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## **Difference and Marginalisation in Ramabai Espinet's The Swinging Bridge**

**Sandip Rambhau Gawai**



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**Sandip Rambhau Gawai**



**Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism**

**K-1/114, First Floor, C R Park, New Delhi-110019,**

**Email: [contact@grfdt.org](mailto:contact@grfdt.org), Contact: +91-9818602718**

**Website- [www.grfdt.org](http://www.grfdt.org),**

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## Abstract

This study aims to interrogate the difference and marginalisation in Indian diaspora through an Indo-Caribbean-Canadian writer Ramabai Espinet's novel *The Swinging Bridge*. It will largely focus on various issues of Indian immigrants in Caribbean. Indian Diaspora is a largest diaspora with differences/diversities prevalently found in every corner of the world. The lives of immigrants are haunted by the memory of past and their current situation in diasporic space. Difference based inequalities such as gender, cultural, ethnic, caste or race and even nationals of the particular country are big issues in Indian diaspora from the beginning of migration and settlement from country of origin to country residence. Ramabai Espinet as a member of Indian diaspora in Caribbean has focused on issues faced by Indian immigrants and particularly women in new land through her novel *The Singing Bridge* and shown that the history of marginalisation, oppression, exploitation of women in diasporic space and their current scenario as secondary migrants. She has also examined the double diaspora experiences of Indian immigrants from India to Caribbean and Caribbean to Canada in her novel. This study will try to interrogate the various issues of difference and marginalisation of Indian immigrants in new space and their histories of exploitation and oppression by indigenous population and even Indian immigrants mindsets toward their own community members and domestic violence among Indian families in diaspora. Ramabai Espinet's novel *The Swinging Bridge* portrayed violent experiences of Indian immigrant women in Caribbean and Canada such as sexual oppression, marginalisation, domestic violence, and Indian cultural practices through her characters as representative of Indian diasporic communities. The various issues of Indian immigrants with the large focus on women issues in diasporic space critically analysed in this paper.

Key Words: Indian Diaspora, Difference, Marginalisation, Oppression, Double Diaspora, Feminism

Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

# Difference and Marginalisation in Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge*

**Sandip Rambhau Gawai**

## **Introduction**

Indian Diaspora is a largest diaspora with differences/diversities prevalently found in every corner of the world. "The Indian Diaspora constitutes an integral part of the socio-economic, political and cultural life in the Caribbean region. Having stemmed from ugly policies and ambitious designs of British colonialism, Indians in the Caribbean have shared the suffering in a variety of ways since the beginning of their arrival on the islands" (Vertovec, 1992). There were also many immigrants left Caribbean region for the Canada due to various biased activities of the local citizens toward South Asians and even among (SA) themselves. The double diaspora experiences of immigrants are quite visible among South Asians of Caribbean. The Indo-Caribbean-Canadian writer Ramabai Espinet's novel *The Swinging Bridge* is largely focus on various issues of Indian immigrants in Caribbean. The lives of immigrants are haunted by the memory of past and their current situations in diasporic space. Difference based inequalities such as gender, cultural, ethnic, caste or race and even nationals of the particular country are big issues in Indian diaspora from the beginning of migration and settlement from country of origin to country of residence. Ramabai Espinet as member of Indian diaspora in Caribbean has focused on issues faced by Indian immigrants and particularly women in new land through her novel *The Singing Bridge* and shown that the history of marginalisation, oppression, exploitation of women in diasporic space and their current scenario as an secondary migrants. She has also examined the double diaspora experiences of Indian immigrants from India to Caribbean and Caribbean to Canada in her novel. "Apart from the caste and religious differences, there was also a consistent major disparity between the number of men and women contracted as indentured labourers. The scarcity of Indian women in the British Caribbean was to have a profound impact on the indentured immigrant Indian community and

on the status and role of women in Indian–Caribbean society" (Ramnarine quoted in Hangloo, 2012). This sort of hierarchical practices based on difference are still persists in contemporary world of Caribbean.

