

Diaspora – Its Impact on Indian Literature in English

Prof. Avinash S. Pawar
Amity University, Mumbai.
aspawar79@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Diasporic literature refers to all those literary works that have been authored by authors who are not from the country in which the work was originally published but are nevertheless influenced by the native culture. All of those writers will be regarded as diasporic writers in this broad sense because they write outside of their home countries yet continue to be connected to them through their writing. The sense of loss and alienation that arose as a result of migration and expatriation is where the roots of diasporic writing can be found. Diasporic literature typically addresses issues of alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, and identity exploration. It also discusses problems with the blending or splintering of cultures. People of Indian descent who have migrated to foreign countries from the areas that make up the Indian republic are referred to as being part of the Indian diaspora, which has its own spatio-temporal aspects much like any other diaspora. So, the present research will focus on how diasporic literature has influenced and contributed to the Indian literature in English.

KEYWORDS

Migration; nostalgia; alienation; Diaspora unwavering.

Introduction:

Novels, short stories, travelogues, poetry, and prose written by members of the diaspora are not new to postcolonial literature. Diasporic literature was born out of a longing for "homeland" or "root," as well as a weird and odd devotion to their customs, beliefs, and language. Indian diaspora writers have been the subject of their well-known works for the previous 10 years. The second-largest diaspora in the world is from India. About 25 million people live in the diaspora, and they dwell in all the prominent places in the world. The contemporary Indian diaspora writers can be split into two groups. People who have lived a portion of their lives in India and have exported their cultural assets fall under one group. Those who were raised outside of India constitute the other group.

They merely imagine their own nation from the outside, as a bizarre starting point. While the writers in the second group found themselves uprooted, the writers in the first group actually experienced displacement. Many works of English literature have been produced by both sets of authors. These authors explored the issues of displacement, alienation, assimilation, and cultural adaptation when they included immigrant characters in their books.

Writing from the diaspora or immigrants fills a significant gap between the nation and the culture. There are many advantages to diaspora writing, and the entire world is connected by a strong network. The search for identity, familial and marital connections, as well as erasing or embedding the multicultural

surroundings, are among the most crucial aspects of diaspora writing. Displacement is frequently viewed as a chance with the current identity. They feel isolated in a foreign land as a result of the host society's rejection of them and the racial discrimination they encounter. The immigrants make plans to integrate into, adapt to, and blend into the society of their host nation. While they try to accommodate, it is not important to them to preserve their original identity and culture. The marginal teams make an effort to defend themselves from the powerful host cluster. The continuation of cultural customs and social traditions is the most important critical insulating tool.

The first generation of immigrants always struggle to maintain their social and cultural baggage, which includes things like their faith, language, music, art, clothing, etc. The diasporic communities make conscious efforts to carry on their traditions to future generations. These cultural segments have a variety of diasporic experiences. Under these conditions, diasporic literature emerges. Others of these portions were non-existent, some lasted or survived, and others underwent absorption. The immigrant population's fractured brain spills its psychotic writing. As a result, the immigrant author feels strongly motivated to write and has a strong awareness of the sociocultural and economic reality in their community. At one level or another, diasporic writing reveals these experiences of unease and dislocation. Location, displacement, and relocation are frequently examined in diasporic texts. The constant shifting of the concept of home, together with anxiety over one's situation and the impossibility of returning, are recurring themes in diasporic writing. The immigrants who are separated from their families alternate between times of crisis and recovery.

The Significant Contributors of Indian Diasporic Literature in English

Rajmohan's Wife by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the first Indian English novel, would not be released until 1864. It demonstrates that the Indian Diaspora has long contributed to Indian English writing. Also noteworthy is the preference for English writing among the descendants of the Indian indentured workers who lived in the so-called "girit colonies." Important authors in this field include V. S. Naipaul, Cyril Dabydeen, David Dabydeen, Sam Selvon, M.G. Vassanji, Subramanian, K.S. Maniam, Shani Muthoo, and Marina Budos.

Characters created by V. S. Naipaul, such as Mohun Biswas from *A House for Mr. Biswas* or Ganesh Ramsumair from the *Mystic Masseur*, are examples of people who have moved generations away from their native India but have a conscious awareness of their past thanks to their inheritance. Instead of actual displacement, Naipaul's characters are guided by an inherited memory of displacement. Their birthplace, India, is not a physical location but rather a product of human creativity. The works of the older generation of diasporic Indian writers, such as Raja Rao, G. V. Desani, Santha Rama Rau, Dhalchandra Rajan, Nirad Chaudhari, and Ved Mehta, primarily reflect on India's past rather than detailing their experiences living abroad. They obviously gain from having a fresh perspective on their home country. The distance provides the objectivity needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of one's home country. The new diaspora of international Indian English writers who live in a market-driven society is gradually replacing the previous diaspora of indentured workers. These authors document their experiences away from the Republic of India, yet although giving the idea that they are back home, their writing is typically extremely depressing rather than yearning.

