

ANALYSIS OF INDIAN WRITERS IN DIASPORIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Post-Colonial Diasporic authors often adhere to a predictable style in their literary works. They employ various methods like stream of consciousness, themes of immigration, magic realism, feelings of alienation, and the adjustment to new environments and cultures to engage readers worldwide. A majority of Indian English literature is produced by writers living outside of India. This research highlights a select group of Diasporic writers and their impactful contributions to literature.

Keywords: *Acculturation, Diaspora writers, Nostalgia, Immigration, Writings, Literature.*

Introduction

The term 'Diaspora' originates from the Greek word that signifies "to disperse." Diaspora refers to the relocation of a community or culture to a different geographical and cultural area. Within diasporic writing, there are two primary movements. The first is the Temporal Move, which involves reflecting on the past through Analepsis and envisioning the future through prolepsis. The second is the Spatial Move, which encompasses two aspects: De-territorialization, referring to the loss of territory, and Re-territorialization, which involves the restructuring of a place or territory that has undergone De-territorialization. Consequently, the novel of the diaspora revolves around space, navigating between the homeland and foreign lands, the familiar and the unfamiliar, and the old and the new.

Diaspora literature has long been a significant aspect of post-colonial literature, encompassing various forms such as novels, short stories, travel stories, poems, and prose. It explores the yearning for a "homeland" or "root," and the unique attachment to traditions, religion, and language that characterizes diaspora communities. In recent years, Indian diaspora writers have garnered considerable attention for their notable contributions to this genre. With a diaspora population of approximately 25 million, the Indian diaspora stands as the second-largest diaspora in the world, with its members settling in renowned locations across the globe.

Indian writers of the modern diaspora can be categorized into two distinct groups. One group comprises individuals who have lived in India at some point in their lives and have carried their cultural heritage with them abroad. The other group consists of those who have grown up outside of India, viewing their home country from a distant perspective. Writers in the first group have experienced actual displacements, while those in the second group have felt uprooted. Despite their different backgrounds, both sets of writers have made significant contributions to English literature by exploring themes such as displacement, alienation, assimilation, and cultural adaptation through their portrayal of immigrant characters in their novels.

Diaspora or immigrant writing serves as a bridge between countries and cultures, offering a unique perspective on the world. This form of writing brings with it numerous advantages, creating a strong network that connects people globally. Key characteristics of diaspora writing include themes of nostalgia, the quest for identity, family dynamics, marital relationships, and the navigation of multicultural environments. Renowned English Indian writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Ghosh, Anjana Appachana, Sunetra Gupta, Anita Nair, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have established themselves as leading figures in the Indian diaspora writing tradition.

Bharati Mukherjee, an immigrant herself, encountered the challenges of adapting to a foreign country's traditions, culture, and society, which are reflected in the lives of the two main characters, Jasmine and Dimple. The investigator highlights the issues faced by these protagonists as they cross national borders and settle in a new land, evoking feelings of resentment, assimilation, belonging, nostalgia, and disappointment. "The Middle Man and Other Stories" by Bharati Mukherjee is a collection of short stories that delve into the experiences of individuals caught between two cultures, exploring the forms and impacts of cultural displacement. Bharati Mukherjee has also faced significant criticism.

Shauna Singh Baldwin, a poet, short story writer, and novelist, portrays the experiences of her main characters in three distinct environments: India, the United States, and Canada. Baldwin skillfully develops themes of cultural exchange and exile, employing various narrative strategies.

Jhumpa Lahiri, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, is renowned for her novels such as "The Explainer of Disease," "The Man of the Same Name," "The Unusual Land," and "The

Lowlands." In her novel "The Namesake," Lahiri depicts the struggles and hardships faced by a Bangladeshi couple who immigrate to the United States in search of a peaceful life. This novel explores concepts of cultural identity, tradition, uprooting, and family expectations. Nostalgia, memory, longing, and loss are prominent themes in Lahiri's works. "The Unusual Land" narrates the protagonist Ruma's lifestyle and delves into Indian culture. Lahiri's "The Unaccustomed Earth" received the 2008 International Short Story Award from the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award. "The Lowland" is an enduring tale that vividly portrays people's emotions, beliefs, vulnerabilities, needs, and struggles through simple yet powerful expressions, seamless narrative flow, and multi-dimensional perspectives.

The second-generation diasporic Indian writers such as Meera Syal, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, and Jhumpa Lahiri have effectively portrayed the lives of both first and second-generation immigrants in the US. These writers have moved away from focusing solely on issues like religious discrimination and racial intolerance. Instead, they have delved into specific regional, community, and culture-specific conflicts faced by Indian diaspora in foreign lands. Through their literary works, they have highlighted the diversity of Indian culture and the various challenges faced by immigrants. Works like Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Meera Syal's *Anita and Me*, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Queen of Dreams* explore the intergenerational gap within the Indian Diaspora, where children struggle to balance the values of their Indian heritage with the influences of the Western culture they are exposed to. These characters, like Meena in *Anita and Me* and Gogol in *The Namesake*, grapple with issues of identity and belonging, facing racial prejudices due to their brown skin. Through their novels, writers like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri have shed light on these complex cultural dynamics within the Indian diaspora.

Meera Syal, Hari Kunzru, Sunetra Gupta, Jhumpa Lahiri, and other second-generation Indian authors have extensively explored the experiences of first and second-generation immigrants in the United States. Their writings no longer solely revolve around major issues like religious discrimination and racial intolerance. Indian diaspora writers, who express themselves in English and other languages, also portray specific regions, communities, and cultural conflicts, thereby showcasing the diversity of Indian culture. However, their primary focus lies on diaspora issues such as displacement, marginalization, homesickness, conflict, identity crisis, racial and cultural animosity, gender discrimination, generational gaps, subjective transformations, cross-cultural interactions, and disintegration. The family unit

within the Indian diaspora becomes the source of pain, trauma, and predicament for its members, particularly the children of these unfortunate and fragmented families. Many of them have strayed from the cultural chaos prevalent in Western countries and have embraced alternative lifestyles, including homosexuality, drug addiction, and lesbianism. The literature produced by the Indian diaspora delves into various aspects and challenges of immigrant life.

CONCLUSION

The extensive and intricate roster of diaspora writers showcases the diverse experiences of individuals living in foreign lands. Readers of diasporic literature often encounter various and unsettling aspects of life in a different country. At times, they may even identify with the central character or other influential figures within the narrative. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, for instance, migrated to the United States and emerged as a diasporic writer in the realm of English literature in India. Her acclaimed novel "Mistress of Spices" (1997) portrays the story of an Indian girl employed at a spice shop in Oakland, USA. Through the enchantment of spices, she endeavors to resolve the predicaments faced by fellow immigrants. Consequently, all diasporic writers skillfully illuminate the challenges confronted by immigrants through their literary creations.

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