CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Significance of the present study

The present study is significant as the topic of research is cross-cultural relations in the contemporary society. In the era of globalization, cross-cultural contacts have become familiar and a regular occurrence with high frequency. These contacts are now unavoidable but what is more significant is that these contacts need not result in clashes and conflicts between cultures. Cultures are unique and distinct. These features of uniqueness and distinctiveness should not be neglected. The autonomy of each culture needs to be preserved. The customs, systems and traditions of each culture need to be maintained. Cultural identity is an inseparable and integral part of humanity as a whole. Man is a product of culture and its uniqueness needs to be maintained intact. The significance of the study is thus its inter-related bonds with cross-cultural relations.

The significance of the present study lies in the perspective of adopting cross-cultural relations. The differences in the cross-cultural relations lead to clashes and conflicts, but in the present study, the attitude adopted is the positive view of cross-cultural relations. The differences are bound to be there, but man as a social animal ought to learn how to overcome these differences and how to get adjusted comfortably with the unique identity of each cultural set-up. What is stressed is the mutual understanding and due respect for other cultures. Mutual understanding leads to warmth of love, glow of sympathy reciprocal respect from both the sides and the growing appreciation of both similarities and dissimilarities. It is necessary to bring down the walls, remove the boundaries and move into common ground of mutual understanding, love and goodwill. In the true sense of the term, the citizenship of the world has become a reality and the same ought to be enjoyed. Appreciation and
respect will build up cultural contacts on the solid cementing of hearts. The global culture has almost become a reality and now man must learn how to shoulder the responsibility of becoming a global citizen. The present study aims at bringing out two strategies of ideal cross-cultural relations. Trust, Love, Understanding and Respect need to be shared mutually and that will hold the key to make the personal social and the social universal.

1.2 Purpose of the Present Study

The present study seeks to explore the cross-cultural relations in the selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee who claims to be a mainstream American Novelist of Indian origin. She desires to be accepted as an American writer who wants to present the multicultural scenario in the United States. Her protagonists are Tara, Dimple, Jyoti, Hanna Easton, Debby di Martino, and the Tree Bride who belong to diverse cultural settings and pass through different cross-cultural situations to weave a pattern of various cross-cultural relations. The contemporary world is characterised by a sense of fragmentation of identity, loss of spirituality, rootlessness, decentering and utter meaninglessness. In such a situation the culture holds the central position on which the man of today can hang on for security and solace.

Each social group has a distinct notion of culture on account of its social, religious, economic, political, sociological, moral and traditional affiliations. This uniqueness and distinctiveness of each culture needs to be preserved. In the present era of globalization the contact of such unique and distinctive cultural groups has become inevitable. This inevitable contact need not be turned into a clash of cultures or the conflict of civilizations. The recognition of cultural plurality and cultural diversity at the global level has become a necessity in the present conditions. It is the tolerance, co-existence and mutual understanding that is required to understand the differences and to accept and appreciate other cultural distinctions. The present study intends to bring an awareness of the spirit of tolerance and understanding among all the citizens of the world. The contacts should be free from tensions of all the types-physical, psychological and sociological. With this purpose in mind, the present study aims at
exploring positive as well as negative side of cross-cultural relations reflected in the selected novels.

The present study intends to explore the five selected novels by an American novelist of Indian origin, Bharati Mukherjee, namely *The Tiger’s Daughter*, *Wife*, *Jasmine*, *Leave It To Me* and *Desirable Daughters*. The comparative method is used to mark the similarities and dissimilarities in different cross-cultural relations. The focus of the study is to explore the differences and find out the reasons of cross-cultural conflicts. The purpose of the study is to understand cross-cultural relations, behavioural patterns according to cultural set-up, the peculiarities of communication channels, value systems, marriage systems, life-styles, customs and traditions and social interaction.

1.3 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of the present study is determined by the fact that it belongs to the domain of literary research. The scope is set by the interpretative analysis of the literary texts. The perspective of interpretation sets the scope of the study and in the present case the same is set by the cross-cultural relations which are to be both investigated and interpreted. The scope of the present study is determined by the fact that the East-West encounter or the migration of the Indians to America for various purposes is also the area to be investigated and analysed. The scope of the present study is set by the limits imposed by the literary texts themselves. The text is the piece that sets the scope of investigation and the medium of words sets the scope of the textual literary interpretation and analysis. However, the cross-cultural relations as reflected in the five novels are to be investigated. The East-West encounter is presented in the Indo-American contact in the lives of the protagonists. Their land of birth and the land of current residence differ and the relations between the two are to be investigated. The limitation of the present study is imposed by the methodology as the investigatory and analytical method is used in the evaluative assessment of the cross-cultural relations as reflected in the novels selected for the study.
1.4 Methodology

The present study especially encompasses the three major literary movements of the recent times such as the post-modernist literature, the post-colonial literature and the cultural studies. The methodology of the study therefore begins with the theoretical discussion of these literary movements. Different sources are used for collecting information about the theory and practice of these trends in contemporary literature depending on the textual and reference materials in particular from the library. This table-work method is known as the library method of research. It consists of consulting the library for information of various types and levels, according to the demands of the research topic.