## **Indian Diaspora in Caribbean: A Brief History**

An act of Parliament in 1834 results the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, which has created labour shortage for plantation and other works in most of the British Empire. They have searched cheap labour from wherever they could manage and first choice of British people was Indian people. They made contact with Indian agents and fulfil their labour shortage with recruiting many Indians for work in their colonies. "Roughly half a million East Indians were brought to the Caribbean through the indentured labour system between the years 1838 and 1920" (Persaud, 2015). The most of the people of India as indentured labourers to many colonies were unskilled and semi-skilled with whom their masters treated very badly. The conditions of women in Caribbean were also very exploitative in nature where women doubly marginalised in hands of their colonial masters and in their domestic lives.

Prea Persaud has divided the history of East Indians in the Caribbean into three phases, "the first phase deals with the initial arrival of indentured labourers in the West Indies and the condition they faced. Coming from the different backgrounds, castes, and occupations, the indentured labourers were a fragmented group whose only unifying thread was they all came from India... second...phase consists of conflicts with the Afro-Caribbean community which casted East Indian not only as "other" but led East Indians to believe that Afro-Caribbean were the enemy and not comrades in the fight for equality and recognition. The third phase, then, marks the politicizing of the Hindu Indian Identity" (Persaud, 2015). The immigrants from India to Caribbean island have faced various issues regarding their difference. The very beginning of the indenturedship, the voyages

have taken place by the sailing ship that makes the lives of migrants horrible during their journey from India to different parts of Caribbean. The ocean journey from Indian subcontinent to Caribbean was extensive and took almost four months by sailing ship. There was a firm terror at sea and a risk of storm, shipwreck, rebellion by the squad and suicide by the travellers. The epidemics of illness and epidemics of infectious sicknesses were extra rampant during voyages. The most of the Indian migrants came to Caribbean from Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay presidency. The reasons of their migration were decline of trades, farming, caste inequality, taxation, and low wages. There were many such sorts of push factors common in indentured migration. The Indians in Caribbean introduced in different parts such as British Guiana (now known as Guyana) in 1838, Trinidad in 1845, Jamaica and French West Indies 1854 and Dutch Guiana (Suriname) in 1873 (Vertovec 43). Later on, they were also introduced in many parts of the Caribbean. The immigrants have confronted various issues like, racial discrimination, gender inequalities, and domestic violence among Indo-Caribbean people. Therefore, Indians jointly organised associations to claim their identities especially; Hindus were very strong and dominant in compare to other Indian groups. Significantly, in the contemporary period, Indo-Caribbean community has made its existence very rapidly, however the rigid activities of difference (racial, gender, ethnic, cultural, national, and lingual) among Indo-Caribbean still exists and they have confronted discriminations in their Caribbean hostland.

### Literature of Indian Diaspora in Caribbean

The literatures of Indian diaspora are the testimonies of the lived experiences of the diasporic communities existing outside their homeland with different social-cultural locations. As belong to Indian diaspora writers through their literary inputs shared their experiences in hostland and their memories about homeland. As far as Indian diaspora in Caribbean is concerned, the writing of the Indo-Caribbean (Descendents of Indians who immigrated to the Caribbean between 1833 and 1917) has started from very beginning of indentured labourers' arrival on the Caribbean island in the form of letters (means of communication for immigrants to their families in India). "Apart from the letters to relatives in India written by early Indian immigrants to the Caribbean, the first...Indo-Caribbean writing are in newspaper, journals and magazines which also appeared in, both in Guyana and Trinidad" (Birbalsingh, 2005). The writers like Seepersad Naipaul have contributed

their writings in these newspaper and magazine, his *The Adventures of Gurudeva and Others Stories* one of the fine example for it. The writings of most of the Indo-Caribbean discussed different issues of Indian immigrants in their hostland and their various religious practices.

