In the contemporary period, Diaspora studies is an emerging field. Tololyan, editor of the journal, Diaspora, states that at present, the term ‘diaspora’ is used as an umbrella term to include several studies such as Jewish Studies, African Studies, Asian American Studies, etc. The term diaspora is used in fields such as anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, literary studies and ethnic studies. This kind of utilization of the term reveals its ambiguous nature. Chaliand and Rageau, however argue that the term’s difficulty emerges only when employed in reading other religious/ethnic fields besides the Jews:

[T]here is no ambiguity about the term ‘diaspora’ – ‘dispersion’ – when it is used in relation to the Jewish people. But once it is applied to other religious or ethnic groups, it becomes immediately apparent how difficult it is in many cases to find a definition that makes a clear distinction between a migration and a diaspora, or between a minority and a diaspora. (xiii-xvii)

Although diaspora communities may have much dissimilarity, yet most scholars dealing with diasporic studies think that they share certain commonalities such as nostalgia, identity crisis, alienation and discrimination. As already mentioned diasporic studies revealed various notions of displacement and dislocation. In fact if there is no displacement, then there is no need for diasporic studies. When dislocation occurs, there is the feeling of alienation and aloofness. In the case of diaspora, most often spatial displacement plays a major role. When a community of people are forced or voluntarily moved from one place to another, they carry the images of their home and homeland in their minds. Wherever they settle they try to re-create their home by following their home culture and tradition. The
displacement in space completely changes their life style and attitude. In this way space plays a major role in the life of the diasporic community.

Literary studies of diaspora concentrate more on the problems and predicament of the diasporic community, and not so much on the geographical shifts. This kind of emphasis on the predicament is not sufficient and there is a great deal of study necessary to understand the type of literary works produced by diasporic writers. This study is, therefore, an attempt to re-view works of some diasporic writers and to reveal how they delineate and utilize spatio-temporal factors in their works. An initial reading of diasporic fictions revealed that the displacement from the geographical location of the homeland was located in the narrative in terms of temporality. Thus the time of home was constructed by a constant to and fro movement through history, culture, memory and nostalgia. Therefore, in this study this aspect too gains prime importance. As already pointed out, the novels reveal that portrayal of homeland or visit to the homeland will be minimal. Even though during their initial stay they carry their homeland always in their mind, but their physical visit to the homeland is not possible or in some cases it is only possible during vacations. Later their experiences in the new country and their struggle for their identity in the settled society prevent the diasporic individuals from indulging in nostalgia to some extend.

This work has tried to look at the effective usage of space and time in the six diasporic novels- Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café*, Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*, Amy Tan’s *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*. Even though several works are available in diaspora, this thesis differs from those studies. Most studies attempt to focus in the similarities and differences in the homeland and in the settled land. This work focused on reading the diasporic fictions by using spatio-temporal aspects. Moreover, most of the works on diaspora generally
concentrate on a particular diasporic community settled in a particular country. But this work, concentrated on five different diasporic communities—Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (even though they can all be subsumed under the umbrella term, Asian diasporic community) in three different countries, namely America, Canada and Britain.

The project as already mentioned focused on Asian diasporic community especially on South Asian, Chinese and Japanese community, who are settled in the US, Canada and UK. Among the Asian diasporic community, the above mentioned three communities are the larger number of settlers in the new countries. Contemporarily the US, Canada and UK are the leading countries which has more population of the diasporic communities than other countries. Based on this statistical account, this work focused on the writers who belong to the Asian community particularly Chinese, Japanese and South Asian (among South Asians, the work concentrated on the writers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) settled in the US, Canada and UK.

