy future but her aspirations remain unrealized. Married off to the Brahmin man, she embodies the values of traditional femininity. At the end of the novel, we find her alone, without a husband but that doesn't stop her to move forward and prove that she is capable of making decisions regarding her daughter and her life. The second approach is Spivakian Marxist Feminism which is exemplified by characters such as Nzinga-Nganga, Perpetua, Consolação, and Esperança, these characters live solitary lives, but they possess knowledge of magic and medicine that is invaluable to their communities. Consolação is the selfless caretaker of the villagers and her mistress Dona Maria de Miranda and her household. We see traces of Marxist ideology, in Nzinga-Nganga, Pagan's both, Goan and American grandmothers as they are crushed by the pressures of capitalism and the inhumane slave trade. They aim to provide for their family without the presence of the male member, showing us how in spite of challenges they do not hesitate to break the shackles placed by society, especially on old widows or single women.

Radical feminism is noticed in Anna-Maria, Pagan, Saudade and Maria-Christina. As they are seen to revolt against age-old traditions related to sexuality. This type of

feminism attempts to explore the differences between men and women by using the psychological perspective, they try to understand how and why women make certain choices, mostly depending on their moral and religious beliefs. In *Skin*, with dark and gloomy themes of suffering and agony, most of the women perish, but there are those who fight and question the patriarchal setup, seen only by analysing the phallogentric ideas in all three novels. Whether through the characters, plot or language the novel uncovers the hidden power dynamics that keep women on the fingers of society and bring them to the forefront through critical reading.

### **2.3 The Loss of Sexual Agency and the Endless Pursuit of Love**

To love and to be loved are two different things. Most of the time, love is not an essential factor in a marriage. Diaspora women writers showcase the life of women, they express their desperate attempts to find love and longing for the perfect love relationship. Lust and love are always like two swords clashing on the battlefield. The lives of women characters in these novels are like a puzzle where they continuously try to unite the shattered pieces of LOVE. Love and desire are words that make our world go round. Every day in life women are constantly in search of the perfect kind of love but at times it is the love that emerges from hurt, betrayal, and hopelessness, that churns out the best-selling works of literature. Across human societies, people have seen women as objects who long for love and they are fine with it, but whenever a woman longs to be desired by her partner or chooses to express her physical needs, the woman is made an outcast, ostracized by the so-called moral society. Women's desires are seen as hormonal nonsense.

Although the novel *Skin*, is narrated by various women characters, Mascarenhas also highlights through the character of Leandro, who is horrified to find Pagan reading

*Rape of Lock* (1712) by Alexander Pope, and he tries to exert his power over the narrative. The situation is depicted in a satirical manner to highlight how men tend to get defensive and uncomfortable when the issue of rape is brought up for discussion. Rape can be not only a physical assault on a body but the violence inflicted on one's mind and soul. Susan Brownmiller in her book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975), argues that rape is not just about individual acts of male violence but includes a whole system of male aggrandizement and male control over women.

Mascarenhas has given a very sensuous feel to the novel, while addressing sexuality or sexual encounters she is not afraid to write or speak about the desires that govern human beings, especially women. We come across, Bosco Rodrigues, widely known as Ghor-Ghor (thunder), a barbaric heathen whose carnal appetites were so uncontrollable that he would force his wife to lie with him soon after the birth of the babies. But, when his wife dies, he howls around the village like a madman, trying to satiate his desires. When Consolação meets him, she is instantly attracted to him. She tosses and turns with sensual thoughts about his body, trying to stop her cravings by soaking her bottom in the basin after basin of water and mint leaves. But the heart wants what it wants, and Consolação and Ghor-Ghor mutually embrace their sexual relationship. But most of the time the shame and horror are accompanied when a woman explores her sexual desires, especially in the time period in which the novel is placed, where women marginalized by society, without a voice often like Consolação “continued to fast. She mixed potions designed to inure her from temptations of the flesh... she prayed to Zamba, Durga, to the Virgin Mary.” (Mascarenhas, 127) We can clearly see that the author uses the female body as a tool to assert power and control in a unique way but, at the same time tests her female characters deal with issues related to morality and sexuality. The problem is that female sexuality is seen as a danger to



those who do not perceive it as important. When Alma de Miranda Flores heroically rushes on her horse through the thick jungles to save Consolação's twins, kidnapped by Ghor-Ghor. She saves the twins and emerges out of the water bare-breasted holding the babies, indifferent to the men who gazed at her body hungrily, which they remembered many years thereafter as the most "magnificent breasts they had ever seen, it was Venus rising from the sea" they said. (Mascarenhas, 148) Margaret clearly gives her female characters supreme agency over their own body only to unravel male-constructed meanings for erotic pleasure, pregnancy, and abortion. The novel shows a graphic symptom of male anxiety, about female agency to discover a fear of the dangers thought to ensue from a woman's control over her own body. The novel foregrounds female skin or the sexual desire rising from a women's skin.

At the same time, the writer shows us how a man like Dom Bernardo can use that desire to sexually exploit his young wife, to fulfil his perverse and sadistic desires by forcing her to crawl and bark like a dog, ordering her to act out the Kamasutra positions while reciting the rosary. Even though he is impotent and cannot have children, he expects his young child bride to sleep with other men and provide him heir to carry forward his cruel legacy. He can only see women as a means to satisfy his carnal debauch wants. Our society often blames women for enticing men with their seductive bodies, often justified by saying she asked for it, she is a slut, a whore, her body is only meant to offer pleasure or to be used only as a toy, but what about young girls who are not even aware of their own sexuality? But the depraved men only bother in satisfying their own sexual needs. Sometimes women themselves agree with the concept that their body and their desires are evil. The novels give us evidence of what Andrea Dworkin in her book *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981) has called 'sexual colonization'. She observes that: "[T]he sexual colonization of women's bodies is a

material reality; men control the sexual and reproductive uses of women's bodies" (48). She reveals how domains like law, marriage, the economy, and organised religion, sometimes further systematized physical aggression against women, more so in the case of rape, degradation of female sexuality and of the ignorance women face, in regards to their physical bodies, merely seen as a 'site' to be conquered, or purchased for men's selfish pleasures.

When the character Saudade in *Skin* is coerced by Livia to give up her children, only because in the eyes of society, bearing a child without the support of marital bliss was a crime and above all a sin. Pagan experiences an attempted sexual assault by her teacher Prabhu teacher, Prabhu. Mascarenahs effectively portrays the power dynamic, sexual exploitation and disparity in authority between characters like Dom Bernardo, Ghor-Ghor, and Professor Prabhu, which allow such incidents to occur.

At the core of the novel *Sisterhood of Swans* is the issue of loss of sexual agency women have encountered over the years. The novel gouges the fate of women particularly single mothers and only caregivers who end up in poverty while most men carry on with their lives, and go on to have uninterrupted lives with new wives and secondary families. Many a time inflicting shame- and most importantly when it comes to women's sexual choices and histories, shame is the name of the game. Sexual freedom for women has been a taboo topic for a long time. Through the feminist critical approach, we can call out this oh-so-subtle system of oppression- and continue to break these idealized norms until it is a thing of the past.

In Selma Carvalho's *Sisterhood of Swans*, Anna-Marie like any other normal girl sees her father as a superhero who can never do her harm and will forever love her. But at the age of ten when her father suddenly leaves her mother and their house to go live

with pregnant Martha and her teenage son Daniel, she is devastated as she experiences her first abandonment by a man whom she loved fiercely. Research suggests that a father's presence plays an important role in shaping a daughter's understanding of relationships and sexuality. She is less likely to be on a quest for male approval or seek male affection through promiscuous sex. Anna- Marie in her adult life shows the same signs as she juggles between her desire to search for that elusive, probably non-existent thing called soulmate and her need to be wired to her daddy. Although, she is repulsed by what she sees as her father's betrayal but at the same time she wants to bury herself in his chest, as she used to in her childhood. She vows "I'll never leave the father of my child. I'll stay. Whatever it takes, I'll stay till their tiny arms no longer feel the need to wrap themselves around a father."(Selma Carvalho, *Sisterhood of Swans*, 5) The abandoned daughter's search for a man who will love and protect her, is reflected in her romantic relationships, as every new relationship makes her look at the hollowness of its imagined intimacy, her neediness of which she is not ashamed at all "I want, I desire, I am vulnerable, ...I am a woman floundering" (Carvalho, 19) she questions the need to have one true love? And if there is such a thing as called Soulmate? The ancient Greeks believed that we were once upon a time physically ripped from one another, doomed eternally to search for our other half. The search for love is thus, seen as an attempt to heal the wound, to join the missing part of human nature. And yet eternal doom isn't exactly a blissful way to go through our life. From the feminist perspective, the spotlight is on Anna's need for emotional bonding and her growing awareness of her sexuality. Her youth sprouts in an amorous relationship with several men showing us that being a woman and longing for a male presence in her life all stems from the invisible hold her daddy has on her life especially when she meets someone new.

Anna-Marie's search for love and emotional bonding starts with her stepbrother Daniel, followed by her coupling and uncoupling with other men. She unabashedly acknowledges that she is susceptible to male dominance and power over her. Anna embarks on a forbidden affair with her best friend's boyfriend Nathu and submits to his dominance over her body. She is a slave of her desire. She is the woman who is also the narrator describing her relationship with her paramour on the basis of physical intimacy. Anna believes that Nathu is using her body to vent his social frustration, but she accepts this with the same fervent desire. Their deep-passionate relationship comes to an end, and when she meets him again years later, she realizes that he has moved on and is now a successful lawyer married to an English woman, while she is still stuck in the past. She comes to the conclusion that her quest is pointless, and that disappointment is inevitable for a woman in her position.

Sex is used as a weapon to subdue the women's authority in a relationship, men believe women's sexuality exists to only please men. Whether a woman desires sex is irrelevant to whether she has sex. Patriarchal heterosexuality is typically male-centric. She knows that Sanjay who cheated on his wife to be with her can never change his true inner self. He could never be loyal to her yet when she discovered her affair with Jassi. The next morning, she gives in to her sexual needs, which shows the power Sanjay as a man can yield to her. It is true when they say that desires are the kind of thing that eats you and leaves you starving. When she ponders on her pathetic situation, she feels defiled, physically, emotionally, and spiritually soiled, made impure by Sanjay's vile behaviour. In the Sanjay-Anna relationship, we see how her marginal status as an orphaned, dependent, longing for love affects her dreams. In the later chapters, he confirms his shallow and objectifying attitude towards women when he justifies his infidelity by saying "the best sex I've ever had" (Carvalho, 138) Later Anna-

Marie's father also reinforces this idea when he says, "Men think with their dicks" (Carvalho,141) emphasizing men's often selfish and self-centred approach to sexual matters concerning women.

If we look closely, Anna- Marie, represents the strong modern woman who knows what she wants and strives to achieve it, but at the same time, she could be denounced as an anti-feminist by her own mother and modern society. Her desire to give up her body and soul in exchange for love and security from Sanjay could be problematic and alarming to her life and to those around her, especially her daughter. She constantly seeks validation from the men in her life. In the end, she cries out her folly in thinking a child would make her special. She raises difficult questions about loyalties inside and outside marriage and that place where women's sexuality holds within but also about the kind of freedom enacted as self-serving practice. Anna-Maria is used as a symbol by Carvalho, of complexity and ambiguity deliberately to obscure the full sexual significance. Whereas her mother Ines seen as a "bastion of parochial Goan prudery" is a kind of a feminist who idolizes women she doesn't know and scorns the "lesser women" she does know, sometimes she taunts her for being nonchalant with her sexual relationships yet encourages her to go out and find another man to replace Sanjay who had left her pregnant and alone.