The modern writers like Ramabai Espinet, Nail Bissondath, Shani Mootoo, V. S. Naipaul, and Lakshmi Persaud and many forth have contributed their experiences of diaspora (and even double diaspora experiences) in their literary writings. They have provided more sharpness and acidity to the investigation by dealing with physical displacement as well as social and cultural sense of displacement in diaspora. The women writers are constantly do focus on women issues such as marginalisation, oppression and so on. As Silky Khullar Anand pointed out that, "Indian diaspora literature in English problematizes the concepts of nation, religion, identity, gender, marginalisation, assimilation and acculturation in exploring the experiences of diasporic life by concentrating on multiple aspects of life in exile" (Anand, 2010). The Indo-Caribbean like others Indian diasporic writers have also focused on such issues in their writings. Ramabai Espinet as self-proclaimed feminist from Indo-Caribbean with double sense of diaspora as settled in Canada concentrate on women predicament from first arrival of women in Caribbean island to their present condition in the same. Ramabai Espinet belongs to a diasporic literary tradition written by women writers' colour who does believe on their writing as form of opposition to various odd activities against women.

### Gender Difference and Women Marginalisation in *The Swinging Bridge*

Ramabai Espinet as belongs to the Indo-Caribbean diaspora has focused on various immigrants issues in her first novel *The Swinging Bridge*. She has resisted against different forms of marginalisation and oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, and colonial prejudices in Caribbean, Canada and even her ancient homeland India in the novel. Women are in central focus to her writing and the novel *The Swinging Bridge* not exception for it. "Differences, related to the class status of individual women, became apparent...in Trinidad and Tobago" (Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, 1998). Mona Singh a female protagonist film-maker by profession engaged herself researching on film about the lives of Haitian woman in Canada. Carene a Caribbean woman is also work with Mona on her project of documentaries on immigrant life in Canada. Mona Singh also thought that



she would make her own film on urban life in Montreal, Canada. The protagonist of the novel *Mona* has long concerned of migration and even she familiar with the dual sense of diaspora. Her ancestors came from India to Caribbean as indentured labourer and later move to Canada for betterment of life than Caribbean. *The Swinging Bridge* “traces Mona’s reluctant journey into her immediate past-the family home in Toronto, her journey back to her Caribbean past with her return to Trinidad and further going back into the ancestral past” (Espinet, 2005). Canada, Caribbean, and India are main settings of Espinet’s novel and in which distinct spaces, lives of women in public as well as private spheres.

The Indenture system have brought many Indians mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar who continues their patriarchal attitudes in Caribbean island and it also carry in Canada with the many Indo-Caribbean which persistently led women’s marginalisation. The gender difference is very crucial issue in Caribbean, which very much responsible to make women lives awful. The women issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment, patriarchal mentalities are significant part of *The Swinging Bridge*. Mona narrates her experiences while she was in Caribbean in her childhood. The sexual attack on her mother shows that women were not safe within their own household. Muddy (her mother) looks very beautiful when she was ready to church payer, uncle “Baddall bent and tried to kiss her. I heard her small animal cries, saw her eyes darting around frantically” (Espinet, 2003). But her mother did not utter a word of her molestation which makes little Mona nervous but that shows inability of women in Caribbean. In the public sphere, safety of women is big issue in Caribbean society, which made us familiar through the Espinet’s novel in which she explored the events of women’s sexual violence. “There had been recent reports about attacks on young girls by unscrupulous taxi drivers...a young girl who had been abducted for a whole day and was then flung out of a speeding car at a busy intersection in San Fernando, her clothing torn, her underwear missing” (Espinet, 2003). And even the protagonist Mona Singh was also experiences such sort of sexual abuses in her childhood. “There are many issues where there is a potential for conflict-for example, the age of marriage, the treatment of women and girls within the domestic environment, wearing of clothes which are cultural and religious signifiers, or the way animals are slaughtered for food” (Brown, 2007). Ramabai Espinet’s novel *The Swinging Bridge* is significantly explores the relationships within patriarchal Trinidadian-Indian family where

women are marginalised and subjugated to different sort of violence such as sexual, psychological, and socio-cultural (Espinet, 2005). Men always dominated women in every facet of society and considered them secondary or other. Ramabai Espinet as feminist not only portrayed women as victims but also raised their voice for resistance through her characters.

