Chapter - II

Diaspora: A Post-Colonial Scenario

Etymologically, Diaspora is derived from the Greek term “diasperien” (dia – across and sperien – to sow or scatter seeds) which refers literally to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile. It also suggests, as Braziel points out, “a dislocation from the geographical location of origin and a relocation in one or more countries, states or territories” (1). The Oxford English Dictionary traces the etymology of the word ‘Diaspora’ back to its Greek root and to its appearance in the Old Testament. As such it has reference to God’s intentions for the people of Israel to be “dispersed” across the world. The OED entry in this case starts with Judaic history, mentioning only two types of dispersals: the Jews living dispersed among the Gentiles after the captivity and the Jewish Christians residing outside of Palestine. However, in the recent edition it refers to people living outside their traditional homeland. The term ‘Diaspora’, then, has religious significance and pervaded medieval rabbinical writings on the Jewish
Diaspora, to describe the plight of Jews living outside of Palestine.

The term 'Diaspora' itself originated to describe the Jewish community. The Jewish Diaspora has existed for at least 2,600 years and if certain local traditions are accurate, perhaps even longer. Moreover, for 1,500 years the Jewish people existed without an effective political centre in their national territory. It is exclusively a diaspora community. Many institutions of the Jewish community in Israel were themselves modelled after those of the diaspora and the Jews functioned as a diaspora community within their own land. The Jewish state came to an end in 70 A.D, when the Romans drove the Jews from their home where they had lived in for over a millennium. But the Jewish Diaspora had begun long before the Romans had even dreamed of Judaea.

When the Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 BC, the Hebrew inhabitants were scattered all over the Middle East, these early victims of the dispersion disappeared utterly from the pages of history. However, when Nebuchadnezzar deported the Judaeans in 597 and 588 BC, and allowed them to remain in a unified community in Babylon, another group of Judaeans fled to Egypt where they settled in the Nile delta.
From 597 BC onwards, there were three distinct groups of Hebrews; a group in Babylon and other parts of the Middle East, a group in Judaea, and another group in Egypt. Thus the year 597 is considered to be the beginning date of the Jewish Diaspora. Nevertheless, "the Jewish people not only preserved their integrity as an ethno religious community, but continued to retain their religion, identity and social customs", says, Boyarin (73).

Focusing on Jewish experience, the diaspora communities exercise a distinct form of cultural power in order to maintain themselves. Jewish culture strongly reasserts their place in contemporary discussion of Diaspora, where the cultural policies of post-colonialism have remarginalized the Jewish experience and, at the same time, it brings insights from studies of other diasporas to bear on the study of the Jews and suggests that diasporic cultural formations offer important clues towards an alternative means of relating culture to polity.

The early historical reference is the Black African Diaspora, beginning in the sixteenth century with the slave trade forcibly exporting the West Africans out of their native lands and dispersing them into the "New
It is estimated that in Brazil’s opinion as many as twelve million West Africans were sold into slavery and forcibly exiled to the "New World" during the almost four hundred year period of legalized slavery which began in 1502 and ended in the mid nineteenth century. (2)

During the four centuries after Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, some twelve million people left sub-Saharan Africa for the western hemisphere. They were not voluntary immigrants. They came aboard slave ships, packed almost literally like sardines. At least one tenth of them died before they reached the New World. Millions of others perished on the trek from the interior of Africa to the coast, or during the hard months of "Seasoning" in the western hemisphere. The slave trade brought a demographic disaster to Africa outweighed only by the deaths of even greater number of indigenous people in the "New world" from the epidemic diseases Europeans unwittingly carried with them.

Africans provided most of the labour in the mines and plantations of America that produced much of Europe’s
wealth from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The Africans and their descendants constitute the Black Diaspora whose history is recounted in the encyclopedic study of Ronald Segal. Islamic slave traders from North Africa also carried another twelve million Black Africans into slavery around the rim of the Mediterranean and Middle East.

The barbarity of the slave trade is attested by the slave traders themselves: According to Segal, a Dutch slave trader on the West African coast in the eighteenth century wrote:

The invalids and the maimed being thrown out... the remainder are numbered. In the meanwhile a burning iron, with the Arms or Name of the companies, lies in the fire, with which they are marked on the breast. .. I doubt not but this trade seems very barbarous to you but since it is followed by mere necessity it must go on; but we yet take all possible care that they are not burned too hard especially the women. (36)
The legacy for contemporary blacks of the African Diaspora is "scarcely less bleak than it has for the past five centuries. The vaunted racial mixture and tolerance of Brazil for example translate into stratified class system with most Blacks are in effectively segregated poverty and disproportionately victimized by notorious death squads that murder homeless black youths on the streets of Brazilian cities. A close look at the black population of Detroit in the United States offers a case study of North American Urban decay that has rotted the lives of the black underclass.

In Segal’s opinion it was in slavery that the diaspora was born, together with the longing and struggle for freedom… The diaspora, indeed, has still to free itself. And to do so, it has to accept its past not as a source of degradation but of dignity, to assume its proper identity, as one of victimization and suffering but also one of courage and resilience and creativity.

About ten million people of South Asian origin can be found living outside their ‘homeland’ – from the Caribbean to Fiji, from Canada to Newzealand. They are concentrated in North America, South East Asia, Europe, Eastern and Southern Africa, and now, as migrant workers, in West Asia. For more than two thousand years, people
from South Asia travelled and settled in South East Asia, Central Asia, and even China and Japan and the East African Coast. However, unlike many other peoples, the South Asians did not migrate permanently in substantial numbers to other parts of the world till the nineteenth century.

Largescale migration from the subcontinent began as early as 1830 with the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean. To replace the frequently-freed slaves with cheap labour in the sugar and cocoa plantations in other British, French and Dutch colonies, the British government set up the system of indentured labour to allow recruitment of workers to go abroad on five to ten year contracts.

British historian Hugh Tinker observes in his new-classic *A New System of Slavery* that for the South Asian emigration was not accepted as a natural process and that even under the most desperate circumstance, he always leaves his native land with an idea of returning to it. “Emigration was, feels Tinker, more a matter of ‘Push’ than ‘Pull’ for most South Asians who needed to escape intolerable living situations back home” (76).

The shock and alienation felt by the emigrants, most of whom would have left their birth places for the
first time, greatly deepened in the company of total strangers "whose speech according to Tinker was unintelligible, and whose physical characteristics appeared foreign, while their ways of eating and other habits would all seem wrong" (81). Working and living conditions were terrible, health care and housing extremely primitive, and wages very low and that remain unchanged for hundred years, about a third of the labourers returned home, and almost all of them came back penniless. Tinker’s research showed that in 1916, seventy six percentage brought back nothing while ten percentages of them bringing a very little amount. Worst of all, most of them returned with their health shattered.

The massive spurt in post-1950 South Asian emigration consisted of two very different types of South Asians. Most of these people who emigrated in the 1950s and 60s were unskilled workers who went to fill post–World War II labour shortages in the lowest-paid unskilled, menial occupations in the British cities.

In contrast, in the post-1970 period the majority of emigrants have been skilled professionals, technicians, engineers, doctors, academics who had settled in high paying jobs, mostly in North America. In addition, a
large number of temporary workers from South Asia also migrate to the oil producing countries of west Asia.

Indian Diaspora has its deep roots in the ancestral land and maintains extensive cultural links. It is an integral part of the Indian culture and civilizations. No longer is the Indian way of life and culture just confined to its geographical boundaries, rather it has its presence wherever Indians have emigrated along with their Socio-cultural baggage.

The formation of Indian Diaspora is characterized by four broad patterns of overseas migration in terms of history and political economy.

- Emigration that began in the 1830s to the British, French and Dutch Colonies.
- Emigration to the industrially developed countries during the post-World War II period
- Emigration to West Asia during 1970s and 1980s and
- Emigration of software engineers and other professionals since mid nineteen eighties to developed countries.

The first wave of Indian emigration comprised mostly indentured labour to European colonies to fill in the vacuum created by emancipation of the African
slaves in plantations. Indenture labour was a new concept of plantation work on contract for a period of three to five years. The system of indentured labour was an ingenious invention of the British to keep their plantation economy thriving on labour under captivity and Hugh Tinker has very rightly described it as the new name for slavery. Under the indentured system, some one and a half million persons migrated. However, most of those migrants and their descendants did not return home though the indentured system was discontinued in 1917.

The second wave of Indian emigration began during the middle of the twentieth century to the developed countries like Britain, United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Those who migrated during this phase hailed from urban middle class families and were well educated and professionally trained. They form the New Diaspora and maintain close ties with the places of their origin. This migration is also called 'migration of talent' or 'brain drain'.

The third wave of emigration of the Indians to the West Asian Countries is basically oriented to labour and servicing occupations on contract basis. There are more than two million Indians in West Asia. The year
1973 experienced the beginning of rapidly increasing demand for expatriate labour in oil exporting countries of the Gulf and North Africa such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Libya.

Migration of Software Engineers to the Western countries, United States of America in particular, occurred in a significant way during the last decade of the twentieth century. They are considered to be the cream of India, trained in its premier educational institutions such as IIT’s, IIM’s and highly recognized Universities.

India witnessed such massive movements of people to other parts of the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Demographically, overseas Indians form the third largest diaspora, next only to the British and the Chinese. Today there are over twenty million people of Indian Origin, including the Non-Resident Indians still retaining their Indian passports. Settled in about seventy countries people of Indian Origin constitute more than forty percent of the population of Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam. They are smaller minorities in Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America
and Canada. These overseas Indians have been frequent
visitors to their places of origin to maintain their
linkages or to seek their roots. People of Indian
Origin have continued to nurture close socio-cultural
relationship in the spheres of religion, language,
films, and music.

The process of globalization and compression of
time and space following the phenomenal advancement in
the technologies of transport and communication, has
given rise to closer interaction between members of a
community displaced across the world in different
countries. These developments have accelerated the
already existing networks between the new diaspora and
their kith and kin in the place of their origin.

During the last few years, there has been a sudden
augmentation in the role of importance of these overseas
communities. They have emerged as a dynamic factor,
shaping the relations between ‘host’ and ‘home’ countries.
Indo-Americans are among the fastest growing immigrant
groups in America. They are the third largest Asian
American ethnic group in the United States, after the
Chinese and the Filipinos.
Indian emigrants started coming to the United States more than a hundred years ago. They are over a million and a half strong, but this large number has grown from small beginning and experienced explosive growth in the last thirty five years. The first Indian immigrants entered the United States in 1870 as maritime workers. The next noticeable groups of Indians came to the west coast of the United States from Canada. These early twentieth century immigrants were largely agricultural workers. After the Second World War, there are more professionals particularly doctors, engineers, and entrepreneurs stepped into the United States as immigrants.

The Indian-American community in the United States has experienced a remarkable transformation from its modest beginning. Indo-Americans have attained a high degree of professionalism. They are most prevalent in the fields of science and technology. Over five thousand Indo-American faculty members are teaching at various universities across the nation. Indo-Americans have also become successful entrepreneurs and many of the hotels and motels in the United States are owned by Indo-Americans.
The second generation of Indo-Americans born in the United States has demonstrated a strong commitment to higher education. Young Indo-Americans in the United States are interested in bettering themselves and securing a comfortable position for themselves in the community. Moreover, this new generation of Indo-Americans is pursuing more diverse professional interests.

While most of the Indo-Americans have traditionally felt most comfortable in science and technology, these young people are now more aggressively pursuing careers in the social sciences. As Indo-Americans branch out into different occupational fields, this diversity will only enhance the strength of the community.

In addition to this, Indian American Community comprises a formidable voting bloc in the United States. Certainly, these numbers have increased a great deal in the past six years, as more Indo-Americans have chosen to undergo the naturalization process, and their voting power is growing. More voting power has also led the Indo-Americans to become increasingly involved in the political system of the United States.

Diaspora seeks to represent the live experiences of people whose lives have unfolded in the myriad
diasporic communities across the globe. Diasporic subjects are marked by hybridity, heterogeneity, culture, language, ethnicity, race, class, gender and sexuality. While diasporic study has emerged as an important new field of study, it enters into a semantic field with other terms and terrain, such as those of exile, migrant, immigrant and globalization.

The term “Diaspora”, coming from “dispersion”, evokes a sense of multiple journeys. Such journeys are not just casual travels undertaken for pleasure or in leisure, but journeys which have the potential for becoming quests. Diaspora and dispersion in their current form and usage imply not merely a going away, but as well, its corollary, a “center” / “home” from which dispersion happens. Diasporic writings are invariably concerned with an individual's or community’s attachment to this home / homeland. But the attachment is countered by a yearning for a sense of belonging to the current place of abode. “Diaspora” is very much a reality, not to be dismissed as an aberration in the present-day world of multinational organization and operations. Any discussion on nation-centered formations is not really worthwhile without reference to diasporic movements.
Ever since creation, people find themselves in perpetual exile due to one reason or the other. Leaving one's homeland can be either a forced option or a willing one. A study of diaspora will be incomplete without an analysis of the problems faced by the displaced migrants, for the word “diaspora” literally means scattering.

Diaspora studies analyse the ethnic tangles and the issues of the immigrants in alien lands. It presents the problems of Indian migrants, in its Indian version, who have gone to a new country. While discussing various concepts of Diaspora, Brah in her article “Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities”, looks at the reason “how the same geographical and psychic space comes to articulate different histories and how home can simultaneously be a place of safety and of terror” (183).

The academic study of migrations and ethnicity has historically been spread under various other fields and headings. Much like the migrants themselves, studies of the effects and meaning of migration have made their homes as varied as History, Sociology, Literature, Economics, Psychology and others. The understanding of the issues involved in migration increases and as more and more people come to experience the effects of
intercultural encounters in some way either as migrants themselves or as members of a community that has its numbers increased by people of different cultural backgrounds. It is clear that the relationship between migration and ethnicity needs to be studied in a more inter-disciplinary manner.

The issues involved are simply too numerous and complex to be understood from one viewpoint alone. For instance, why do people migrate? An economist might tell us it is because economic prospects are better somewhere else, while a sociologist might say it is because certain social pressures in the migrant's homeland have become unbearable.

The multiplicity of 'homes' does not bridge the gap between the 'home'--the culture of origin--and the world--the culture of adoption. The boundaries seem to be conflicting. The expatriate position can be one of either the speculative intellectuals/the synergetic borders. While the latter is more at home in both cultures and reaches out to both simultaneously, the former finds it difficult to be at home in these new societies. The eagerness to create and inhabit one's private space is inherent in every human psyche. It becomes even more sensitive for the diasporic people
who are dislodged from their primary space their homeland. In their domicile, the diasporic community is assigned a space which is de-centered and marginalized, what Avtar Brah calls the “Diaspora Space” (196). It is within this space that a diaspora writer can create a narrative space.

Diaspora and Diaspora Space may be considered as potential sites for hopes and new ideas, which articulate the inherent desire of the exile to make sense of the old and the new, of home and the new space. But the old and the new cannot be easily reconciled and unified. This sense of closing an impossible gap is perhaps one of the reasons why an increasing number of writers from the Indian diaspora are attempting to express their struggles and successes in bridging the home and the new home.

The Indian Diasporic Literature is that body of writing in English produced by persons who identify themselves as of Indian heritage, who are living outside Mother India in such places as East Africa, or in western countries such as Canada, Britain and the United States. Different meanings can be assigned to ‘here’ and ‘there’ or ‘here’ and ‘away’ by the descendants of indentured South African Indians, loyal to the Empire but protesting
discriminatory practices like being deported 'home' to India, in fact, being sent into exile again.

Due to the recent explosion in literature written by the Indian diaspora, there has been a corresponding rise in academic interest as to the nature of that literature and its methodologies. The use of home, identity, freedom and economical status by diasporic Indian writers are both used as a means of re-establishing their connection with India and as a means of self-validation.

In *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie aptly describes what might be one of the potent motivations in a diasporic Indian writer:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or immigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some usage to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost. (10)
The diasporic experience is a global one, with global appeal; the Bible features a quest for the Promised Land. The longing for paradise is picked up on and elaborated by Milton in *The Paradise Lost*, and Homer’s *Odyssey* focuses on Odysseus seeking to return to Ithaca. Each one of these great stories can be said to feature a diasporic narrative, in the form of a search for a lost home. The shared accessibility of the Jungian archetype of the quest lends the diasporic narrative its power, as Rushdie says “the past is a country from which we have all migrated” (11). Thus, it is not surprising that modern diasporic writers continue to find emotional and intellectual resonance in myth and legend, since so many myths and legends share the theme of a lost or distant home.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin in their *Postcolonial Studies*, define ‘diaspora’ as “the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions” (68). Robert Cohen describes diasporas as the communities of peoples living together in one country who “acknowledge that the old country – a nation often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions” (ix). Diaspora, thus, lives
in one country as community but looks across time and space to another.

The migrant Diasporas and their descendents experience displacement, fragmentation, marginalization, and discontinuity in the cultural 'discourse' of the subject countries. The new mode of diaspora feels that the discourses and narratives of nationalism, ethnicity or race are not suited anymore to the present times where the migrants are thinking in different ways about their relations to the new place, their home, and their past. Since there has come about a considerable change in the outlook and identities of the Diasporas with the changed global, economic, political and cultural scenario, the identities of diaspora individuals and communities cannot be placed only in relation to some homeland to which they all want to return or at all costs must return.

The diasporic experience can be defined not by essence of purity but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity by a conception of identity. According to Hall, “Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves a new, through transformation and difference” (402).
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 labourers to far-flung parts of the empire in the nineteenth century. The dispersal of Indian labourers and professionals has been nearly a world-wide phenomenon. Indians and other South Asians provided the labour that helped in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe. In countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, Indians have made their presence visibly felt as professionals. In the United States at least, the Indian Community has occupied a place of considerable privilege, and many Indians could reflect the moment of recognition that 'Indianness' and being 'American' do not always happily coincide.

In recent years, with a declining economy on the one hand, and the congregation of India in clusters that visibly put them apart on the other hand, Indians have for the first time become the target of racial attacks. In the Indian Diaspora, the plurality of India is condemned to disappear, even as the most esoteric traditions are given a fresh burst of life, and a unitary
vision of 'Indianness' of Indian civilization and of Hinduism, appears poised to dominate.

The word diaspora was first employed to refer to the Jewish people, as it suggests the idea of dispersal and fragmentation, and in much of their literature there is a presumed relationship between the diasporic community and the land which they left and to which the possibility of return always subsists, to what can aptly be termed as 'motherland' or 'home' Brah observes thus:

> The conditions that make for a diasporic community are admittedly complex, but this presumed link between diasporic community and the motherland is easily questioned, nor is there any reason why we must be held hostage to any form in linguistic and epistemological tyranny. No substantive issue can be decided on the issues of origins. (152)

Writers of the Indian Diaspora have been fairly on centre stage in the last decade, primarily because of the theoretical formulations which are now being generated by the critiquing of their work and the growing interest in cultural studies. Language and cultures are
transformed as they come into contact with other languages and cultures. Indian Diasporic writings raise questions regarding the definitions of “home” and “nation”. Schizophrenia and/or nostalgia are often the preoccupations of these writers as they seek to locate themselves in new cultures. Jain makes the following observation regarding the Diaspora:

It becomes important to question the nature of their relationship with the work of writers and literatures of the country of their origin and to examine the different strategies they adopt in order to negotiate the cultural space of the countries of their adoption, the contributions are both from India and abroad, both Indians and non-Indians, and hence the work represents perspective located in different cultures. (216)

The Indian diasporic writers are induced to the attachment or are willing to assimilate or integrate with their new environment, but still, they remain attached to their ancestral customs, traditions, languages and religions. In *The Gunny Sack*, Vassanji narrates the characters with their ancestral traits. The novel functions on one level as a “defence against
transience (128).” These ancestral traits have endowed the Indo-Canadian diasporic writers too with a new identity. Homi K. Bhabha explains in his *The Location of Culture*: “to forget becomes the basis of remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imaging the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identity” (5).

The other is a “dual entry matrix” (164); as Lacan suggests the existence of its apparent binary opposes the other. When traveling or settling abroad, members of the Indian Diaspora undergo an “othering”, that is both literal and metaphorical. In literal terms, their passports are stamped and checked by security officials, and they can traverse geographical and political borders, only if they are permitted to. The Lacanian “dual entry matrix” leads to a state of inner hybridity, a hybridity that only becomes more multifaceted the further one travels from “home”. As Bhaba notes, understanding this duality is necessary: “to avoid the increasingly facile adoption of the notion of a homogenized other, for a celebratory, oppositional politics of the migrants or minorities” (74-75).

The Indian diasporic literature is also about self-discovery, of those who want to lead a convenient
life, through economic progress, or of those, who are forced to come out of the mother land, because of their economic condition. Through new atmosphere, experience, and language, they come to realize their self. The search for self, after the othering experienced in the west, is often externalized and articulated through fiction. This journey of self-discovery can be compared to the Australian aboriginal walk about, where one leaves on a journey to find the self, and to exchange stories with that self in an effort to re-integrate the past and the present experiences. The Indian diasporic writer may go on a similar walk about in their fiction, in order to reclaim a self that has been othered through years of living abroad.

Mike Featherstone highlights the importance of this reclamation of identity in his article *Localism, Globalism, and Cultural Identity*:

It can be argued that the difficulty of handling increasing levels of cultural complexity, and the doubts and anxieties they often engender, are reasons why 'Localism', or the desire to return home, becomes an important theme (in diasporic literature) regardless of whether the home is real or
imaginary, temporary, syncretised, or stimulated, or whether it is manifest in a fascination with the sense of belonging, affiliation, and communities attributed to the homes of others. (47)

Diaspora writers can thus use fiction as a sort of connective tissue to heal the gap between themselves and their homeland(s). These fictions connect the Indian diaspora to its motherland. These writers analyze the harrowing experience of Indians who have settled down in the new, promised land. The Indian characters find it extremely difficult to cope with new modes of life in the new country. Indeed they are torn between the familiar (Home) and the unfamiliar.

The place of a diasporic person's 'belonging' may have little to do with special location, but be situated in familiarity and community, in these symbolic features which constitute a shared culture, a shared ethnicity of system of belief, including nostalgia for a distant homeland. It is when the place is least spatial, perhaps that it becomes most identifying.

The main features of diaspora is the history of dispersal, memories of the homeland, alienation of host
country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship. The writer’s emphasis is on the importance of memory, home, and identity as valuable assets and modes of remembrance. In defining “Diasporas”, Safran claims that they are “expatriate minority communities that share a memory, home or vision about their original homeland” (83-84).

Exile plays a significant role in shaping Indian English sensibility. It is a complex evolutionary process entailing cross-cultural shifts, loss of mother tongue, native ethos combating with the militating elements of new environment and the dual pull of cultural loyalties.

Indian-English writing, due to its cross-cultural origin, has intrinsically been revolving round the theme of the compelling and challenging encounter between two cultures apparently antagonistic in their attitudes, approaches, and values. The immigrant experience is complicated as a sensitive immigrant finds himself or herself perpetually at a transit station fraught with the memories of the original home which are struggling with the realities of the new world.
It is more so in the case of Indian woman writers in English because most of them share the same cultural dichotomy. To name only a few, Kamala Markandaya is married to an Englishman and settled in England; there is Ruth Prawar Jabwalla of Polish parentage who had her upbringing in Germany and education in England and is married to an Indian architect; Anita Desai has a German mother and a Bengali father and Bharati Mukherjee rejects a hyphenated identity and has avowedly become one of the Americans; Indira Ganesan is a Tamilian settled in the United States like Divakaruni.

These writers express the nomadic impulses of Indians who in their deliberate search for a materially better life, migrate to various lands and who strive to identify themselves with the foreign land and consequently face tensions of adaptation and assimilation. According to Gurr, an artist born in a colony is made conscious of the culturally subservient status of her home and is forced to go into exile in the metropolis as a means of compensating for that sense of cultural subservience. (8)

The reality, however, is that the phenomenon of exile and expatriation, particularly for the Indian diasporic writers is a lot more complex and gloss over
or underestimate the differences among exiles, expatriates, and refugees; although convenience dictates that they can be seen together as one corpus.

The sensibility informs that these conditions result in very different thematic preoccupations. Expatriation implies neither a forced eviction from one's motherland, nor a deliberate rejection. These are no connotations of permanent or obligatory leave taking. For the refugee, the notion of home brings to mind disintegration rather than nostalgia, because they look for space to live in, they are denied.

As they are refugees, their sense of segregation is much beyond the expatriates or the exiled ones. In practice, however the distinction between the exile, expatriate and refugee is difficult to maintain. The effervescence of diaspora gives rise to a sense of disillusionment. This sense is, in fact, the consciousness of crisis of the diasporic Indian community at being denied a central and nurturing tradition. A strong sense of social ethos deconstructs a complex history in order to forget a sense of identity. And such a sense varies from individual to individual. Within a community there might be several conceptions about the sense of
identity. All the characters in Banerjee's novels have different conceptions of identities.

Categorising a body of writing as diaspora raises the question of its relationship to such a counterpart as immigrant writing or exile and expatriate writing. Post Colonial writing has its preoccupation with the attachment to the homeland, for instance, Divakaruni's writings have the prominence of this attachment. Immigrant writing does not ignore this but focuses more on the current experiences in the adopted abode of the diasporic writer. From different cultural backgrounds of several writers, the Indian diaspora in America induces the authors to focus on their own experiences and memories.

An identity has developed on feeling of space that the immigrant communities can declare as their ownself. The writings of the immigrants focus on these issues of discrimination and demarcation. They have established an identity with pieces of geographical space, and sense of place, counter parting with their deepest emotional attachment to the country. Writers try to abridge their own voices and the mainstream, through their struggle for peace and identity.
The women writers of the Post Colonial era tell stories from a perspective that is seldom fully explored. There is a kind of hunger for the immigrant stories. They tell their own stories and those in the larger ethnic community in a starkly different way from that of an American writer. Another powerful reason for the success of female writers is that typically their stories take place in the context of a family. And the readers love to pore over such books and see how these writers explore not only multi-culturalism and cultural clashes, but also such taboo subjects as incest.

The first generation Americans find themselves stuck between traditional parents and upbringing at home and the more liberal and open community outside. This “in between-ness” can leave them with uncertainty about their own role in society—neither Indian nor American. Their thoughts were expressed in most of Divakaruni’s novels. Divakaruni in her novels directs much focus on the immigrant experience and the turbulent nature of exile and displacement. They are about the culture, family and the seduction of memory. The position of the immigrant allows for double perspective experiencing the old and the new cultures. It includes stories about communication style across cultures,
expectations of friendship and expectations of characters.

The turbulent nature of displacement of the expatriate makes them search for the roots of the homeland. The longing for homeland and sudden change and political uncertainty reflects about acculturation. The novel *Queen of Dreams* moves towards politics and sociology. Divakaruni is intertwining romance with trenchant insights into the harsh realities of immigrant lives, whether they live in material comfort in Berkley or in poverty in Calcutta, thus granting both visual pleasure and aesthetic revelation.

Divakaruni's novels are analyzed within the perspective of the immigrant experience, transformation, and identity. It mainly focuses on the theme of displacement and replacement in the characters, which are dislocated and relocated from one culture to the new culture. Finally they describe how the writer tells the Indian and American experience, the magical realism, the transformation of character to attain identity. The author poignantly describes the general implication of the arrival of the immigrants, of the location of an individual from one's homeland and the obvious implication of location.
Divakaruni clearly explains on issues such as reproductive rights, rights to safe, legal abortion and parental care in both novels *Queen of Dreams* and *The Vine of Desire*. In these novels woman characters search for an identity in a host country which was absent in their home country they faced various problems such as violence within a domestic partnership, sexual harassment and suppressment in their own country. In *The Vine of Desire* Divakaruni clearly explains the difficulties faced by a woman through the character Sudha.

In the first full length novel *The Mistress of Spices*, Divakaruni adopts a more complex strategy for portraying diasporic identity. Some makes use of elements of the fable in order to explore the various kinds of problems encountered by the immigrants who come to the promised land of silver pavements and golden roofs.