CHAPTER V
Chapter: V
Conclusion

The main objective of the research was to examine the notions of nation and identity as reflected in the literary works of the writers of Indian Diaspora. Having primary focus on the interpretation of author about the concept of nation and identity, the research also aimed at examining the dialectic situation of value, beliefs and ideas about many other issues such as: Tradition versus modernity, spirituality versus materialistic outlook, continuity versus change, emotionality versus nationality, religiosity and blind faith versus secularism and scientific attitude, inequality versus equality, groupism versus individuality, social control versus individual freedom, ascription versus achievement orientation, jointness versus nuclearity/alienation, social security versus personal insecurity, localism, particularism versus globalization and universalism, subjectivity versus objectivity. So the work tries to focus upon certain other issues as well, that a diasporic writer tries to present. Such issues are related with, adoptability, absorption, assimilation, problem of cultural shock and resulting mental conflict.
In research methodology, it is believed that the right choice of subject means half the work done. Any student of English literature, who wants to do research in the field of English literature, first finds himself somewhat confused and perplexed, because he has to chose one right drop from the vast ocean of literature. After thinking for a considerable time, changing my decisions several times, finally I made up my mind to do research in the field of diasporic literature. The Indian diaspora and diasporic literature are the two new avenues for any student of English literature to do research on. Both the avenues are considered to be much in discussion and lime-light. It is new literature in a sense that it deals with a new human experience and sensibility. Of course, the language in which it finds its emergence is the same- English. But it differs in the spirit. Diasporic literature opens a new direction for a reader and a researcher to think and to write. It has with it an unexplored scope which a reader and a researcher can dig out.

Writers of the Indian diaspora have been fairly centrestage 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. Diasporic writing raises 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. 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.

Research was initiated following the proposed chapterization, where it was an attempt to focus on the major concerns of selected primary sources. As the title of research suggests, I tried to evaluate and define the two very important terms, ‘nation’ and ‘identity’, in the very first chapter of my literary research. Chapter I, Nation and Identity: An Understanding, defines several important terms, which do
have relevance in understanding and appreciating the primary sources in the given context.

It was the use of secondary sources, which brought to my knowledge that Indian diasporic literature is a result of international migration of Indians and their subsequent settlement in foreign countries as well as the new concept of the Global Village. The mobility began after the Second World War and it went on increasing during the second half of the 20th century. New scientific inventions, chiefly in the field of electronic media and information technology have made this globe a smaller place. The new concept of Global Village has almost changed the definitions of 'nation' and 'identity'. Such changes have been felt and experienced by those, who have accepted mobility by going abroad.

While defining 'diaspora', several historical movements of cross-continental migration have been referred, apart from the dictionary-aided meaning. The findings say that the sociological concept of 'melting pot' clarifies several things related to the study of diaspora. Peter Kivisto in the 'Introduction' to his book, *Multiculturalism in Global Society*,
depicts five major world migration patterns in the 1990s: from Asia to Us and Canada; from Central America to Canada; from Africa to Europe; from Asia to Europe; and from India and South-East Asia to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Countries. It indicates that migration is as good as any natural phenomenon. But this outer migration of different races and communities creates racial, cultural and linguistic confusion and this becomes a great hurdle in the formation of a national culture. The new culture which develops in this island is bafflingly alike and also different from the parent culture because as the time passes, the old values gradually diminish leaving their remnants in their memories while the migration in modern times is entirely otherwise. In fact, the class which moves out of its cultural contours has no love lost for its motherland. Moreover there is so much of cultural mixing in the post colonial era that it has given birth to ‘hybrid-culture’.

