CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Understanding Diaspora

"The formation of a diaspora could be articulated as the quintessential journey into becoming; a process marked by incessant regroupings, recreations, and reiteration. Together these stressed actions strive to open up new spaces of discursive and performative postcolonial consciousness." – Okwui Enwezor
Man, has always been on the move since the beginning of civilization. Sweeping changes affecting the world politically, economically, socially and culturally have redefined boundaries, compressed ideas of space and reinterpreted the perception of ‘Nation’, ‘Home’ and ‘Identity. We live in an age where transnational immigration, border crossing, heterogenous nationalities, multiple identities, dual citizenship, acculturation in more than one nation space has assumed new paradigms. The recent spurt in migration globally, has been facilitated by improved transportation and communication facilities and a multicultural environment. Judith M Brown elucidates:

The technology of swifter travel has been a critical factor as metalled roads and the internal combustion engine superseded human and equine feet as the fastest mode of travel on land, and as the sailing ship gave way to the steam ship in the nineteenth century, and eventually to mass air travel in the twentieth century, to enable movement between continents and across oceans.¹

Migrants are the new citizens of the world, at home in every country – a fact fuelled by the shrinking, porous, borderless world, the global media and the revolution in cyber communication. Sociologist Saskia Sassen clarifies that there is distinct character to the capital flows and accumulation patterns today.

Newly centralized cities are part of a service-based and free-trade-dependent world economy. Points of concentration such as London, New York, Paris and Tokyo are marked as ‘global cities’ in this scheme.²
Diasporas or the movement of people from their homelands have come to exist with force and energy in different parts of the world. The term ‘diaspora’ has been etymologically taken from the word ‘diasperien’ (sperien = scatter, sow; dia = across) and was originally used by the Greeks. It connotes a triumphalist migration, the fertility of dispersion, discrimination and scattering of seeds. It is a complex and a contested word. The biblical use was one of ‘scattering’, what the Lord would do as a punishment for not observing the divine laws (Deuteronomy 28: 58–68). The Hebrew equivalent was galut, which meant exile. The Jewish use of the term takes an emotional overtone—shaded with elements of enforced exile, collective suffering, a substantially strong and obligatory sense of identity and a great longing for the home country. It has been noted in the Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Studies:

The Hebrew usage and Jewish experience of expulsion and exile from Jerusalem provided the basis for the use of the term well into the modern times.

The word carried connotations of cruelty, devastation, hostility, loss, exile and return; but words and concepts never remain static, they evolve in time to acquire expanded meanings in response to historical, cultural and social changes and developments. Before World War II, the term ‘diaspora’ was understood to mean the dispersal and migration of Jews after the Babylonian exile to ‘live and work’ in different countries. It also meant their yearning for a homeland, yet to be created; but with the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, the yearning acquired political and symbolic overtones. After the war the term focused on particular periods or
specific periods of colonial history. The ushering in of globalization saw diaspora encompassing the term 'exile' and 'migrant societies'. Today this meaning has expanded to include a scattering of people with a common origin, background, and beliefs etc. that live and work in other countries and who continue to maintain a relationship with the motherland or homeland. Today:

…the expression provides a working definition of the post-modern condition especially in global cities with heterogeneity of nationalities and races interacting with each other in an ever increasing multiplicity of identities. While the traditional definition of the term in the biblical – Roman – Jewish tradition emphasized the circumstances of the origin of tradition, the recent usage emphasizes the end result of the migration – the presence of diasporic communities. The term now captures the sense of the self for various communities in the decentered, postmodern and globalized world.\(^5\)

People in the diaspora are de-territorialized and transnational, with their social, economic, religious and political networks being transnational too. In this sense we speak of the Indian diaspora, the Chinese diaspora, the Tamil diaspora, the Palestinian diaspora, the African diaspora, or the Irish diaspora.

Arjun Appadurai claims that new, ‘imagined worlds’ have become part of the national economy and by reinforcing their status and importance one can understand how communities are forged transnationally, through networks of diaspora, migration, technology, electronic media, ideologies and global capital. His focus on this offers a rubric to think how new types of relations are made in a
transnational world. He subscribes to the fact that ‘the disjunction between economy, culture and politics has given rise to the growth of diaspora.’

The meaning of diaspora stems originally from the Greek ‘to scatter’ and ‘to sow’, thus suggesting both dispersal and settlement. It might appear to be an inappropriate means of relating it to patterns of Asian migration, which have varied over time in their historical and economic determinants. Diaspora, focuses on settlement after displacement and exists on differently articulated positionalities, which may be linked to specific histories of recent migration but can also in later generations depart from them. Migration is responsible in creating transnational networks.

