CHAPTER- I

Introduction
CHAPTER-1

Introduction: Defining ‘Diaspora’

Diaspora women poets discussed in this thesis are called ‘Cassandras in exile’ as their solitary silence is implicit in the fate and voice of Cassandra, the female prophet of Greek mythology punished by Zeus. She was awarded a gift of prophecy to which no one would listen. Cassandra thus symbolizes the plight of a woman poet. Like Cassandra, the poet is isolated by her poetic gift. Ironically, both strength and weakness lie at the root of her gift of prophecy. She is chosen by the divinity but also condemned to suffer. She is empowered with the gift of singing but ignored by all. The myth of Cassandra will be dealt with at length in chapter three later.

There is an innate opposition embedded in the etymology of the term diaspora, of Greek origin, which reflects how double-edged the concept can be: dia- a preposition which, when used in compound words, means ‘division’ and ‘dispersion’ and –spiro literally means, ‘to sow the seeds’. This suggests, on the one hand, the idea of dispersion and on the other, that of stasis and stability sowing seed, suggesting new life and new roots.

Diaspora studies is a field struggling with the following issues, according to Susan S. Friedman’s proposal Migration and Diaspora: Cultural Theory of Representation (2008:2),

“The multiple meanings and models of diaspora and migration; the relation of migration and diaspora to conquest, colonialism, post-colonialism, refugeesism, political exile, etc; the heterogeneity of diasporic groups, especially by gender, class, sexuality, caste, religion (etc); the problematic and potentials of assimilation, acculturation, and transculturation, nativism and the hostility of host lands, generational conflicts and continuities in the (re) production of culture; the role of language and other cultural practices in
migratory experiences; the significance of memory for the production of what Salman Rushdie calls “imaginary homelands”; the phenomenological dimensions of migration and diaspora (loss, between worlds, nostalgia) depression, exhilaration etc); etc. “

And a field like this hardly fits itself to the limiting and centering powers of definitions and theories. That is why there are a lot of arguments between scholars as to what ‘Diaspora’ and ‘Diaspora studies’ mean: Diaspora as located between cultures and between majority and minority, nation and nonnation, citizen and foreigner, original and hybrid often goes beyond the centering theories of humanities. Before discussing the various arguments about Diaspora, different definitions of the term must to be considered.

Etymological meaning of the word ‘diaspora’ is “to scatter about, disperse” from ‘dia’—“about, across” + ‘speirein “to scatter” (originally from in Deut. XXVIII: 25.)

- noun
- The scattering of the Jews to countries outside of Palestine after the Babylonian captivity.
- (often lowercase) the body of the Jews living in countries outside Palestine or modern Israel.
- Such countries collectively: the return of the Jews from the Diaspora.
- (lower case) any group migration or flight from a country or region: dispersion.
- (lowercase) any group that has been dispersed outside its traditional homeland.
- (lower case) any religious group living as a minority among people of prevailing religion.¹
The OED (Oxford English Dictionary) defines ‘diaspora’ as “the voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homelands into new regions”. Under colonialism, it refers to multifarious movements, involving, the temporary or permanent movement of Europeans all over the world, leading to colonial settlements. Consequently, the ensuing economic exploitation of the settled areas necessitated large amount of labour that could not be fulfilled by the local populace. This led to the diaspora resulting from the enslavement of the Africans and their relocation to places like the British Colonies. After slavery was outlawed, the continued demand for workers created indentured labour. This produced large bodies of people from poor areas of India, China (and others) to the West Indies, Malaya, Fiji, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia etc.

Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia defines ‘diaspora’ as “the dispersion of Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile (586 B.C.) or the aggregate of Jews outside Palestine or present day Israel. The term also carries religious, philosophical, political and eschatological connotations, in as much as the land of Israel and themselves.”

Columbia Encyclopaedia also refers to it as, “term used today to denote the Jewish communities living outside the Holy Land. It was originally used to designate the dispersal of the Jews at the time of the destruction of the First Temple (586 B.C.) and forced exile to Babylonia. The diaspora became a permanent feature of the Jewish life.”

Stuart Hall says, “diaspora identities are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference.” According to Hall, diaspora experience “is defined, not by the essence or purity but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity, by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, differences; by hybridity.”

The 1989 Oxford English Dictionary traces the etymology of the word ‘Diaspora’ back to its Greek root and to its appearance in the Old Testament
(Deut. 28:25).” And it considers the word as a reference to “God’s intentions for the people of Israel to be ‘dispersed’ across the world”. In the 1993 edition, “Diaspora” is defined as referring to “any body of people living outside their traditional homeland” revising the former definition of the term as exclusively applicable to Israelis or Jews. And *The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (1995) defines Diaspora as “the process by which people of a particular nation become scattered and settle in other countries, especially (the Diaspora) the Jews who left ancient Palestine in this way”. The obsession with the classical case of the Israeli Diaspora and the identification of the word as representative of an immigrant community and its process of formation which the above definitions show point to the need of distinguishing between these meanings for a fruitful discussion.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* (1998) define diaspora as “the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions …”. And they use the term in the context of Western or European colonization. Their definition seems to be especially remodeled for colonial and post-colonial contexts. A historian by the name Sathis Georgouris showed a similar emphasis to the constant, mobility, in his research article *The Concept of Diaspora in the Contemporary World*. He argues that historically Diasporas are the results of migration, whatever the case. And because they don’t have to be bounded by the economic, political, historical etc., limits of any state, they are always on the move seeking better gains as entrepreneurs. And it is this historical mobility and the ability to surpass the institutional operatives of capitalism that made them economically successful “diasporic entrepreneurial networks”. And this made them to stick together and form “the articulate image of social – ethnic cohesion”.

Georgouris concludes asserting that diasporic communities should not be viewed as traces of a national community but rather as results of their own dispersal or mobility under specific historical conditions (political, economic, sociological, psychological, cultural). Accordingly not every
immigrant community is truly Diaspora except those who share a strong ancestral center and linkage with each other in their movements in the hostlands. Georgouris gives as examples Jews, Greeks, and Armenian failing to extend his analysis outside Europe.

According to Homi Bhabha diasporas are “gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refuges; gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centers; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues or in the uncanny fluency of author’s language, gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment of other world lived restoratively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present.” Bhabha thinks that the in-between (third) space occupied by the diasporic subject is pregnant with creative possibilities. Salman Rushdie and Edward Said also visualize higher creative potentialities in the condition of exile.

Autar Brah believes that “Diaspora space is the intersectionality of Diaspora, border and dislocation as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed.”

Vijay Mishra says that, “Diasporic epistemology locates itself squarely in the realm of the hybrid, in the domain of cross-cultural and contaminated social and cultural regimes.”

Mexican-American author Gloria Anzaldúa writes of the emergence of a new consciousness that she calls mestiza consciousness. La mestiza is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of group to another. The mestiz faces the dilemma of a mixed breed. She writes, “Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, and inner war.” Anzaldúa days that the new mestiza must develop tolerance for contradictions and ambiguities and in doing so, she develops
new creative possibilities. She further states, “The focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the mestiza stands, is where phenomena tend to collide. It is where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs. This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together. Nor is it a balancing of opposite powers. In attempting to work out syntheses, the self has added a third element which is greater than the sum of its severed parts. The third element is a new consciousness- a mestiza consciousness and though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion. That keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm.”

After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and rapid globalization in world economy, diasporas are now known as “exemplary communities of the transnational moment.” Safran tried for the first time to manage the proliferation of the use of the term ‘Diaspora’. He tried to set the criteria in order to build typography. His criteria underlined the attachment of diasporas to their place of origin which through their collective memory and mythology is defined as their homeland. At the same time, these communities grow a feeling of rejection in their host country which results in the increase of their desire for return to the homeland. This return becomes and almost metaphysical destiny for them that contributes to the development of personal as well as official ties with the homeland. The etymological analysis of ‘diaspora’ reveled and embedded dual metaphor between roots/routes.