Mona has punished several time in her childhood by her father (Da-Da) to wear short dress and even making love with her boyfriend. Although, she has rejected domestic life and wants to love liberal life with her partner “I would not marry Roddy and become his little wife. All I wanted was to be his love” (Espinet, 2003). This shows some sort of resistance of women to odd activities that women have to perform as part of their cultural baggage. Mona’s mother never raised her voice front of male members of her family and even she never defends herself. However, Mona wants to live liberal life and escape from this sort of role of women in society. In the Caribbean, Indian immigrants have strongly preserved their cultural practices and women are always known as preserver of culture in diaspora. In her essay “In My Mother’s House: The Mobilisation of Home in Women’s Writers of the Indian Diaspora” Sundra Ponzanesi says, “As far as the condition of migration and diaspora is concerned, women are often called to preserve their nation through the restoration of a traditional home in the new country. The idea of home entails the preservation of traditions, heritage, and continuity; there is even an intense emotive politics of dress for some communities” (Ponzanesi, 2000). Mona has also familiar with term bamboo wife. “A Hindu ceremony conducted “under bamboo,” in the bamboo and tarpaulin tents that Indians in villages built for their lavish wedding ceremonies. These weddings were not recorded legally” (Espinet, 2003). However, men never termed as “bamboo husband” because of their superior status to women. In compare to men, women always marginalised due to their so-called inability, which decided by society. According to Simone de Beauvoir “one is not born, but rather becomes, woman” (Beauvoir 18). The process of socialisation in society has created gender difference and given more importance and rights to men in compare to women and consider other for them. These sorts of socialisation process in society are responsible to subjugation and marginalisation of women that excluded them from their own rights.

Ramabai Espinet has not only focus on current situation of women in Caribbean but also traces the history of women predicament from Indentured migration. The

story of “Gainder, the girl who had escaped an unwanted marriage, is thirteen years old when she arrives at the island of Trinidad” (Espinet, 2003). Where, she has joined plantation work with her Jahaji bhai and bahin the only family of her in Trinidad. She got popularity among people because of her talent in singing and dancing and performed in various ceremonies. Joshua has offered her marriage proposal when has heard her songs but however, he has stop her and try to break her singing and dancing “ Joshua waits a full month after the wedding to tell Gainder that she must never sing or dance in public again. Her heart turns to stone when she hears these words” (Espinet, 2003). It clearly indicated that, liberal lives were not allowed for women in Indo-Caribbean community during the period of indenturship. Espinet in her novel, with different stories of women has shown that greater gender difference do exist among Indo-Caribbean community.

According to Njelle Hamilton, “Espinet also shows the deleterious effects of Presbyterian education and religious values on the Indo-Trinidadian psyche. While she limits the negative effects of Presbyterianism on men to dissolution of ethnic marriages and erasure of their Hindu names for Christian ones, women face even more detrimental erasure of their sexual identities” (Hamilton, 2013). The living condition of women from long history of migration to recent diaspora settlement women are marginalised due to gender difference that very visible in Caribbean Diaspora. “For Indians life in Trinidad at that time life was a mess of contradiction. Even in urban San Fernando we heard of girls being cursed and even beaten by family members for so much at looking at “man.” And husbands too, beating and kicking wives, except not in our family, never in our family” (Espinet, 2003). “The boundary of the ethnic is often dependent on gender and there is a reliance on gender attributes for specifying ethnic identity; much of ethnic culture is organized around rules relating to sexuality, marriage and the family, and a true member will perform these roles properly. Communal boundaries often use differences in the way women are socially constructed as markers” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). Women are known as strong preserver of cultures and responsible to produce ethnic groups.