In *Saudade*, the abrupt breakup between Maria-Christina and Miguel, makes her realize "this kind of love was a feeling that could pass, perhaps not without pain... I had thought my happiness depended on Miguel." (Suneeta Perez da Costa, *Saudade*, 2018) She quickly understands that whatever relationship they had could never define who she really is. Her relationship with Miguel was of the same type as that of Anna-Marie and Nathu. Both women secretly enjoyed physical pleasures, with someone who was committed to another person, that other person being the best friend.

Writers Cameron and Kulick discuss the same concept about ‘sexuality in the twenty-first century as a ‘liberating discourse’ through language. Their book *Language and Sexuality* (2003) opines:

“It is a commonplace of contemporary discourse about sex that talking about it is intrinsically a good and liberating thing. There is a widespread belief that, until very recently, the subject was so veiled in shame and ignorance that it could hardly be broached in discourse at all and that we are still in the process of breaking that silence. We are apt to congratulate ourselves on our openness to sex talk, contrasting our modern, enlightened attitudes favourably with the prudishness of previous eras when such talk was taboo --- censored in public discourse and repressed even in private.” (18)

In all three novels, readers can witness how the female characters break the silence of this so-called taboo topic and think aloud about their sexual desires. They have no qualms about thinking about sex or sexual acts.

## **2.4 Marriage and Oppression**

Private patriarchy is a concept based upon household production as the main site of women’s oppression. In traditional cultures, after marriage, a girl has to go to her husband’s house. As the families think that girls are a burden, whereas sons will earn and will look after them. Thus, the oppression starts from her family itself. And as a wife, she is made aware of the subordinate position she holds in her husband’s house. In the diaspora novel *Saudade*, Suneeta in a very subtle way expresses her views and plants certain questions in the minds of the readers. Questions that surface is “Why is it when a woman loves, she gives up her freedom, dreams, her country? why does she forget herself in the process to satisfy her partner? We see how Maria-Christina’s mother who was in love with a Hindu boy, Sanjay, the brother of her best friend, Meeta

dreamed to be together forever but when her mother discovered their forbidden relationship, she was married off into a wealthy Brahmin family. Her husband promised her a better life for her in Angola and carried away the woman who had dreams, who once was madly in love and wanted only love in return, dragged away to an unknown land, “away from her own mother, away from the man she really loved, from everything known and familiar.” (Peres da costa, 45) After her son Henrique was stillborn, she experienced a complete loss of her mental stability. All her life she had lost her loved ones. The innocent Maria believed that her mother was drinking tea to cope with her sorrows, however, upon closer inspection, it appeared that her mother was actually consuming large quantities of alcohol throughout the day, which reflected a portrait of her troubled mental state. She ate almost nothing and would complain about Ifigênia’s cooking. Most of the time, she burst into a rage if the bed was badly made or the pillow was out of place. She stopped reading her books and took to carrying the Bible around, muttering, and pouting passages from Proverbs. Most of the time post-parturition depression is overlooked by society. Maria’s father could easily go back to work and divert his mind from the tragedy, whereas her mother suffered invisible wounds, which are very deep to be healed.

When a woman is tormented in a marriage, she feels hopeless to take control of her own choices and desires. Maria-Christina’s mother longs for her home. She attempts to retain bits and pieces from her past life, the photo of her old lover, the song that she hums “From the strings of my guitar, which sought only your love, arises a voice, because here comes the morning carnival...” (Peres da Costa, 19) resonates with her unfulfilled love life. In Another incident on an evening during the rains when her parents were supposed to attend a party in Luanda, her mother draped herself in a beautiful sari, with a light-green chole, accompanied by gold earrings to her lobes. She

laughed and twirled at her reflection impressed with her transformation but as soon as her father entered the room he shouted “Change at once” At that very moment, the telephone rang announcing that her mother had an accident and was less likely to survive. Maria-Christina understood then, that everything had really changed for her mother, she was not only losing her only living family that preserved her link towards her home in Goa but also her right and choices were snatched away in marriage by a husband who longed only for more and more wealth at the cost of her confidence, self-esteem which loosened away like the sari at the nightfall.

Selma Carvalho expresses similar futility of a ruined marital relationship in her novel *Sisterhood of Swans*. The devastating consequence of a loveless marriage as well as emotional trauma. Women in patriarchal societies are thought to be the sole guardians of culture. Carvalho opposes this man-centric idea of loyalty and warns women that to get a man for love as a result of her sacrifice is easier, but she must be ready to bear the aftermath of love. Men frequently change their love objects. Culture supports men in such circumstances because the infidelity of a woman is dangerous and unwanted in our culture even if she herself is a deserted one. Carvalho through her novel strives to deconstruct the strong pillar of the patriarchal world with her protesting voice. While most couples tend to lavish their imagination on how joyful and satisfying the marriage life will be, for Anna- Marie it is not the case as she saw her mother, Ines a Bombay girl who fell in love with a Goan boy called Francisco. Anna-Marie’s aunt Cielo called him “A *sossegado* Goan man, no ambition whatsoever” (Carvalho, 75) They lived with no stress about the future, living from one day to the next, without proper income and a house. Hence, Ines forced him to quit his job at Xavier’s College and moved to London for a better future. At first, they thought marriage and kids were the only options to soothe their restlessness and rebellion to become somebody, but



soon when London didn't provide the life they imagined, the couple grew apart and finally witnessed a painful breakdown in their marriage. Soon he left them for another woman, her mother was left to pick up the pieces one by one, being a single parent with no proper financial security. She was abandoned by the very people who were connected to her with the Goan thread. The so-called superior Goan society saw her as 'worthless without a man.' For them, fathers, husbands, and sons were the architects of destiny.

Ines herself compared her life to Sylvia Plath, the famous writer, who was betrayed and left by her husband for another woman. She also suffered from a mental breakdown at a very early age, but Ines was different. She had to think for herself whether to be submerged under the trauma or rise up like a phoenix from the ashes because Ines had seen the degradation of her own mother Anna, which she was not even aware of, her mother's ideology that woman's place is only to be in the kitchen and serve her husband, cluttered Ines's adult life. When Anna died, she suffered from the effects of old age, she forgot her home, and her children, her grandchildren, without them in her life she was never alive. Once her children left her in an old-age home, she forgot who she was. Most of the time a woman's value is measured by the existence of her husband or a man in her life. Ines is a character painted with sharp contrasting colours in connection to Anna-Marie. She viewed marriage as a practical transaction and belonged to a generation of pragmatists on the other hand for Francisco, marriage became a regular exercise, interpreting the actions of his spouse as being cruel.

Carvalho with her magnificent and mocking tone comments on the cliché that women think they can change men's kind of ideology, as exemplified by Anna-Marie's belief of Sanjay: "I am convinced I can break him down and remould him to what I need. Women are built to believe we can restore men to their pure selves." (Carvalho,

34) But she does not realize that to fix someone one needs to be whole first. It is ultimately a futile endeavour.

Anna-Marie too has to witness a similar fate as her mother when her partner Sanjay, is found cheating on her with a woman called Jassi. Her life seems to come to full circle, the same aching pain left by a man. She begins to believe that she is inadequate. During a Christmas tea dance, Anna-Marie is approached by her old-school feminist mother who still expects her to marry a suitable Goan man and settle down. Society's priorities appear to be skewed when, during Anna Marie's pregnancy, questions about the father's identity and the presence of a father figure take precedence over the well-being of the unborn child. The mother whom she despised during her teenage years unaware that her taunts like swords were a premonition of what is to come in the future. Anna-Marie finally realized that although her mother did not kill herself like Sylvia Plath, her life was barren and full of misery. She says "Daddy had taken decisions about his life and yet remained fundamentally unaffected by those decisions. His life had gone on... Mummy couldn't save herself. Not the way Daddy had, not the way, men always do save themselves." (Carvalho, 152)

Anna-Marie gradually changes her perception from one that is hopeless, worrisome, and fearful to a voice that is desperate, rebellious, and furious. In her supposedly fascinating romantic world of finding a soulmate, she builds a self-enclosed world of fears and worries-a constant emotional state preoccupying her. The role of a mother for little Ines can bring light to her darkened and hollow life but one can never stop to wonder whether the daughter too will struggle the same fate as a child, as a woman, or as a wife.? or will her fate lead her towards a less painful path? We could never know. That doesn't mean that the future should be faced with gloomy eyes. As we may have dark nights, but the sun will rise to remind us that so will we. Most of the

time, when marriages or relationships break, the children are the collateral damage, whatever actions a man or woman makes, the consequences of it on children unconsciously become so forceful that it dictates the course of their adult life. Suddenly the fairytales and happily ever after, become just an illusion distant from the truth of reality, of life and the facades of love.

## **2.5 Goddesses, Mistresses and Witches**

Many traditional cultures, one such being our Indian traditions contain the worship of women goddesses dressed in traditional or simple clothes. Their existence is entirely pure and virtuous and is well appreciated by society. But what calls into question is - what about the women whom society does not view as goddesses? Viewing women only as goddesses has reduced women to objects that should be treasured. The goddess keeps the family happy, while the other woman, called the mistress, whose becomes the bad entity and her desires, and emotions remain unwanted. The theory of goddess can be problematic, the trope of using divinity as a way of laying arguments with the patriarchal associations poses its own problems. The question is why does femininity need to accept aid from divinity? Is a mortal female not enough to fight on her own? the categorization restricts the scope and reach of feminism.

Most of the time women oscillated from one extreme to another, the possibility of being a wife and the other being a whore or a mistress. Sometimes a goddess or a witch. In *Skin*, the mention of the goddess is mostly done in times of aid. Nzinga-Nganga seeks protection from the mother goddess after her painful parturition. She ingrains her daughter with all the knowledge of the legend of the goddess who could transform into a black panther and protect those who prayed to her. In another instance when Consolação is ashamed of her blatant sexual desires, she invokes goddesses Zamba,

and Durga and also prays to Virgin Mary, all three famously revered for their purity and strength. In the thoughts of men, Alma Pagan's ancestor, is remembered as the goddess 'Venus' representing her bravery, ferocious and skilled service in protecting small children. When for the first time Anna-Marie carries her baby, she is overwhelmed with emotions of love and protectiveness for she becomes sure that, if harm comes her daughter's way, she could quite easily burn the world to save her, just like Goddess Demeter turned the earth barren when Hades, the god of the underworld abducted her daughter Persephone. These roles are defined by the mode of sexually appropriate behaviour, virginity, and purity linked to young girls, marital chastity for wives, and abstinence for widowed or divorced women. In *Skin*, it is the legend of the black goddesses who took the shape of a panther, to protect those who pray for help. When Ghor-Ghor kidnaps the babies, it is at the final moment, that a panther leaps on him and carries him away to his shocking death. This incident shows us that, it doesn't matter if the man is powerfully strong, because when a woman decides to protect her children, she can take on the avatars of any goddess be it Panther, Kali, or Chamunda devi.

In the *Sisterhood of Swans*, there is a recurring image of men leaving their wives or love for another woman and their new baby. It is a narrative of how young women who want to achieve great things for themselves yet, remain at the receiving end of cruel and cunning men in their life. Carvalho gives her female characters agency over their life and body, but that does not mean much when they get involved with men who can only take without giving. The women need not be young, women of all ages, time and again have to settle for much less than they deserve. Anna- Marie, at first is a victim of her father leaving her mother for the other woman. Later in the novel, Anna herself takes on the role of 'other women' first when she dives into a secret relationship with

her best friend's boyfriend, and later on when she dreams about starting a family with the married man Sanjay. From here the story takes a twist, the ice-cold taunt of Sanjay's wife, "My suffering is coming to end whereas yours has just begun" warns Anna-Marie of the possibility of repeating the same story. Sanjay cheats on her with another married woman called Jassi. She calls her the same names her mother called Martha, her father's new wife: whore, bitch, slut. Women pitted against each other to gain the attention of one man, is a trope echoed down through the ages. Anna even learned cooking to prove herself and compete with Sanjay's wife Kaya. The men seem to indulge in juggling, both the wife and mistress without really thinking about the consequences. The events are repeated so often, till you feel you are looking into a maze of mirrors, at the meeting of the different couple and leaving each other.