Clifford considers ‘Diasporas’ as a new form of consciousness, collectivity and solidarity in a period that fragmentation and deterritorialization are praised as dominant paradigms. Diasporic groups often find recourse to a discourse of nostalgia praising difference. They construct relations to transnational political, cultural or religious movements that try to overcome the national boundaries. Clifford invests too much in the hybrid and deterritorial trait of the Diasporas. The double consciousness (here and there) attributed to the diasporic communities is presented as a
general characteristic that endows them with freedom from boundedness and other constraints of nation states.

Daniel. J. Elazar regarded Diasporas as ethno religious communities which as a catalytic minority would influence the host society. Esman defined Diaspora as a minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with the land of its origin. Toloyan who launched a journal Diaspora stated,

“We use diaspora provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community”

Another European scholar, Dr. Myria Georgiou, defines Diaspora as “an intermediate concept between the local and the global that nevertheless transcends the national perspectives” quoting Gillespie. And it implies…” a decentralized relation to ethnicity, real imagined relations between scattered people who sustain a sense of community through various forms of communication and contact and who do not necessarily depend on returning to a distant Homeland.”

Beyond dualisms and socio- historical constructs-outside the nation-ethnicity becomes too frail to hold on t. and the nation is no longer limited in its geographical boundaries. Its dispersed people interact whether in reality or in imagination and sustain a disproric community. An article entitled Diasporas; some conceptual Consideration by Fred W. Riggs defines Diaspora as “Communities whose members live informally outside a homeland while maintaining active contacts with it.” The word ‘informally’ excludes people having a formal status such as “soldiers, diplomats, missionaries, businessmen, journalist, spies etc” who are agents of the state or non-state entities in the homeland. The other criterion ‘active’ refers to the
maintenance of interactive relationship (ibid). But maintenance of contact in the homeland may exclude latent diasporans with the potential to be active.

Conceptually “Diaspora highlights the existence of transnational networks of people and their sense of belonging in communities beyond spatial boundaries”. It also implies that this sense of belonging is not only connected with experiencing migration but “might have an on-going importance for younger generations who have not experienced migration processes”. In addition diaspora implies that certain cultures continue to “survive, transform and remain relevant” even after the owners of the culture get physically dislocated from their homeland. In general diaspora specific to minorities who sometime in history migrated and have a deep connection with a distant homeland are different from indigenous minorities due to “the direct or the symbolic and historical experience of migration and or deterriotialisation”.

Safran (1991) proposes that “the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority community whose members share several of the following characteristics”. Safran’s characteristics are summarized as follows.

- Dispersal from an original center to peripheral regions, (Dispersal)
- Perpetuated myth of the homeland (myth)
- Sense of alienation in their host lands (alienation)
- Idealization of their homeland as a place to which they will return (idealization)
- Commitment to maintain or restore their homeland (commitment)
- Relationships with the homeland whose existence supports their own ethno communal consciousness and solidarity (interaction with homeland) 11
In general, the theories and concepts of Diaspora define the Diaspora as a community dispersed from an original homeland riding in a host land and maintaining a real or imaginary connection with the homeland. As a concept, it is the condition of existing dislocated from the social-historical constructs like nation, race, ethnicity, culture etc., which define oneself a different location having its own constructs and the resultant effects and features of the subject individual or community.

**Origin and development of the term ‘Diaspora’**

Chronologically speaking, the first mention of a diaspora created as a result of exile is found in Septuagint in a phrase that meant “thou shalt be dispersion in all kingdoms of the earth.” When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, the word “Diaspora” was used to refer to the population of Jews exiled from Israel in 607 B.C. by the Babylonians, and from Judea in 70 B.C. by the Roman Empire. It subsequently came to be used to refer to the historical movements of the dispersed ethnic population of Israel, the cultural development of that population or the population itself. The capitalized word ‘Diaspora’ refers to the Jewish diaspora and the uncapitalized word ‘diaspora’ may be used to refer to refugee population of other origins or ethnicities.

The wider application of diaspora evolved from the Assyrian two-way mass depuration policy of conquered populations to deny future territorial claims to these populations. In Ancient Greece, the term ‘diaspora’ meant “the scattered” and it was employed to refer to the citizens of a dominant city-state who immigrated to a conquered land with the purpose of colonization, to assimilate the territory into the empire.

The first recorded usage of the word ‘diaspora’ in English language was in 1876 referring to refugees of the Irish famine. The term was widely assimilated by the mid 1950s, with long-term expatriates in significant numbers from other particular countries like England, USA and so on.
In all cases, the term ‘diaspora’ carries a sense of displacement and the population so described finds itself separated from its national territory. Its people have a hope or a desire to return to their homeland at some point. Some writers have noted that diaspora may result in a loss of nostalgia for a single home as people “re-root” in a series of meaningful displacements. In this sense, they may have multiple homes and maintain some kind of attachment to each. Diasporic cultural development often assumes a different course from that of the population in the original home-land. With the passage of time, these separated communities tend to vary in culture, traditions, language and other factors.

Diaspora’s original connotations of dispersion and exile now encompass a larger semantic field. It is sometimes used to refer to a range of ethnic communities and to a variety of categories of people like political and war refugees, immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities etc. Definition and understandings of diaspora get modified ‘in translation’ as they are applied to new groups of people.

**Characteristics of Diaspora:**

There are three core elements that are widely understood to be constitutive of Diaspora. Some subset or combination of these underlies most of the important definitions and discussions of diaspora. The first is dispersion in space; the second, orientation to a homeland and the third, boundary maintenance.

I. **Dispersion:**

This is the most widely accepted criterion of diaspora. It can be interpreted strictly as forced or otherwise traumatic dispersion; more broadly as any kind of dispersion in space, provided that the dispersion crosses state borders. More broadly still, the dispersion defining diasporas includes ‘ethnic communities divided by state frontiers’ or ‘that segment of people living outside the homeland. This allows even compactly settled populations to
count as diasporas when part of the population lives as a minority outside its ethno national homeland.

II. Homeland Orientation:

The second constitutive criterion of diaspora is orientation to a real or imagined homeland as a source of value, identity and loyalty. In recent discussions, there is a shift in this regard. Earlier, this criterion was strongly emphasized. Four of the six criteria specified by Safran (1991) concern the orientation to a homeland. These include maintaining a collective memory or myth about the homeland; regarding the ancestral home as the true and ideal home to which one would eventually return; being collectively committed to the maintenance or restoration of the homeland and its safety and prosperity and finally continuing to relate personally and vicariously to the homeland in a way that shapes one's identity and solidarity.

Recent discussion deemphasizes homeland orientation. Clifford, for example, has criticized what he called the 'centred' model of Safran and others. Clifford notes that many aspects of the Jewish experience itself do not qualify. For example, even the South Asian diaspora is not so much oriented to roots in a specific place or a desire for return to homeland. For Clifford, decentered, lateral connections are as important as those formed around teleology of origin/return.

III. Boundary Maintenance:

The third constitutive element involves the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis a host society. The mobilized diaspora for centuries has constituted a separate society or quasi-society in a larger polity. Boundaries are maintained by deliberate resistance to assimilation through self-segregation. On most accounts, boundary maintenance is an indispensable
criterion of diaspora. It is this that enables one to speak of a Diaspora as a distinctive community held-together by active solidarity as well as by dense social relationships. And yet, there is an interesting ambivalence in the literature. Though boundary-maintenance and preservation of identity are generally emphasized, there is a strong cross-current that emphasizes hybridity, fluidity, creolization, and syncretism. As Hall puts it, “the diasporic experience is defined, not by essence or purity but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity or diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. 12 Thus, there is a tension in the literature between boundary maintenance and boundary erosion.

In modern times, terms like trans-nationalism, post-nationalism, globalization, deterritorialization, post-colonialism, trans-culturalism and post-modernity are in vogue. They mark an epochal shift in our understanding of the term diaspora. It can be said that the world has now passed from the age of the nation-state to the age of diaspora. What Anthony Giddens tells about the term ‘globalization’ could be said equally aptly of ‘Diaspora’; ‘It has come from nowhere to be almost to be almost everywhere.” Martin Heidegger has rightly said in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ “Homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world.” 13

The unprecedented porosity of borders, the unprecedented circulation of people, goods, messages, images, ideas and cultural products signify a basic realignment of the relationships between politics and culture, territorial states and de-territorialized identities. Diasporas are treated as ‘bona fide actual entities’ and cast as unitary actors. Sheffer distinguished ‘core’ ‘marginal’ and ‘dormant members of Diasporas’. Diaspora as a term can be seen as an idiom, a stance of a claim. As a category of practice, diaspora is used to make claims, to articulate projects, to mobilize energies, to appeal to loyalties and as a stance it is a way of formulating the identities and loyalties of population.
According to Gilroy, “Diaspora is a valuable idea because it is an alternative to the metaphysics of ‘race’, nation and bonded culture coded into body. He puts emphasis on contingency, indeterminacy and conflict. Gilroy in his book ‘The Black Atlantic’ (1993) has presented the most sustained theoretical defence of the concept of Diaspora. He reconstructs the history of the West through the work of black intellectuals like Du Bois and Richard Wright.

**Cohen’s typology of Diaspora:-**

Robin Cohen’s recent project on Global Diasporas presents very interesting ideas on the ways or rethinking the issue of movements of population and new forms of ethnic organization. He provides an important corrective approach to ethnic and national boundaries that treat them in relation to fixed territorial and political bounders. His views focus on the trajectories of migration and settlement and the reconfiguration of ethnic solidarities.

Groups called ‘Diasporas’ travel across territories for various reasons. The essential element here is spreading of people from their original homeland. Cohen refers to homeland in metaphysic sense rather than territorial. The group need not be identified with a nation state but it must constitute itself as a population category, usually a nation or ethnic group for Cohen, the central ideas behind ‘Diaspora’ is found in the forcible scattering of people as denoted in the *Book of Deuteronomy* subsequent definitions have related to the Jewish dispersion to Babylon. The African Diaspora has also taken up this ter. Armenians, Greeks, Africans and Jews form the traditional or classic diasporas. Cohen seeks to retain the objectivist definition found in classical notion of Diaspora but also shows openness to modern or global aspects resulting from mass movements of population and the slow decline of the nation state.

Cohen lists the following criteria for allowing the term Diaspora to be used for a group of people.
- Dispersal and scattering.
- Collective trauma.
- Cultural flowering
- Troubled relationship with the majority
- A sense of community transcending national frontiers.
- Promoting a return movement.

Cohen suggests that the old diasporic practice of sojournning has become a feature of the new global economy. The former emphasis on the binary process of ‘travel from’ and ‘return to’ are no longer useful and valid. Cohen’s typology constructs five different forms of diasporic community. They are

- Victim Diaspora
- Labor Diaspora
- Trade Diaspora
- Imperial Diaspora
- Cultural Diaspora

Cohen acknowledges that some of these forms mingle and overlap one another. They may take dual or multiple forms or change their characteristics over time. His examples are drawn from the experience of Jews as the prototype form. According to Cohen, Africans and Armenians are Victim Diasporas; Indians are labour; British as Imperial; Chinese and Lebanese are trading; and Caribbean are cultural.

Typologies may function as heuristic devices. Weber’s ideal type has a member of analytical uses particularly for the purpose of comparison. Cohen’s typology is descriptive and inductivist. He relies mainly on the origin
or intentionality of dispersal. In some cases, it refers to occupational patterning e.g. labour, trading. In others, it is an experience of forceful or violent displacement e.g. victim or penetration (imperial), in yet others, it is the development of a particular syntheses of cultural elements (the cultural). In order to differentiate, Cohen presents Diaspora as a unitary sociological phenomenon which is divided into different types.

Diaspora formulates a population as a transnational community. Cohen suggests that the sense of unease or difference faced by members of diasporic groups causes them to identify with co-ethnics in other countries. The idea of primordial bonding seems to lie at the bottom of the notion of diaspora. Cohen acknowledges that there might be different factors that give rise to the diasporic movement for different groups. Within these groups also, there might be different pull/push factors at different times and for different destinations. For example, among the Greek diaspora, there are several factors like asylum, forceful expulsion or exile, trading/labor migration and brain drain for different categories. The idea of diaspora tends to homogenize the population referred to at the transnational level. However, such populations are not homogenous as these populations may have migrated to different countries for different reasons. Diasporas are not homogeneous in another sense also. They may have formed different collective representations of the group under local conditions. They may develop different ethnic cultural organizations and promote their ethnic identity. Different groups within the overall category will have different political projects with different gender, class and political affiliations.

The postmodern versions of diaspora (Hall 1990, Gilroy, 1993, Clifford, 1994, Brah, 1996) denote a condition rather than being descriptive of a group. The post-modern version of diaspora denotes a process at the holistic level and not just in terms of the group of intergroup relations. The diaspora process is originally related to globalization and cultural mixing. Such processes involve transnational and trans-ethnic mixing. The diasporic process is one whereby social unities round nation become destabilized.
According to Clifford, nation-state in subverted by diasporic attachments which construct allegiances elsewhere. The diaspora claims to belongingness do not come from claims to inhabit original territory it may be different territory to their constructed and deferred homeland. Clifford suggests that Diaspora think globally but live locally.

The present perception of Diasporas is breaking the ethic spectacles and underestimates the continuing attachment to the idea of ethnic bonds. There are certain common features in Cohen’s and Clifford’s approaches in spite of significant differences. The orientation to a symbolic homeland is a key feature for defining Diaspora. Diasporic forms flourish in today’s globalised world. They come out as it strong social organizations. Clifford’s view challenges ethnicity and ethnic absolutism. According to him, ethnicity is replaced by hybridity. Cultural hybridity replaced the concepts like ethnicity, nationality, nationhood, boundaries and identity. The post-modern concept of diaspora helps us in understanding migration, post-migration, reterritorialization and multiple sense of belonging and loyalties of the people beyond boundaries of nations. Dr. Myria Geogiou (2001) in the article Thinking Diaspora; Why Diaspora is a key concept for understanding Multicultural Europe describes diasporization central to the understanding of the contemporary world.

Diaspora today illustrates the hybrid and ever-changing nature of identities that are no more dependent on homogeneity, purity and stable localization. Cultural viability does not depend on purity, but rather through mixing. There is a diversity of cultures in the Diasporas that co-exist, merge and remerge through hybridity. The cultures of Diaspora can be the results of cultural meetings or of suppression, exclusion and domination and yet the diasporic cultures are neither original pure or new impure. Georgiou suggests that post-modern world can be described by hybridized identity and culture. The concept of diaspora becomes the best way of understanding the present day world in which the concept of ethnicity is rapidly fading. Georgiou argues that diaspora is not a panacea and it should not be taken
as the only useful concept for understanding cultural hybridity. Its value lies in the fact that it adds to the concepts of migration and ethnicity. It emphasizes that communities can extend beyond nation boundaries.

Diaspora as a special form:

Martin Baumann indicates three different referential points related to Diaspora (a) the process of becoming scattered

(b) the community living in foreign parts and

(c) geographic space in which they live.

These traits are related to diaspora as a social form. In the context of social relationships, diasporas can be seen as those created as a result of voluntary or forced migration from one place (home) to at least two other countries. They must be maintaining collective identity often through ethnic myth of common origin and historical experience. They institutionalize networks of exchange and communication that transcend territorial states and create new communal organizations. These groups maintain variety of explicit and implicit ties with their homelands and develop solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement. They are unable or unwilling to be fully accepted by ‘host society’ and therefore they experience a sense of alienation or exclusion or superiority or other kind of difference.

Diasporic people are often confronted with divided loyalties to homeland and host countries. The collective groups of Diasporas often act as powerful pressure groups in the domestic politics of the host countries as well as in the international political arena. The homeland political orientations of South Asian religious groups are quite strong and deterritorialization is often at the core of a variety of global fundamentalism. Appadurai has cited
the example of the movement for the establishment of Khalistan as ‘an invented homeland of the deterritorialized Sikh population of England, Canada and United States. Right-wing religious organizations in the homeland are known to have received much support from overseas populations.