Khachig Toloyan designates Diaspora as, ‘emblems of transnationalism because they embody the question of borders’. Whereas the nation state is imagined in terms of bounded stability as ‘a land, a territory a place that functions as the site of homogeneity, equilibrium, integration...[and] domestic tranquility’ – diasporas are recognized as the ‘others’ of the nation-state’. Toloyan views diasporas as exemplary communities who however upset bounded categories in different ways such as political, territorial, cultural and psychological. By restricting himself to the transnational temporality, Toloyan means to draw a distinction between the pre-modern or classical ‘ethnodiasporas’ – Jews, Greeks and Armenians – and the large scale dispersal of significant ethnic clusters, or what Arjun Appadurai
terms ‘ethnoscapes’. However, Braziel and Mannur differentiate diaspora from transnationalism. They suggest transnationalism speaks about larger, more impersonal forces like globalization and global capitalism. Diaspora, they claim addresses the migration and displacement of subjects. Transnationalism includes this through cybernetics as well as the traffic in goods, products and capital across geopolitical terrains through multinational corporations. Diaspora cannot be reduced to such macroeconomic and technological flows as it has aspects of a human phenomenon which is both lived and experienced.

Appadurai describes five different types of imagined world landscapes that help explain the nature of this “new” global economy:

- ethnoscapes,
- technoscapes,
- financescapes,
- mediascapes
- ideoscapes.

Ethnoscapes refers to people who move between nations, such as tourists, immigrants, exiles, guest workers and refugees. They appear to affect the politics between countries. Mediascapes also considered in the thesis refer to the distribution of electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information.

Iain Chambers reinserted Jews into the narrative of modern diasporas but his timescale says Sudesh Mishra is too sweeping for any meaningful discussion of the specific historical causality of such social formations.
Sudesh Mishra feels that a common strategy among diasporists is to classify diasporic social formations by:

1) Identifying new structures of being (identity) of an uprooted ethnic collectivity as it oscillates between Homeland (the absent topos) and Hostland (the present topos).

2) By defining a set of defining characteristics of this collectivity.

3) By alluding to some kind of departure manifested on the plane of consciousness, as reified in memory.\textsuperscript{11}

He agrees that diasporists tend to draw on cultural productions (aesthetics, music, electronics, etc) of such social formations.

Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur offer the following explanation of the diaspora:

… a naming of the other which has historically referred to displaced communities of people who have been dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration or exile\textsuperscript{12}.

They urge a quick action in the theorizing of diaspora as “it forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism, while refiguring the relations of citizens and nation-states. Secondly, diaspora offers myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to the hegemonic, homogenizing forces of globalization.”\textsuperscript{13}
Initially, the term diaspora was taken to mean any group of migrants permanently settled outside their place of origin. Robin Cohen has proposed a typology of diasporas each of which has been caused by a different set of precipitating circumstances which result in a variety of social contexts, mythologies and definitions of solidarity. These are:\textsuperscript{14}

1. Victim Diasporas (Africans and Armenians)
2. Labour and Imperial Diasporas (Indentured Indian and British)
3. Trade Diasporas (Chinese and Lebanese)
4. Homeland Diasporas (Sikhs and Zionists)
5. Cultural Diasporas (Caribbeans)
6. Globalization Diasporas (International migration)

Cohen notes that these types may overlap and may change their character over time.\textsuperscript{15} While referring to modern diasporas Sheffer has proposed a simple definition, “Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of strong, sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands”.\textsuperscript{16} Agreeing with this Judith T Shuval states, “Diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements – all of which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality”.\textsuperscript{17}
The term “diaspora” has acquired different connotations down the ages. In today’s world it covers the whole of a migrant community by-passing the divisions made in earlier literature between the first and subsequent generations of migrants i.e. between exile and expatriation. Diasporas are relatively restricted minority communities all over the world whose identities are grounded in national or global networks and whose inhabitants often long for their homelands, real or imaginary.

As Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur have expounded:

Diaspora, in the rapidly changing world we now inhabit, speaks to diverse groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe – from Kuala Lumpur to Sydney, Harare to Toronto, Paris to Marrakesh, Budapest to Santo Domingo, or even Calcutta to Tijuana, just as earlier in the twentieth century it mapped the movements of Palestinian refugees from Jerusalem to Amman or Beirut, and Pakistani refugees from Karachi to Dar-es-Salaam.18

Arjun Appadurai also discusses about diasporas of hope (the possibility of working and living elsewhere as a routine matter), diasporas of terror (people dragged into refugee camps of Thailand, Ethiopia, Tamilnadu and Palestine) and diasporas of despair (in search of wealth, work and opportunity as their present conditions are intolerable). He says that these people bring the force of their imagination as both memory and desire into the lives of many ordinary people,
into mythographies different from the disciplines of myth and ritual of the classic sort.\textsuperscript{19}