### **Racial and Ethnic Difference in *The Swinging Bridge***

Ramabai Espinet focuses on racial and ethnic differences and prejudices against the Indian origin people in Caribbean. The novel *The Swinging Bridge* has historical background of Indian indenturship of nineteenth century, the lives of Indian immigrant in colonial

and post-independence of Trinidad and migration of Indian origin people from Caribbean to Canada and their consequences in nineties. There are various communities’ shows their existence in the territories of Caribbean island and particular in Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname. The communities such as Chinese, Africans, Portuguese, Asian Indians, Jews, Syrians, European, and Amerindians are largely found in Caribbean with their amalgamation. Notwithstanding, this ethnic and racial heterogeneity, there is a dominance of people from African and Asian (origin) descent. In Caribbean, people from these two distinct ethnic backgrounds share a common experience of colonial oppression (Premdas, 1996). The Caribbean island is a vastly difficult place with regard ethnicity, race and cultural differences. Ramabai Espinet in her novel explores the various issues of racial and ethnic difference in Caribbean through her novel *The Swinging Bridge* where characters confronted the racial discrimination and threat as an Indo-Caribbean. “Race/ethnicity became the key platform for exposing differences in women’s lived experiences of subordination, resulting in feminists defining themselves as ‘black’, ‘native American’, ‘Asian’, ‘women of colour’ and so on. It is, however, important to establish that the latter groups were themselves not monolithic in their ideological position on the causes of gender inequality” (Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, 1998). As Indo-Caribbean, women have face double exploitative nature of racism and ethnicity in diaspora.

The protagonist Mona Singh and her family as belong to India have experiences of migration from Indian subcontinent to the Caribbean Island and then to Canada which crates the anxiety of Identity, belonging and country of origin. Her family has experienced the sense of double diaspora and their predicament in different locations. Mona Singh never visited to India and someway shown her negation towards her own ancestral homeland. “I never wanted to go to India, a place our ancestors had left more than a century ago, where we heard that poverty was the way of life” (Espinet, 2003). Her escapement from India indicates betterment of life and she has decided to leave Trinidad for Canada where many Indo-Caribbean immigrants used to live after 1960s. “Church missionaries were helping people in all sorts of ways to migrate to Canada and to get settled once they arrived. Grandpa Jamesie wrote a letter to Auntie Vannie, saying how Indian people from good families should think about settling in Canada because it was such a nice place, with such nice polite people” (Espinet, 2003). Mona got scholarship



to study in Canada where she has settled forever. However, her childhood memories are very strong and full of experiences as an Indian in Trinidad. The most of the people confronted issues of racism and ethnicity in Caribbean island. The protagonist Mona Singh and her brother Kello (who suffered diagnosis of AIDS) deal with the issues of racial difference that made their lives horrible and atrocious. The very first incident occurred in the life of protagonist Mona who was in train journey. "I was back on the train. My thoughts had been rudely interrupted by the sound of a radio two seats down... Politely, I asked whether he could turn the radio down or perhaps wear earphones. He acted surprised. "Is it disturbing you?"...I nodded..."Are you hearing that conversation?" I nodded. Then without warning he put his lips directly to my ear and in a piercing whisper hissed, "Then you must be listening to hard! If you don't like it, why don't you go back to where you came from?" Nothing in his manner had prepared me for this assault" (Espinet, 2003). Ramabai Espinet claimed racial discrimination is the part of both countries Caribbean as well as Canada where racial opponents publicly threatened to immigrants. While, laws of multiculturalism have passed for safety of immigrants, however they are still facing problem of racial and ethnic differences in diaspora. "'Ethnicity' to refer to relationships among collectivities based on religion, phenotype, culture or nationality. These characteristics are seen as distinctive and used to signify difference in relation to other collectivities. In the Caribbean, ethnicity is often used interchangeably with race and ethnic difference may cohere around differences of phenotype and historical origin; religion and "culture"' (Reddock, 2007). The cultural/ethnic practices among Indo-Caribbean are very common which preserved and marked the differences in Caribbean even in Canada. However, many immigrants were/are abused by the indigenous population. "The city of San Fernando housing its twin but separate populations, Africans and Indian, each lacerating the others, each tolerating the other's crossover, the strays, inveterate mixers seduced by curiosity and a taste of difference, whose blood and semen and juices would solidify and form the rickety bridge across which others might begin to cross the rapids that they feared would wash them out into the open sea" (Espinet, 2003). This clarifies ethnic differences in Caribbean and their quotidian activities that, "Migrants and their descendents have experienced a whole spectrum of negative reactions, ranging from verbal comments and acts of petty discrimination to overt hostility, and even wholesale eviction" (Brown, 2007). The characters of the Ramabai Espinet's