Historically mistresses have been depicted as seductive and manipulative women who use their sexuality to gain power and control over men. However, in more recent feminist discourse, the concept of the mistress has been reexamined. Many marriages take place for convenience without any love or affection for the spouse and this is similar to the relationship between Sanjay and his wife, whom he only tolerates because of his family. Sanjay and been in love with a Parsi girl but was forced to give her up and marry an Indian Punjabi girl. As a result, he goes on to have several affairs. In the novel *Saudade*, we find women pulling women down, in a particular episode mothers discuss the dirty rumours related to the disappearance of a maid. Later on, it was revealed that the maid was actually sexually assaulted by the married owner of the house where she was employed. This incident highlights the unfortunate reality of women bringing each other down. The issue is that women are put in boxes, labelled as wives or mistresses, goddesses or witches, and are placed opposite each other to blame, critic, and abuse each other. The bottom line is that women are human. Not goddesses

or whores. Above all, they are not perfect beings like goddesses. Beings with flaws, and complex personalities, capable of both moral and immoral behaviour.

In our society time and again, women are wrongly accused of witchcraft or being a witch, especially those who are single, widows, or older disabled women. The word ‘witch’ represents many things, sometimes a woman with a broom, a woman with some supernatural abilities but for many feminists, it can mean an important symbol of individuals who’ve experienced some form of oppression, and thus challenge the societal structures. Accusing a woman of witchcraft is a sexist fabrication that has compelled women to lead a life of agony and trauma. In Kristin. J. Sollee’s book, she says “witches, sluts, and feminists are the trifecta of terror for the patriarchy” Margaret Mascarenhas in *Skin* has used the witch, as a symbol of reclamation of power and authority. In the world of Goa where the toxic masculine energy tried to overpower women belonging to the fringes. Her book shows us through the lens of strong powerful women, who even in times of prolonged suffering have risen above it and claimed their rights, and created a safe place to express their views and thoughts. We can easily understand when people fear what they can’t control, especially men who seem to feel threatened by the power emanating from these women. The women in the novel transmit the knowledge of rituals and worship to their daughters, who in turn use it in times of need, in the first few chapters we find the young slave woman uses her powers to heal her wounds made upon her by the cruel Dom Bernardo, her daughter Perpetua too uses her powers to curse her father to death. Although we find them using their powers to avenge the torments they faced in life, by men. We see they are quite ruthlessly hunted down, and killed by men who could not bear the women to be in the power of their own destinies. Their whole life becomes a witch hunt. It is only in the fourth part named “The Power of Witches” Mascarenhas uses the witch as a symbol to

demonstrate the idea of a witch woman overcoming oppressive forces and is empowering to a degree, but Margaret's narrative acknowledges the fact that the witch is almost always a victim first. The martyrization of persecuted women seems to glorify their victim status, which can be seen as dangerous. The victim trope might assert that all women, along with other marginalized groups face abuse and oppression in the same way and if the witch women are able to harness the power to grant success, we need to question whether other women have the ability to gain that power. It is important to acknowledge that women like Perpetua, who were born into a world of extreme suffering and forced to endure it, cannot realistically expect that their lives will magically transform into something happy and carefree. Likewise, not all women possess the resilience and resourcefulness of Consolação who used her knowledge of magic to escape a dire situation and safeguard her offspring.

In *Sisterhood of Swans*, we find the divorced Ines is looked down upon by her own people who do not see her struggles to be able to provide singlehandedly for her daughter. The stigma attached to women widowed or divorced is very much prevalent in our society which can clearly be seen in the novel.

## **2.6 Women and Indentured Labour**

Women servants play an important role in forwarding the narrative in the novel *Skin*, although their position in society is at the bottom of the pits, through the lower position that shows a higher sense of understanding and knowledge between what is right and wrong. Goa's involvement in the slave trade made it possible for the wealthy higher class to employ servants in the house who were treated appallingly. The atrocities they faced were gruesome. Buying and selling slaves made it easy to use women from Africa, as and how they wanted. The Mbundo tribe in Africa respected

Nzinga-Nganga, a granddaughter of a prophetess who possessed the knowledge and secret power of African rituals. However, she was captured as a slave, raped by Dom Bernardo and left pregnant. She protected her child, a girl named Perpetua until she was no longer able to do so. Perpetua went on to marry another slave called Antonio who worked at Dom Bernardo's estate. For a while they were happy, but tragedy struck when rumours spread that Antonio had stolen grains, Bernardo was furious and cast both Perpetua and Antonio into a dungeon, where a few crusts of bread were tossed into the pit every day and dirty water from the vessel in which dishes were washed was thrown, another time the jailer Costa filled the vessel with his own urine and poured into the pit, their treatment was cruel and inhumane. When the couple died, Perpetua's breast was cut off, her body was hollow and a rotting mess, such bloody fate was that of a woman who was helpless at the hands of her own father, powerful and cruel dictator Dom Bernardo. Soon after a period of physical and psychological trauma, Nzinga-Nganga's health deteriorated, the vile subjugation made her body crippled, and the woman who had once possessed the powers suitable for a goddess was squashed by the dominant force. Consolação was Perpetua's daughter who worked at Miranda Flores's house, was like a second mother to Alma but, was always on the verge of being exploited for her never-ending will to serve her mistress. This attitude to non-stop work without ever wishing for anything in return turns them into meek submissive beings, the next members of the lineage were stuck in the same cycle of providing services. Esperança, born to do the same, had her hands full with the housework, caring for the children, and also breastfeeding her daughter Saudade along with her mistress Dona Gabriela's daughter Eva. The lovers Saudade and Leandro could never be together, as the walls of discrimination on the basis of caste and class were very high, although their



union that is Pagan could finally breach the borders. Saudade will always remain “a maid who has gotten into the worst kind of trouble” (Mascarenhas, 238)

In the novel *Saudade*, there is no background given about the maid Ifigênia, at first reading of the text it seems that she is of no significance for the text, but at close reading one can gauge the silence that Ifigênia possesses, while cooking, braiding maria’s hair, ironing her father’s shirts and much more work. Her life and identity are changed as she is a servant and has to comply with the order of never speaking her own native Kimbundu language and to use only Portuguese while conversing in the house. Milagre, a young maid, was exploited by her employer, causing her to feel embarrassed and repulsed. However, instead of seeking justice, she chose to vanish because she was aware that her societal status marginalised her, making it impossible for her to obtain the necessary assistance.

Although there are no maids in *Sisterhood of Swans*, the female characters are slaves to their destinies, whatever they do, wherever they go, they cannot change the end product. Ines, Anna-Marie’s mother tried her best to better her family’s living conditions even after her husband left them. She longed to live a better life but her end was tragic, sudden, and messy. All the women characters in the novel are governed and controlled by the men in the role of lover, husband, or employer.

## **2.7 Men as Victims of Patriarchy**

Men in the patriarchal setup are compelled to uphold the strong masculine personality. The pressure to provide for and protect his family sometimes becomes unbearable and thus the only outlet is aggression and violence of which the firsthand witness is the woman. Society has created certain standards, for applauding high-value men who are financially stable and can have any woman they want. If men do not

conform to such ideals of manhood, such as basing self-worth on performance, hiding doubts and vulnerabilities, and repressing emotions they feel emasculated.

In Saudade Maria-Christina's Father in search of wealth and Fortune moves his family to Angola, leaving behind his Brahmin legacy. He was a labour lawyer, working for the Ministry of the Interior, preparing worker's contracts. It did not bother him that in order to protect the interests of the owner of an iron-ore mine against the native workers suffering from lung diseases like tuberculosis, and cataracts, he became blind to the fact that the workers bought as slaves often died in the course of their bonded labour. As she got older, she truly saw her papa as a loathsome corpse of a man, sickened by so many secrets of incomplete lives and dreams, "like some ancient karma inscribed itself on the body as much as the mind." (Peres da Costa, 18) He is the perfect example of a man, who suffered failures and took out his frustration in the form of sudden outbursts, taunts, and mood swings. In the end, when Angola rejoiced in taking control of their land from Portuguese colonizers, her papa was restless and a dark shadow loomed over him, engulfing him fully as he shot himself to death. The end of a reign governed by powerful men crumbled down when the natives protested against the tyranny. The downfall of the Portuguese empire became the downfall of Maria's father. He exemplifies a man who experienced emasculation when he was stripped of his influential bureaucratic role, leaving him feeling worthless without it.

Men as well as women are damaged by patriarchy. For example, masculine men who strive to be traditionally masculine can suffer when they are taught to suppress their emotions and avoid intimate relationships to avoid being labeled as weak or sissies. In the novel *Sisterhood of Swans*, Francisco, Anna-Marie's father is a man who could never fulfil or support his family and their expectations. He couldn't cope with the responsibilities as a father or as a husband. He couldn't achieve the ambitions his

wife had for him, which turns the marital relationship bitter and traumatic. Men sometimes in order to avoid confrontation and conflict do not express their thoughts, which leads to misunderstanding in relationships. The woman's quality to retaliate and have verbal dialogue stresses them, this is seen when Francisco turns mute in his marriage and becomes an equal accomplice in its destruction.

In *Saudade*, Maria-Christina's lover Miguel was the sole provider in his family. He worked at a shipwright factory, and his parents being peasants had high aspirations for Miguel to change their dire living conditions. But Miguel wanted to study agronomy, he boasted that he wanted to change lives, but the atmosphere in Angola was changing, which made the factory unsafe to work at. Left him unemployed with only option to return back to Brazil to pursue his studies at Lisbon University. He was running after something which everybody wanted in life, recognition, respect, and money but leaving behind his love and family. Similarly, another male member in her household suffers exploitation, Caetano, an orphan who was bought by Maria-Christina's father to work as a servant and always yearned to be reunited with his mother. Despite the country gaining its freedom, Caetano could never experience true freedom. He became involved in the riots and protests and ultimately gets killed, bound forever to the beast of death. He would never have the opportunity to celebrate and partake in the joys of a liberated life.

## **2.8 Sisterhood: Means to Self-reclamation**

During the lonely and desolate hours of the night, when everything seems to contract and anger begins to fester within them, women may find comfort banding together, as the walls of their homes seem to close in around them. Anna- Marie understands that she prefers to be left alone rather than annoyed and bothered by the

presence of other men. The realization dawned on her that she did not want any other lover, the feeling of being in heaven with a lover is no longer required in her life. She acknowledges that places and men are all replaceable, only her friendship and sisterhood with Sujata and the intimacy she once shared with her mother will remain forever. The actual companionship and love she receives not from the men but from the women in her life, her mother, and her best friend Sujata. Sisterhood of Swan, as the title of the novel implies, the bird folk of swans bask in the glory of finding one soulmate for life. And surely these women have their mates not in the lusty perverted men but in the unselfish relationship bought together by their shared gruesome realities. As Anna reached a stage in life, where she understood the true importance of her mother, how she was the only one who remained back while her father indulged in procreating with ‘other woman’. Her mummy was her protector, she had stood firm alongside her, in every stage of her adult life against the world. The same emotion of fidelity echoes in Sujata’s lines “Whatever happens, whomever we become, we’ll always have each other.” (Carvalho, 171) the mother-daughter relationship is one of the most important themes and is common in all three novels. Anna too realizes her connection with her own daughter, the common strength, comfort and sisterhood she shares with the mothers around the world only makes her strong, she understands the agony of why goddess Demeter turned the earth barren when Hades kidnapped her daughter Persephone. She doesn’t want her daughter to go through her experiences and harbours the hope of a happy and secure future. In *Saudade*, the naïve innocent Maria watches her mother’s every move and tries to imitate them, for example applying kohl to her eyes and dressing up.