Avadesh Kumar Singh divides diaspora into theme based slots, classical (Jews), pre-modern (diaspora caused by colonial forces in 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century), modern (represented by the high flying present generation). It can be further classified as pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial diaspora, splitting the first narrative into two (i) the classical ie. Jewish diaspora (ii) the traditional colonial diaspora of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, for instance the ‘Girmittia’ diaspora and (iii) the postcolonial diaspora , if one would like to call it, of the second narrative of the rucksack of our obtaining time.\textsuperscript{20}

The word diaspora is increasingly becoming an umbrella term for immigrants of all hues, Diaspora refers not only to classic cases such as Jews, Hebrews, Greeks and Armenians but to people from other wider categories also.

Sudesh Mishra refers to William Safran’s enumeration of characteristics for defining and delimiting a diasporic formation which clarifies the broad usage of the term which includes expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants.\textsuperscript{21}
While citing Walker Connor’s broad brush definition of diaspora as “that segment of a people living outside the homeland”, William Safran outlines the following characteristics for members of the expatriate minority community – the expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial communities insisting that they must share the following characteristics:  

1. They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original ‘center’ to two or more ‘peripheral’, or foreign, regions;
2. They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;
3. They believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their – host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
4. They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
5. They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity;
6. They continue to relate personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.
The Expatriate community shares certain characteristics according to Safran such as heritage, memory, idealization of Homeland, personal relationship with roots, etc. The ‘new space’ is substantiated in the words of Vijay Mishra:

Within a nation state citizens are always unhyphenated, that is if we are to believe what our passports say about us. In actual practice the pure unhyphenated generic category is not only applicable to those citizens whose bodies signify an unproblematic identity of selves with nations. For those of us who are outside of this identity politics whose corporeal ties fissure the logic of unproblematic identification, plural, multicultural societies have constructed the impure genre of the hyphenated subject.\(^{23}\)

An expatriate refers to a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country other than that of the person’s upbringing or legal residence. It can also refer to a person who has voluntarily renounced his native land. Immigrant, on the other hand, is a person who has migrated to another country where he was not born in order to settle there. Transnational migrants refer to people who have an exposure to assimilation in more than one nation space. Trans-nationalism becomes a place where there can be cultural exchange, enunciation and articulation of immigrant experience. Transnational migrants not only create, but also maintain multiple ties across several national boundaries. Glick Schiller, et al., define Transnationalism as a:

social process whereby, migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political and cultural boundaries.\(^{24}\)
Said’s binarism of filiations and affiliation is elaborated here to incorporate the histories and notions of exile and the diaspora:

The exilic experience like that of immigration is the condition of voluntary or involuntary separation from one’s place of birth; but, unlike immigration, this physical separations offset by continuous bonds to the lost homeland together with non-integration into the affiliative order in which the exilic subject is contingently placed. Literatures of Exile have become increasingly evident as wars, famines and natural disasters result in more and more involuntary dislocations of large groups of people. Diaspora denotes a condition of being deprived of the affiliation of nation not temporarily situated on its way towards another totality but fragmented, demonstrating provisionality and exigency as immediate, unmediated presences.  

The term ‘diaspora’ has begun to refer to a set of wide ranging experiences and identities and is about to lose its original connotation today. And yet, the importance of diaspora studies cannot be undermined. It forms an important part of area studies, cultural studies and ethnic studies. Diaspora forces us to modify watertight compartments of a nation and its boundary lines and realign the relations of citizens with nation states. Again, diaspora offers multiple, sites of disagreement to the dominating forces of globalization. It further showcases the psychological, sociological, anthropological, political, economic changes in a borderless society. There is a generational change in attitude between the first and second generation immigrants and to these issues acculturation studies are applied to bring about an understanding of intergenerational conflicts. An increasing number of people from the Diasporas are playing important roles in
the formation of alliances – Political, Economic or Social, networking with people from their own country and other countries and modern national narratives. The diaspora brings a consciousness of belonging to a transnational community, bound by customs, intellectual and political loyalties, and sometimes a feeling of inexplicable attachment to what is, or what was one’s own. Echoing the same sentiments Mukesh Williams and Rohit Wanchoo have claimed:

These palimpsests of consciousness, ambivalence of feeling, or fissuring of selves, can create a cultural identity of the diaspora that Stuart Hall terms as ‘an imaginary coherence’ where identities regularly undergo change.26

The scope of the study is an understanding of the concerns of acculturation in the Diaspora and locating them as portrayed in the novels selected. The scope shall also include detecting the problems and adjustments in settling in an alien land, formation of hybrid identities and the acculturation strategies used. Living in a diasporic space also enables and promotes the growth of new identities, subjectivities and alliances promoting both the homeland and the hostland.