novel *The Swinging Bridge* have confronted verbal abuses and discriminations by indigenous population. Protagonist of the novel Mona and her brother Kello have faced racial discrimination. He says, "I didn't like them talking about us as 'the Indian people' as if we weren't even present" (Espinet, 2003). Mona has also thought about her racial discrimination experiences in her childhood "I was only about five years old. I remember that I was just going into Muddie's zinnia and sunflower garden to hide when a bus passed on the road in front of our house. Some girls stuck their necks out and shouted, "Collie, Collie, Collie!" (Espinet, 2003). The word Collie used to address people of Indian origin in Caribbean who brought by their masters as indentured labourers whether they are men or women. It is sometime a derogatory term to identify Indo-Caribbean immigrants. Ramabai Espinet's characters as immigrants in Caribbean and even in Canada have same consequences regarding their identity. Da-Da (father of Mona) also has mentioned such issues with his experiences in Caribbean and Canada. "It may be worth emphasizing that the maintenance of distinctions between the "Christianized African Creole" and the "Asiatic coolie" was a matter of some concern for the colonial authorities as well. After the establishment of the Republic of Haiti in 1803, the specter of successful non-white revolt haunted every European in the Caribbean. Any stint of solidarity between labourers, especially of different races, was speedily crushed. As the planters faced the prospect of the end of indenture, and the imminent formation of a purely domestic labor force, images of the shiftless, lazy African and the industrious coolie circulated with increasing frequency. The colonial construction of "Indian" and "African" continues to inform the contemporary formations of the two groups' identities" (Niranjana, 2006). Moreover, many such incidents Espinet has depicted in her debut novel *The Swinging Bridge* to reveals the truth of predicament of immigrants based on difference in Caribbean as well as in Canada.

### **Double Diaspora Experiences in *The Swinging Bridge***

Ramabai Espinet is a diasporic feminist writer, who has experienced of double diaspora from her ancestral homeland India to Caribbean and from Caribbean to Canada which clearly mention in her novel. She has shown the historical migration of Indians to Caribbean as indentured labourers with particular focus on women. The crossing of kala pani was responsible to expunge purity of people those who were belongs to Hindu community. It was considered sin because according

to Hindu people crossing the *kala pani* or black water means gave up one's own religion or caste. Although, "Chronicling the *kala pani* trajectory across the black waters of the Atlantic that brought over 70,000 Indian indentured workers to the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe to replace a newly liberated African plantation force in 1848, indianité subscribes to a more expansive reconciliation with society. One wonders why indianité and Créolité did not mutually influence each other in any significant way across the narrow island divide" (Mehta, 2009). Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge* largely explores the stories of Indian indentured labourers in Trinidad and their experiences of crossing the (sea) *kala pani*. The story of Mona's great grandmother Gainder is very significant part of the novel that shared history of indenturship. Gainder has crossed *kala pani* from India to Caribbean and her brutal experiences in both India as escaped marriage girl and in Caribbean as an Indentured labour. The experiences of Indian immigrants in Caribbean were good because they got contract jobs for five years and earn money at the same time it has also bad aspect because most of the immigrants have experienced racial discrimination and difference based inequality. "Indenture was seen as an obstacle to the emancipation struggles and democratic ideals of the recently freed blacks and people of color who lost their negotiating power with the colonial once the Indians were brought to Martinique as an easily replaceable workforce. Ostracized for their racial and cultural difference and the ambiguous status they occupied within the colonial machinery, Indians were further relegated to marginal representation through a denial of civil and legal status" (Mehta, 2009). The novel *The Swinging Bridge* is an ample example to understand the lived experiences of Indian immigrants in Caribbean as well as in Canada with their double migration.

