

Indian Diasporic Writers in Diasporic Literature – A Study

¹K. N. Uma Devi, ²Dr. M. Nagalakshmi,

¹Ph. D Research Scholar, Assistant Professor, Department of English, VELS Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai.

²Associate Professor, Research Supervisor, Department of English, VELS Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Chennai

ABSTRACT

Post-Colonial Diasporic writers usually follow a stereotyped style in their writing. They use different techniques such as stream of consciousness, immigration, magic realism, alienation, adaptability of new land and culture invite readers across countries. Most of the Indian writing in English is penned by diasporic writers beyond India geographically. The present study emphasizes a handful of Diasporic writers and their works which are significant to readers.

Keywords: *Diaspora writers, immigration, literature, writings, nostalgia, acculturation*

Introduction

The word ‘Diaspora’ derives from the Greek word meaning “to disperse.” Diaspora is simply the displacement of a community or culture into another geographical and cultural region. There are two main moves in diasporic writing. One is *Temporal move* and the other one is *Spatial Move*. The Temporal Move is looking back at the past which means *Analepsis* and looking forward at the future which means *prolepsis*. The Spatial Move involves two things: one is De-territorialization which means the loss of territory and Re-territorialization which means a restructuring of a place or territory that has experienced De-territorialization. Therefore, the diaspora's novel involves space, which moves between the country of origin and foreigners, between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between the old and the new.

Diaspora writing in novels, short stories, travel stories, poems, and prose is not new to post-colonial literature. The desire for "homeland" or "root", a strange and unusual attachment to their traditions, religion, and language gave birth to the so-called diaspora literature. For the past ten years, Indian diaspora writers have become the focus of their prominent works. The Indian diaspora is the second-largest diaspora in the world. The diaspora population is approximately 25 million, and they settle in all famous areas in the world.

Indian writers of the modern diaspora can be divided into two different classes. One category includes those who have spent part of their lives in India and brought their heritage assets abroad. The other are those who grew up outside of India. They just dream of their own country from outside, like a strange place where they started. The writers in the first group had actual displacements, while those in the second group found themselves uprooted. Both groups of writers have created a great deal of English literature. When these writers portrayed immigrant characters in their novels, they examined the themes of displacement, alienation, assimilation, and cultural adaptation.

The diaspora or immigrant writing occupies an important place between the country and the culture. Diaspora writing has many benefits, and a powerful network connects the entire world. The most important characteristics of diaspora writing include nostalgia, the search for identity, family and marital relationships, as well as eradicating or embedding the multicultural environment. English Indian writers such as Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Ghosh, Anjana Appachana, Sunetra Gupta Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have become prominent writers in the Indian diaspora writing tradition.

As an immigrant, Bharati Mukherjee faced the same problem to adapt to the traditions, culture, and society of a foreign country represented by the lifestyles of the two protagonists Jasmine and Dimple. The investigator pointed out the problems of the protagonists' Dimple and Jasmine began to cross their national borders and settle on new foreign land. It also reveals your resentment, assimilation, sense of belonging, nostalgia, and disappointment. "The Middle Man and Other Stories" by Bharati Mukherjee is a collection of short stories about people between two cultures. These stories explore the form and impact of cultural displacement. Bharati Mukherjee also faces a lot of criticism.

Shauna Singh Baldwin (Shauna Singh Baldwin) is a poet, short story, prose, and novel writer. She represents the experiences of the main characters in three different environments: India, the United States, and Canada. Baldwin developed the themes of cultural exchange and exile, involving a variety of narrative strategies.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a Pulitzer Prize-winning author famous for her novels such as "The Explainer of Disease", "The Man of the Same Name", "The Unusual Land" and "The Lowlands". In the novel *The Namesake*, she describes the struggle and hardships of a Bangladeshi couple who immigrated to the United States to live a peaceful life. This novel reveals the concepts of cultural identity, tradition, uprooting, and family expectations. In her novels, nostalgia, memory, longing, and loss are prominent themes. The novel "The unusual land" narrates the lifestyle of the protagonist Ruma and the Indian culture. "The Unaccustomed Earth" won the 2008 International Short Story Award from the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. The lowland is an eternal story that tells people's emotions, beliefs, vulnerabilities, needs, and struggles, all of which are brought together and brought to life through simple expressions, smooth narrative movements, and multi-dimensional perspectives.