It has been noticed that earlier it was religion, which was more vital, to use the Wordsworthian phrase ‘the breath and finer spirit’ of culture. Now it is economy which is governing supreme in the formation and alteration of cultural norms of a
society. Labour diaspora is a part of it. The problem of nation, identity, national identity, individual identity etc. are the recent needs, that have emerged, which were never experienced by mankind in the past. These problems are more or less psychological, and there is only one solution to it, that is to accept the fact that expatriation/emigration involves anxiety and belonging to two different communities, which forces a kind of struggle with something other people do not have to struggle with. It is recognition of doubtless ‘fluid identity’. Also, the state of nowhereness' creates a great agony and enigma for him.

It can also be mentioned here that, nowadays, many use expatriation and immigration as synonyms. However, there is a thin line of demarcation between the two. As the theme implies, expatriation focuses on the native land that has been left behind him, while immigration denotes the country into which one has ventured as an immigrant. The expatriate lives on his ‘ex’ status, while the immigrant celebrates his present in the new country. The expatriate negotiates a new space. Therefore, an anxious sense of dislocation is the characteristic of an expatriate.
To discuss further, I referred Spivak, Said and Homi Bhabha to explain this crucial question of identity formation, with the paradigmatic experience of exile, emigration and expatriation reflecting the unaccommodated man's predicament. The migratory developments in overseas colonial empires the idea of stable/unitary/monolithic gave way to the plural fragmented/dispersed/hybridized in the twentieth century. This kind of dispersal and movement of people complicates the process of identity construction. It can be said that diaspora and the diasporic writing that emerges as a response does, therefore, both necessitate and problematize the migrant's or the émigré's split situation in the same context.

The question of national belonging surfaces or is remarkably reflected in the literature of Indian diaspora. If we examine the works of most of them, Indian diasporic writers, they have chosen the locale, settings and the characters with the Indian background. Their ultimate attitude may be positive or negative but they can hardly become free from the Indian syndrome, which have been further discussed in the next chapter, i.e. *Diasporic Literature: Meaning and Matter*, which
is a further exposure towards the diasporic literature and its development.

Diasporic literature has its root in the sense of loss and alienation, which emerged as a result of that migration and expatriation. It seems that diasporic literature is a kind of psychological attempt to regain that which the writer has lost at the level of reality. The works of V. S. Naipaul, Nirad C. Chaudhri or even the latest Kiran Desai deal with the Indian background. In fact it is a psychic attempt made by those writers to have India, to be in India if not at the level of reality at the level of at least imagination. It won’t be wrong if I say that diasporic writing in its theory and practice is a work of the exile, who has experienced unsettlement at the existential, political and metaphysical levels. In this context, Said’s writings do clarify many things, related to the migrant existentiality, the hybrid one. Apart from the views of Said, Abdul Jan Mohammed, Homi Bhabha, G.V.Desani, Bissoondath, Bill Buford and of the dozen or so writers, critics and editors, I found contributing to this ‘Oriental Scene’ and defining the position of immigrants and expatriates.
Postcolonialism which is often referred to as the "theory" of migrancy, does not necessarily equip one with adequate means of approaching and interpreting diasporic writing for two very important reasons (i) writing generates its own parameters for esthetic evaluation as the act of writing itself is a negotiation with cultural constructs; (ii) postcolonialism is variously defined through political and historical conditions as well as aesthetics, and its legitimacy needs in itself to be questioned. The whole question of postcolonial aesthetics needs to be subjected to a careful scrutiny.

When we think in the light of diasporic literature, we have to take into consideration certain issues, because those issues have their influence on the Indian diasporic literature. The first issue is that all those who write this kind of literary works can be put into two categories: (i) those who were born and brought up here and migrated later on, in search of better future and (ii) those who were born and brought up abroad only and who know India through their several visits. If we examine the literary works of both the categories, we notice certain remarkable differences. The writers of the earlier category at
least possess the understanding about Indian culture and its ethos. They do know the limits of this country and also the reasons for those limits. So they are considerate in their works. Writers of the second category know India only through their visits, or readings, or through their stories, which they have heard from their forefathers. Naturally when they write about India, a different picture of India would emerge. The element of bias and sometimes even a strong dislike is to be found in their works, because they do not have the first hand information or experience about the Indian culture and society. Their mindset is already treamed in such a way that the attitude becomes negative, when they think about India. Here, V.S. Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness* or *Many More Mutiny* are the best examples of it.