The economic strategies of transnational groups represent an important new source and force in international finance and commerce. The economic achievements of certain diasporic groups are seen to ressent from the mutual pooling of resources, transfer of credit, investment of capital and so one. The Government of India enacted measure to attract intellectual and financial resources of non-Resident Indians. Some state governments like Gujarat, West Bengal, and Maharashtra have tried to woo NRIs through incentives and special concessions. Gujarati Hindus support religious organizations financially through endowments and funds. Thus political and economic links support the idea of ‘triadic relationships-homeland, place of settlement and everywhere in Diaspora among South Asian religious.

**Diaspora as mode of cultural production:**

Diaspora is also described as involving the production and reproduction of social and cultural phenomena. The constant flow of goods and activities are involved in relationships among people. These social relations take on meaning within the flow and fabric of daily life. With reference to questions of globalization, and interest in diaspora has been equated with the anti-essentialist, constructivist approach to ethnicity. The words like ‘syncretic’, ‘creolized’ ‘crossover’ ‘hybrid’ and ‘alternative’ are used for these production and reproduction of forms. Stuart Hall offers important insights regarding Diaspora, ethnicity and identity. He says,

“Diaspora does not refer as to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other peoples into the sear. This is the old, the imperializing, and the hegemonizing form of ethnicity. The Diaspora
experience as I intend it here is defined not by essence or purity. But by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves and through transformation and difference.”

Global media and communications play a very vital role in the flow of cultural phenomena and the transformation of diasporic identity. Gayatri Spivak also highlights ‘the discourse of cultural specificity and difference, packaged for transnational consumption through global technologies, particularly through the medium of ‘microelectronic’ transnationalism represented by electronic bulletin boards and Internet.

The examination of media and communications in the South Asian religious diaspora is comparatively new. In this field, Maria Gillespie has produced a most valuable ethnographic study of the role of transnational television and film in the formation and transformation of identity among young Punjabi Londoners. The connections and relations are strengthened by modern communication systems which have augmented a sense of diasporic awareness among the Punjabi families in South hall. These connections may be as symbolic links between viewers of the same blockbuster Bombay movies and home videos of weddings. While watching episodes of the mythological and religious TV serials, Hindus in Britain and the USA may light incense and perform devout salutation when a deity appears on the TV screen. In the same manner, casual surf of the internet reveals hundreds of home pages and hyper text links to sites designated to the world wide maintenance and propagation of South Asian religious.

**Post-modernity and Diaspora:**

Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) writes,

“Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the ‘present’ for which there seems to be no proper name
other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix ‘post’ post-modernism, post-colonialism, post-feminism…”

Bhabha suggests that the concepts of binary oppositions like black/white, self/other, majority/minority, present/past/future etc are no more sufficient enough to describe our age. The post-modern era is what he calls ‘beyond.’ This is the reality of the multicultural post modern society whose identity, culture and history are mixed up. He seems to suggest that the post-modern artists should show the displaced unstable existence of our times beyond the temporal limits of past, present and future and polarities like black/white, majority/minority and so on. The terms post-modernity, post-coloniality, post-feminism do not suggest ‘after’ or ‘anti’ but they insistently gesture to the beyond. They suggest going beyond time, polarities and categorizations of the modern and colonial…in between.

The wider significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that “the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presenting” just like “the beyond”. Bhabha argues that there is no homogeneous nation or organic ethnic community for there are always minorities ignored. He argues that all imagined communities are hybridized and multicultural.

Bhabha in *The Location of culture* uses a new term ‘Dissemi Nation’ with ‘N’ Capitalized to indicate that it is not merely an individual immigrant that gets dispersed or dislocated but the socio-historical construct ‘Nation’ too. In the chapter ‘Dissemi Nation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation’ in ‘The Location of Culture’, he describes location as the concept of identity not limited by geographical limits but something that is constituted regardless of the specific location.

Bhabha questions the idea of nation and nationalism exposing its instability. He says that nation is only a historical construction and what existed or exists is only nation less. According to him, the immigrants, the minorities and the diasporic gather in the cities to change the history; of the
nation. Bhabha describes the situation of the Diasporic as a time of gathering which includes the gatherings of exiles, émigrés and refuges; gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering in the half light of foreign tongues or in the uncanny fluency of another’s language. The conception of the nation as a cultural identity which historicism advocates is refutes by the situation of the migrant. The immigrant often falls into hybridity and becomes stranger of his own country language and identity. Bhabha, thus, debunks historicist concept of the nation and focuses on the temporality of the location of culture. In short, dissemiNation is a concept that emphasizes the temporality of culture as opposed to its historical originality and pri-mordiality. It describes the condition of the immigrants who are ripped off from their motherland and not fitting in the foreign cultures of the host countries. For Bhabha, the Diasporas are 'unhomed'.

**Displacement:**

Displacement is a concept that refers to the crisis of identity. The crisis of identity can result from migration, enslavement, voluntary migration for better life. It may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious or unconscious oppression of the indigenous people and culture by a superior racial or cultural model. The displacement creates ‘alienation of vision and the crisis in self image in the displaced. It often leads to a stubborn assertion of ‘the myths of identity’ in the literature of the displaced. It can also lead to linguistic alienation resulting from the drowning of one’s culture under the domination of the other culture. This has led in Africa to ‘the alienation of the state from the actual society.’ This is the reason why immigrants form their own Diaspora communities in the host nation. The geographic and climatic conditions of the host country also create a sense of otherness in the migrants.

Exile is one manifestation of the ubiquitous concern for place and displacement in societies home and abroad. It is a sense of loss and
displacement from a traditional homeland. It can occur in homeland due to modernization which can cut off a person from his traditional language, way of life, religion, tribal practices and so on. It occurs inevitably in a foreign land where everything is at odds with one’s tradition, culture and language. In such cases, exile brings about homelessness, displacement and nostalgia on its subjects. Exile involves the sense of punishment one has to undergo that is, to be away from one’s home and to explicitly refused permission to return home. It is common to distinguish between internal exile, i.e. forced resettlement within the country of residence and external exile, deportation from one’s homeland. Self-exile is often practiced as a form of protest or to avoid persecution.

The Uruguayan writer Vinar (1990) presents his own experience of living in exile and his choice of repatriation. He suggests the importance of memory and personal biography in the choices that people make. The multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through the experience of living in, remembering and imagining them go beyond the mere idea of place of birth. Drawing on psychoanalysis, he explains the attachment or sense of belonging to a nation, using Freud's concept of 'tracing' (or memory sketch), in which memory of body and senses comes first, followed by memories of cultural specificity such as history, ideals, music, landscape and national symbols. Vinar concludes that belonging to a nationality, which includes a linguistic community, history and culture is inherent in today’s human condition.

**Hybridity:**

Post-modern theories no longer describe to pure ancestry. Hybridity as a reality and theme in post-modern literature was seen as a threat to identity and ancestry. In the post modern world, cultural encounters are taking place on equal terms as a mutual acceptance of differences. Recent approaches have acknowledged and accepted the strength of hybridized and syncretic view of the world.
Acculturation can be defined as a change resulting from direct contact between two cultures or cultural groups. There are four strategies of acculturation; the first is ‘assimilation’ which can be defined as “the relinquishing of one’s own ethnic identity and adopting that of the dominant society.” According to Al-Issa, the American melting pot concept refers to ‘assimilation’. The second strategy is ‘integration’ i.e. incorporation of part of the other culture while maintaining one’s own cultural identity. 17

The third strategy is ‘separation’, when the ethnic group withdraws from the larger society. Segregation is the example of separation. ‘Marginalization’ is that in which the group or individual loses contact with its own culture as well as the culture of the majority and is usually characterized by alienation and loss of identity. The experience of acculturation involves stress anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation.

Immigrants often suffer from discrimination and prejudices under host society. They become targets of prejudice and discrimination on account of various psychological factors that affect them and the host society. These include group favoritism towards one’s group; competition for positive social identity; social influences like those of mass media, schools, parents, peer groups etc; social structural differences (e.g. class differences); displaced hostility or projection of frustration from a powerful body to the powerless minority; authoritarian personality; differences in socio-cultural norms etc.

According to Allport (1954), there are two types of psychological effect of discrimination or victimization-

1. Blaming oneself (withdrawal, self-hate, aggression against one’s own group)

2. Blaming others (fighting back, suspicion, increased group pride etc.)

Pettigrew (1964) has made slightly different categorization of response to discrimination and victimization. They are of three types:

- Moving towards the oppressor by seeking acceptance through integration.
• Moving against the oppressor by fighting back.

• Moving away from the oppressor through withdrawal, flight or avoidance.

The domination of the Third World by the Westerners made them feel that their knowledge of science and Christianity put them above others. This resulted in stigmatization of the non-Western. In spite of modern development in human right laws, the world has failed to eliminate discrimination and racial prejudices. When prejudice continues to exist in more subtle and indirect form instead of overtly expressed against minorities, it is referred to as aversive racism. Aversive racism is rather far difficult to deal with and combat. This new kind of racism tends to hide behind the legal system and it is often rationalized by some Western democratic or Christian principles. If attention is not paid to the factors associated with prejudice, discrimination and aversive racism, social and racial harmony among the ethnic groups in Western multicultural society would never take place.

In the USA, immigrants are generally not favoured by native whites and African Americans because their immigration is believed to have negative effects on their lives. Media also play negative role in aggravating prejudices against minorities by giving biased coverage about the minority groups. One of the media through which negative impression about the minorities can be reduced is literature. Novels, poems, dramas, short stories and films by and about the immigrant minority groups can help counteract the perception of all minorities as others, making them respected as humans. It can also help the minorities to gain confidence and shake off their inferiority complexes. Diaspora literature is the literature of the migrants expressing their experiences and sense of displacement and loss of social constructs like nation, ethnicity, race, culture, language etc. It also expresses their identity crisis, sense of alienation, nostalgia, loss and emptiness. The diasporans lose the unique bond those members of the same race, nation and ethnic group share. They experience social isolation, culture shock and stress. Therefore, in diasporic literature, we come across the themes of
emptiness, frustration, disillusionment, home-sickness and racism and discrimination.

**History of the Diaspora (origin and development):**

The development of diaspora through the various stages of its history substantiates the ripening of the diaspora into the very condition of culture. The history of diaspora can be broadly divided into three phases leading to the postmodernist diaspora, namely: ancient diaspora, medieval diaspora and the modern diaspora. The first mention of created as a result of exile is found in Septuagint in the Hebrew Bible. Its use began to develop from its original sense when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek. The first recorded usage of the word ‘Diaspora’ in English language was used in 1876 for the refugees of the Irish famine. The term became widely assimilated in English by the mid 1950s with long –term expatriates being referred as a diaspora. In all cases, the term diaspora carries a sense of displacement and the population so described finds itself separated from its homeland for whatever reason.

European history contains numerous Diaspora-like events. In ancient times in 6th century B.C. the trading and colonizing activities of the Greek tribes from the Balkans and Asia Minor spread Greek culture, religion and language around the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins. They established Greek city states I Sicily, Southern Italy, northern Libya, eastern Spain, the South of France and the Black Sea coasts. Greeks founded more than 400 colonies. Alexander the Great’s conquest of the Archaemenid Empire marked the beginning of the Hellenistic period which was characterized by the Greek colonization in Asia and Africa.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus reached America after which European exploration and colonization rapidly expanded. In the 6th century, around 2, 40,000 Europeans entered American ports. Immigration continued to North and South America. In 19th century alone over 50 million people left Europe for America.
In 19th century 45% to 85% of the population of Ireland immigrated to countries like Britain, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand because of ‘Great Hunger’ of the Irish Famine. It is estimated that the size of the population that immigrated to various countries from Ireland was around 80 to 100 million. Another example of pre-modern Diaspora is African Diaspora which began at the beginning of the 16th century. During the Atlantic Salve Trade, around 9.4 to 12 million people from West, West-central and South-East Africa were taken to the Western hemisphere as slaves. This population and their descendants were major influences on the culture of English, French, Portuguese and Spanish New World Colonies.

Asian Diaspora constitutes one of the largest among the Diasporas. Chinese immigration first occurred thousands of years ago. The mass emigration that took place from the 19th century to 1949 was caused by wars and starvation in China. Most immigrants that migrated from China were poor, less educated peasants and coolies. They immigrated to developing countries such as the USA, Australia, South Africa Southeast Asia, Malaya and other places. The largest Asian Diaspora outside of Southeast Asia is that of the Indian Diaspora. The overseas Indian community, estimated over 25 million is spread across many parts of the world almost in every continent. It constitutes a diverse, heterogeneous and eclectic global community representing different languages, religions, cultures etc. The common thread that binds them together is the idea of India and its intrinsic values.

20th century witnessed huge population movements often by government actions. For example, Stalin shipped millions of people to Eastern Russia, central Asia and Siberia both as punishment and to stimulate development of the frontiers regions. Other Diasporas were created as a consequence of political decisions such as the end of colonialisms. During the World War Second, Nazi Germany departed and killed millions of Jews. Some Jews fled to Western Europe and America
before borders were closed. Later other Eastern Europe refuges moved West, away from Soviet annexation and the Iron curtain regimes after the Second World War. The Soviet Union and Communist controlled Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia expelled thousands of ethnic Germans. Most of them moved to the West including Western Europe and many of them sought refuge in the United States.

After World War Second, Israel was created and there was a series of uprisings against colonialist rule. The Middle East nations became hostile to historic Jewish populations that emigrated and resettled in Israel. During the war to establish Israel in 1948, the Palestinian Diaspora were displaced and emigrated from their former territory. Arab-Israeli war in 1967 added to the number of Palestinian Diaspora that continued to live in refugee camps maintained by Middle Eastern nations. In 1947 partition resulted in the migration of millions of people between India and Pakistan. Millions were murdered in the ethnic violence of the period. It is estimated that around 10 million people became the victim of bloodshed ad communal violence. India and Pakistan became free in 1947 and thousands of former subjects of the British Raj went to UK from the Indian subcontinent.

During the cold-war era huge populations of refugees migrated from then developing countries. US-USSR cold war created huge number of global Diasporas. In South East Asia, many Vietnamese people migrated to France and later to the US, Australia and Canada after the cold war related Vietnam War. The Afghan Diaspora resulted in 1979 Iranian Revolution following the fall of the Shah. Unrest in Iraq pushed Assyrians into exile. Uganda in Africa expelled 80,000 South Asians in 1974 and seized their businesses and properties. Hundreds of thousands of people fled from the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 into neighboring countries. Thousands of refugees in Zimbabwe moved to South Africa. The long war in Congo also created millions of refuges. Millions of Iraqis fled conflict in their nation since 2003, the beginning of the US occupation Iraq.

**Migration Diasporas:**
Some scholars argue that people migrate to other countries for economic reasons and form an effective Diaspora. In the USA, there are such migrants as Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban-Americans and so on. Elsewhere, Turkish have migrated to Germany, South Asians in the Persian Gulf, Filipinos worldwide and Chinese workers in Japan. The International Organization for Migration said that there are 200 million migrants around the world today. Europe hosted the largest number of immigrants with 70.6 million people in 2005. North America with over 45.1 million immigrants is second followed by Asia which nearly hosts 25.3 million. Most of today’s migrant workers come from Asia.

During the 19th century, abolition of slavery in the European countries of the Western hemisphere created a need for a new source of labour. In areas where land was scarce such as Caribbean Islands, newly freed slaves were forced back to work on plantations. In the areas where land was plentiful, such as Guyana, Surinam and Trinidad, former slaves took up independent farming. Most labourers came from North Central and North-Eastern India. Sizable minority also came from Tamil and Telugu speaking regions of the South. Some Tamils migrated to Srilanka to work on tea plantations. South Asians went to Malaya, then a British colony. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Indians migrated to Myanmar to work on the plantations or to perform menial jobs. In general, South Asians who migrated to British East Africa were neither indentured nor contract labourers. They came initially to build railways and stayed as low ranking civil servants, Shop-keepers and professionals. Many of these immigrants came from Gujarat, Punjab and Goa.

In the 20th century while some South Asians continued to immigrate to communities that had been established in the 19th century Diaspora, other struck out for new destinations, the U.S., Canada, the UK and European countries and later Australia, and the Middle East, Immigration to the US came in two waves, the first from 1907 to 1924 and the second much
large wave, starting in 1965 continuing to the present day. The first wave consisted mostly of Sikhs from Punjab and Muslims. In 1965 with the immigration and Nationality Reform Act marked the beginning of the second wave of immigration and by 1990 nearly one million South Asians had immigrated to the US. A large percentage of South Asians in the second wave were professionals. At present, the currently the largest concentration of immigrants and Americans of South Asian descent is in California and New York.

South Asian immigration to Canada began at the start of the 20th century. In Canada, the most of immigrants are from the Punjab. By 1908, these were around 5000 south Asians. Due to strict regulations related to immigration, between 1909 and 1943, only 878 Asian were allowed to enter Canada. After World War Second, restrictions were gradually loosened and immigration laws were liberalized. After 1962, there was a significant influx of Sikhs from Punjab, Hindus from Gujarat, Mumbai and Delhi, Muslims from Pakistan and Bangladesh, Christians form Kerala, Parsis from Mumbai and Buddhists from Srilanka. By 1990’s, South Asians in Canada became quite prosperous and well-educated minority.

Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis began to come to UK as factory workers in the 1950s and 1960s. They faced hostile attitude of the working class Britons and tended to concentrate in urban ghetto neighborhoods. By mid-1980’s South Asian composed more than half the non-white population in the UK. Some South Asians also settled in Australia and other European countries.

Indians Diaspora is the third largest Diaspora, next only to the British and the Chinese in that order. Indians or the people of Indian origin are found in all continents. In Mauritius, the people of Indian origin are the single largest community (60.69%), in Guyana 51.93, in Fiji 41.31, Trinidad and Tobago 38.63, Surinam 36.04%, UAE 32%, Qatar 24%, Bahrain 20%, Oman 15%, Kuwait 13%, Malaysia 7.26%, Saudi Arabia 7%, Srilanka 6.28%, Singapore 5.4% and Myanmar 5.26%.
The Indian diaspora today constitutes an important and in some respects unique force in world culture. The origins of the modern Indian diaspora lie mainly in the subjugation of India by the British and its incorporation into the British Empire. Indians were taken over as indentured labour to far-flung parts of the empires in the 19th century like Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, Surinam, Malaysia, South Africa, Srilanka etc. Over two million Indian men fought on behalf of the British Empire in various wars, including the Boer war and the two World Wars. Some remained behind to claim the land on which they had fought. Gujarati traders in large number left for East Africa in the early part of the 20th century. Finally, in Post-Second World War period, the dispersal of Indian labour and professionals has been a world-wide phenomenon. In spite of diversity, the Indian community has certain common traits. However unlike Indian communities across the world might be, they all maintain some sort of tenuous link with the motherland. Certain customs and traditions bind Indians together to some extent. Religious festivals, rituals, arranged marriages, food and Hindi movies and music are some of the major binding forces. The newspapers published by Indians carry a section of matrimonial advertisements. These advertisements help Indians to locate one another. The religious practices of the Hindus, Shikhs and Muslims in the US and other countries show that they are often more desperately committed to their religious practices and faiths. They even show the signs of susceptibility to a resurgent and militant Hinduism, militant Shikhism, and militant Islam and so on.

Indian diaspora constitutes a historical and contemporary presence of people of Indian subcontinent in other parts of the world. The formation of Indian diaspora is one of the most significant demographic dislocations of modern times. They can be classified as the ‘sugar’ and the ‘masala’ diaspora. Sudesh Mishra classifies Diasporas in the following words:

“There is a distinction to be made between the old and the new diasporas. The distinction is between, on the one hand, the semi voluntary flight of the indentured peasants to non-metropolitan plantation colonies such as Fiji,
Trinidad, Mauritius, Guyana, roughly between the years 1830 and 1917; and on the other hand the late capital or post modern dispersal of new migrants of all classes to thriving metropolitan centers such as Australia, the United States, Canada and Britain.”

Other critics call these diasporas ‘Forced Diasporas’ and ‘Voluntary Diaspora’. Vinay Lal calls it ‘diaspora of labour’ and ‘diaspora of longing’. In majority of the older diasporic writers, there is a sense of an unease generated by dislocation and deracination. V.S.Naipaul, originally a third generation of immigrants who moved to Trinidad, always expressed a sense of unease, the question of inheritance and homelessness. The idea of home as an ambivalent location shows that identities are fixed but keep on changing in case of diasporas quite often. New diasporas have relocated themselves in such a way that borders and boundaries have been confounded. In case of Indian diaspora writers, there are three visible divisions. The first category is that of a writer like Bharti Mukherjee who detests the idea of being called immigrant writer. She likes to be known as ‘mainstream American writer’. She has moved from aloofness of expatriation to the exuberance of immigration.

Sudesh Mishra rightly remarks that the concept of home becomes vital in diasporic writing. There are polarities of attraction and repulsion experienced by the characters towards and from their homeland in the writings of the diaspora. Sudesh Mishra says, “The movement from Naipaul to Meera Syal suggests an important rethinking of the concept of ‘home’ within the diaspora, especially as this occurs against the backdrop of the global shift from centering or centripetal logic or monopoly capitalism to the decentering or centrifugal logic of transnational capitalism. Whereas for sugar diaspora, ‘home’ signifies an end to itinerant wandering, in putting down the roots, ‘home’ for the masala diaspora is linked to the strategic espousal of rootlessness, to the constant mantling and dismantling of the self in makeshift landscapes.”
Different labels have been attributed to Indian diasporic writing such as ‘Trishanku’ image from the mythology of India suggesting dangling, uncertain identity neither here nor there. It can also be called Desh/Pardesh Syndrome. Rushdie extends his perception of migrant writers as endowed with a double/plural, insider/outsider perspective. The alienated consciousness of the writer using the English language is an important factor. The relationship between East and West often used for different polarities of ways of life has also been explored in diasporic writings. Diasporic Indian writers are often criticized on the ground that they write for the Western readers or with an eye towards winning a Booker or a Common Wealth writer’s award.

History and magic realism have been the major preoccupation of the recent Indian writers writing in English, particularly some diasporic Indian writers. They are often overburdened with history and suffer from excessive weight of historical references. Amitav Ghosh explores, for example, the relationship between human destiny and historical events. In the works of diasporic writers, there is recurrent theme of comparison between ‘home’ culture and the culture of the country where the writer is settled. Vinay Dharwadkar in his essay The Historical Formation of Indian English Literature (2003) mentions how migrant and itinerant writers have energized Indian writing in English during different historical phases starting from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to present day writers. He states that the diaspora has perceptibly modified the four primary zones of contact that provide a social framework for Indian English literary culture since the late 18th century. Firstly in its foreign setting, Indian professionals come into contact with people from different races and nations. They now form multicultural and multilingual international white collar work force. It has also attracted a large number of educated Indian women into a various professions especially in the USA. It has certainly contributed to the growth of Indian women’s literary intellectual output. Now there are well-educated and professionally successful Indians scattered around the globe. Though fragmented, they are an interlinked community that contributes simply to the country they belong
to and also the world in general. They are also providing an extensive
international readership for contemporary Indian English wiring.

Secondly, the zone of marriage and family has undergone a radical
change. It has resulted into interracial, intercultural social sexual relations.
Interracial marriages among diaspora mediate the works of the diasporic
writers, for example, thematization of homosexuality in Agha Shahid Ali’s
poetry, of bisexuality in Vikram Sheth’s poetry and fiction, and of lesbianism
in Suniti Namjoshi’s poetry and prose. Thirdly, many Indian-English writers in
diaspora come from non-Christian background. They constitute a wide
spectrum of religious background and in spite of secular in content and
perspective, the diversity of the religious background give them different
ethnic, regional and cultural identity. This diversity also lends their writings
great strength and variety. There are several Hindu, Muslim, Christian and
Parsi writers that represent Indian diaspora.

Fourthly, the zone that has expanded in the diaspora recently is that
of intercultural friendship and social relations. The conception of Indianness
and East-West encounter has undergone a great change. Indian immigrants
in different parts of the world differ from each other in their attitudes towards
India, Indian religion and culture and the concept of Indianness that is
directly related to psycho-social effects of dislocation and displacement.

Diaspora literature, thus involves an idea of a homeland, the
narratives of harsh journeys undertaken voluntarily or by compulsion
economic, political or social. Diaspora continues to relate, personally or
vicariously to their homeland in one or the other way. Their ethno-communal
consciousness and solidarity are thus defined by the existence of such a
relationship. There are certain common elements in all forms of Diaspora viz.
the sense of yearning for their homeland, a curious attachment to the
traditions and culture of their country and ethic group, religion and language.
These elements give birth to the literature of the Diaspora which is primarily
concerned with individual’s or community’s attachment to homeland. Return
to homeland is metaphorical and the yearning for homeland is often counted
by the desire to belong to the new home. Therefore the migrant remains what Rushdie calls ‘a peripheral man’, a creature living on the edge.

According to Amitav Ghosh, “the Indian diaspora is one of the most important demographic dislocations of Modern times.” The first diaspora consisted of disprivileged and subaltern classes and return to homeland almost impossibility. Physical distance thus became psychological alienation and the homeland becomes the sacred icon in the diasporic imagination of the creative writers. The second diaspora was the result of man’s choice and inclination towards material gains, professional success and business interests. It represented access to advanced technology, communication and material comforts available with luxurious lifestyle. The diasporic writers engage in cultural transmission of a map of reality for multiple readerships. They are equipped with bandies of memories and an amalgam of global and national strands that embody real and imagined experiences. Diasporic writings are to some extent about the business of finding new angles to enter reality. One of the most remarkable aspects of diasporic writing is that it forces, interrogates and challenges the authoritative voice of history. Most of the fiction of the South Asia is replete with the diasporic consciousness which is nothing but the witness of all the happenings of social realities, longings and feelings of belonging. Most of these works are written in the background of post-colonial times which created new challenges and new set of questions regarding identity and belongingness.

During the last two decades, the term ‘diaspora’ has been used in a wide range of humanistic disciplines. In 1991, Toloyan launched a journal of transnational studies. There have been several attempts at renaming diaspora with the terms like exile groups, overseas communities, ethnic and racial minorities and so on. Historically, diaspora refers to Jewish and Christian histories of religions. Jews, Scholars and studies of Judaism used the term to denote Jews who lived outside the ‘Promised Land’. Diaspora refers to the land across which one is dispersed, the activity of dispersion and the people who are dispersed. The term diaspora thus has
geographical-sociological and historical meanings. Later, the term diaspora was applied to non-Jewish non-Christian people and it was applied to the exile situation of Africans as African diaspora. African diaspora refers to global dispersion of Africans whether voluntary or forced, throughout history, the emergence of cultural identity based on origin and social condition. The term then was applied to social sciences also. John Armstrong in 1976 investigated socio-economic conditions of the migrant groups. He contrasted proletarian diasporas of unskilled workers with mobilized diasporas of skilled, trained and qualified workers and professionals. Gabriel Sheffer and some other scholars took up the term for political science. In his classic work *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (1986) he emphasized the characteristic of a Diaspora a trans-state networks. In 1991, inaugural issue of the journal ‘Diaspora’, William Safran suggested six key characteristics discussed in this chapter earlier. Robert Hettlage outlined a sociological theory of diaspora while Gerard Chaliand and Jean Pierre Rageau sketched out the global dispersion of eleven national-ethnic peoples. Cohen emphasized the creative and innovative aspects of diasporic situations. He observed that the term diaspora in modern context is simply the outcome of continental and international migration.21

Diasporic subjectivity calls attention to the conditions of its formation. Contrary to studies of diasporas as objects of analysis where race or religion might be considered a defining feature, it can be argued that no one is born diasporic. Rather, one becomes diasporic through a complex process of memory and emergence. Thus, to be black, for example, does not, automatically translate into a state of being within the black diaspora. Blackness is not inherently diasporic. Black diaspora subjectivity emerges in what it means to be black and live through the displacements of slavery and to carry into the future the memory of the losses compelled by the legacy of slavery, to be torn by the ambivalences of mourning losses that are both your own and yet not quite your own. Black diasporic subjectivity emerges in relation to other diasporic communities and through the depths of histories that will not rest because they have had no peace. Diasporic subjectivity
requires both a lateral engagement across multiple diasporic communities and identities and vertically through long histories of dislocation.

In lateral terms, diasporas do not emerge in isolation, but are defined through difference. In contemporary debates, diasporas tend to be discussed in their singularities. Thus, there are extended discussions of the black diaspora, or the Chinese diaspora, or the Indian diaspora. When critics take up explorations of more than one diasporic community, these multiple diasporas tend to be discussed as examples of various types of diasporas. There is relatively little discussion of diasporas as they emerge in relation to one another. And yet, we know from Stuart Hall that diasporic identities emerge through difference and not as singular and self-evident manifestations of diasporic experience. The tendency toward thinking through diasporas in isolation results in a definitional morass. Rather than discussions of how one diasporic community emerges subjectively in relation to another, we are left with objective declarations of diasporas as representative types and debates about true versus false diasporas. What is needed is a finer understanding of diasporas constituted through difference. This means not only adequately understanding how diasporas are internally complicated and divided in this complexity, but also how diaspora as a term and critical force has emerged in relation to other emergent fields and disciplines. As Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin so evocatively note, “if a lost Jerusalem imagined through a lost Cordoba imagined through a lost Suriname is diaspora to the third power, so is a stolen Africa sung as a lost Zion in Jamaican rhythms on the sidewalks of the Eastern Parkway”. These losses are not only shared across geographies and communities, but are also constitutive of each other. For a lost Zion sung in Jamaican rhythms can only be imagined within the knowledge of a lost Jerusalem and a stolen Africa. These are not parallel losses, but losses which inform each other, losses whose songs of remembrance call forth one loss even as they commemorate another. They share continuities even as they persist in their differences. Modern diasporic studies have shifted the emphasis from religion and religious identification to ethnicity and ethnic
adherence. In recent years, a rather free, arbitrary and often plainly metaphorical use of the term ‘diaspora’ has emerged decomposing the early Greek philosophical meaning that encompassed certain situations and relations. Diaspora is positioned by scholars as a check to the dominant discourse of rootedness and nation formation. It opposes essence, purity and sedentary and favours hybridism and mobility as strategic forms of resistance.

Diasporic literature is quite varied. Today, multicultural literature is considered as major source of insight into the rich cultural dynamics of modern society. In the countries like the USA and UK, it is generally acknowledged that some of the finest contemporary literature produced there is multicultural.

In the USA, there are writers from Arab American, Asian Americans, Africans, Hispanic, Native American ethnic groups. They all constitute a large chunk of diaspora with distinct sensibilities. These diasporic groups differ from each other and they also differ within themselves in their attitude towards the host country. One of the early Arab immigrants’ pets comprised of writers from Lebanon and Syria which included Ameen Rihani, Khalil Gibran, Mikhail Naimy and Elia Abu Madi. Gibran is quite familiar to the US readers and readers elsewhere, Ameen Rihani is considered ‘the father of Arab American Literature’. Like Walt Whitman, he sang of himself and America. *The Book of Khalid* (1911) written in verse deals with immigrant experience. Gibran’s works are profoundly philosophical. *The Prophet* has put him alongside the greatest of poets and philosophers. He freed Arab American writers of their’ self consciousness addressing to pies other than immigrant experience. Mikhail Naimy was once nominated for the Noble Prize in literature. His famous work *The Book of Mirdad* shows his search for spiritual solace and guidance from the eastern philosophy. Arab American writings are not limited to issues of culture and identity, homeland and heritage. Naomi Shihab Nye, a Palestinian American, is recognized as an outstanding poet. Prose writer and anthologist. Other notable Arab American
writers are Samuel Hazo, a poet of Lebanese and Syrian heritage, Diana Abu Jaber who had moved to New York with her parents at the age of seven and Mona Simpson of Syrian-American parentage. Though these writers are immigrant writers, they rarely show the sense of dislocation or displacement in their works.

African diaspora literature is quite rich from the point of view of the feeling of dislocation, displacement, exile and longing for roots. Awoonor celebrates the recovery of the repressed history of the black Africans. Home as physical construct may have been destroyed but it survives as imagined construct in the memory. In Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka’s *The Interpreters*, African Joe Golder has been presented as a laughable homosexual. He derides Africans for their nationalism and their black ancestry. Ama Ata Aidoo presents the failure of return of the African American woman to Africa where she faces rejection. She thus challenges the myth of smooth return of African Americans to their homeland. Ghanaian novelist *Why Are We so Blest* allegorizes the exploitation of the Africans. However, South African novelist Bessie Head celebrates the possibility of reconnection between the traditional African woman and modern African American women. There are remarkable black American women and modern African American women. There are remarkable black American writers like Zora Neale Hurston, Tony Morrison, Terry McMillan, Octavia Butler, Walter Mosley, Rita Dove and so on. Rita Dove has been honored with a term as poet laureate of the USA in the early 1990’s. Her collection *On the Bus with Rosa Parks* (1999) is a wide ranging insightful venture into family relationships. She has written several powerful plays also. Marilyn Nelson focuses on interfamilial relationships and status of women in society. August Wilson is one of the most significant playwrights who has won two Pulitzer Prizes.

In women writers and poets like Alice Walker, Andra Lorde and Tony Morrison, we come across paralysis of consciousness that is born of Psychic and cultural death. Alice Walker writes in one of her poems:

“My struggle was always against
an inner darkness,
I carry within myself
the only known key to my death.”

Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Paule Marshall are some of the most powerful black voices that present the cultural and mental universe of the colonized. Ngugi says that values are the basis of identity of the people and colonialism tries to empty their brains of all form and content and destroys their identity former. Such people experience alienation from themselves and lose tough with themselves.

South Asian diaspora comprise of countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka. In the global market today, South Asian Waiting in English has received unprecedented attention. Salman Rushdie’s seminal novel *Midnight’s Children* and his subsequent works received wide acclaim. Michael Ondaatje, Aundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, V.S.Naipaul, Vikram Sheth have anchored a place for South Asian writing in English on the international literary scene.

The South Asian literature has certain common traits as many works call attention to the idea of Empire and interrogate the colonial history. The struggle for independence, the tragic saga of Partition of India and Pakistan, the mass migration of Hindu and Muslims on both sides of the newly framed borders, violence that followed it, have found expression in literature of India and Pakistan. The ethnic tensions in Srilanka, the long standing conflict between the Government of Srilanka and Tamil Tiger rebels has claimed more than 60,000 lives and displaced more than 1.5 million people. These sufferings have also found voice in Srilankan literature.

Much of the south Asian diasporic writings focus on the issue of identity, often juxtaposing the individual and collective, private and public, local and foreign. Religion and politics became focal point of discussion in many diasporic works. On the whole, these write takes border, secular
humanist view and yet nourish a kind of nostalgia for their past and traditions. In case of women writers, there is more emotive expression of feminist issues in sociopolitical construction of the nation. For many diasporic writers the act of writing implies their way of reclaiming their homeland. The immigrant’s story has proved to be a very fertile subject and the South Asian immigrant writers have attempted to record the predicament of displacement, celebrating and/or questioning the act of straddling two cultures and coping with new countries and their cultures.

The narratives of these diasporic writers are varied and realistic. The settings are also as varied as themes. Harl Kunzru’s novel *The Impressionist*, for instance, stretches from Rajasthan to Agra, Mumbai, London, Oxford and finally to a remote African landscape. Jhumpa Lahiri’s stories are set both in Indian and American locales. Rushdie’s *Shame* is despised in Pakistan but the narrator tells as that it is a factious place and not real Pakistan. These writers use English in distinct ways to authenticate place, character and experiences. There are immigrant writers who live in Canada, Germany, UK and USA. Majority of Indian English writers today live abroad such as Naipaul, Rushdie, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Jumpa Lahiri, Vikram Sheth, Rohinton Mistry, Uma Parmeshwaran, Bharati Mukherjee, Anjana Apachana and so on. Uma Parmeshwaran talks of two quite distinct waves of emigration, one that took place during colonial period and the other after independence. The first wave consists of indentured labourers, traders and educated people while the second wave that started after 1960’s can be called gold rush period. The decade after 1990’s can be designated as that of multiculturism. The Indian writing in Canada is largely preoccupied with complexities, contradictions and ambivalences of immigrants in geographically hostile country. Lakshmi Gill in her poem *Out of Canada* makes the speaker question where she would be buried. The speaker wishes to die not in Canada but at the foothills of the Himalayas. Thus, what seems longing for homeland is a critique of the host country.
Women writers have carved niche among diasporic writers. They belong to different countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and so on. The major diasporic women writers are Meena Alexander, Moniza Alvi, Anjana Apachana, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Sujata Bhatt, Yasine Goonratne, Sunanda Mongia, Uma Parmeswaran, Kamala Markandaya, Hima Raza, Suniti Namjoshi, Meera Syal, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sunetra Gupta, Jean Arasanayagam etc.

Diasporic writers have explored various genres of literature fiction, memoirs, fictional narratives and poetry, fiction being the most noteworthy contribution. Naipaul’s novels and other fictional works deal with Third World problems and he seems to pose as a social historian and social critic. He often mixes fiction and autobiography in his works. His works are usually associated with the themes of rootlessness, disillusion, fantasy and dystopian vision. Vikram Sheth has experimented with various forms like poetry, novel in verse, a libretto travelogue, and a magnum opus *A Suitable Boy*. It is an expression of a reaffirmation of secularism and idealism. Sheth unlike other diasporic writers refuses to be labeled as immigrant Indian writer, commonwealth writer or any other kind of writer. He wants to be known simply as a writer. Bharati Mukherjee deals with experiences of migration and acculturation in the modern multicultural world but she avoids social, political and cultural criticism. Kiran Desai’s *Inheritance of Loss* explores international issues such as globalization, multi-culturism, economic inequality, fundamentalism and terrorist violence Chitra Banerjee’s *Queen of Dreams* deals with the theme of dislocation versus relocation, domicile versus diasporic consciousness, exile versus involvement.

Recently, there is an outburst of women diaspora a writers that include Aulta Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Bapsi Sidhva, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kiran Desai, Bharati Kirchner, Sujata Massey, Indira Ganesan and Shauna Singh Baldwin. Women face everyday problems of survival and continuance of life. They are the ones who have to quickly learn to adopt and
function in new surroundings. They exhibit extraordinary power of endurance, optimism and survival even under the most turbulent and arduous, testing conditions.

In comparison to the output of fiction, diasporic poetry lacks the richness and variety of fiction. However, there are some powerful voices like Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatt and others whose poetry shows the sign of their encounter with time, history, culture and their impact on poet’s self and identity. There is a kind of poetic tension that enhances the richness to their diasporic writings. Sujata Bhatt, for example, carries the seeds of home within her memory wherever she goes. She says in no ambiguous terms:

“But I have never life home,

I carried it away

With me- have in my darkness in myself.”

Sujata’s poetry is a unique blend of singularity and plurality, of local and global, wherein she seems to be cohabiting both ‘here’ and ‘there’. All diasporic writers relate to places and countries at different levels. There might be what Makarand Paranjpe suggests referring to Sri Aurobindo’s scheme of various level of relationship-physical, vital, intellectual, psychic and spiritual. Diasporic relationships of various writers/poets may be operating at one or the other levels or at several levels at the sometime. Paranjpe suggests rightly that India is not simply a geographical territory but an idea, not a mere desi but a darshna. From this point of view, all diasporic writers have one thing in common and that is mystical, indefinable relationship with India.
References:

1. Dictionary.com
10. Ibid. p. 4.


20. Ibid. 294.