These contemporary Indian writers from the diaspora fall into two entirely different categories. One group consists of people who have lived a significant portion of their lives in the Republic of India and have travelled abroad with the belongings from their home country. Those who have spent their entire lives outside of the Republic of India are included in the second category. They must have only seen their homeland from the outside, as an unfamiliar place from which they came. The authors of the first cluster have a factual displacement, whilst those who are happy with the second cluster become uneasy. Both writing teams have produced a highly regarded body of English literature. These authors explore the themes of displacement, alienation, assimilation, acculturation, etc. through the representational process of migrant characters in their work. When considered against the political science backdrop of the enormous Indian landmass, the portrayal of injured characters by diasporic Indian writers assumes a significant relevance. One diasporic Indian writer, Bharati Mukherjee, experienced life as an exile because of Canada's multiculturalism policy, which emphasized discriminating tendencies and treated immigrants more like foreigners than citizens. Mukherjee used the following words to describe how she felt about her treatment in Canada:

In Canada, I was frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter, frequently assumed to be domestic, praised by the astonished auditors that I didn't have a singsong accent. The society itself, or important elements in that society, routinely made crippling assumptions about me, and about my "kind". (Mukherjee, 2)

Salman Rushdie uses the genre technique to address the figure of speech of migration in his book *The Satanic Verses*. The protagonist Tilo is portrayed by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her book *The*

Mistress of Spices as an exotic persona to highlight the migrant's suffering. The *Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh depicts the degree of rootlessness a character has after being born and raised in a foreign country. In his book *Afternoon Raag*, Amit Chaudhari describes the lives of Indian students in Oxford. These authors also highlighted the benefits of displacement. Living as a migrant has advantages, including the chance to experience several cultural styles from a dual perspective. This benefit frequently assists Diasporic Indians, particularly those in the second generation, to deal with the conflict of having two identities. Second generation Indian diasporic authors like Meera Syal, Shashi Tharoor, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, and Jhumpa Lahiri have realistically depicted both first- and second-generation immigrants' lives in the US. Alienation is another important diasporic element and Ashima is the perfect example for alienation. *The Namesake* is a story about an identity crisis centered on the character Gogol, who is having difficulty defining himself through his name. Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli are a family who reside in a modest apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were looking forward to the birth of their first kid. Not long after, Ashima gave birth to a child in the unfamiliar surroundings of the American hospital. Ashoke believes that because they immigrated from India, his child is too fortunate to live in America. But Ashima feels for the baby as the baby is going to live without any support.

Both Ashima and Ashoke are waiting to give their son a name from Ashima's grandmother who lives in India. In the meanwhile, they gave him the temporary name "Gogol."

"I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country.

It's not right. I want to go back." (Lahiri,33)

This is a reflection of Ashima's grief at being alienated. She didn't want to raise Gogol by herself in a foreign country. She thinks her family will only raise him in the ideal manner. at another scenario, the patient feels alone at the hospital among Americans when the nurse gives her a gown in place of her sari. When Ashima feels a movement from the baby inside her, she realizes that she is not alone in this hospital full of Americans, even if she had wondered if she was the only Indian lady there. As an additional illustration, each time Ashoke gets home from work, she shares with him her daily adventures in the new country.

That is conceivable as a result of the fact that such writers are primarily challenged by identity crisis. and racial intolerance. What current issues in the modern world are the little things? In new circumstances, seemingly insignificant things take on a tremendous amount of importance. Here, the various responses exhibited by Indian, Western, and diasporic characters to analogous circumstances are destined to merely appear to differ. It demonstrates that all people have similar desires inside. Great Indian English fiction authors like Raja Rao, Mulkraj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Kamala Markandaya were fiercely committed to exposing the harsh truths of life in order to bring about the desired change in society. Some of the topics that were particularly important to their hearts included nationalism, partition poverty, peasantry, subjugated women, the rural-urban divide, the East-West encounter, feudal practises, casteism, and communalism. They are all renowned for their accurate depictions of modern Indian society.