#### Conclusion

To Recapitulate, Indian diaspora spread worldwide with difference in race, gender, culture and many such markers which make Indians different from other population of their adopted hostland. The presence of Indians in Caribbean has also marked with such characteristic to keep their identities distinct in new space. However, the markers of difference lead to their marginalisation, oppression by the local population. Different sort of practices and claiming their identities in hostland Indian immigrants faced various issues of discrimination which made their lives horrible to live in diasporic space.

Ramabai Espinet as a diasporic writer with Indian origin in Caribbean and later her settlement in Canada

has familiar with racial, ethnic, cultural and gender differences, which very much do exist in Indian diaspora. She has revealed such sort of complexity of difference through her novel *The Swinging Bridge*. "Difference, however, is always expressed, which is to say that it is not enough simply to proclaim the merits of difference, meritorious though it may be. More than this, what is necessary is to imagine how the terms differentiated by the mode of dominance might be decomposed-how they might be delinked from the relations they bear to one another, and thus from the meanings they carry-as well as how they might enter into new relations. This is what diaspora seeks to imagine" (Barber, 2011). The relationship between immigrant people and the local population are significantly understood through their respects to each other's culture, race or any sort of markers of difference in diaspora. If they succeed it sound well and if they failed, it creates unrest among people. Ramabai Espinet's *The Swinging Bridge* portrayed Mona a protagonist and narrator of the story who discovers the history of migration of her descendents from Indian subcontinent to Caribbean as indentured labours, and their encounters with the new culture and even their migration from Caribbean to Canada. Most of the scholars of Indo-Caribbean diaspora praise the living condition of immigrants but there is also need to focus on overall issues of difference such as racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural difference, which continuously involve in discrimination, and exploitation of Indian immigrants in diaspora. "Mona, in the novel is in her forties, trying really hard to feel associated and belonged. She tries to make Montreal her new home but she find that like her complicated history and life her home is equally complicated subject. Dissatisfied with everything around her, she not only feel uprooted and isolated but also has acquires a nowherian position and associate this nowherian self to her identity" (Devi 2015). The historical journey of Ramabai Espinet's novel from India to Caribbean and Caribbean to Canada is enough to understand the consequences of Indian immigrants in diasporic space.

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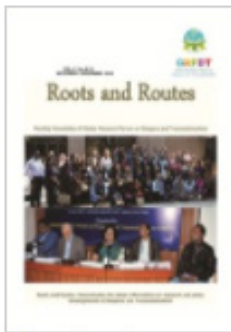
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# GRFDT NEWSLETTER

***Roots and Routes* disseminates the latest information on research and policy developments in Diaspora and trans**

## Newsletters



September-  
December  
2016



July-August



May-June 2016



March-April  
2016

*Roots and Routes* is a monthly newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). It is inclusive of articles, book reviews and news analysis, which help in disseminating latest information on research and policy development in Diaspora and Transnationalism. The newsletter enjoys readership of academicians, policy experts, diaspora think tanks etc.

The regular columns of the newsletter are :

- 1. Article** : consisting of well researched articles of about 3000-4000 words on any aspect of diaspora, migration and transnationalism.
- 2. Short commentaries** : consisting of short write ups of about 1500-2000 words based on opinion, description or explanation of any event or situation related to the above mentioned themes.
- 3. News analysis** : consisting of analyzing current news in about 1000-1500 words
- 4. Book reviews** : 1000-1500 words.

We are pleased to invite your contributions to the above mentioned sections. Please send your contributions to the editors of the newsletter at [editor@grfdt.com](mailto:editor@grfdt.com)

**Editors-** Arsala Nizami and Monika Bisht

**Managing Editor:** Dr. Sadananda Sahoo

**Email:** [editor@grfdt.com](mailto:editor@grfdt.com)

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**GRFDT**

Global Research Forum on  
Diaspora and Transnationalism

Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is shaping as the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to diaspora and transnationalism.

The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform need to be reassessed in the present context to engage them in the best possible manner for the development human societies by providing policy in-put at the national and global context.