Anjana Appachana is a diasporic novelist who resides in the United States received the O'Henry festival prize. She has written *Incantations* a collection of stories and a novel *Listening*

Now. She deals with the issues faced by Indian women in their homeland and abroad. In her first novel, *Listening Now*, she analyzes three-generation women's problems and how they sustained with the help of their friends and relatives. Her collections of short stories portrayed the perfect description of traditional and modern women. In her short stories, she describes the mother as a traditional figure.

Anita Nair is an acclaimed and bestselling author, and she has written nine novels, two plays, and a collection of short stories. She has written a screenplay for the movie adaptation of her novel *Lessons in Forgetting*. Her rebellious women characters break the societal chains and affirm their individuality. Women writers pave a new path for women in their writings.

Anita Rao Badami is an Indian Canadian writer who is best known for her award-winning novel, *The Hero's Walk*. Her first novel is *Tamarind Men*. Her novels deal with the complexities of Indian family life, the cultural gap of the western immigrants. *The Hero's Walk* was placed on the top five finalists for CBC that is Canada Reads Competition. The book, *The Hero's Walk* describes the problems of family life, and how peace evolved in the family at the end.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a multi-faceted diasporic writer who resides in the United States. Her short story collection *Arranged Marriage and other Stories* brought the American Book award in 1995. Her works are set in the United States and India. Her main focus is on the experiences of South Asian migrants.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni beautifully presents inter alia (among other things) the matrix of diasporic consciousness like alienation, rootlessness, loneliness, nostalgia, cultural conflict, questioning, etc., in her novels. She explores and highlights concerns for racism, economic disparity, miscarriage, divorce, longingness, homesickness, disappointments, etc. Her characters are caught physically between the two worlds which challenge their belongings to either location. To keep hold of the values of the homeland in the new atmosphere of the adopted land often leads to mental conflict, dilemma, and unanswered questions which ultimately lead to identity crisis. The metaphor of 'Trishanku' has been commonly used to define people who live in a state of 'in-betweenness' or more precisely the immigrants. In general, the migrants are caught in the crisis of identity as an intuitive understanding of their native culture unavoidably comes into conflict with their rational understanding of a foreign culture. In an alien environment, they try to scrutinize and re-evaluate the tradition and culture of their homelands.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's women characters represent the global cosmopolitan citizen, who travels between both eastern and western cultures and settings and facing an identity crisis and trying to assimilate in a given space. In her novel *The Mistress of Spices* which is written on February 17, 1998, she constructed the story of dreams, desires, hopes, and expectations. Tilo, the main female character, was born in a faraway place and she travels through time to Oakland, California. The author of this novel creates this Tilo character as the successful survivor in a new place. Chitra narrates Tilo as a brave girl who breaks the rules and helping the other female migrant characters through their twists of trouble. For example, she gives the life of those female migrant characters from the abusive husbands, racism, general conflicts, and drug abusers. In general, the researcher found this novel as a tale of joy and sorrow.

Secondly, In the novel *Sister of My Heart*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni characterizes the two cousins (Sudha and Anjali as Anju) sacrificing their life for each other. These two cousins get everything easily that they want from an early age. They get love from their three mothers, respect from their younger ones and helpers in their home, and friendship from their neighbours and especially from their community people. Through these two characters, she describes the struggles of women with outdated Indian customs, arranged marriages, separation from their three mothers, late pregnancy, miscarriage, and abortion, etc.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her novel *The Mistress of Spices* depicts Tilo, the protagonist, as an exotic character to reveal the migrant's anguish. Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* shows the extent of rootlessness encountered by characters born and brought up in a foreign land. Amit Chaudhari, in his novel *Afternoon Raag*, portrays the lives of Indian students in Oxford. These writers also depicted the positive aspect of displacement. There are benefits of living as a migrant, the opportunity of having a double perspective of being able to experience diverse cultural modes.

Meera Syal, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, and other second-generation Indian writers have faithfully tested the lives of first and second-generation immigrants in the United States. This is possible because major issues such as religious discrimination and racial intolerance are no longer the main focus of their writings. Many Indian diaspora writers who write in English and other languages also depict specific regions, communities, and cultural conflicts reflect in their literary works, reveal the diversity of Indian culture. But her main focus on diaspora issues is dislocation, marginalization, homesickness, conflict, identity crisis, racial hatred, cultural and gender hatred, intergenerational differences, subjectivity change, cross-cultural interaction, and disintegration. The family unit of the Indian diaspora caused the pain, trauma, and predicament of these family members to vary degrees, mainly the children of these unfortunate and fragmented families. Many of them have deviated from the cultural anarchy (chaos) of Western countries and tended to be gay, drug-addicted, and lesbian. The literature of the Indian diaspora raises different issues and aspects of immigrant life.

The ranks of second-generation diasporic Indian writers like Meera Syal, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, etc., have faithfully proved the lives of both first and second-generation immigrants in the US. This is possible because issues like religious discrimination and racial intolerance are no longer the main concentration of these writers. Many Indian diaspora writers who write in English, and other languages too have represented in their literary works focus on a particular region, community, and culture-specific conflicts in alien lands of relocation reveal the variety of Indian culture. . Indian diasporic literature has raised different issues and aspects of immigrants' lives.

Literary works like Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Meera Syal's *Anita and Me*, Chitra Banerjee- Divakaruni's *The Queen of Dreams* have portrayed the issue of the intergenerational gap of the Indian Diaspora, and the first generation parents expect from their children to live by the value system of Indian culture which they force on them at home through customs, rituals, food, beliefs, dress, language, etc. The children come across different cultural backgrounds find

confused between the two cultures like *Meena* in *Anita and Me* and *Gogol* in *The Namesake*, who face the racial explanations because of their brown skin as they are not able to decide which is their real 'home' India or the country where they have been born and brought up. Like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri also depicted similar characters in her novels.

CONCLUSION

The list of diaspora writers is long and detailed. Readers of diasporic literature occasionally experience different and disgusting trends in life in a foreign country. Sometimes they even know themselves through the central character and other powerful characters in the work. In this way, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni immigrated to the United States and became a diasporic writer of English literature in India. Her award-winning novel "Mistress of Spices" (1997) depicts an Indian girl who works in a spice shop in Oakland, USA. She uses the magic of spices to solve other immigrants' problems. Thus, all the diasporic writers depict immigrants issues vibrant in their literary works.

REFERENCES

1. Alexander, M. (n.d.), The Kenyon Review, Interview with Meena Alexander.(R.Maxey, Interviewer)
2. Bharati Mukherjee, 1999, *Darkness*, Penguin India, New Delhi.
3. Bharati Mukherjee, 1990. *Jasmine Grove* Weidenfield, New York
4. Nair, Anita. *Lessons in Forgetting*. India: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anita_Rau_Badami
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diaspora>
8. Appachana, Anjana. "Incantations" and other stories (1991). New Delhi: penguin, 1992. Print.
9. J.G. Ravi Kumar Diasporic Women Writers: As a Social Perspective IJAHMS Vol 01, No.12, December 2015, ISSN No, 2395-0692
10. Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*. London: HarperCollins, 2012. print.
11. N. Jayaram, Ed, 2004. *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*. Vol.4 Sage: New Delhi.
12. Pandey, Abhay. 2008 *Indian Diasporic Literature: Creative*, New Delhi.
13. Prbal J. Roddannavar, Themes seen in Diasporic Writings, AJMS, Vol12, Issues3, March 2014, ISSN:2321-8819.
14. Baldwin, Shauna Singh. *What the Body Remembers*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1999. Print.