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**INVOKING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AS AN ANTIDOTE TO MODERN
CHALLENGES IN BESSIE HEAD'S *WHEN RAIN CLOUDS GATHER* AND CHITRA
DIVAKARUNI'S *THE MISTRESS OF SPICES***

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ABSTRACT :

Contemporary systems of knowledge have been on the rise from the modern and postmodern societies, characterising an era of battles between religions, science, political ideologies as well as cultures. Therefore, the society is exposed to a babble of diverse and contradictory cultures and customs leading to various challenges. This paper investigates indigenous and traditional knowledge systems which are no longer stagnant relics of the past. Instead, they are dynamic, life-sustaining toolkits invoked to navigate and solve modern challenges such as ecological collapse, migration, gender inequality, cultural alienation, psychological trauma and identity crisis. In Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* and Chitra Divakaruni's *The Mistress Of Spices*, by invoking the ideologies of indigenous knowledge systems doesn't

necessarily mean going back to prehistorical times or living within the context of a single coherent cultural package or the absence of cultural and digital wars. Rather, it offers a liberating ethnic cleansing and cultural preservation ethics. The hypothesis predicates that, when these traditional systems are flushed into the contemporary modern society, it serves as a productive force of authenticity of identity formations. By placing the indigenous knowledge and modern knowledge systems in the third space, there is a free play of movement from one knowledge system to the other while establishing a firm and positive hybrid system of knowledge. Hybridity will be used as the main theoretical framework to analyse this paper.

Keywords: indigenous knowledge, modern, postmodern, hybrid, culture and identity