When people move from place to place, they face several changes in the way of life like adhering to the settled country’s time, adapting to the settled country’s climatic changes and adjusting with the culture of the settled society. These changes affect the psychological condition of the people who settle in a new place. In the select novels, movement of the diasporic community is mentioned. These novels help the readers to understand the initial problems faced by the diasporic community in an unknown land by following the unknown language and culture. The spatial movement brings tremendous changes in the nature of the characters and it changes the basic nature of the character itself. In some cases spatial dislocation helps the characters to lead an improved and a kind of sophisticated life; GaoLing and LuLing in The Bonesetter’s Daughter and Nazneen in Brick Lane face tremendous changes in their life in the new spatial
location. In some other cases, it spoils the spirit of the life and leaves them in an unhappy condition: Mui Lan, Fong Mei and Gwei Chang in *Disappearing Moon Café* are the best example to show the metamorphosis of how due to spatial change, they lose their innocent spirit and are forever troubled and haunted by melancholiness. Portrayal of homeland in the select novels will be very less when compared to the portrayal of the settled land.

Similar to space, time too plays an important role in the diasporic community. Time indicates the changes in the lives of the diasporic community. During the diasporic community’s initial stay in the settled country their nostalgia for their home country will be more and it will be reduced as time moves forward. In some cases, time helps the diasporic community to assimilate with the settled society. In the case of Nazneen in *Brick Lane*, Ashima in *The Namesake* and Feroza in *An American Brat*, they forget their initial suffering and traumas that they experienced in the settled society and begun to be self assertive and ready to lead their own lives.

The women writers – Kogawa, Lee, Sidhwa, Tan, Lahiri and Ali – utilize space and time in their works in order to portray the split identities of the characters. As the writers themselves belong to the diasporic group, they use their experiences to portray the characters in their works. In *Obasan*, Joy Kogawa by utilizing space and time effectively tries to present the survival problem faced by the Japanese Canadians. The past turmoil faced by the Japanese Canadians during the Second World War is explained vividly to the readers. Kogawa uses the history of her community to picturise the identity crisis faced by her people. Based on her experiences Kogawa constructs Naomi’s character in order to make the readers to know the oppressions faced by the Japanese Canadians. In *Disappearing Moon Café*, Sky Lee by portraying the history of Wong family presents the history of the Chinese Canadians. Through the novel, Lee portrays
the role played by the Chinese in the construction of rail-roads in Canada and their part in the formation of Canada. She emphasizes that in spite of their hard work for the upgrading of Canada, the Chinese diasporic community faced several discrimination by the Canadian government. Through the incidents of discrimination, Lee indicates the identity problem faced by the Chinese in Canada. Bapsi Sidhwa in An American Brat uses the character of Feroza, Aban and Manek to show how different cultural practices affect the mentality of the diasporic people effectively during their initial days of staying. Being a Pakistani-American Sidhwa elucidates the cultural practices of both Pakistan and America vividly. She portrays the initial shock experienced by the diasporic people due to the cultural difference through the characters of Feroza and Manek.

Amy Tan in The Bonesetter’s Daughter, by using the life history of three women characters namely Precious Auntie, LuLing and Ruth touches upon the history of China. Her novel in detail talks about the cultural and behavioral difference between the two generations of the diasporic community. LuLing and Ruth represents the first and second generations of the diasporic community respectively and the misunderstanding between them. Ruth’s character present the cultural difference faced by the diasporic people between inside and outside home. Similarly in The Namesake Jhumpa Lahiri uses the aspects of space and time effectively, to present the sufferings faced by Ashima during her initial stay and depicts the changes in her characters in the process of time. Lahiri uses the character of Gogol to present the problem of split identity faced by the diasporic people. Monica Ali in Brick Lane by using the displacement in space and time emphasizes the ideas of dislocation, alienation and changes in the nature of the diasporic people. This novel too concentrates on the idea of fractured consciousness by talking about the cultural difference.
Bakhtin introduces the concept of chronotope in his essay “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”. In this he describes how an author creates a world in his/her work in which s/he uses the real world s/he lives in. In order to explain it he utilizes the concept of chronotope which literally means space and time. By using this he points out the distinctive usage of space and time in novels. The project looked at the features of space and time in the form of history and culture in the select novels.

The six writers by using history and culture accentuate the problems faced by the diasporic community in the settled land. In most of the cases, when the second generation people, who are born and brought up in the settled land, are questioned about their identity it suppresses them from mingling with others. In Obasan, Naomi feels reluctant when her identity is questioned by others and it results in her silence. The suppressing nature of the settled land keeps her mum. In The Namesake Gogol faces identity problem due to his Russian name. He feels that his name does not show him as an Indian or as an American but instead a Russian. Till the end of the novel Gogol suffers due to the cultural difference.

Aspects of history and culture are used by the writers to portray the problematics of their splintered identities due to their diasporic existence. History of a particular community is revealed by the writers to portray the temporal shifts from past to present and vice-versa. Kogawa, Lee and Tan use history of their community/family to talk about the fractured identity in their novels, Obasan, Disappearing Moon Café and The Bonesetter’s Daughter. The novels try to indicate how the past incidents affect the identity formation of the present generation of the diasporic community. Among the three protagonists of the three novels, Naomi and Ruth face problem than Kae. It affects the spirit of their lives and in the end of the novels three protagonists are able to come out of their problems. Knowing of the protagonists’ community/family history allows them to
come away from their agony. In *Obasan*, Naomi’s wearing of her Aunt Emily’s coat symbolically shows that she is accepting the ways of her Aunt Emily to fight for her rights. Kae in *Disappearing Moon Café* feels that she is free from the curse, due to which three generations of her family members suffered. In *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* through the recovery of Ruth’s throat problem, the author symbolically mentions that Ruth comes away from her problem of fractured consciousness about the Chinese and American culture.

In the second set of three novels *An American Brat*, *Brick Lane* and *The Namesake*, utilize culture to point out the identity problem faced by the diasporic people. The novels present how cultural difference affects the mentality of the diasporic people and their identity formation in the settled lands. Different cultural practices inside the home and outside the home affects the younger generation of the diasporic community. Gogol in *The Namesake* and Shahana in *Brick Lane* suffer due to the practices of two different cultures. When time progresses, the mentality of the diasporic characters changes and gives way for the understanding of their position in the society. The three novels have open endings where there is a way for the protagonists to accept their split identities.

In the six novels various kinds of diasporic characters are presented and they are used by the writers to portray their identity problems. The reading of these different characters led to an understanding of the rise of multiple identities such as split identity, homeland identity and the settled land identity. In each novel one can find the usage of multiple identities by the writer. In *An American Brat*, during Feroza’s initial stay in the US, due to her dressing and glass bangles on her arms, she was easily recognized by the White community as a South Asian. Manek, who comes to the US two years before Feroza, mingles only with his own community people. He stays with them in an apartment. He does not try to mingle with the White community and feels comfortable only within community. When
he meets Jo, Feroza’s friend, he could not behave in a normal way. “He was different and embarrassingly anxious to make a good impression on the large, unsmiling girl” (147). He goes to Pakistan in order to marry a Pakistani girl because, he prefers a Pakistani bride instead of a White one. There is not much change in the behavior of Manek’s towards the White and this result in his separation from the white community. In Feroza’s case, in the initial stage of her stay in the US, she lives separately. Even though she mingles with Jo and her friends closely, they look at her in a different ways. They are unable to accept her as one among them.

At about this time, she also became aware of her different color and the reaction it appeared to have on strangers like that rude saleswoman, and on some of her classmates. Not that her classmates were discourteous. A few tended to avoid her, and these she disregarded. But some, in their anxiety to be civil, were exaggeratedly effusive and awkward in her presence. She sensed she was not accepted as one of them. Dismayed by her own brown skin, the emblem of her foreignness, she felt it was inferior to the gleaming white skin in the washrooms and the roseate faces in the classrooms. (152-153)

She prefers to stay separately from the White community excepting for her friendship with Jo. But later, due to her relationship with David, she changes her opinion. At the ending of the novel she integrates with the White society. Aban, Manek’s wife lives separate from the new society. From her feeling of loneliness, one can understand that she does not want to integrate with the settled society. In this novel, Sidhwa presents two different types of characters, Manek and Aban who prefer homeland identity and Feroza who goes with the settled land identity.