For Pagan and the other women characters in the novel *Skin*, there have always been women’s bodies that accompany each other in every stage of life. Nzinga Nganga,

a character who once possessed the art of magic, African ritual, and most importantly the pendant of the black goddess was turned into a slave and was raped, tried her best to pass on her knowledge to her daughter Perpetua,

“She vowed to cleanse the child’s spirit of any traces it may have acquired of Dom Bernardo’s evil nature. In this endeavour, she propitiated the Mother Goddess with a piece of her own flesh, which she cut from her inner thigh with the blunt edge of a machete.” (Mascarenhas, 105)

She taught her daughter the importance of African legends and myths. The art of healing and the forbidden usage of curses when necessary. Later, the grandmother Nzinga Nganga cautioned her granddaughter about the possible problems that might arise, if she indulges in men. Because she knew that allowing a man to have power over one’s body could cloud a woman’s personal power and abilities. Despite her grandmother’s warning, Consolação learned the art of Nganga, The whole village came to her for advice on the treatment of various bodily problems. And she would brew out a number of cures. However, when she met Bosco, he weakened her strengths. Later we find the fact that women were traditionally excluded from combat and weapon handling, but Alma defies societal norms by utilising her riding skills and knowledge of firearms to rescue Consolação’s twins from Bosco. Her proficiency in handling a pistol comes from her mother, Maria, “She cleaned it just as her mother had taught her with the expertise of a soldier.” (Mascarenhas, 140)

Another ancestral character Dona Gabriela provided proper and highest quality education for her children as well as her granddaughter Pagan. Taking into consideration that the novel shows us the time when girls were not allowed to pursue their studies. But these higher-class Goan Brahmin women were given the privilege.

She sends her daughter Livia to Paris so that she could study at the Sorbonne. The education that Livia acquires makes her lead a very Bohemian-type life, imbued with strong feminist perspectives.

The women in the novel are all storytellers, their tales try to rejuvenate the parched soul. As the main chronicler is Esperança, whose mode of narration, makes it possible for the truth to come to light. She is not only a servant but a companion to orphan Pagan, so strong was their bond that when the American grandmother took Pagan back to the United States, she was sure to miss nothing else but Esperança and her blissful tales. Esperança teaches her daughter Saudade about the importance of one's inner beauty, "It means, my little one, that beauty is no guarantee of a long and happy life." (Mascarenhas, 248) which in turn Saudade conveys the message to her lost daughter Pagan. She also tells her the significance of the stone "This is Kuba, the black Madonna. It was given to me by my mother." (Mascarenhas, 182)

In another instance, when Pagan is unsure of her pregnancy, it is Livia and her dreams in which the shadows of her unknown mother Saudade and Pagan's twin sister Alma, motivate her to proceed with the pregnancy. The entire novel becomes a precious device to further the narrative of powerful women.

One of the most basic needs is the desire to be loved and respected. The diaspora writers have revealed through their writings, how female characters deprived of these fundamental need to be loved and respected that they turn to strangers and men who cannot fulfil the ache. The writers wrote extensively on various themes associated related to women's exploitation namely loss of sexual agency, subjugation under patriarchal structures, and sometimes marriage being the toxic one. In the primary physical nature of their relationships, women feel despondent and moody and would

long for lust to transform into love. Sexual affairs do not give them the comfort that they seek. Their quest for love ended in disappointment and discontentment. They have failed in love and have realized the futile nature of lustful relationships. The writers beautifully portrayed marriage merely as an illusion, where ideal love is of no significance.

Writings related to women's issues anywhere in the world have their particular immediate context and these contexts are developed in accordance with the society we live in. When writers, write it is obvious that, they would refer to their environment, social and cultural implications, and the general attitude and tendencies of society towards women, in which they exist with their fellow beings. Thus, these diaspora writers give words to the hopes, fears and aspirations of the women. The choice of the theme may differ among the writers individually but their writing would remain their natural response to the conditions of women and their existence. In recent years, a great sense of urgency is seen to express and establish, the identity of a woman as a distinctive force in their own unique life.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The Melancholy of the Goan Identity and Longing for Home**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

A large amount of literature is often a product of melancholy and longing for home. It is commonly said that painful experiences and memories are the pillars through which creativity has been unleashed. Pain and longing sometimes are incredible sources of inspiration and motivation. Profound nostalgia for what was, and what is lost has been the reason behind some of the great works in history. There have been a lot of first-generation immigrant narratives of longing and loneliness and the probing of distant roots and new unknown ones in an alien country. The writing of diaspora writers is born out of their pain and suffering in their quest to find a place that could come a little closer to the feeling of belonging and home and identity. Some of the second-generation writers are straddling two periods in the history of Goa, grappling with two cultures, one acquired from her Portuguese upbringing by the parents and one brought in the new Indian culture to which every Goan was exposed in the wake of the liberated Goa. In doing so, many writers are able to identify and process their miserable conditions.

These authors and their texts represent so clearly a locus of concern to women in particular, beginning with resonances of home and relationships but extending to issues of cultural dislocation, ethnicity, language identity, and longing for the feeling of home. In the narratives, the central character, usually, the female finds herself at a crossroads between home and a problematic place or relationship that is located at the intersection of different identities, languages, cultures, life stages, or different geographies. Also, at



the imaginary intersection of time and place, the characters continue to discover- as the writers narrate these tales- the multiple ways in which we can finally feel at home.

### **3.2 Goan Identity**

#### **3.2.1 Defined by Colour**

*Skin* focuses on the different aspects of Goan Identity. Race becomes one of the major components in defining Goan identity. While trying to showcase the peculiar life of the characters in the novel, Mascarenhas incorporates her writing canvas with all sorts of people, the elites and the natives of Goan society, the Hindus, Christian Portuguese and the complexities of their lives with regards to the skin colour which played an important role in defining a Goan. The duality of white and dark skin is the ever-present conflict in today's times, so it is not hard to imagine the bloodshed caused by the same problem, during Portuguese rule. The dark skin that distinguished the African people and their tribal culture was seen as inferior and barbaric. And to think that Goa, despite being located on an Indian coast, having not the same skin but slightly lighter in shade, played an important role in the horrendous slave- trade.

The protagonist of the novel *Skin*, Pagan is a Goan who was raised in the United States. When she visits her grandmother in Goa, she learns about family secrets and comes to understand the importance of her skin colour to her grandmother. The secret is that she is not the biological daughter of her parents, but an illegitimate creation of her uncle's relationship with an African servant. Her grandmother initially refuses to acknowledge her presence, and Pagan struggles to understand why her skin colour matters to her grandmother. Grandmother recognises Pagan's unorthodox arrival in her life and only later recognises the challenge to shape the child into a pure Portuguese Brahmin lady.

Even on her deathbed, Grandmother Gian remains resentful about Pagan's failure to appreciate her fair skin and her green eyes, which situate her in a higher standing in society. The novel later reveals that the fair skin and the green eyes of the Saraswat Brahmins played a significant role in fostering a fruitful relationship between the Portuguese masters and the Goan higher class. Thus, Gina's elevated views of these features can be explained by her understanding of historical importance, as evident in her statement,

“because of my efforts, as well as my superior genes, Maria (Pagan's Christian name) is perceived as a legitimate white woman in the white world and as an aristocrat in Goa. Still, she would defy me... baking herself in the sun like a raisin Stupid girl. Why should I recognize her?  
(Mascarenhas, 203)

The Goan grandmother believes that being fair-skinned is an essential part of the Goan heritage. In this case, Goan is defined as being the upper class, with fair skin, and of Portuguese descent. When she remembers her fair skin as a significant criterion that gave her access to the elite Miranda Flores family despite her poor status. Grandmother's views revealed to us how it is not enough to be just a Goan, but it is highly important for one to be fair-skinned and high class if not the Goan identity of one such as Pagan is always in turmoil. She tries to navigate between the white lies that are spoken by her family members some of which run so deep, even the rock and roots could believe them to be true. To untangle it all requires the creation of a new world. That's what Pagan seeks to do. She is part of the cultural hybridity, in search of herself, to try and cover up the hollowness of her adult life. She is aware that her fair skin will always make her stand out in a crowd both in Goa and in America. When she was sent

to Boarding school being the lightest-skinned girl seemed to give her a certain advantage with the Belgian nuns. Her pale pink pearl made her fellow students, go out of their way to be friendly with her yet she was never involved in their close circle or playful game, she always felt like an outsider amidst them. When her classmates continue to ignore her, she turns cold and frigid, creating an identity of an Ice Queen or a Snow White.

She very well understood what it meant when Gina, her Goan Grandmother told her “Besides your name, your skin is your greatest asset, take care of them”. (Mascarenhas, 174) The grandmother’s comments indicate that she believed that being fair-skinned is an essential part of being part of the Goan upper class. She neither recognizes Pagan’s other heritage nor does she acknowledge her upbringing in the United States of America. What is important to the grandmother is that she sees Pagan as Goan, therefore Pagan should act Goan, and in this case, a Goan is defined as being upper class, with fair skin and of Portuguese descent. The grandmother’s view reflects certain fundamental aspects of the social system that remained unchanged: views about race and social status. She is incapable of admitting the other half of Pagan’s genetic inheritance and the low social status of her other grandmother who belonged to the African slave hierarchy in Goa.

It is the same colour that leads to Ghor-Ghor’s tragic downfall. Consolação’s beauty mixed with the magic of her African heritage and her complexion inherited from her grandfather Dom Bernardo started their passionate relationship. But when Consolação got pregnant Ghor-Ghor was horrified “Do you think I’m going to raise some dirty mulatto half-slave in the same house as my son?” (Mascarenhas, 127) Despite his dismissal, she gives birth to twins with a lighter complexion, upon laying

his sight on them he screams again “Look at their color, whore. These are not my children.” (Mascarenhas, 130)

Pagan understands the true importance of a kind and happy life that does not come from others, it should be something that you feel, you can relate to. Although, having light skin is deemed a privilege by most of the characters in the novels. There are relationships that try to shatter this demarcation, Leandro and Saudade’s relationship comes too close to destroying the grandmother’s shallow system of colour discrimination. Pagan too is attracted to her lover, Xico’s cappuccino-type skin. As Saudade writes in her diary, “It means that beauty is no guarantee of a long and happy life.” (Mascarenhas, 248) the words come true when we see Gina, the grandmother’s body turning blue and grey under the debility of old age. The white skin or a beautiful complexion of a person does not equate to being a kinder or a good human being, it is important to note that all those in the novel who boast about their great white complexion are fragile and feeble-minded characters. And those who can see the difference between right and wrong, belong to the lower, humble class of people.

### **3.2.2 A Goan Hybrid Identity**

In the world today, there are many individuals with mixed cultural backgrounds, who often grow up feeling like imposters, in the very country they are born, much like the character Pagan. In the course of the novel Pagan discovers, that her roots are far more diverse than she initially thought, with elements of Saraswat Brahmin, Portuguese, slavery and African culture, and a specialism of Indian gods and goddesses in her bloodline. There is love and betrayal, powerful yet discontent women and emotionally handicapped men, forbidden relationships and the nameless births of innocent children, and the sum total of all these is Pagan, a character bewildered to

embrace her heritage, which is both pleasure and pain. She tries to understand her identity which is a combination of different layers, much like an onion. that like an onion. On her quest for identity, Pagan, baptized by her Goan grandmother as Pagan de Miranda Flores, a child of diaspora, mixed Goan and American parentage. Margaret Mascarenhas, is also a cultural hybrid, a product of cross-cultural references, displacement, and her return to her roots, she tries to portray the issue of hybridity realistically. The diasporic pattern of the novel portrays Pagan's paternal roots in a colonised land, and her obsession to figure out her identity makes her cry out her anguish and helplessness "The problem is me, in my inability as a cross-cultural hybrid to figure out where I belong" (Mascraenhas, 8). The knowledge of her dark inheritance makes her realise as she writes in her letter to her boyfriend "I have for the first time become more than vaguely interested in my heritage" (Mascarenhas, 145). Pagan's experience is emblematic of the larger Goan diaspora, which has produced many individuals who feel like they don't fit in anywhere, she is the countless 'cultural hybrids' forever oscillating between different cultural identities.