Diaspora and Indian Literature in English:

Indian immigrants' writing is linked to their sense of self, their sense of place, their memories of home, and their active

engagement with this "new" world. Writers describe their personal, familial, and socio-political identities as well as the circumstances that led them to where they are and what they write. *The Ledge Between the Streams*, Ved Mehta's autobiographical investigation, deals with his personal and familial details in a traditional manner. Ved Mehta's autobiographical legacy is expanded by Bharati Mukherjee in very distinctive ways. *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, her memoir that she co-wrote with her husband, is about society. It is a piece of art in which Mukherjee expresses her longing for her hometown. Meena Alexander resorted to writing as a source of power, release, and alternative options. Insight into one of her key interests, self-creation and identity formation in the context of migration, is provided by the title of her memoir, *Fault Lines*. The Indian diaspora made several significant contributions to Indo-American literature. Although Jhumpa Lahiri has only ever resided in America, India nonetheless appears in several of her fictional settings. Since the majority of the characters have Indian heritage, India continues to be mentioned as a location. The characters' memories will occasionally be used in a more symbolic sense. The story continues to be related to India in her *Interpreter of Maladies*. All of the significant characters in the title story suffer from a sense of estrangement. With a desire for connectedness and the absence of connection as the two facts of Ramanujan's poetic world, K. Ramanujan holds a significant position among Indo-American poets. *Migrant Music* by Meena Alexander explores how the excavation and re-composition of the past produce a sense of belonging and home.

The writer like Jasbir Jain tries highlight the contribution of modern Indian diasporic writers starting from 1980 who have Indian origin but live abroad, started to receive international recognition.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* started a new trend of free play of language and style, blending together fantasy, laughter, irony and satire. As a continuation of this trend, "a widening of themes and greater stylistic experimentation" marks the next phase of Indian English fiction. Another important development of this phase is "resurgence of women's writing" (Jain, 60)

April Nanjangud by Sharat Chandra, perceives and remembers India with the delicate awareness of an exile. His earliest, most ardent reflections on America's treatment of immigrants can be found in *Once or Twice*. His book *Immigrants of Loss* explores the universality of displacement and the starkly polarising structure of American social systems. A well-known Indian novelist living abroad, Vikram Seth also contributed to his books of poetry, including *The Golden Gate* and *All You Who Sleep Tonight*. Poets like Maua Khosala, Prageeta Sharma, Vijay Seshadri, and Ravi Shankar have also contributed their literary prowess.

Writing is a late development for Chitra Banerjee-Divakaruni and is closely related to her status as a migrant. The book *Her Mistress of Spices* weaves a tale of love and survival out of magic, memory, and immigrant life. Her poems and stories primarily explore the themes of gender and migration. Numerous facets and dimensions of the sensibility of expatriates have been addressed by authors like Indira Ganesan, Amulya Maladi, Sanjay Kumar Nigam, Hema Nair, and Vijay Lakshmi, among others. Meena Alexander also writes about her experiences living abroad. The idea of self-creation recurs frequently in Meena Alexander's writing.

Conclusion:

The Indian ethnic community served as a foundation for the development of the Indian Diaspora. To bring the community together, the idea of lifestyle as a collection of cultural influences is

applied. Once the network is established, it is expanded to include the measurement of relationships between diasporas. Youth who are born and raised in European environments sometimes have trouble visualising India. The parents of the first generation inform the second and third generations that they are Indians based on oral traditions, observance of holidays and ceremonies, and cultural forms. They grow perplexed and struggle to remember who they are. Parents' stories about their cultural background are still inventive. The place where they were born and had pals from Europe is the reality.

They are aware through the media that India's economy is growing just like China's. India is a solution to the issues caused by the economic crisis in Europe. They attempt to investigate their Indianness. Universities in Europe provide courses on India and its cultures. Many Indian students travel there to study. They indirectly take pride in the contemporary, expanding economy of the nation where their ancestors were born. Through the internet, cyber technology, and the media, they are also given additional information about India. They also have professional chances in India. The governments of their various European nations are likewise interested in expanding trade with India. India and the projected Indian Diaspora are now actualized realities. The cultures of the migrant communities have seen significant changes overall. Although their geographic or physical location has been delocalized, their social and cultural standing is still bound to the ancient memories of the civilization that gave rise to their way of life. Thus, we note that the British colonial oppression of the rural Indian population gave rise to the Indian Diaspora, a sizable and distinctive group. From the early eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, it not only disrupted the traditional social structure but also gave rise to the indentured and labour, which caused a mass exodus of Indian

labourers to the plantations in the British colonies.

WORKS CITED

Jain, Jasbir, Ed. *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice*. Jaipur: Rawat, 1998.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*. London: HarperCollins, 2012.

Mukherjee, Bharati. *Darkness*, Penguin India, 1999.

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

Dr. Avinash Pawar, a distinguished faculty member in the English department at Amity University, Mumbai, exhibits a profound passion for Film and Comparative Literature. His scholarly pursuits extend into diaspora studies, where he has conducted extensive research on the influence of diasporic narratives on Indian literature in English. Dr. Pawar has delivered numerous presentations at both national and international conferences and has made prolific contributions to academic literature.