One more issue, which demands a special attention, is the psyche of the Indian diasporic writers. No doubt they are intellectuals and they have the capacity to write, but the question which arises here is, why do they write to highlight certain dark sides of their native land. They focus invariably on the Indian poverty, corruption, over population or caste and
communal clashes. It seems that there is a subtle motive working behind it and the motive is to get recognition as well as appreciation from the reading class and the government of that host country. That proves to be the easiest way for them to establish themselves with acceptance.

The recent developments in the diasporic writing are multiculturalism and vision of new society. It seems that socio-economic developments are the governing forces in this case. The concept of multiculturalism approves the possibility of accommodating people of more than one culture at a time. But this concept of multiculturalism becomes workable only when people part with their conservative traditional viewpoint of living together with some other race or religion. It becomes workable only when man tries to appreciate the bright side of culture of others, ignoring fully drawbacks. It doesn't mean abolishing one's own native culture but to find out the possibilities of preparing a link between one's own culture with the culture of others. In brief the concept of multiculturalism does not mean the destruction of one's original culture.
Although the concept of multiculturalism has grown, along with the intellectual development, the diasporic writers tend to focus on the pains of discrimination and alienation, because ‘our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’. But readers have to keep in mind that such work of art or writing is a momentary flare of intense emotion or thought, and that it does not always reflect societal reality or the writer’s long-range beliefs. One has to find a pattern that validates that leap into a valid generalization.

Following the reading of secondary sources, I evaluated three of the primary sources in the third chapter, i.e. Diasporic Fiction- An Analyses. The three primary sources under reading were: (i) Half a Life by V. S. Naipaul, (ii) Jasmine by Bharati Mukherjee and (iii) Wife by Bharati Mukherjee, and in Chapter: IV, Thematic Concerns and Discourse, the primary sources like: The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri, Bye-Bye, Blackbird by Anita Desai, and Manhattan Music by Meena Alexander, were under observation, following the decided criterion of the chapterization.
The overall reading and assessment of the primary sources in these two respective chapters has brought me to certain conclusions. The diasporic writers and their works are the sources for several new avenues to explore, in terms of varieties in theme and discourse pattern. Diasporic discourse, like other minority discourses, is mainly about the location of culture. This newly emergent literary study describes an ongoing process of identity loss and identity recovery for non-Westerners. In the domain of diasporic literature, different ethnic groups, based on their different original cultural heritages, have their ethnic, cultural, and historical specificities; hence, the condition of the dislocated and dispossessed is especially poignant and complicated because they cannot find a 'home' of their own.

The outcome of primary as well as secondary sources admit that, diaspora provides a different kind of 'field' site from those of past anthropological preoccupations. Situated within and across a range of nations, Indian diasporic lives come to embody a set of disconnections between place, culture and identity.
The fact that the writers like Naipaul, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Meena Alexander and Jhumpa Lahiri are found going back to India for their fictional material might suggest that they are moving away from their host countries towards India or the homeland, in the classics, Jewish sense of the diaspora. Of course the theorists and their views do vary regarding this matter. All these primary readings appear to be, in fact end up demonstrating a self-legitimating logic of leaving the homeland behind and, therefore, at least indirectly, of embracing the new diasporic home. These texts justify, in subtle and indirect ways, the immigrant writer’s subject position and the cultural choices that such a position entails. However, I won’t like to simplify the issue of the location of culture by implying that place of residence is identical to a cultural position or that the politics of culture is solely determined by the place of residence. What is more likely is that instead of sacrilizing the leftovers and relics of a now inaccessible homeland as the old diaspora of indentured labourers did, the new diaspora of international Indian English writers lives close to their market, in the comforts of the suburbia of advanced capital but draws their raw material
form the inexhaustible imaginative resources of that messy and disorderly subcontinent that is India.