In *Brick Lane*, Nazneen, during her initial stay in London follows her homeland identity. Almost the majority of the Bangladesh community is
presented in the novel as staying separately and also distancing themselves from the settled community. This kind of cultural withdrawal from the social set-up of the settled land and blindly following the homeland culture reveals to the readers the predicament of the diasporic individuals. Even within such a kind of circumstance, some of them try to assimilate with the new society. In the closing of the novel the writer symbolically presents Nazneen’s acceptance of her split/fractred identity. Nazneen’s daughter Shahana prefers an identity that belongs to settled land. Razia, by criticizing her own community accept the new society’s identity. She changes her dressing and hair style in order to fit into the settled community. The doctor’s wife, Mrs. Azad assimilates with the new community. She complains about her society: “They go around covered from head to toe, in their little walking prisons, and when someone calls to them in the street they are upset. The society is racist. The society is all wrong. Everything should change for them. They don’t have to change one thing.” (114). She does not feel herself as separate from the new community and she confirms it by saying, “I work with white girls and I’m just one of them” (114).

In *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, GaoLing and LuLing live separately in the settled community. When Ruth was in school LuLing forbids her daughter to mingle with the White students. She does not want Ruth to grow up in the Western culture and restricts Western food. Throughout her life she prefers to stay separate. Ruth, who is born and brought up in the US, easily assimilated with the White community. In this novel less number of Chinese diasporic characters is mentioned and the author gives importance only to these three characters. Among them LuLing and GaoLing prefer homeland identity and Ruth prefers settled land identity.

In *The Namesake*, Ashima and Ashoke live away from the White community areas. They prefer to mingle with the Bengalis more than with the
Whites. At the same time for the sake of their children, they celebrate Bengali as well as Western festivals. But they are not able to reduce the gaps of culture. Through Gogol’s eye the cultural difference between his parents and the settled community is presented. Sonia, Ashima’s daughter, tries to assimilate into the Western culture and practices. Being born and brought up in the US, assimilation is not difficult for her. Even though at home, her parents follow Indian culture, Sonia easily manages to assimilate with the Western culture and accepts her settled country’s identity. In the case of Gogol, assimilation is not easy for him. He often feels that he is different from the White. When he stays with his parents as Gogol, by following Indian culture at home, he finds something obstructs him from assimilating with the settled community. When he changes his name as Nikhil and lives separately in a room, he finds himself (Nikhil) to be an entirely different personality. Throughout his adolescence age he finds that he is in between two cultures and this result in his rational and judicious integration with the society.

In *Disappearing Moon Café*, the Chinese community is presented as separate from the settled community. When Chang meets Kelora, he is attracted towards her. He lives comfortably with her family members by marrying her. When she becomes pregnant, he leaves her and returns to China in order to meet his parents. When his parents compel him to marry a girl from their own community, he hides his previous marriage and marries her. Similarly Wong Ting An marries a French Canadian, which results in failure. It shows that, even though Chang and Ting An try to mingle with other communities, they could not be successful in their attempt. Even though Fong Mei’s daughters, are born and brought up in Canada, they do not have friends from the settled community, but ultimately they accept the settled country’s identity. Lee in the novel presents most of the Chinese community to be separate from other communities and they prefer homeland identity.
In *Obasan* three types of characters are presented. Aunt Emily and Stephen prefer to assimilate with the settled society, who accepts the settled land’s identity. By assimilating Aunt Emily fights for the rights of her community, while Stephen lives like a Canadian by not bothering about the cultural clash his family has with the society. Aunt Obasan lives separate from the new community and prefers her homeland identity. Like Gogol in *The Namesake* the protagonist of this novel Naomi, tries to integrate with the society and prefers the split identity. Even though she is born and brought up in Canada, she fails to assimilate with the community. From this reading one can understand that most of the diasporic communities try to live separately from the settled society by following their homeland identity. This study proves Ghuman’s idea, that majority of Asians prefer integration and reject other three factors assimilation, separation and marginalization, is not true. It also enables s to understand that one cannot homogenize the condition of the diasporic community. The reading of the diasporic fiction depicts that within a single novel, the writer portrays varieties of diasporic characters. Thus, the reading of diasporic fiction depicts that the heterogeneous nature of diaspora. Even though diaspora is perceived as homogenous by many scholars and critics, the reading herewith highlights the heterogeneous nature of the community.

The first chapter which served as an introduction to the thesis provides the history of the term diaspora, a brief literary overview of diasporic literature and an explanation of Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope. Chapter two analyzed the novels –Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan* (1981), Amy Tan’s *The Bonesetter’s Daughter* (2001), SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990), Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat* (1997), Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003) and Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (2003) by using diasporic features. Chapter three reads Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*, SKY Lee’s *Disappearing Moon Café* and Amy Tan’s *Bonesetter’s Daughter* by applying Bakhtin’s concept of ‘Historical Inversion’ and showing how the writers
utilized history in their works to present their split identity. Chapter four analyzed Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat*, Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* by applying Bakhtin’s ‘idea of metamorphosis’ (108) and ‘public accounting’ (109). The study signified how the writers used their homeland culture to present their inbetweenness in the settled land. Chapter five illustrated that diaspora is heterogeneous and the reading of the novels with the application of chronotope ended up with a new concept called ‘Diasporic Chronotope’.

The aim of the thesis was to explain the heterogeneous nature of diaspora through the spatio-temporal trope which was analyzed on the axis of history and culture. By doing this, this work tried to prove that single chronotope would not be sufficient to explain the diasporic experiences and it gives way for the formation of multiple chronotopes due to multiple identities, which could be termed as ‘Diasporic Chronotope’. The reading of the diasporic fiction with the usage of ‘Diasporic Chronotope’ will give way for further research.

Diaspora is a social practice. Bakhtin’s theory was important – through literary it helped in doing an analysis. Chronotope could be read as a historical/cultural concept. It reflected all social, cultural and economic features of the diasporic community in the new land. Diaspora works could themselves be seen as chronotopes wherein chronotopes could be specific to a historical period, culture, nation, etc but the diasporic chronotope explains the ambivalent nature and the heterogeneity of diaspora itself. It explains the cultural environment of the diaspora as well as the heterogeneous nature of identity. One can explain this in the words of Peeren:

A chronotopical reading of this statement would circumscribe the community’s control over tradition: the chronotope may be mutable, but does not offer free selection. Diasporic subjects do
not just work with tradition as though standing above them. Rather, they are themselves constituted in and through tradition. Because the diasporic community is itself subject(ed) to a particular tradition of time-space organization, there is a limit to the amount of customizing and versioning it can achieve. (70)

The thesis has thus located itself into understanding the nature of diaspora as depicted in literary genres such as fiction. It tried to promote the idea that being marginalized and discriminated did not lead to destruction of selves but in fact led to forging identities. This issue was strengthened much more in the writing by women. Individual characters such as Naomi, Feroza, Nazneen, Ashima, Kae and Ruth may evolve into independent, self assertive, intelligent women capable of living in the new globalised environments. This kind of whole identity is of course not depicted in the novels but there is definitely a chance that the women may move towards this kind of personalities as their identities are dynamic and evolving. In conclusion, one can borrow the words of Stuart Hall to explain this notion of identities and change:

I was aware of the fact that identity is an invention from the very beginning, long before I understood any of this theoretically. Identity is formed at the unstable point where the ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture. (1996: 115)

Therefore, the diasporic individuals live in a historical/ and cultural environment which could be read as being spatial and temporal in the case of diasporic communities. The present research, one hopes would inspire scholars to explore the exciting field of diaspora as well as comprehend the critical theories of Bakhtin. The fruitfulness of the present research would only be answered when such studies do happen.