When Pagan is expecting twins, she wonders what a child of her union with Xico could look like. A cross-cultural child is automatically destined to feel confused, always at the crossroads to choosing which identity is the best. On one hand, they are told that they have the best of both worlds, and people envy them for being bilingual, for enjoying certain advantages, on the other side of the coin. The somewhat correct truth is they are neither fish nor Fowl; many spend years trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together from the mixed cultural heritage into one superior identity. Anna-Marie's daughter Ines, a second-generational product of a Punjabi-Sindhi man and a woman of Goan-Portuguese ascent, is named Ines because it is a cultural thing to name the granddaughter after the grandmother. But for the Punjabi uncles and aunts she becomes

Chotu, Sweetie, Gori, Bilo, and Dinky. Many other uncles, aunts, cousins second cousins try to form a relationship with Ines. Women folk arrive and sing Punjabi songs and try to teach Ines the art of cooking stuffed parathas and paneer. Although the language they speak is alien to Anna, Ines fancies it.

In *Skin*, Pagan herself being a hybrid recognises the need to pass on her knowledge to her children who are also the product of cultural hybrid and they must pass on this knowledge further to their own children. “I write stories that become books, under the pen name of Pagan Maria” (Mascarenhas, 261) in *Sisterhood of Swans* we understand when we are born into a particular family, we inherit the past and the possession and certain characteristics that are equally good and harmful, for Sujata, it was her father’s fear. She watched her father suffering anxiety attacks and how he feared the changing times, when he was a kid, his family had abandoned their home and business in Uganda, trying to transform their lives in England. but they were received as refugees and put in a camp. From then onwards his life was filled with constant uneasiness, he spoke about killing himself. These talks turned her childhood distressing and erratic. she continued to suffer throughout her adult life. Anna is sure that Sujata and she have inherited their parents even when they had inherited nothing else.

For Anna- Marie, feels that there is a part of her identity that is incomplete, which only her father could fill. She believes that her father’s stories, traditions, and his beliefs can fill the void. As long as he is absent from her life, she will always yearn for those things and being fatherless is a subtle yet significant aspect of her identity. These novels show us the crossroads and irregularities between cultures through the portrayal of the Western world, where some Goans were successful while some failed. The subject that

matters most in diaspora literature is marked by its concern for ambiguity or loss of identity.

### **3.2.3 Defined by the Intimacy Shared by an Indian and a Goan**

Why don't you say you are Indian? Why do Goans insist they are Goans? Isn't Goa part of India? The issue as to whether Goans have a separate identity, an Indian identity, a dual identity, or no identity at all, are some of the questions that come to mind while reading the novels. Goans Anna-Marie brings forth an interesting perspective about how outside of India, Indian people do not have time to hate each other. Even if Goans and Indians are quite different from each other, the enemy remains the same. And in knowing we migrate to the colonial empire, with whom we share a bittersweet relationship. Nathu understands that they are surrounded by the dominant culture and in order for him to achieve something great he needs to blend in and become English. The sad reality is that Anna being a catholic Goan and Nathu a Bengali, cannot experience Britain in the same way. Anna- Marie understands her Goan-Indian origin and tries to be loyal to her Indian roots. Reminiscing about the days of the old, she is nostalgic for the past conjured up in her mind as a fantasy. Whereas her mother clearly says she is a Portuguese Goan and is of the view that all Goans hate Indians. She represents the Goan Catholic who had to cope with the process of adaptation and assimilation into the new culture. Still, she is the perfect example of Kutchabacha of Indian society, never fully Christian enough for the European culture and never fully Indian in her name or the choice of food and music. Nathu is a quite different Indian, he has always seen life for what it was, is and could be. On one hand, he knows that his allegiance lies with his motherland India but on the other hand, he believes if we are to succeed, we need to evolve, from our past, he aims to belong to the country he resides in and as Sujata says "if we are to grow, we have to reach beyond the narrow confines

of our own definition of what it is to belong.” (Carvalho, 170) whomever our parents are we can never command our hearts not to feel love, only because the other one is different religion, race, caste or has a different colour skin. Being a Goan did not stop Anna from blissfully sharing her thoughts, memories, body, and soul, with men who were non-Goan regardless of the pain it caused her. She walked hand in hand with all types be it her friend Sujata, Nath; a Bengali, Sanjay; a Punjabi. The friendly Pakistani shopkeeper, all were a part of her journey.

### **3.2.4 Language of Familiarity**

Language has always been an entity that makes us feel at home, especially when we are away in a foreign land, among people who do not speak our language. Language has the power to unify and divide people. It is a kind of belonging, when one hears the local language around, instantly it is a relief and a comfort to find someone closer to home. As more Goans are leaving Goa to live in countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and other European countries, the use of Konkani is decreased and more and more Goans are writing in English. Although Goa was subject to Portuguese rule, it is now English rather than Portuguese that dominates the linguistic fabric of the state. Goa’s long history of Portuguese domination has left an indelible mark on its culture which can be seen in *Skin*. The Grandmother however is proud of her Portuguese brand and still wants Pagan to read and learn the Devanagari script, which was used by the local people. This shows the fact that Portuguese was the language of the wealthy, elite, educated, and Catholic, and literature written during that colonial period was written by and for the small but powerful section of society. Ifigênia, a maid in the novel *Saudade*, is ordered to only speak Portuguese by Maria’s mother even when she speaks to her friend. This shows us two different people aching to speak their language. Ifigênia’s helplessness to speak Kimundo and Maria’s mother’s need to hear everyone



speaking her mother tongue arises from the deepest need to feel at home in a far land. They are torn between preserving their language of origin and acquiring the language of their adopted culture. We see in *Skin*, how learning Portuguese and French gave the higher-class Brahmins power to showcase their authority and ownership over the lower-working farmers who could only speak Marathi and a few words in Hindi.

### **3.3 Saudade: Not All Who Wonder and Wander Are Lost**

A central impulse in the work of a number of the diaspora writers considered in this study is nostalgia- the expression of longing or yearning for an earlier time or place or a loved one in the past history. In understanding the Goan diaspora it is necessary to dig deeper to elucidate the meaning of the term *Saudade* is an untranslatable Portuguese word that exists but goes nameless in English” (James. A Russell, *Everyday conceptions of emotion: An introduction to the psychology, anthropology*, p. ix) It is common in the literature and music of Portugal, Verde, and Brazil. The concept originated in the so-called ‘Age of the Discoveries’ when Portuguese explorers were away sailing to new lands, some never coming back, thus leaving their families suffering from their absence and longing for their return giving the word a bittersweet position. The Portuguese scholar Aubrey Bell, in his 1912 book *In Portugal* defines Saudade as “a vague and constant desire for something that does not and probably cannot exist, for something other than the present” The concept has many definitions, it is translated into English as “longing,” “yearning” or “missing,” “homesickness,” and “nostalgia.” The etymology of the word saudade is seen as derived from the Latin solitude, “loneliness,” with a possible influence of the Portuguese word *saúde*, “health,” which in the past also meant “salvation” (J.P.Machado, *Etymological dictionary of Portuguese language*, 1977). The Greek word, *λαχτάρα* (lachtára) means “desire” to describe a longing, yearning, or craving, mixed with some nostalgia or hope. It also has no direct translation

into English. Many other languages have words that try to explain the complicated feelings that make up the saudade meaning. The Welsh word *Hiraeth* is also an untranslatable word, similar to nostalgia, longing for a place which can never be revisited back.

Other authors argue, on the other hand, that it arrives from the Arabic concept of *saudah*, which is said to have exactly the same meaning (Castro, 1980, quoted in Farrell, 2006). The word has a unique status as translated in English from the work of Pessoa, a famous Portuguese poet as “Saudades, only Portuguese people are able to feel it well because they have a word to say that they feel it” However, Portuguese people are not the only ones who can feel *saudade*, the feeling is universal, it is both pleasure and pain. 17<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese writer, Manuel de Melo says Saudade is a “pleasure you suffer, an ailment you enjoy.” It is also a literary and artistic term with some aesthetic kinship to *Fado* music meaning fate in Portuguese. The melodies that spring out of *Fado*, reflect the loving sadness of losing a loved one. Sometimes remembering the memories of days gone by. When we are deeply in love with someone, we invest all our heart and soul into them, our whole world revolves around them. Our attachment to them is so strong that it’s difficult to remember a time before they came into our lives, and coping with their departure can be challenging. The bittersweet ache of missing them creates a sense of saudade a complex human emotion.

The tension at the heart of diaspora consciousness appears at the psychological level as the narratives in which female characters long for or ponder their emotional distance from home, we can see that the term *Saudade*, encompasses something more than a yearning for literal places or actual people. We know even if one is able to return to the place, where he/she grew up, one can truly never return to the past of our childhood, since it exists only as a place in our imagination. Although the meaning of

*Saudade* itself has changed over time, essentially it has come to signify more than the loss of one's childhood home. Historian Jean Starobinski says "What a person wishes to recover is not so much the actual place where he passed his childhood but his youth itself. He is not straining towards something which he can repossess, but toward an age which is forever beyond his reach." In *Skin*, Pagan's first experience of literal homesickness or longing that colours adult recollections, occurred when she was still a child, living away from her American grandmother. The narratives expose the loss that it mourns, the loss of innocence itself.

The title of Suneeta Peres da Costa's novel *Saudade* is an apt adaptation of the emotions of nostalgia and longing for the place which was once called home. In an interview with Jessica Faleiro, Suneeta tells "Saudade is perhaps an anti-epic, a diasporic exile's song, a fado re-attuned to the violence of the Empire, the ghosts of colonialism, and the haunting disposessions of the Iberian slave trade." It is also a coming-of-age story of Maria-Cristina, told from her innocent point of view of growing up against the agitated political setup of pre-independence Angola under Salazar's rule. Maria from a very early age observes her mother's Portuguese speech, her dressing style, and how she performs stoically in the presence of those whom she regards as different, and below her, for example, her mocking taunts towards Caetano their black servant. The maternal bond binds her to the language, the lingering losses of the migration experiences, and the Goan culture particularly the Goan Catholic legacy, all contributing to creating her own independent mind. Looking back, her childhood memories were beautifully crafted, only to show a child developing an identity in a world that was constantly changing. It is a tale from rapture to rupture. As women age, the emotional and imaginative distance from home- their longings and pains evolve as well. Homesickness and nostalgia function as the main tropes in Maria-Christina's life,

as a yearning, for the forgotten childhood or the lost youth that has been outgrown. The recurrent imagery of blood- used to show the menstrual blood gives the readers an insight into the narrator's own coming of age. Another way, we can perceive "The coming of age" is not in the traditional sense used to describe a child's journey to adulthood, but to see in the sense Simone de Beauvoir gave the phrase: the coming of age, referring to the precarity of old age. The narratives by Margaret Mascarenhas, Selma Carvalho, and Suneeta Perez da Costa considered in this research focus on characters who negotiate the limits and possibilities of midlife and beyond, accomplishing a passage through nostalgic mourning for lost communities and histories.

Almost all characters in *Saudade* are adrift, immigrants, displaced by the factors that are external, influenced mostly by the political upheavals of a particular place or country. In diaspora novels, the tribulations of the families are the disruptive consequence of the colonial and postcolonial interface, even for those who want to be wishful or nostalgic or are simply in denial of what once was and can never be the same in the future. Men, as well as women both, suffer from throbbing homesickness. For example, Maria's mother tries to console herself by speaking in Portuguese and Konkani, wearing a pair of old Kolhapuri sandals, draping a yellow blossom printed sari, and the black kohl eyes all signify the bonds that she can never forget or lose. Maria's mother shares a similar mindset to that of Anna-Mari's mother Ines in *Sisterhood of Swans*. She too tries to hold on to her Catholic-Goan identity as she tries to navigate her life as a single mother in Horton. She attends the Goan community hall in Horton, where she meets other Goans and feasts on the delicious dishes of *Pulav* and *chicken xacuti*, a speciality of Goan delicacies. She even tries to convince Anna-Marie to marry a 'nice Goan man'. Both mothers are tormented by the emotion of loss, which

is more intimate to them than any other emotion. The estrangement from their mothers, their home, and most importantly their dreams crushed away in the new world.

Maria, in the novel *Saudade* is a young woman searching for her own place in Angola, has a lot of identities thrown at her which hold her down to a predetermined past. A very intimate way of awakening to a sense of independence from the forces trying to contain her and not allowing her to flourish into her full self. She transforms from a naïve girl who admired her mother deeply to a disillusioned, questioning all that she took for granted as a kid.

In the last chapter, as the atmosphere in Angola turns bitter and harsh, Maria has to return back to her old ancestral house in Goa. where she will have to live as a stranger among her father's family. She starts questioning, how does one pick up the threads of an old life? How can one go on? When in your heart you begin to understand there is no going back. There are some things that time does not heal. She realises that some wounds go too deep. As she travels by ferry, her fellow travellers question her identity and that she was very lucky to be back home, but she feels alienated and disconnected from the place she approaches, and the response "My name is Saudade" seems shallow and empty, she realises that Goa cannot be her home because as the famous saying goes 'home is where the heart is and it seems her heart beats only for those whom she has left behind in Angola, her mother, her friend Andrea, her lover Miguel's letters, Caetano, and the maidservant whom she came to care for. For her, the matter of home seemed too tiering and hopeless, knocked down and remade many times that it has emptied her soul. Maria's sense of home or 'return' is quite plainly unclear, precarious and desperate. Maria's homecoming emphasizes the importance of the ancestral home. She is well aware of her mother's abandoned house, the house once a symbol of pride is slowly fading away just as her mother's deteriorating health after her husband's

death. The house has turned into a grotesque, soulless structure with the stillness of the past memories confirming that whatever silent memories walked in the house, walked there alone forever. Something so precious to a Goan identity has been left to rot in the dust.

For Maria, the 'Parashurama' myth seemed strange as she felt she was entering an abyss, but at the same time the coconut trees, betel groves, and the paddy fields all represented the refreshing new beginning, for when she enters the house she ached to satisfy her hunger she had not known, she gobbles up the Goan baked pão. The hunger represents her need to belong somewhere and the Goan pão is the heritage that she has inherited from her father, but she is yet to embrace.

In *Skin*, Saudade is more than just nostalgia, Saudade is the by-product of cross-cultural relationships. Her ancestry is filled with so much pain, that it becomes hard to wonder about a blissful past that never existed. Saudade, both a woman and her feelings are lost to the shadows of the dark. The concept of Saudade is no longer relevant in the novel. Whereas, in *Sisterhood of Swans*, Anna feels that a huge chunk of her life, is missing, a part of her identity is missing that only her father could fill. Her nostalgia is for the happy old days when her family was together and happy. She believes that her father can fill the void, with his stories, traditions, and his beliefs. As long as he is not part of her life, she will always long for those things and being fatherless is a more subtle part of her identity. All three novels follow the tropes of home and homesickness, and the links between home and mother, in metaphysical geography. All Narratives reflect maternal associations, with special powers who help in gaining the spiritual homecoming for their daughters.

### 3.4 Alienation and Homemaking

The idea of 'home' is complex, not merely a physical structure or a geographical location but always an emotional space. Many women, especially, the feminists and the writers, who have shaped and have been shaped by the second wave of feminism, have experienced conflicts between being daughters, wives, mothers, or lovers- whether heterosexual or lesbian. Women have always felt the tension between private and public identities- between securing a possible career and keeping it together a private life that supports what is traditionally called 'home-making.' The novel *Sisterhood of Swans* presents an aching existence of second-generation immigrant women in England. While the idea of homemaking for first-generation diaspora families meant nothing but loss and homelessness, second-generation characters like Anna-Maria, Sujata, Sanjay and Nathu are eager to find their place in Western society. At the same time, they are well aware that England has not yet accepted them. The feeling of alienation and isolation permeates the novel,

“Before us lies the wide chasm of an England we can’t cross and the inescapability of an ethnic alienation we can’t deny. We’re imposters at the gate... I’ve contrived historical narratives to form an alliance with Sanjay to create a shadow of solidarity which I think I can embrace, but which I the sense will collapse when reality intrudes” (Carvalho, 17)

The theme of belonging is central to the coming-of-age novel by Carvalho, as the characters search for a sense of 'home. Anna-Marie, a 26 years old only child of Ines and Francisco, moved to Britain in 1989 from Bombay, with hopes of starting a new life. Sadly, their dreams shattered and their family fell apart. The fallout with her father

becomes the first trigger that leaves her feeling homeless and emotionally alienated from the people around her. Later in her life, her rejections and failures in securing a perfect life partner turn her life sour and she loses interest in her surroundings. She is forever plagued by a yearning to belong and to hold onto the familiar. Her restlessness stems not only from the inescapability of ethnic alienation, being a Goan-Indian in England, but also from the inevitable suffering caused by her parents.

The bondage of past memories accompanies many in the new country or place. As Anna-Marie walks through Sanjay's house she finds "There is nothing here that says this house wants to be part of London. This is a house in denial about where it belongs. It's a withdrawal into a proud conservatism which Asian lives flaunt, but also want to escape." (Carvalho, 31) Sanjay is lost between borders, working at a Tesco supermarket while scheduling affairs. He is stuck in the cycle of either accepting and embracing the new way of life or carrying on with his bits of traces of being an Indian. The different Indian spices stored away in tiny jars, and the smell of ancient recipes all represent the unknown resident that wishes to unveil itself but is tied away by their own insecurities, longing, wants, and desires.

Unlike Sanjay, Nathu clearly understands that in order to belong to a place or a country, one needs to learn to embrace the new way of the world and coexist with all the other cultures. He knows, "We don't have the answers to everything. We are fumbling, fumbling about in the dark. Fumbling without experience. Our righteous rage, our desire to exist on spectrums-left-wing, right-wing is just hysterical panic." (Carvalho, 49) Nathu's house is a reminder of the atrocities that Britain inflicted on others, particularly on Africans and Indians, who were converted into slaves and robbed of their dignity and wealth. The walls of his house are adorned with images that serve as a reminder of the suffering inflicted on these communities. Nathu's home stands as



a tribute to the painful and shameful history of the past, which is being preserved by individuals like Nathu. From a state of oppressed, he takes on the role of an oppressor to fit into English society. For him, culture is fluid and should be accessible to everyone. Similar to Nathu, Kaya, Sanjay's wife is the only character who is nothing like a confused first-generation Indian immigrant. She's confident in her job and goes on with her family and friends quite graciously.

In the diaspora novels, the conflict arises when the new ideas of the present generations evolve, but will be rejected more strongly by the older generation, influenced by the need to maintain the native and traditional values. As Ines screams at Anna: "You have no respect for the past, for the tradition, for family, for everything that came before you." (Carvalho, 63) But the change is inevitable, however, the more diaspora increases and the more generations are removed from the Goan base, there will be more indifference and detachment. They will have no emotional bond to the ancestral home or the village. We find a type of alienation, defined by the emotions felt by the second-generation immigrants, in the novels *Saudade*, *Skin*, and *Sisterhood of Swans*, wherein the final chapters of the novels, the main protagonists Anna-Marie, Pagan and Maria-Cristina respectively, all return back to Goa, out of desperation to find a place to belong and to call home. For Anna- Marie Goa doesn't change anything, it does not elicit the required emotion of belonging, for when her mother dies she tries to make sense of her world, her need to find security and home takes her back to Goa, the place her mummy had told her about. She wished to find a part of her mother and herself in Goa, "but looking for her in Goa was a falsehood." (Carvalho, 120) Goa was not more than a physical concept, it was not her home. She was forever moored to Horton. We can clearly see her anguish when someone makes a racist comment about her home, she cries out "Home's Horton, mate. Fuck you." (Carvalho, 120) She is conscious of

the fact that we are allowed to get disordered or schizophrenic because we are all going through the same thing, our lives are complex and smudged by our messy loves and messy politics of the world. Whereas Pagan and Maria, both come much closer to calling Goa home even though, they encounter feelings of isolation and alienation. They struggle to find a “true” perspective within their romanticised memories; they are determined that nostalgia must be resisted, for it distorts and falsifies memories.

The novels are like those great stories, the ones that really were full of darkness and danger and sometimes you didn’t want to know the end because how could the end be happy, how could the world go back to the way it was, when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it’s only a passing thing, even darkness must pass so that when the sun shines, it will shine out more clearly. Those are the stories that stayed with us, that meant something. Even if we were too small to understand why. Folks in these novels, like Nzinga Nganga, Saudade, Pagan, Anna-Marie, Ines, Maria-Christina, and many more had lots of chances in turning back only they didn’t, they kept going because they were holding on to something. That something is the desire to belong. How does one pick up the threads of an old life? How can one go on? Some wounds go too deep that they cannot be healed with time, and it is a challenge to know how to proceed.

Thus, at the end of each novel, it is a fateful hour in the destinies of these women, that is the hour of judgment. In which everyone must decide who they shall be. Do their hearts remain lifeless like the statues that encircle them, or do they still pulsate with the same blood that flowed through the veins of their ancestors who created them? Or is their identity restricted to the tombs of their sleeping forebears? Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly present among the living and waiting to emerge like the sun rising above the horizon. There are two places the women can choose to dwell for what lies ahead

or what lies behind. Sometimes, it seems it was the easiest to let the past take the throne inside their minds. Although they carry so much luggage from the places they have been, making room for a new memory will always be a hard task, but one by one they can try to dump the bags and sort out, the goods they carry with them and the bad they can toss out. This way the burdens that once plagued them, cease to exist in their lives even if they look behind from time to time their focus will be on the present. Living in the present – the past a distant memory, where they will never stay.

The limitless nature of fantasy can be both a blessing and a curse. We cannot direct everything. We cannot control all of the movements of our very own composition. Many Goans who emigrated to foreign countries, at first soar on the heights of Western lifestyles but as days turn to months and months to years they turn desperate and feel like wanderers on this earth. However, even when physically far from home, those who hold onto the memory of home will always remain true to themselves.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Haunting Past of Goa's Colonisation**

“Decolonising the racial hegemonies in our minds and culture should not be seen as something being done, heroically, by one group for another, but as a historical corrective that levels the playing field.”

- Suneeta Peres da Costa

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In literature, history has to be re-examined critically as history reveals itself in the texts and the text is reflective of the history. Goa's history is full of varied events that have contributed to the making of the state, with a past that differs from the rest of India. Portuguese ruled for nearly 450 years since 1510. They changed the entire landscape of Goa, a small state on the west coast of India's picturesque heaven. Famous for its beaches and architecture. Portuguese introduced new ways of administration, and changes in the religious setup, dressing, and eating habits. The bulk of Goa's history has been written from the perspective of colonial agents. The view that 'Goa Dourada' translated as Golden Goa was constructed during the colonial phase to solidify and administer the narrative of Goa as a well-ordered society without tensions. This type of narrative can now be seen as problematic. Because of course, Goa is fragmented on various levels of caste, religion, culture, etc.

The history of Portuguese colonisation in Goa has abundant references to exiles and migrations either because of the political suppression of those who opposed the colonial regime. But also, there is another history that is discussed by the writers about the life stories of Hindus-Catholics, in European countries or in the United States of

America. Where they took different identities and formed bonds of friendship and sometimes of love affairs. Goans not only took Goa to the world but bought the world to Goa. Their lives allow the ones left behind in Goa to accept the recent changes brought about by the movement of Goans in discrediting their Goan-Indian identity and accepting Portuguese citizenship. Continuing the business of leaving Goa in the hope of better lifestyles, in the form of Goan cooks, butlers, pantry boys, bakers, and ayahs. During the Portuguese regime, Goans were specially selected owing to the mode of their Western dress, food, drinks, social customs, etc, particularly the Christians which they could not find in the whole of the Indian subcontinent. While continuing their infiltration into every part of Goan society. The colonizers considered native religions and rituals pagan and uncivilized.

The novels are based upon its lament for a native Goan land, out of reach now or lost somewhere deep in the past. There are different worlds present in one Goa. Some Goans are still bound to the past. The narrator's constructions of the character's inner lives and histories via the narrator's scepticism and uncertainty about them, suggest that beneath the words we read, lie unarticulated stories that may contradict the ones the narrator is experiencing.

#### **4.2 History Becomes Stories**

The plot of *Skin* is yet another historiographic metafiction novel of a diasporic young lady who decides to go back to India to find her true identity, and in the process comes across a large amount of information that connects her heritage with Goa's dark colonial past which will always be a triggering factor in the making of the future not only for the characters in the novel but also for Goa's evolving process. It is a tale of the history of the catholic elite Indo-Portuguese family who along with Goa has enjoyed

the forbidden fruits of Portuguese enterprise. History and story have interchanged places many times, when Pagan arrives in Goa, she understands the official history of the family as her aunt Lidia and her nanny Esperança, tell her stories about their own childhood days and what was it like to live in Portuguese Goa. The stories reveal to us Goa's part in the barbaric slave trade. The dark history of Pagan's ancestors becomes the bitter reality of her present. It seems history and story change places, as we can see sometimes history became story and story became history. This double positioning of time in the narrative can also be called a *leitmotif* that points to us that our life is a continuous process from one time period to another, from history to story, and vice-versa. Thus, we find, the doors of knowledge opened to Livia and Esperança. Through the writings of Geography, Literature, Maths, French, Art, and History. But it was the colonial version of the history, not the true story. The true story had been given to Esperança by her mother, who received it from her mother. The true story always resides with the mothers, thinks Esperança. But that doesn't mean they always tell the truth.

History and story are like the two ends of the seesaw, sometimes one is more while the other is less. In a narrative when history is situated at the centre of the texts, it can sometimes take away the true essence of the characters and the lives they live. It becomes very important for a writer to try and keep the historical narrative far from the main plot of the novel, history could be used as a backdrop but should never overshadow the true emotions, and experiences of the characters to be portrayed to the readers. We have established that the pattern of the novel *Skin*, through a juxtaposition of the past and present, form is the mirage of plots, subplots, of cultures that stressed the hybrid identity of the colonial experience characterised by the ambivalence of form and content. It fictionalizes the historical and social events from the Portuguese era in

Goa to create new forms of representation of subaltern women, the protagonist Pagan, herself, and other women characters in the novel. History is often connected with the emotion of memory. In *Skin* we find memory is an integral part of the narrative, without which the plot would be static and the characters would never get a chance to explore their own personal conflicts. The healing power of memories is seen when Pagan remembers her childhood in Goa, and her time spent with her American grandmother. The memories shared by Lidia, Esperanca, help her rebuild her own history, fractured by her conflicted childhood, the reconstruction allows her to tell on yet another history for her and her children. A Goa which was once colonised would one day finally come to terms with its decolonised state.

The novel *Saudade* shows us a world of Goans who moved across colonies for a better life but were driven to move after the dismantlement of the British and Portuguese empires. Goans were swept like the salt breeze from the Atlantic and inspired by Macmillan's 'Wind of Change' speech, which helped to kickstart the independence movement in the South African colonies, especially in the southwest African Portuguese territory of Angola in the final years of colonial rule. A novel born out of the stories and tales narrated to her by her aunt Livia, who had lived in Angola during the years leading up to Independence. Historical evidence tells us about the connection the Goan immigrants felt with the Angolan environment. A young activist woman called Sita Valles, of Goan origin, in Angola, was brutally killed by her enemies, which parallels the world in which the Narrator Maria-Christina resides. Another Goan freedom fighter PP Shirodkar, deported to Angola by the Portuguese, came to love the land where he was caged. He announced that "he would love to be reborn in Angola." The important aspect of the setting is that it is a historical fiction that guides the plot further to explore the legacy of slavery and other evils in the very

setting leading up to the independence of Angola from Portuguese rule. A coming-of-age story or a *Bildungsroman* of Maria in accordance to Angola's growth from a colony to being an independent country, the complicity in the Portuguese rule and how a Goan immigrant family deals with it, and their dependence on the Angolans who are their servants. Suneeta's knowledge about the Indo-Portuguese, Goan, and diasporic communities helped her to turn history into a beautifully heart-wrenching story of longing and pain. The historical perspective helps us to understand the society prevailing during the Portuguese times. This fiction of looking inside a Portuguese-speaking world spun by a Goan writer standing on the outside of the Goan land brings to us the recovery of a Portuguese imperial past to critically analyse its importance and the need to re-evaluate certain experiences that might have been seen as superior once before but has a scope to understand the more underlying meaning to it. For example, when Maria's wealthy white friends Susan and Andrea have political and business connections in South Africa which helps them to flee from Angola in times of crisis. But on the other end, those who are marginalised by their poor living standards, folks such as farmers and working-class settlers such as Miguel are defined as *Retornados* meaning 'The Returned', who tried to take refuge in Portugal after the independence of African colonies, but are never accepted back as one with the people. The black Angolan Caetano can never truly return to his home, forever caught up in a civil war, unlike Maria, who although had fewer options, still can find a place with her paternal family in Goa, with whom she might come to live happily.

History is most of the time said to be seen or narrated by the victor's eyes, the ones who noted down history belonged to the elite or the colonisers, documented history itself. The marginalised, on the edges, rarely had the opportunity or the education to pen down history from their point of view. The large extent of the



narratives tends to be by the privileged and show hegemonic structures. Margaret's *Skin* can be seen as a tale of the privileged and written for and about the day-to-day working of a higher-class family of Miranda Flores. Although the novel seems to criticise the higher class, the main protagonist is part of the elite community and not a lowborn. But *Saudade* takes us on a ride where the tale narrates those voices that have been historically silenced. the text could be seen as a revolutionary one. The hidden secrets and truths of Goa's dark history are presented when Maria's Marxist history teacher punishes Maria for calling out Bartolomeu Dias as an invader. The conventional story that portrays colonial agents, such as Bartolomeu, as benevolent figures who annexed territories and civilised native populations, and portrays white men as brave conquerors who eradicated cannibalism and claimed lands like Angola, is deeply problematic. *Skin*, however, challenges this distorted narrative by allowing female servant characters to tell their own stories about their ancestors, who were oppressed by cruel colonial agents and suffered under their domination.

#### **4.3 Ghosts of the Past**

The recurring imagery of *bhoots* or ghosts from Indian folklore mythology is ever present from the beginning of the novel *Saudade*. Ghosts can be interpreted as lies about the past, perpetuated to the present, which haunt the future. They can also symbolize diseases of heredity that destroy the joy of life in the younger generations, or in the Indian context, the *bhoot* is associated with death that was unresolved and conflicted, such as death in childbirth or death in early teenage years. These deaths leave the bhoot unfulfilled and craving earthly pleasures. In popular culture, the image of a female bhoot is common. In the novel *Saudade* the concept of *bruxa*, a Portuguese word that translates to 'witch' mostly related to African black-magic or witchcraft is brought into the picture. Maria attempts to escape her real-life problems by retreating into a fantasy

world of delirium and dreams of the otherworldly realm. The existence of such imagery in the text only strengthens that our past and the Goan historical past will always come to haunt Goans, regardless of the place they reside at.

Maria was deeply affected by the loss of her stillborn brother, Henrique, and struggled to come to terms with the concept of death. She imagined him as a mercurial presence, appearing and disappearing in various forms. She envisioned him as an incomplete form with notional features like hair, eyes and gender. When she went outside to take my nightclothes off the line, she would feel his presence and imagine him playing with her. Similarly, when she brushed her teeth, she would see him in the mirror, mocking her. However, whenever she tried to communicate with him, he would suddenly vanish. This shows that she was unconsciously dealing with her loss and trying to cope with the pain of losing her brother. The 'ghost of Camões' appears in the novel as a symbol of the lingering presence of Portuguese colonialism in Goa. Camões is known for his epic poem, the *Lusiads*, which glorifies Portugal's imperial conquests and expansion. In the novel, his ghost is depicted as haunting the present-day characters, reminding them of the violence and oppression inflicted on Goa by the Portuguese colonial powers. It also serves as a metaphor for the ongoing cultural and linguistic influence of the Portuguese on Goan society. The Portuguese language and cultural traditions have persisted in Goa long after the end of colonial rule, and the presence of Camões ghosts highlights the continuing legacy of Portuguese influence. The novel subverts the power dynamic by giving voice to the Goan characters and allowing them to tell their own stories, challenging the narratives of the colonisers and their Glorified legacy.

In the novel, the concept of the Janus ideology, Janus, the two-faced Greco-Roman god, of beginnings, endings, and duality is also used to explore the dual

identities and histories of the Goan characters, who are torn between their Indian and Portuguese cultural heritage. It highlights the complex nature of identity and history. The characters are able to peek into the past and make sense of it in a way that helps them to move forward and succeed in the future. The novel suggests that the conflicting identities and histories must be acknowledged and reconciled to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the present and future.

In *Sisterhood of Swans*, we do not come across ghosts of dead people but the ghost of living people who left willingly, leaving behind their haunting memories. Sujata is haunted by the same thoughts of suicide, the same affliction her father suffered years back. The hereditary ghosts of the parents, haunt the children. The memories of her happy childhood along with her mother and father would always haunt Anna to the extent that it will become impossible for her to have any long-lasting happy relationships with the people around her. At the Goan community hall, where Goan uncles shout out with a glass of wine in their hands shouting out ‘Viva Goa’, navigating in a world distanced from the present, a world which is stuck in the past, holding onto something that is fading away. The young generations flee to universities leaving the old parents with their own ghosts to deal with. Ghosts in this case are a kind of haunted longings; figures of earlier relationships and the places with which they are associated, both remembered and imagined, focusing on a person’s emotional life, affecting her or his deeper register of memories.

#### **4.4 In the Name of Empire, Wealth and Religion**

Our sole aim to gain freedom from the colonial rulers was fulfilled when the Indian army entered Goa and drove away the Portuguese agents. The refreshing truth remains that today Goa is free from bondage. But are we truly free? Colonization is still taking

place either when we try to copy the fashion, and lifestyles of the Western world, or when we, in turn, try to colonise others by migrating to other places in search of a good home or a job. If we see around us, our Goans are constantly moving to London, increasing Goan values, and traditions in foreign countries. While leaving behind empty homes and ageing parents who are left to care for a slowly declining Goa. Similarly, in the novel *Skin*, we see similar situations where older parents long for their sons and daughters to return back home after pursuing Western education, but they are often disappointed as the new generation is disconnected from their roots and easily swayed by the Western ideal of living without religious, familial, or cultural ties. Our Goan society still reeks of traces of hidden colonial imperatives in the social, cultural, and religious realms. We are every day and everywhere affected by other cultures through media means, movies, books, etc.