The other aspect of research observation of these novels can be put here, in terms of different phrases. These novels are a part of a larger process of moving away from the homeland towards the host country. In descriptive scheme it can be divided into the following five phases of diasporic experience, which are quite evidentiary in all these six primary sources: (1) immigration (causing social disarray and anomie); (2) acculturation (a reorientation of traditional institutions and the adoption of new ones); (3) establishment (growth in numbers, residential footing and economic security); (4) incorporation (increased urban social patterns and the rise of a middleclass); and (5) accelerated development (including greater occupational mobility, educational attainment and political representation). Ultimately, however, the diasporic experience need not be reduced to either a simple-minded rejection of the homeland and acceptance of the home country, or vice-versa. What happens, especially to the writers in this category, is a more complex process of confluence. Akin to what Homi
Bhabha calls hybridization, this process is not a supreme position of one culture on the other, nor is it a facile transplantation.

In English Studies, owing to a process dating from the late 1960s which steadily conferred on Anglophone Literatures the hierarchically subsumed labels of 'Commonwealth Literature', 'Postcolonial Literature', and subsequently, that of 'New Literatures in English', a rigid centre-periphery paradigm cemented itself in the literary field. This phenomenon has led, on the one hand, to the quasi-ghettoisation of so-called 'Non-Native Literature' by assigning it to the margins of what is regarded as mainstream 'English Literature'. On the other hand, there is evidence of a strong tendency to focus too narrowly on these marginalized cultural products in order to highlight their counter-discursive potential within what is therewith collusively accepted as the existing paradigm of colonial centre and colonized periphery. In institutional terms this has dual consequences. Scholarly engagement with Anglophone works has been considered as either: (a) some fascinating extra-curricular activity rather than mainstream research/pedagogy,
Diasporas are intimately connected to global dissemination taking the form of migration, transnationalism, and transculturation. Arising out of specific socio-cultural processes, they nonetheless manifest themselves globally in terms characterized as follows by Robin Cohen in his seminal study, *Global Diasporas*, as "Common Features of a Diaspora":

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or the further colonial ambitions;
3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its locations, history and achievements;
4. an idealization of the putative ancestral home, and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;

or (b) less valuable with respect to its aesthetic features than to the qualities of 'resistance' discernible in it.
5. the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. a troubled relationship with host societies ...
8. a sense of empathy and empathy with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. (1)

Cohen's model, which envisages diaspora as a socially shared form of existence, is based on William Safran's analysis of the classic example of the Jewish enforced diaspora of exile and its consciousness of displacement, homelessness, and a concomitant yearning for a re-rooting in one's 'true home'.

In contrast to these theorists who adapt an ethnographic approach to their subject, James Clifford understands diaspora to be a type of consciousness predicated on experiences of suffering and survival, which 'lives loss and hope as a defining...
tension. This 'double consciousness', to appropriate W.E.B. Du Bois's term in *The Souls of Black Folk*, derives from an awareness of being connected to a 'here and now' which is distinctly not the imagined home 'out there in the past'. This dual aspect of the diasporic consciousness opens up a two-fold possibility of cultural expression. On the one hand, the experience of loss as contingent on exile is foregrounded, as in the Jewish, African, and Armenian diasporas. On the other hand, and increasingly so within the context of literary and cultural studies, the trend has been to regard the diasporic consciousness as giving rise to amorphously fluid cultural productions which need to be addressed by the discourses of syncretism, creolisation, hybridity, and translation. Stuart Hall's remarks can be taken as exemplary of this argumentation: "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (2). A logical development of this approach is, furthermore, reflected in Homi Bhabha's theorization of the migrants who inhabit the diasporas in terms of the 'interstices'
he sees them as occupying, a 'third space', and which exist in an agonistic relationship to national production.
References:
