



A study on contemporary identity of diaspora women writers

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Abstract: The current study examines how modern Diaspora authors' works address mental and emotional health issues. In Diaspora literature, Identity Crisis is a result of numerous factors, including removal from one's home culture, the loss of one's original language, and the expatriate's status as a social outcast or unwelcome alien. Authors' exposure of their skill, which is based in the customs of society and culture, has been prompted by diaspora experiences including alienation, immigration, expatriation, exile, Identity Crisis, and Indianness. South Asian women's voices have been amplified by the avalanche of writing that has propelled the literary world of diasporas to new heights in the postmodern, globalized period. The literary achievements of these ladies have been widely celebrated and recognized in recent times. The inclusion of more people's perspectives also significantly increases its social significance. Such works clearly demonstrate a new coalition spanning international lines, challenging traditional literary conventions. Though the authors keep the diversity and uniqueness of countries around the world. It has also been noted that the majority of prominent Indian Diaspora authors are either first-generation or second-generation immigrants. They are the descendants of indentured workers and other third-wave migrants. Indians everywhere, at home and abroad, face the same challenges in life. The thesis only discusses female authors. The writing by women of the South Asian diaspora has been chosen because, as has been stated and examined in the preceding study, it demonstrates a feminist commitment and a collective aesthetic that distinguishes it from the literature of male South Asian Diasporic writers.

Keywords: Contemporary Identity, Diaspora Women Writers, Diaspora literature, Identity Crisis, Indian Diaspora authors

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INTRODUCTION

Women's writing was seen as a potent tool of modernist and feminist declaration in the 20th century. In the last two decades, feminist works written in English in India have achieved phenomenal popularity. The wealthy, Western-educated women writers of today represent a generation in their own right. Their novels address both contemporary and long-standing concerns in women's lives. The general public loves these kinds of novels, and the publishers get easy profits from them. Publishing houses believe that it is women writers who keep the literary canon alive with their use of risky subject matter and themes. They are so shockingly candid about the female experience that they explain the entire female world. The female mind, which has been mostly left untouched until now, is partially revealed in their writings. Typically, these books focus on the mental anguish of repressed housewives. Modern women's writing, however, does not just express their darker side but also their growth, journey, identity consciousness, etc. Women novelists have been using the term "feminist" for quite some time. Modern women, as depicted in their works, are no more passive victims or helpless victims of circumstance. They believe that women are just as capable as men. A woman's place in society is no longer limited to the home; she can now be a breadwinner in her

own right. The books written by Indian women authors show how contemporary women have distinct perspectives. The female authors take into account these details. Throughout their works, Indian women authors investigate the feminine subjectivity and apply it to a range of topics, from girlhood to womanhood. These authors use their fiction to educate readers about the many facets of feminism. Feminism, according to these authors, includes ending women's silenced hardships. One of India's greatest literary strengths is the creative voice of its women writers. When women seek employment outside the home, they are sometimes forced to fill duties that males have traditionally held. In literature or elsewhere, their journey has been long and difficult. In addition, the growing tide of globalization has altered the literary landscape of the present, with writing traversing national and cultural boundaries to give voice to previously silenced minorities through the work of emerging authors. A new generation of South Asian women writers, or simply women writers, is at the forefront of this literary movement. Writers from the diaspora have been carving out their own niche in the literary canon. Postcolonialism has also inspired other authors and academics to examine its many facets, such as race, identity, the Diaspora, and more. Diaspora experiences, such as cultural hybridity, loss of belonging to a culture, confusion of national identity, and many others, are common among postcolonial writers and will be examined in further depth. Diaspora is a phrase referring to the widespread historical Jewish colonies outside of Israel. However, the phrase has evolved, and now it can apply to any population of a specific nationality that is located in a country other than its own. There are now more than 20 million people of Indian descent living in over 110 different countries. It has been pointed out in retrospect that the upheaval was voluntary, and that exile does not always result in misery. People who move to a new country face new difficulties, hopes, and fears. The first generation of immigrants, in particular, has always been plagued by a strong sense of nostalgia and a fierce commitment to its cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions. Therefore, protecting their distinctive identity is a top priority.

DIASPORA

Moving around is something that humans have done since the dawn of civilisation. Historically, humans have frequently migrated from one location to another in the pursuit of necessities such as food and water. In ancient times, people gravitated toward the riverbanks because that's where they could access water for their farms. It is impossible to pinpoint the first moment that migration began. Climate change and resulting food and water shortages drove the earliest migrations. Migration of well-known characters is found even in sacred texts like the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Bible. Adam, Eve, and Satan were cast out of heaven in the Bible. Perhaps they encountered difficulties with adaptation, acculturation, and integration in the new country. Lord Rama and his wife Sita were exiled from Ayodhya for the same amount of time. According to the terms of the treaty, even the Pandavas were required to temporarily relocate from Hastinapur.

The Greek words *dia* (meaning 'across') and *spieren* (meaning 'Sow or Scatter seeds') are the origins of the English word 'Diaspora.' The Greek diaspora refers to the people who emigrated from Greece. In order to incorporate the new territory into the Greek Empire, many Greeks relocated there. It originally referred to the dispersion of Jews after their expulsion from Babylon in the sixth century BC, but subsequently came to represent all Jews who lived in exile beyond the borders of Palestine. Today, the proverb can be used to organize any group of people who are geographically dispersed yet share a common collective memory and

a myth of homecoming. Africans, Indians, Jews, Greeks, Armenians, South Asians, Chinese, etc. are only few of the many groups who have relocated from their homelands. Different types of diaspora can be identified by the origin countries of their members. William Safran makes some observations about different diasporas and how they differ from the Jewish diaspora. As William Safran writes in his book *Diasporas in Contemporary Societies*: "we may legitimately speak of the Armenian, Maghreb, Turkish, Palestinian, Cuban, Greek, and perhaps Chinese diasporas at present and of the Polish of the past," writes Naomi Alderman in her book *Myth of Homeland and Return*, "although none of them fully conforms to the 'ideal type' of the Jewish diaspora" (Safran 84). While all diasporas share some commonalities due to their shared experience of uprooting from the homeland, the specifics of that uprooting will vary by nationality and ethnicity. As Bauman writes, "at today diaspora is free from its indication of any Jewish past and it can refer to any processes of dispersion and to relate to many so-called dislocated, deterritorialized communities" (Bauman 314). Diaspora's meaning was crystal evident whenever it was used in context with the Jewish people. It's difficult to tell the difference between a development and a Diaspora, or between a minority and a Diaspora, once the news is combined with other religious or ethical get-togethers. For instance, even when referring to distant relatives of British people in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, or the United States, we don't use the term "English Diaspora." Instead of calling them Diaspora people, we name them Australians, Kiwis, South Africans, Canadians, or Americans, despite the fact that they share many of the same experiences and qualities. The word has nothing to do with the wealthy Germans who have bought up large swaths of land in the former Soviet Union or with the people of a few countries in Latin America. These Chilean and Argentine districts will likely always be recognized for their distinct Germanic culture, which is often used to illustrate the outé characteristics of a diaspora.

HISTORY OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA

The Indian diaspora is believed to number about 35 million people across the globe. They can be found in large numbers across every continent. While Indians abroad may be dispersed across the globe and practice a wide variety of professions, they share a commonality in their shared background, ethnicity, and awareness of their cultural heritage as Indians. *Some Reflections on the Indian Diaspora*, written by Bhikhu Parekh, provides an accurate definition of the term "Diaspora" (1993). When describing the Indian diaspora, he compares it to the banyan tree, a traditional icon of the Indian way of life, which has extended its roots across multiple soils and can survive off of only one when the others run dry. He is not homeless; rather, he has multiple residences, which are the only places he has found to make him feel truly at home. It's all about how you frame it.

Since pre-colonial times, emigration has been a regular process for trade and the spread of religion. The historical context of migration out of India dates back at least two thousand years. When Emperor Kanishka of India was in power, a major exodus began (around the first century AD). The Romani people, also known as "gypsies" today, originated in what is now the Indian state of Rajasthan and made up this group of migrants. The Indians moved northwestward, eventually settling in Eastern Europe. Around 500 CE, a second major migration from the Indian subcontinent began, this time a group moving to Southeast Asia. Using their superior naval power, the Cholas were able to defeat the "Indianized" kingdoms of Southeast Asia, including modern-day Indonesia and Malaysia. Southeast Asian culture has the clear imprint of Indian society. This can be seen most plainly among the Brahmin rulers of Thailand's

aristocracy, the Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia, and the temples of Central Sumatra and Bali, Indonesia. On the other hand, labeling the descendants of those who left India many centuries ago as members of the "Indian Diaspora" is neither logical nor adequate. Because of their extensive mingling with the local community throughout the centuries, these groups have effectively eliminated any trace of their former "Indian" origins. This effectively removes them from the category of PIOs ("People of Indian Origin"). Yet, in the course of the last few hundred years, India has achieved what may be the world's most diverse and complex relocation history, shaping the Modern Indian Diaspora. An estimated 30 million people are now a part of the Indian Diaspora, which spans all six continents and 125 countries. Aside from our shared Indian heritage, the members of this larger group are remarkably diverse in terms of their individual characteristics. We can distinguish between the Old Diaspora, the New Diaspora, and the Gulf Diaspora because of how much it shifts. In each of the three courses, students will focus on a single consistent topic. Work relocation was used to create them, and it still is today, both for unskilled labor dating back two centuries and for highly skilled labor beginning in the mid-1960s. The term "Old Diaspora" refers to the first major migration of Indians outside of their own country. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, it lasted all the way until the end of British rule in India. Slavery was abolished by the governments of the United Kingdom (1834), France (1846), and the Netherlands (1873). Following the end of slavery, the British, French, and Dutch possessions experienced a serious lack of workers. There was a huge demand for laborers in the colonies due to the widespread cultivation of sugar cane, tea, and rubber. The British government established the indentured labor system to meet this need. It's time to abolish the indentured labor system, was a contractual arrangement with penal punishments wherein laborers committed to passage to and employment in a foreign country under set terms, usually for five or ten years, and assumed a variety of forms, frequently articulating with local social connections. (Goss 389)

SUCCESS AND FUTURE OF PEOPLE OF DIASPORA:

While Indian people make up a small but significant minority in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries of the New Diaspora, they make up nearly half of the populations of Old Diaspora countries like Fiji, Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname, and more than two-thirds of the population of Mauritius. There are several geographical and skilled Indian social, professional, religious, and philanthropic organizations that make up the New Indian Diaspora, especially in the United States. Recently, Indians have shown their growing political influence through the election of governors such as Bobby Jindal in Louisiana, Nikki Haley in South Carolina, Preet Bharara in New York, and the formation of the India Caucus in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. There are now nine Members of Parliament (MPs) with Indian ancestry serving in the Canadian House of Commons. Eight people of Indian origin, including two women, set a new record for election to the British Parliament, and eight others sit as Lords. Trust in India's educated capacities has been bolstered by the success of Indian CEOs, researchers, academics, media personalities, movie makers, and IT specialists in the United States. This feat has been significant in establishing India as a hub for skilled and committed professionals. Remember, only a couple decades ago, India wasn't hip. You won't see any references to a "India Rising" or "Amazing India." There was a time when India was stereotyped as a poor country full of snake charmers and elephants, but those days are long gone. With this new "India brand," it's easy to see why certain countries are showing increased interest in hiring Indian college grads and professionals. It also facilitates collaboration and

outsourcing between American and Indian businesses. Especially in the countries of the New Diaspora, people of Indian descent have gained recognition for their impressive range of achievements in business, science, the arts, and the economy, as well as for the harmony with which they work together. But most of the 30 million diaspora members, including the Gulf Diaspora's temporary residents, are separated from family and friends, have fewer legal protections, and face an uncertain future.

Let's face it: our ethnicity, skin color, and religious beliefs set us apart from the bulk of the populations in the countries where we currently reside. Despite widespread acceptance of people of ethnic Indian descent and the increasing "coolness" of being Indian, we continue to be targets of xenophobia and the scornful violence that often motivates it. Despite having some political representation, Indians in Malaysia still face segregation because of religious tensions between the majority Muslim Malays (Bhumiputras) and the majority Hindu Indian population. This is only one example of the prevalence of ethnic tensions across our diaspora.

CONCENTRATED PSYCHE OF INDIAN DIASPORA

The term "diaspora" refers to a wide range of phenomena that have been the subject of extensive discussion and debate amongst professionals. Their life experiences have given them a resilient mental makeup. That the Diasporas are "unhomed" is a concept that Bhabha brings up in his book *The Location of Culture* (1997). The identity dilemma is reflected in the term "displacement." Movement, servitude, and voluntary migration for a better life can all lead to an identity dilemma. A superior racial or cultural model may have led to the downfall of the indigenous people and their culture through cultural denigrating. The displaced often experience a crisis in their sense of self-identity and a corresponding alienation of vision. As a result, 'the myths of identity' are often steadfastly defended in the writings of the uprooted. There will be linguistic alienation as a result of the submergence of one's own culture under the dominance of the other. As a result, "the alienation of the state from the actual society" has occurred throughout the continent of Africa. The reason for this is that immigrants often establish their own Diaspora communities after they arrive in a new country. It has also been observed that the migrants' experience of otherness is influenced by the host country's geography and climate. Exile is a symptom of the universal preoccupation with location and uprooting in cultures around the world. It's the pain of being uprooted from one's native land. It may happen at home if modernisation causes a person to lose touch with his native tongue, culture, religion, tribal rituals, etc. It's unavoidable in a place where every aspect of daily life is at war with one's own customs, language, and beliefs. Such exile causes its subjects to feel homeless, uprooted, and nostalgic. To be punished by being forced to live away from one's home and to be denied permission to return home is a common definition of exile. There is a clear distinction between expulsion from one's home country and internal exile, or being relocated elsewhere within the country of residency. As a form of protest or exile from persecution, self-exile is common. Moreover, one Uruguayan novelist, Vinar (1990), has written about his time spent in exile and his decision to return home. He uses his own life to illustrate the importance of memory, which, like a person's biography, influences their decisions. A person's place of birth is only one of many connections they will make to a location through their lifetime. Using Freud's concept of tracing (or memory sketch), in which memories of the body and senses come first, he goes on to describe the attachment or sense of belonging to a nation through recollections of cultural distinctiveness such as history, ideals, music, landscape, and national symbols. In the end, the author concludes that a

shared linguistic community, historical narrative, and cultural identity are essential components of national identity. These characteristics are strongly ingrained in social organisms like humans. The concept of hybridity has emerged as a key theme in studies of diaspora. In postmodern literature, hybridity is both a reality and a theme, and it is often interpreted as a threat to traditional notions of ethnicity and individuality. Cultural exchanges in the 21st century are characterized by a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for one another's unique traditions and customs. Modern theories and methods recognize and value the value of a multifaceted, interdisciplinary perspective. Acculturation, or the blending of two cultures, is the result of this kind of cross-pollination. The next steps in this process of acculturation include assimilation, which means "the giving up of one's ethnic identity in favor of the dominant society's" (Al-Issa 94). Al-Issa argues that the term "assimilation," meaning the inclusion of elements of the other culture while preserving one's own, best describes the American melting pot concept. Withdrawal from mainstream society, as when an ethnic minority isolates itself. Separation is illustrated by the concept of segregation. When a person or group becomes marginalized, they experience alienation and a loss of identity as a result of losing touch with both their own culture and the culture of the majority. Feelings of stress, worry, despair, marginalization, and alienation are all part of the acculturation process. There is a lot of prejudice and discrimination against immigrants in the country they are living in. Different psychological characteristics, both internal and external to the host society, make them easy targets for prejudice and discrimination. Favoritism toward one's own group, competition for a positive social identity, social influences such as those of the media, schools, parents, peers, etc., social structural differences such as class differences, displaced hostility or projection of frustration from a powerful body onto the powerless minority, authoritarian personality, differences in socio-cultural norms, etc. Brooding of psychological outcome of such mental trauma, Allport (1958), has mentioned two types of effect of discrimination or victimization :

- (1) Blaming oneself that is withdrawal, self-hate, aggression against one's own group
- (2) Blaming others that is fighting back, suspicion, increased group pride and many more

Pettigrew (1986) has made slightly different categorization of response to discrimination and victimization. They are of three types:

- (1) Moving towards the oppressor by seeking acceptance through integration.
- (2) Moving against the oppressor by fighting back.
- (3) Moving away from the oppressor through withdrawal, flight or avoidance.

CONCLUSION

The study provides a context for the rest of the book by discussing the nature, scope, and history of the Indian diaspora. The study also compares and contrasts the themes explored by different Diaspora women writers. Diaspora is defined and its various forms and characteristics are discussed. Identity Crisis and Indianness, two key concepts in understanding diasporic perspectives, are defined and discussed. The focus of the study is on Diaspora and the aforementioned two words as they relate to literature and criticism. Subsequently, we'll talk about some of the most important diasporic authors, including some of the best regional writers. Both the current applicability and potential future expansion of the concept have

been highlighted. The next section explains why a book was chosen over any other type of writing. In today's society, the book enjoys the highest level of popularity among all kinds of written expression. This selection of novels is from the most popular literary genre in the previous two decades. Novels were preferred over short tales, poems, collections of stories, and novellas because of the novel's greater focus on character growth and development. These authors have also written across genres, expressing the diasporic Indian experience of identity crisis. However, they are purposefully left out. We have purposefully narrowed our focus by omitting works by South Asian Indian Diaspora women writers that deal with historical narrative, myth and legend retelling, theatre, life writing, or poetry. There are significant stylistic, structural, and narrative differences between genres, thus we haven't included them here either.

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