By analyzing the novels, we find our position changed, we can no longer find one pure culture in Goa. Similarly, the Goan-Portuguese society in *Skin* favoured the foreign Portuguese, and French over Konkani, Hindi, and Marathi. In the same way, we favour the English language today. The uprising scenario of Goa made it difficult for Goans to accept the Indianization of Goa, as they were confused to choose which side, stuck in time, whether to remain loyal to their Portuguese masters or accept the Indian right to be liberated. If we are to study our current Goan society, nothing much is changed. *Skin* shows us how Goan people who worked in countries like Kuwait, Dubai, London, and Abu Dhabi performed menial tasks for their masters, but when they return to Goa, with gold and enough money, they feel superior to their own villagers, who toil in the fields for their daily food, who cannot afford to have a visa to the gulf or the other Western countries. *Skin* tries to bring forth the irregularities in Goan society situated strongly in the Indian Caste system. But solidified by the Portuguese as there is ample

evidence to suggest that the Portuguese strengthened the caste system in Goa during their colonial rule. Historical records show the earliest references to the caste system in Goa, mostly found in the Portuguese colonial documents, which detail the law, and strict penalties for those who crossed the line. They firmly believed in the hierarchical social structure. The Kunbis, Gawdas at the bottom, Sudras somewhere in between and the highest castes reserved for the Portuguese and other Europeans. A reference is found in the book *A Short History of Goa* written by C.F. Saldanha wherein it is recorded that "Land could also be owned by private owners called Bhatkars or landowners, who had several roys called roits or Mundkars. These Mundkars lived in feudal tutelage of the land of the landlord."

As time passed, the number of Mundkars increased after the Portuguese Rule in Goa. Since the Portuguese were believers in the feudal aristocracy and slavery, the Bhatkars were empowered, to treat the Mundkars like slaves. When Mundkars could no longer bear the maltreatment, they approached the Portuguese government in 1901. Portuguese framed rules regarding the Mundkars by Decree dated 24-8-1901 which was subsequently amplified and modified in Legislative Order No. 1952 dated 26-11-1959 (for short 'Diploma of 1952'). Still, it did not bring any change in their deplorable treatment by the Bhartkars.

The colonial violence implemented by the Portuguese regime was concerned with snatching away the agency of the Goans in regard to religion and religious practices. The basis of Christianity in Goa was always shaky, in the novel *Skin*, the priest who promised to remain celibate for life, gave into his sexual needs. Some Hindu Brahmins saw the conversion to Christianity as an opportunity to keep their status as it is. Thus, the Hindu Brahmins became Christian Brahmins. In *Skin*, we find how the elite Miranda Flores family could enter the church alone, while the workers and lower-class servants

*Mundkars* had to stand out and attend the mass service. Saudade became a nun not because she wanted to but because she was forced to hide her illegitimate pregnancy from the world, she herself did not believe in organized religion but believed in the spirit of gods and goddesses present inside us. The people accepted the status and the authority the religion bought to them but were unable to fully understand what it was to be a Christian, we find those who boasted about the artificial and materialistic power were the ones who claimed to be Christian. Whereas the low servant helps, who worshipped the goddesses of Chamunda and the Virgin Mary both equally were humble and kind characters. Local religions survived and continued despite the constraints imposed by the Portuguese imperial structures by means of the Inquisition. The novel *Skin* shows how Goans continued to see old religious meanings through the new Christian religious signs and objects, frequently recognising in the patron saint or in the images of the Virgin Mary the familiar devi or devta. If we notice around the Goan landscape, the front of most Goan households has the Holy Cross structure. These represent the displacement of the sacred Plant Tulsi. The Hindus who were converted willingly or non-willingly replaced their place of worship with a new God. The novel mentions that most people in Goa were families called Kamats, belonging to Saraswat Brahmins, who converted to Catholicism in order to retain their land and wealth. Portuguese soldiers or officials were married to the daughters belonging to Hindu Saraswat Brahmins to ensure the transfer of more power and wealth. Thus, it is not wrong to accept that the Portuguese did further add to the discrimination and other social prejudices in the Goan society.

Another major legacy the Goans seem to inherit from the Portuguese is the *sussegado* lifestyle. The calm, serene state of Goa is seen as only fit for drinking and living in a highly fun-induced world. During the spice trade with the East, evidence is

found that cashew apples grew copiously on the East coast of Brazil, which were accessible to Portuguese traders who bought the trade of making Cashew feni to Goa. It is made by fermenting, and further distilling into liquor. Before the arrival of Portuguese colonizers, coconut feni or coconut toddy was quite famous in Goa. The traditional community involved in feni making process is called *rendier* (toddy tappers). But as the cultivation of Cashew apples increased so did the demand for cashew feni became the new and unique source of alcoholic beverage in Goa. The techniques of distilling coconut feni were adapted to distil the introduced exotic fruit that was not native to Goa. The word “feni” seems to have been taken from the Sanskrit word “phena” translated as “froth,” this could be due to the fact that the drink shows light froth and tiny bubbles when the bottle is shaken or when it is poured in a glass. Goa has always been prone to accept the concepts of the colonisers. Goans accepted the feni into their daily lives and made it a source of their daily livelihood. However, when the Portuguese left Goa, in 1961 the Indian government enacted a prohibition on the manufacture of feni in order to keep Goa in line with the whole of India. But decades later in 1994, when Goan feni makers pleaded to legalise the cashew feni trade, in order to preserve and protect a special cultural aspect of Goan traditions. It was successfully registered under Geographical Indication Act 1999 which falls in class 33 for Alcoholic Beverages and registered under GI No. 120, on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Finally, Cashew feni became one of Goa's first alcohol to be registered from Goa.

Margaret in her novel *Skin* shows us how the Goan community was affected by the feni enterprise. Women are seen working hard in the fields while the men lazily sit in bars and gulp down bottles of feni. When the younger generation looks up to their fathers and elders, they too are born into a family that would go on to experiment with other addictions like alcohol, and heroin. At the same time, we cannot overlook the

medicinal properties of Cashew feni, in treating a common cold to orthopaedic problems. In the olden days, after childbirth, the midwives would blow a mouthful of feni on the vagina, as it helped to heal the lacerations caused during childbirth. Although the advantages of Feni are way more than the disadvantages, the art of drinking a variety of alcoholic beverages such as feni, port wine, and beer was introduced by the Portuguese in the colonial era. Alcohol consumption was not only a social activity but played an important role in Goa's economy. However, the consumption of alcohol is not without its problems. Excessive drinking leads to health-related problems like liver failures, road accidents, and other social issues, such as domestic abuse. The idea that Goans happily indulged in drinking is echoed in *Sisterhood of Swans*, in the line "You Goans love the Irish. You both like to drink and dance." (Carvalho, 156)

Our Goan culture has been overrun by so many cultures, no one really knows who they are anymore. The Goan Catholics are trying to be Hindus, the Goan Hindus are trying to be like the Maharashtrians, while it is only the native Goans like 'Gawdas' and 'mahrs' and other native communities who seem to remain loyal to their roots. Obviously, the past is a distant memory, or a place and therefore, the subject of nostalgia. From this point of view, Goa cannot be simply unique among the places once colonised by the Europeans be it British, Dutch, or Portuguese colonisers. If we are to look at the larger landscape, it is not hard to see a process that, although having distinct elements, obeys the same logic: the use of the past as a shred of meaningful evidence through narratives that are frequently used for social construction or to induce intimacy among its people.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

From this research, we can conclude that these writers are typical diaspora writers, who have been tortured and enslaved by their memories of what Goa was once upon a time and which no longer exists. Goa has changed drastically throughout these many years. The dissertation consists of five chapters, the first and the last being 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion' respectively, three core chapters are "Diaspora through Feminist Perspective", "The Melancholy of Goan Identity and Longing for Home," "The Haunting of Goa's Colonial Past". The "Introduction" lays down the aim and objectives of this study, the research and methodology, and the biography of the writers whose literary works are the subject of this study. Apart from this, it also provides the definition and the different aspects of the Goan diaspora and Feminist criticism. The "Conclusion" is the shortest chapter that ties up the whole dissertation with a brief summary and suggestions.

The second chapter elaborates on how Margaret Mascarenhas, Suneeta Peres da Costa, and Selma Carvalho are representative feminist writers. The themes are prevalent in the novels *Skin*, *Sisterhood of Swan*, and *Saudade* make their texts highly absorbing, confessional, and feminist. Their writings artistically portray the unhappy, dissatisfied life of women. The texts are a critique of patriarchal prejudices and discrimination. While closely examining these modern texts, we are also examining modern society, women continue to be harassed and oppressed. Be it in any time period or varied places. Just like the persecution of slaves and witches that took place in the olden days, it becomes a perfect example of society's seemingly eternal misogyny. Women today are the direct heirs to those who were hunted down or killed not just in

the physical sense but in thoughts and emotions. The books focus on how women across generations have tried their way out of situations and difficulties that hindered to an extent, that idealism is worn out by the realities of life. The texts explore the intergenerational differences in the female immigrant's life with a candour that is witty and clever in its political statements. Despite all the suppression, each of them defies evil in some fashion. Some decide to travel across the ocean to create and cope with life, even when society is against them. The writers reveal to the readers the devastating plight of women after being deserted by their men in ecstasy or in pursuit of extramarital affairs. They are ignored by society and even their own family members call them insane, old hags and subsequently die in pain and poverty in contrast, the novel also portrays women who protest the patriarchal forces by reclaiming the social taboos attached to them and brandishing them proudly. Their female characters are bold and have courage, bound by the patriarchal chain to having an independent identity, they fight back with wisdom and strength. The Characters seem to be stuck with the same old memories, which disables them to accept a new identity or to let go of the old ones. The writers try to give voice to the silent suffering of every woman, so that our society may hear their cries hidden behind their silence and give freedom of thought and expression. A woman may enjoy the pleasure of love and her status may remain as such even after her youth is gone. Every woman in our society desires to attain respect and dignity in society. Hence, these writers, as the voice of every woman have made sure of their significant position in the diasporic literature.

In the third chapter, all three novels end as in many diasporic narratives, the readers are left with questions the implication being that life offers us more often unanswered questions than it does easy answers. The conflict between longing for the old identity and new identity, love and desire, light and dark, and past and present

makes an appearance throughout the narratives. The problem arises in defining Goan identity and what happens when it evolves and turns into a hybrid identity. All characters in the novels face some sort of disappointment in being adrift or misplaced, as a consequence of colonial history. The divine obsession with identity comes from their hearts for society which has also become ignorant of women's troubles. The chapter discusses the characteristics that define a Goan in the Western world, depending on its skin colour language, and the way they dress up. Special focus is put on the term *Saudade* and its importance in diaspora literature.

The fourth chapter analyses Goa's colonial past and sees it from a fresh point of view of the diaspora writers, who even though did not experience the colonial era firsthand but still feel the aching of their fellow Goans who once lived through the times to tell the tales, be it their parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. Their research can be seen and appreciated throughout the novels. Their passion for Goa's history is what makes one understand and gain knowledge about the history and the concepts of Ghosts and deaths related to the bitter past. The various prejudices, the caste system, and their personal struggles are the focus putting factual history as a background. Goa's sudden change from being a religious Brahmin Hindu state to a state perceived by others filled only with bars and drunkards.

It's always been the men in history, so we need to see 'her' story, the women who are held up as an example to other women as if it is a good thing to do. Why are women blamed for being raped? and why are they blamed for the actions of someone else? that is a question that is asked every day in courts, all over the world and I don't think our horror should be less in India or in Goa. That is why reading and analysing the lives of women be it in a diaspora genre or any other area in literature, makes it an important aspect of my research. We have seen that there are things that have been kept secret and

hidden, especially the issues related to a woman's pleasure or her agency over her own body and I think the texts amplify those issues. The texts help in calculating the cost of silencing women's voices, it looks at the cost of remaining silent or not helping or turning a blind eye to the other women's traumas, in our society, schools, homes, workplaces, or our country.

To sum up, it might be said that, with the finely drawn female as well as male characters, real and liberal and the apt use of words, their nostalgic evocations of pulsating images from the heart of Goan hybrid culture and landscape, their accurate depictions of the elite and the lower sections of Goan society, make a lasting contribution to the rich symphony of cultures in a mixed setting. Works like *Skin*, *Sisterhood of Swans*, and *Saudade* help shed new light on diaspora and feminism, heralding a bright dawn in fiction-writing by Goan Diaspora women writers. This dissertation helps us grasp the meaning behind the saying that states: "Airports are witness to more heartfelt displays of love and affection than wedding venues, as it is only when love is departing from us that we truly recognize its worth."

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