The collection of material from the library sources through both the print and non-print channels, the investigation of cross-cultural relations in the literary texts is followed by the procedure of analytical study of the cross-cultural relations. A close textual scrutiny is made and the contemporary critical theory and practice are used in order to analyse the elements of cross-cultural relations in the texts.

1.5 Review of Literature

The primary source of the present study is the five selected novels by Bharati Mukerjee—*The Tiger’s Daughter, Wife, Jasmine, Leave It to Me* and *Desirable Daughters*. The essays of Bharati Mukherjee are studied as a secondary source. The reviews of Bharati Mukherjee’s works and her interviews to a number of interviewers like Vrinda Nabar, Sybil Steinberg, Geff Hancock and Alison B. Card and others too are considered in this review of literature. The books on Bharati Mukherjee are considered as secondary sources. The books like: *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Cultural Perspective* by Nagendra Kumar, *Bharati Mukerjee: Critical Perspective* by Nelson Emmanuel S. and *Bharati Mukherjee’s Fiction: A Perspective* by Sushma Tandon etc.

There are a number of essays in *R. K. Dhawan’s Indian Women Novelists* (Vol-3-Prestige). *Malti Agarwal’s English Literature: Voices of Indian Diaspora* (Atlantic)
contains seven essays on Bharati Mukherjee’s novels. For background material the works such as Viney Kirpal’s *The Third World Novel of Exartriation* (Sterling), Homi K. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, and *Culture and Imperialism* are consulted. However, Jasbir Jain’s *Theory of Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practice* too gives theoretical base to the diasporic literature. There are about a hundred and more articles on Bharati Mukherjee’s novels published in journals of repute, both in India and abroad.

**1.6 Hypotheses**

The appearance of cross-cultural relations in an alien land by a diasporic writer is the main interest of the present study. The diasporic writer has nostalgic attachment to the former homeland but now considers the present location to be the homeland. In such a situation the desire to integrate with the new homeland and the emotional attachment to the land of birth are bound to criss-cross. This is presented in order to make the protagonists free of tensions from the cultural clashes and conflicts with recourse to the positive outlook of mutual understanding and resolving the issues of cultural identity and ethnic affiliations. The hypotheses of the study state these facts in order to collect the evidence from the texts to verify the truth and establish the validity of these hypothetical statements. The hypotheses posited on the present study are stated below:

1. Bharati Mukherjee presents the situation that reflects the cultural diversity in her five different novels.

2. Bharati Mukherjee presents the cross-cultural relations in order to reflect the cultural clashes and a sense of rootlessness experienced by Indian immigrants in her novels.

3. Bharati’s Mukherjee desires to adopt a positive outlook on appreciating and maintaining cross cultural relations for ensuring social health in a multicultural set-up.
4-Bharati Mukherjee advocates mutual understanding and reciprocal respect to enhance cross-cultural relations as illustrated in her five selected novels.

5-Bharati Mukherjee desires the positive global view to be adopted in promoting cross-cultural relations as illustrated by her five selected novels.

These five hypotheses are tested, verified and validated on the basis of the supportive evidence collected from the data from the five selected novels.

1. 7 Culture: A Conceptual Background

The key word of the present study, culture comes from the Latin word *cultura* which means to ‘till’, ‘grow’ and ‘cultivate’. But in the present study culture is treated as a social entity. In fact, the word ‘culture’ is used in different ways and forms. It is especially used in two different ways. In the words of Gurveen Kaur (2003:5): “The word ‘culture’ is used in two different ways. One could be called the ‘thin’ notion of culture and the other the ‘thick’ notion of culture”. The ‘thin’ notion refers to visible products like style of dressing, cooking, music, arts, dances and languages. But the ‘thick’ notion is quite comprehensive and wide-ranging. The thin notion of culture highlights the strangeness of different cultures whereas the real value of different cultures lies not in their peculiarity but their rationality. The thick notion of culture is a celebration and recognition of the rationality of all human beings. In brief, it connotes the whole way of life including ideas, values, traditions, customs and habits that give a society its distinctive life-style.

In fact every culture has a body and soul. The body consists of its visible elements and the soul, its invisible elements. Culture is not objective because each person more or less is locked within a culture, a part of human life. However, culture is the act of developing by education, discipline, or social experience. It is the training or refining of the moral or intellectual faculties. In brief, culture is the total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, action, and artifacts. It is the body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a unique complex of traditions of a tribal, racial, religious, social, or national group. Culture
and society are inseparable. One does not or cannot exist without the other. Culture and society may have some common elements but the two are not identical. The essential difference is that society is composed of people while culture consists of knowledge, ideas, customs, traditions, folkways, mores, beliefs, skills, institutions, organizations, and artifacts. According to E.B Taylor (1891:18): “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Culture is regarded as the moral, spiritual and intellectual attainments of man, whereas civilization is something outside us and consists of material culture, technology and social institutions. Civilization reveals the external properties and development of society whereas the term ‘culture’ covers the entire field of man’s achievements. Culture encompasses all forms of art, recreation and language. It is plural and its plurality includes ideas, languages, forms of worship, architecture, dress and handicrafts, which contribute to its continuity and richness. It means that culture does not include only art, music, dance and drama, but a whole way of life. The term culture has attained larger dimensions of meaning over the years. One of the early scholars of cultural studies in Britain, Raymond Williams (1963:16) defines culture as “an individual habit of mind; the state of intellectual development of a whole society; the arts; and the whole way of life of a group or people.” The aim of culture is to pursue perfection in all walks of life. It is capable of developing the faculties of man in a harmonious and balanced manner. So the cultured man perfects not only himself but also the world. In addition, the 19th century British poet-critic, Mathew Arnold (1966: 48-9), has defined culture in various ways. According to him: “It is sweetness and light, it is the best that has been thought and said, it is internal to the human mind and general to the whole community; it is a harmony of all the powers that make for the beauty and worth of human nature.” These definitions underline culture’s dynamism and its presence in every aspect of social life. In brief, culture includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, law, customs, opinion, religion, superstition, and art, a complex typical behavior or standardized social characteristics peculiar to a specific group, occupation, profession, sex, age or social class.
When we consider culture as a specific way of life shared by a group of people, each and every group has its own set of beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, reactions which are shared by the other members of the cultural group. The distinctive beliefs and reactions depend upon the different circumstances. The primary transmission of cultural beliefs begins in infancy and results in established cultural identity. It means that culture never remains rigid and unchanging. It grows and changes in response to experience. The culture of our own grandparents differs from the culture of our parents. Therefore, culture of our parents more or less differs from ours too. As a part of society, each individual has to adjust with the current customs, beliefs and social aspects of life.

Each generation faces the changes in different ways. As a result, each generation has a youth culture that has its own set of characteristics. This means that there is a history of culture. People develop cultures to provide a structured framework of rules for their behavior. In turn, people’s behavior is influenced by their cultural background that is socialization and their personal experiences in society. Therefore, cultural relativity means to understand the cultural development of societies and social groups. In specific circumstances, any form of human behavior can appear to be good or bad. A good example about any culture is not to kill any other human being. But in the war, that is in battlefield the murder is considered as a duty of the soldier. In peace time this may be considered as a murder. Here we view the social context of cultural relativity.

People do not just form cultures. They also form much smaller groups within society which we term sub-cultures. When we use the term sub-culture sociologically, we are referring to a group of people whose behavior has features that set it apart from the wider concept of culture of the society in which it develops. For example, in Britain we recognize the youth category teenager as a distinctive sub-cultural group. Although teenagers may develop interests and behavior that are unique to this group that is the ways of dressing, the kind of music they enjoy, a particular form of language. They hold even their own religious beliefs and values. It means that social behavior is always dynamic. There is a continuous flow of influence from one culture.
to another as each culture depends upon the religion, age, gender, social class and the ethnic background.

In the opinions of F. R. Leavis, the long creative continuity of culture, full human consciousness of ends and values and human nature is preserved in works of literature. Culture is high art which is the quintessence of the value of a society.

### 1.8 Cultural Studies

A cultural study is an academic field of critical theory and literary criticism. It is an innovative interdisciplinary field of research that investigates the ways in which ‘culture’ creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. Combining the strengths of the social sciences and the humanities, cultural studies draw on methods and theories from literary studies, sociology, communications studies, history, cultural anthropology and economics. By working across the boundaries among these fields, a cultural study addresses new questions and problems of today’s world. Rather than seeking answers that will hold for all time, cultural studies develop flexible tools that adapt to this rapidly changing world. Cultural life is not only concerned with symbolic communication, it is also the domain in which we set collective tasks for ourselves and begin to grapple with them as changing communities. A cultural study is devoted to understanding the processes through which societies and the diverse groups within them come to terms with history, community life and the challenges of the future.

The term ‘cultural studies’ is invariably associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) founded by Richard Hoggart and his colleagues in 1964. Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957, Chatto) has been an influential work. Stuart Hall, one of the colleagues of Richard Hoggart, makes the same point while reflecting on the beginning of cultural studies.

The ideas of Louis Althusser had an enormous influence on the cultural theory in the 1970s. It was Althusser’s concept of ideology that was of critical importance to the discussion of culture. The work of Althusser’s disciple Micheal Foucault has greatly contributed to the cultural theory. It was his analysis and description of
‘discourse’ that gained wide circulation among cultural theorists. Post structuralism and post modernism have affected a paradigm shift in cultural studies. They have called into question the traditional guarantees of meaning, religion, science and reason.

The shifting of the center from Birmingham to the American academic circles has resulted in a definite shift of focus in cultural studies today. A cultural study has widened its scope over the years. Cultural studies still involve questions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, oppression and inequality. With the globalization of communication and the rise of the multi-national corporate hegemony over cultural production and the media, cultural studies have acquired profound importance. At a time when cultural studies have become detached from economics and politics, the works of Raymond Williams and Edward Said provide a valuable focus to rethink about cultural studies. Both are acknowledged as the foremost cultural theorists of our times and represent different intellectual and political positions. Raymond Williams is a Marxist and Edward Said is a non-Marxist, yet their works have many common themes, shared values and concerns.

Williams rejected not only the minority versions of culture but also the crude Marxist generalization about bourgeois and popular culture. Nethertheless his own analysis of cultural ethics is clearly founded both on a class analysis of society and on the assumption that men’s deepest cultural identity stems from their relationship to the mode of industrial production. Raymond Williams rejects the concept of ‘Mass culture’, according to him, to acknowledge mass culture is to fall into the conservative trap, to accept that there is a minority culture. He sees ‘mass culture’ as an elitist construction. Williams proposes the idea of a common culture—a culture ‘that is not based on exploitation, but on collaborative effort and enriched by working-class attitudes and values. If we think of culture, as it is important to do, in terms of a body of intellectual and imaginative work, we can see that with the extension of education, the distribution of culture is becoming more even, and at the same time, new work is being addressed to public wider than a single class. Yet a culture is not only a body of intellectual and imaginative work, it is essentially whole way of life.
Williams’s description of culture in terms of the dominant residual and ‘emergent’ is of critical significance to cultural theory. The involvement of culture, according to Williams, is to be seen in the dynamic interrelation of historically valid and variable elements—namely, the dominant, residual and emergent. Communications have been central to Williams’s cultural theory. The chief value of Williams’s cultural theory lies in its recognition of the materiality of culture. Without reducing culture to the economic level or elevating it to the ideal, Williams showed how culture participates in other social practices—economy, politics and ideology. Through his formulations of cultural materialism and structure of feeling, Raymond Williams focused on the political economy of cultural production on the question of economic inequality and oppression and persistently thought in terms of a socialist society. Williams has greatly influenced the debate on culture in the present century.

A cultural study in America is a fairly recent phenomenon. It is only with the importing of French theory during the 1970s that any real engagement with culture was initiated in America. Edward Said’s cultural theory is shaped by and is a response to the post structuralist debates about history, identity and representation. There is another tradition to which he owes his initial training which is that of comparative literature, philology and humanism. ‘Orientalism’ (1978) inaugurated a rigorous critique of Western representations of the Orient and enabled post-colonial criticism that called into question the authority of Western scholarship of other society. Orientalism traces the various phases of the relationship between the West and the Orient. Said describes ‘Orientalism’ as a discourse that conditioned all discussion of the Orient and enabled the West to manage and even produce the Orient, politically, sociologically militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively. The book ‘Orientalism’ focuses chiefly on the internal inconsistency of Orientalism and its functions as a discourse. The book ‘Orientalism’ gains great closeness because the last section deals exclusively with American imperialism both cultural as well as political.

*Culture and Imperialism* (1993) expands the arguments of Said’s earlier works, chiefly ‘Orientalism’, focusing on the relationship between European culture and the Empire. In ‘Orientalism’ Said’s sources have been predominantly Middle Eastern. In
Culture and Imperialism there is an attempt to bring in a lot of non-middle Eastern material chiefly from India, Africa and the Caribbean that is crucial to the understanding of imperialism. Said’s chief argument is that culture, like all other human practices, is worldly, and derives from historical and social processes. The whole argument of the book is based on this premise. Edward Said says: (1993: XXIV) “My method is to focus as much as possible on individual works to read them first as great products of the creative or interpretative imagination and then to show them as part of the relationship between culture and empire. I do not believe that others are mechanically determined by ideology, class or economic history, but authors also believe very much in the history of their societies shaping and shaped by their history and their social experiences in different measure. Culture and the aesthetic forms it contains derive from historical experiences which in effect are one of the main subjects of the book.”

Aijaz Ahmad has commented on Said’s works in the most detailed and reasoned manner in his works like In theory, Classes, Nations, Literatures (1993). Edward Said provided formulation about Orientalism. Gayatri Chakraworty Spivak put forward the notion of subalternity. Spivak’s theory of subalternity encompasses status of women, blacks, colonized and the working class. Her famous essay Can the subalterns speak? mainly addresses itself to the muteness of women in post-colonial societies. Spivak is mainly concerned with the mute and silent women in the societies. She found the experience of marginality to be a common factor. She linked race, gender and class politics with international market economy and emphasized the plurality and diversity in feminist thought. Marginality is the location from which she examines and deconstructs the hegemonic systems of the West. Spivak’s formulation led to a new vision that has gone beyond orient-occident framework. It includes in its scope what has come to be called internal colonization situation where the subalterns including the mute women are subjected to a different kind of suppression.

Homi K. Bhabha in his Nation and Narration (1990) and ‘The Location of Culture’ (1994) examines the cultural and political boundaries which exist in between the spheres of gender, race, class and sexuality. Homi K. Bhabha upholds the tenet of ‘hybridity’ in the cultural context. Homi K. Bhabha has put forward the idea of ‘a
mimicry’ that denotes the gap between the norm of civility as presented by European Enlightenment and its distorted colonial imitation. In his opinion the colonizer provides to the colonized the tools whereby the colonized erodes the imperial power by building up the native resistance. This is done through mimicry of the dominant power creation of an in-between space or hybridity. Mimicry is the outward or external imitation of the authority leading to the setting up of new structures of authority and generating new political initiatives. Bhabha questions the idea of the nation, its application to the heterogeneous collections of people to bring out their national character. This seems to have generated a great deal of interest in the subject, the notion of nation and nationalism coming under sharp focus.

1.9 Cross-cultural Relations

The Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and the information explosion mark the three waves of revolutionary changes in the march of human civilization. These three revolutionary waves show how man has made tremendous advances in all walks of life. An advance means to move forward and a series of such forward steps enables man to make progress. The question is: Is progress enough? If it brings peace, harmony and happiness to the life of an individual and causes the welfare of the entire mankind, progress alone would be sufficient. The reality is that it has never been observed that simple material progress has brought the spiritual well-being of a man. Therefore, man needs not just to be progressive but needs to be civilized and moreover needs to be cultured. ‘Civilization’ has the dictionary meaning of being an advanced stage of social development or a process of achieving social advancement. The term ‘culture’ is something beyond development or advancement and therefore it has assumed greater significance in the present times.

A culture of a nation is made of land and resources, its people, climatic conditions, languages and religions, communication, education, and health, economy, the role of the government, science and technology, soils, vegetation and wildlife, demography, art of agriculture and fishing, and trade and a distinct set of traditions and connections. It is a set of learned beliefs, values, and behaviors, the way of life
shared by the members of the society. It also includes the values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore and institutions which are shared by a group of people who are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality or religion. Culture does mean an integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs and behavior that depends upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. The demographic profile is related to the domain of human knowledge, the present practices are related to the domain of human behavior and the history of the past, myths and folklore are related to the domain of the pattern of the human beliefs. Culture consists of language, ideas, customs, tattoos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of arts, rituals, ceremonies and symbols. Culture has played a critical role in human evolution; altering human begins to adopt the environment to their own purposes. Every human society has its own particular culture or social culture system which consists of three elements, values, norms and artifacts. Values are ideas that tell about the importance of life, norms consist of expectations of how people should behave in different situations and the artifacts deal with things and material culture which reflect the culture’s values and norms but are concrete objects that are manufactured by man. Culture in general is concerned with beliefs and values on the basis of which people interpret experiences and behave individually in groups. Culture refers to a group and community with which are shared common experiences that shape the way to understand the world. Culture is like a lens through which to view the world. Education, social standing, religion, personality, belief structure, past experiences and innumerable other factors affect human behavior and culture.

Culture, then, is a comprehensive term which includes everything below, above and even beyond this universe. Culture encompasses the holy marriage customs, all the invective of abuses and curse words, all the traditional beliefs about passing the salt, the ominous nature of birds like owls and albatross, the significance of number thirteen as unlucky and of number nine or seven as lucky and even the way in which to cover the head or to tie a shoe lace. Culture is what man has made his whole way of life. The spider weaves a web and waits for the victim to be trapped in a complex but delicately structured network of the spider’s web. The spider produces the thread of the web that entangles the prey and the spider produces poisonous liquid to kill the
targeted victim. This is vitiating life which is using the means and ends for vicious purposes and destruction of life. In the march of civilization it is noticed that man has multiplied and magnified his destructive power. The average rate of destruction during the First World War was that only one bullet killed a man. Now a single atomic bomb has the capacity to kill more than ten thousand lives. On the other hand, there is a bee that collects the sweet juice from flowers. The bee constructs the most architectural shelter in the hexagonal beehive. The bee constructs the beehive which is made of wax which is used in making candles and these candles give us light. The bee converts the sweet juice of flowers into nectar like sweet honey. Honey gives sweetness and wax brings light. Light is knowledge and sweetness is wisdom which means the capacity to use knowledge appropriately, rightly and wisely. The march of human civilization has illustrated the truth of the saying knowledge comes but wisdom lingers. The busy bee shows how to combine both the light of knowledge and the sweetness of wisdom. In Arnold’s opinion, culture is the best that has been thought and conceived in the world to remove the clouds of doubt to drive away the conflicting armies of ignorant crowds and to dispose the darkness caused by the receding faith. T. S. Eliot’s notes on the definition of culture and F. R. Leavis’s views on culture have emphasized the broadness of vision, catholicity of mind and the great tradition of the most creative accomplishments of mankind. Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall have duly brought out the significance of culture in their writings. Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* portrays the sufferings of the miserable underdogs. Edward Said’s *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism* show how the intellectual perspectives of West are biased and how corrective measures ought to be taken to restrict the impact of cultural imperialism. These developments have stressed the inevitability of cross-cultural and multicultural setting in the contemporary world. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s notion of subalternity, Homi K. Bhaba’s hybridity are recent additions to the cultural theory. It is now observed that the world has accepted the simultaneous presence of multiple cultures in a single society as a melting pot, as a salad bowl. The world was said to be round till recently but now it is universally accepted that the world is flat and that the clash of civilizations is almost imminent. Whatever may be the situation whether of melting in
a pot or being dressed in a bowl or conflicting clashes, it is clear that culture is vitally significant to the welfare of mankind in the contemporary set-up.

Cross-cultural relations mean the relations between two individuals or groups that belong to different cultures. A man from one of the seven North-Eastern states of India has a different cultural affiliation from a man from one of the southern states of India. In the cosmopolitan centers too, the situation of the interaction between two individuals or groups belonging to two or more cultural traditions has become a common experience. Cross Cultural relations obviously exist between two persons or groups belonging to opposite parts of the globe. On account of migration for studies, business, communication, tourism, work and for other purposes, the number of such interaction of people belonging to different cultures has increased. In the present circumstances of the world becoming a global village, cross-cultural relations are reflected in the literary texts. These need to be analyzed for the purpose of understanding and appreciating cultural differences. It is essential to appreciate the motives behind these relationships. When two groups or persons from different cultures meet, their interaction can be positive which may help in the development of cultural enrichment, understanding and appreciation. It is possible that the interactions can be confusing, difficult and negative and this may cause displacement, dislocation and dispossession. The differences may be on the cultural norms, standards in style of communication, in ways of behavior or in the structure of beliefs. This may result in making understanding impossible and adjustment difficult. The cross-cultural relations depend heavily on the recognition of the uncertainty and informality of such interaction with others that belong to another cultural set-up.

It is repeatedly said that literature is the mirror of life or that literature is the slice of life. Literature is the photographic representation of life, life is mirrored in literature, and similarly it will be appropriate to say that culture is reflected or mirrored in literature. In case of the reflection of more than one culture or the mirroring of multiple cultures the most appropriate illustrations are to be found in what is branded as diasporic literature. The diasporic writers generally present the turn of events in the lives of the characters who are often immigrants from the homeland to the adopted land. The stages of adapt, adopt and adept are noticed in
which the journey of the protagonist is from the centre to the periphery then again from the periphery to the centre. The sense of alienation, the phase of adoption, the stage of reconciliation, the progress of assimilation and the destination of acculturation are the progressive steps, which enable the cross-cultural shift possible. The present study intends to present the cross-cultural relations in the selected novels of Bharati Mukherjee.

1.10 What is Diaspora?

Diaspora is a word of Greek origin that means scattering or sowing of seeds. It is used to refer to people who leave their native lands and settle in other parts of the world for employment, business or any other purpose. The word ‘diaspora’ is derived from the Greek word diaspeiro, which means scattering or dispersion of the people from their homeland. It was first used by the Greeks for the movements of the Jews away from their homeland. Today, the term is applied to a number of ethnic and racial groups, living in an alien land. Moreover, the word Diaspora is defined as population of migrant origin which is scattered among two or more destinations. They develop different links involving flows and exchange of people and resources. In a sense, there is a continuous oscillation between the homeland and an alien land. Diaspora includes complex mixes of people who have arrived at different times, through different channels, through different means, and with very different legal statutes in their various destinations. However, Diaspora is an emerging word in literature. Literature produced by the diasporic writers explores the problems and possibilities engendered by the experience of migrancy and diasporic, it is gaining remarkable popularity among the lovers of literature.

The concept of diaspora is used in the discussion of the African diaspora, which could be said to have begun with the enslavement and subsequent relocation of Africans by Europeans. Native Americans refer to themselves as a diaspora; their forcible relocation into reservations and their attempts to prevent their culture from being absorbed is a great problem. For people of mixed ancestry, the idea of strong connection with homeland is quite profound. For many members of a diaspora,
retaining this connection through multiple generations plays an important role in shaping their identities. Even members of a diaspora tend to cluster together within a larger community, often adopting conservative values to retain their culture and inculcating their children with ideals about their homeland. They may teach their children the language of their homeland, cook traditional dishes, practise an ethnic religion, or dress in a way which distinguishes them from members of their adopted country.

The diasporic writings in English convince us that the Indian immigrants and expatriates have produced a rich harvest of literature in multiple forms and genres, in diverse altitudes and backgrounds. The diasporic writers are settled abroad in different countries. They belong to both old and young generation. Their writings bring them awareness of geographical dislocation, cultural ambivalence, social and political alienation and absence of centrality. Therefore, memory and nostalgia connect them with their homeland and past associations, which feed their imagination to mete out something ‘new and strange’.

Today people are migrating to different parts of the world for one or other reasons. From India too, millions of people have migrated to various alien lands under ‘forced exiles’ or ‘self-imposed exiles’. As a result, most of the immigrant writers have made an attempt to focus psychic trauma of the people. Some of them have made a good mark in the field of writing. These immigrant writers shed light on the cultural attachment with their motherland, their feeling of alienation and rootlessness in an alien land. The diasporic writing is known as ‘expatriate writing’ or ‘immigrant writing’ largely gives voice to the traumatic experiences of the writers. They are on the frames owing to the clash of two cultures or the racial discrimination in an alien land. However, immigration proves a pleasant experience only to a few immigrant writers who succeed in assimilating themselves with new geographical, cultural, social and psychological environment. But for most of the diasporic writers, immigration is not a good experience. They often find themselves sandwiched between two cultures, two value systems and contradictory traditions. The feelings of nostalgia and a sense of loss make them restless. Therefore, their writing reflects their mental state and condition of anxiety. There are many diasporic writers scattered in
various countries like Britain, America, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Mauritius, East Africa, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and so on. The diasporic writers are settled abroad in different countries-in Britain, Canada, America, Germany, Australia, and West Indies.

The writers like V. S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Robinton Mistry, Uma Parameswaran, Salman Rushdie, Lakshmi Gill, Yasmin Gooneratne, and many others have left their country and have settled abroad. Among the Indian Diaspora, Bharati Mukherjee occupies a distinctive place since she redefines the concept of Diaspora. To most of the diasporic writers, immigration is synonymous with ‘unhousement’ and ‘rootlessness’. But for Mukherjee, it involves a process of gain. Her characters in long as well as in short fiction are set against divergent ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Though they encounter cultural crisis, they soon explore new ways of ‘belonging’ and ‘becoming’ in the country of their choice.

1.11 Indian Diaspora

Indian Diaspora is a generic term used for addressing people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India. It constitutes NRIs (Non-resident Indians) and PIOs (Persons of Indian Origins). The Indian Diaspora is estimated to be over 30 million. The Government of India recognizes the importance of Indian Diaspora as it has brought economic, financial and global benefits to India. The Indian Diaspora today constitutes an important and unique force in the world culture. Indian diaspora is a geographically diversified diaspora, which is spread in as many as 110 countries. At the same time, the characteristics of this diversified group vary. The origin of the modern Indian diaspora lies mainly in the suppression of India by the British and its incorporation into the British Empire.

The story of the Indian Diaspora primarily has its roots in the penal colony system of the late 18th century and the indentured labor system of the early 19th
century. Though Indians have migrated to the neighboring Asian countries, they have their own missions, may for economic prosperity or other opportunities.

**1.12 Diasporic Literature**

The term ‘Diaspora’ is derived from the original Greek word ‘Diaspeiro’. It was formerly used for the dispersal or scattering indifferent parts of the world of the Jews from Palestine. In the present times it is used to refer to a number of ethnic and racial groups living abroad. The meaning of ‘Diaspora’ denotes a scattering or dispersal of a group of people to an alien land away from their traditional homelands. The diasporic writings are also called ‘expatriate writings’ or ‘immigrant writings’. The word ‘diaspora’ indicates the population of migrant origin, which is scattered among two or more destinations. Diaspora includes a complex of people who have arrived at different times through different channels, through different means, and with different legal status in their various destinations. The diasporic writings in English show how the Indian immigrants and expatriates have produced a rich harvest of literature in multiple forms and genres in diverse attitudes and backgrounds. The diasporic writers are settled abroad in different countries and even now for one or the other reason people are migrating to different parts of the world. As ‘forced exiles’ or as ‘self imposed exiles’ people have migrated to various alien lands. Indians were sent as indentured labor to countries like the Caribbean countries, Fiji, Gayana, Mauritius, Srilanka and other countries. They have migrated to South Africa, East Africa, Canada, England, America and the Gulf countries in search of employment, for business, for academic purposes and for other reasons. Most of the Diasporic or Immigrant writers have made an attempt to focus on the psychic truma of these people. Their writings present on awareness of geographical dislocation, cultural ambience, social and political alienation and sense of centrality. They show the cultural attachment with the motherland, the feeling of alienation and rootlessness in an alien country. They show how the immigrants have found themselves sandwiched between two cultures, two value systems and contradictory traditions. The feeling of nostalgia and a sense of loss is reflected in the presentation of their mental state of anxiety.
The importance of Indian Diaspora which is dispersed in about one hundred and ten counties of the world is duly recognized. The Aristotelian unity of time of action of twenty-four hours, that is a single day, is observed by Mulk Raj Anand in his Untouchable. Raja Rao narrates the story of Ramaswamy and Madeline against the background of the diverse cultures of France and India. Kamala Markandaya married Mr. Taylor to settle in England and out of her ten novels, six novels deal with the theme of East-West encounter and the characters are drawn from both India and England. A nostalgic longing for India is a characteristic feature of her diasporic writings. Markandaya’s six novels Some Inner Fury (1955), Possession (1963), The Coffer Dams (1969), The Nowhere Man (1972), The Golden Honeycomb (1977) and Pleasure City (1982) depict the diasporic experiences of the sense of displacement and dislocation, a sense of loss, the feeling of nostalgia and the process of assimilation and acculturation.

B. Rajan has published two novels The Dark Dancer (1958) and Too Long in the West (1961). B Ranjan moved from England to America and turned to Canada. His daughter Tilottama Rajan is a younger generation diasporic writer of Myth in Metal Mirror (1967) which is a collection of thirty-six poems. Shanta Rama Rao’s fictional works are Home to India (1945), Remember the House (1956), Gifts of Passage (1961) and The Adventurers (1971).

Anita Desai has become a diasporic writer of eminence with her fictional works like Bye Bye Blackbird (1971), Baumgartner’s Bombay (1988), and her later novels are Feasting Fasting, Journey to Ithaca, and The Zigzag Way. The cross-cultural contact between the East and the West and the resultant sense of alienation and frustration in her dominant characters are frequently treated by Anita Desai. Her daughter Kiran Desai’s diasporic talent is noticed in her works like Hullabaloo under the Guava Orchard (1999) and The Inheritance of Loss (2006).

V. S. Naipaul tries in his writings to revive his connections with the past. Naipaul is a writer of Indian origin from Trinidad who is now settled in England. In A House for Mr. Biswas, Naipaul is highly critical of the East Indians and suggests that
the East Indians and the West Indians ought to become part of the collective West Indian consciousness. Naipaul’s works like *An Area of Darkness, India: A Wounded Civilization* and *India: A Million Mutinies* are based on his recurrent visits to India and on his perceptions and experiences in India. Naipaul has been highly critical of India in the beginning but then he accepts India as a land capable of million mutinies.

Ved Mehta is a notable diasporic writer whose autobiography *Face-to-Face* (1957) brings out his experience of life. In his other prose works, he projects the image of India and her people, their customs and rituals in an absorbing manner. Salman Rushdie treats history and religion in *Midnight’s Children* (1980) and ushers in a new era of fictional art. It is a postmodern novel, which reveals the unreality of historical discourse. The protagonist Saleem Sinai is presented as a troubled and fragmented soul. He suffers from a sense of identity crises and the harrowing tale of Mother India during the days of partition, becomes his own.

In 1986 Vikram Seth published his first novel *The Golden Gate* set in San Francisco and written in verse. Vikram Seth’s 1349-page-epic *A Suitable Boy* (1993) is considered to offer an unmatched portrait of India in the 1950s. His novel *An Unequal Music* (1999) has continued his artistic pursuit of his ideal theme of preference to calm, and equal balanced affection.

Amitav Ghosh was born and grew up in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran and India. His first novel *Circle of Reason* (1986) was followed by *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, The Poppy Fields and The River of Smoke* are novels in which Amitav Ghosh has chosen different areas in which he initially conducts research in an extensive manner.

Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* (1996) takes into account the detailed description of Emergency of 1975 though it has the backdrop of the 1971 Indo-Pak war.


1.13 Bharati Mukherjee’s Life and Literary Career

Bharati Mukherjee was born on 27th July 1940, in a Bengali Brahmin family of Calcutta. Her father Sudhir Lal Mukherjee was a pharmaceutical chemist and her mother, Bina Banerjee Mukherjee was a housewife. She spent her first eight years as a member of a large extended family. However, in more intimate convictions, the family observed Hindu practices and beliefs. In 1958 Mukherjee’s father lost his partnership in the factory and moved his family to Baroda, where he joined the Research and Development wing of a large Bombay complex. In the meantime, Bharati Mukharjee completed her B. A. (Honors) in English at the University of Calcutta in 1959. Subsequently she took her M. A. degree in English from the M.S. University of Baroda in 1961. Her father encouraged her to join creative writing program in the United States. She went to the University of Iowa’s Writers’ Workshop with a P.E.O. It was during her stint at the University of Iowa that Mukherjee met Clark Blaise, the Canadian novelist, professor and journalist and married him in North America. However, the couple took a bold decision to move to U.S.A. in 1980 and since then they have been living there as U. S. citizens.

Mukherjee's literary works focus on the phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants and the feeling of alienation often experienced by expatriates. Her work also exposes cultural clashes, dislocation and sense of alienation of Indian
characters in an alien land. Her own struggle with identity first as an exile from India, then an Indian expatriate in Canada, and finally as an immigrant in the United States has led to her current contentment of being an immigrant in a country of immigrants. Bharati Mukherjee’s academic and professional career won many awards. She has been honored with the National Book Critics Circle Award for her short stories collection entitled *The Middleman and Other Stories* in 1989. Her creative five novels are - *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989), *The Holder of the World* (1993), and *Leave It to Me* (1977) and two collections of short stories are *Darkness* (1985) and *The Middleman and Other Stories* (1988). She has also co-authored with her husband for two non-fictional works. Mukherjee's early novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife*, both published in the early 1970s, are the novels about isolation and cultural dislocation of Indian expatriates. In *Wife*, Dimple Dasgupta is married off to a young engineer, and soon finds herself immigrating to America. She initially finds her new life impossible to adjust. She makes an attempt to become an American, wishes to speak American-English by watching the television.

*The Tiger's Daughter* is a fictionalized story drawing from Mukherjee's own first years of marriage and her return home for a visit to the homeland compelled by her sense of nostalgia. The protagonist, Tara Banerjee, returns to India after marrying an American and faces a different India from the one she remembers leaving. This first novel addresses Mukherjee's personal difficulties of being caught between two worlds, homes and cultures. Mukherjee's second novel, *Wife*, is a more distant story that narrates Dimple, a young, naive Indian woman, trying to reconcile the Bengali ideal of the perfect, passive wife with the demands of her new American life. As a young woman who was raised to be passive, Dimple lacks the inner strength and resources it takes to cope in New York City as the young wife in an arranged marriage. In this novel, Mukherjee deals with the complications that come from being thrown between two worlds and the strength and courage it takes to survive and, ultimately live. *Wife* was often dismissed because its heroine fails to make the transition from one world to another, and was often judged to be ‘weak’.
Darkness, her first collection of short stories, focuses on natives of South Asia who long for success and stability, but are burdened by their histories and face the difficulties of prejudice and misunderstanding. This collection was a transitional work for Mukherjee, who was reflecting back on her difficult years in Canada and cherishing the opportunity to establish herself in the United States.

In 1988, Mukherjee had a major public breakthrough that lifted her into the top ranks of all writers. She was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction for The Middleman and Other Stories. In this collection, Mukherjee becomes a valuable middleman linking dissimilar worlds. She tells her tales from many perspectives, with a keen eye for the concept of self within a larger society. She wrote this collection in a lighter tone, with characters that are adventurers and explorers, rather than refugees and outcasts, and are a part of a new, changing America.

Jasmine is Mukherjee's most popular novel. It is a novel that stems from an earlier short story from The Middleman and Other Stories and is expanded to a story of a young widow who uproots herself from her life in India and re-roots herself in search of a new life and the image of America. It is a story of dislocation and relocation. In the novel, Mukherjee rejoices the idea of assimilation and makes it clear that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant of her life, because in the third world, she faced only despair and loss. According to Mukherjee, people should read the story of Jasmine not only as Jasmine's story of change, but also as the story of a changing America. It has been said that Mukherjee often represents India in her fiction as a land without hope or a future. She has also been criticized for a tendency to overlook unavoidable barriers of caste, education, gender, race and history in her tales of survivors.