Rushdie defines the immigrant writer as “a translated being”27 and translation has its own politics and manipulations. He is caught between his perspectives, his sense of the truth and what he must project from an already restricted space. These raise questions that seek clarification in regards to the writer’s feelings or his wish to meet and valorize the demands of the market, which continues to
churn out bestsellers. It is here that the writer’s perception of himself when anchored in a linguistically different culture, a community-based construct, a geographical territory and the concept of a two nation-state becomes significant. His writing begins to intervene with politics and culture at home and what he will portray. The corpus of writers taken for analysis is from the first and second generation, with more women writers addressing the migrant narratives. Autobiographical traits are common in diasporic fiction as many of the writers write from their firsthand experience. The writers from India, Britain, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan are themselves twice or thrice removed from their homeland just as it is for their characters that already have diverse counter histories. Writers like Hanif Kureishi, Meera Syal already possess a hyphenated identity as British Asians. Romesh Gunesekera, Ardashir Vakil, Preeti Nair, Atima Srivastava and Monica Ali, have been living in UK since their early years. As Susheila Nasta sums up in *Home Truths*:

> The voices of the new generation of Asian British writers of 1980s should perhaps be seen to represent less a ‘symphony’ of polyphonic voices, celebrating the utopian possibilities of hybrid fusion or transcultural relocation for a new generation of Asian Britons than what has been called atonal ensemble.

> …Writers of the Asian diaspora thus carry an innate ability not only to adapt, to assimilate, and appropriate, but also to hybridize, reshape and sometimes deliberately misappropriate.28
To add to this is a statement by Salman Rushdie in the same book

England’s Indian writers are by no means...the same...[they] include political exiles, first generation migrants, affluent expatriates whose residence here is frequently temporary naturalized Britons, and people born here who may never have laid eyes on the subcontinent...fiction is in the future going to come as much from addresses in London, Birmingham and Yorkshire as from Delhi and Bombay. 

The South Asian writer in the diaspora traverses a heterogeneous reality whose porous boundaries are constantly drawn and redrawn. The tight tension between geographical location and the neutral space occupied by the literary narratives, helps the writer to articulate an ambivalent identity of the diaspora. Finding solutions depends on the individual tendency of each writer.

The term South Asia means the region south of the Himalayan range extending down to the Indian Ocean. The cluster of countries includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan. Though this region is unified by ties of history – the British colonial rule and the resultant struggle for freedom, there are other influences also like climate. The region is unified by the monsoons, the tropical weather with the long hot summers and not very long winters. The term South Asia has been shaped by many different migratory trajectories of people from the sub-continent over the past 150 years which have created multiple strands of varying interests. South Asia has emerged as a world region in modern times.
As the noted historian, David Ludden notes:

It was separated from other regions because a particular constellation of social identities has become essential for people living there through the operation of powerful social institutions...Geographical boundaries around South Asia have changed over the centuries and are still changing today.[and] South Asian history has no one beginning, no one chronology, no single plot or narrative. It is not a singular history but rather many histories with indefinite contested origins and with countless separate trajectories.... Cultural boundaries drawn by modern scholars in and around South Asia have come to be see more as artifacts of modern national cultures than as an accurate reflection of pre-modern conditions.30

The term ‘South Asian’ is an invented one. It was introduced in Britain in the 1970s as another ‘ethnic’ label to divide and rule, yet another signifier of racial difference. Often used in Government census as a means of distinguishing Britain’s Black and Asian populations, it inevitably flattens a diverse range of backgrounds which stem from complex religious, linguistic and regional histories. In addition, the use of ‘South Asian’ only seems to make sense when viewed from within a context such as Britain, an environment in which ethnicity has frequently been falsely homogenized. The widespread use of ‘Asian’ as a collective category for all sub-continentals in Britain dated from the arrival of the ‘Indian’ (originally from Gujarat) communities called from Kenya in 1968, and subsequently from Uganda in 1972. In official discourse the term ‘Asian’ was first used to replace the archaic term ‘Asiatic’ which was considered insulting: thus the Asiatic Review was renamed as the Asian Review in 1953. Although not generally a current term in Britain until the arrival of East African Asians in the
1970s, individual uses of Asian occur; such as in the West Indian Gazette: African and Asian News (1958-64) edited by Claudia Jones.

Sociologists N. Ali, V.S Kalra, S Sayyid have made the term Br Asian famous and have pointed out that the term was given:

…to designate members of settler communities which articulate a significant part of their identity in terms of South Asian Heritage…[and it is]… a recognition of the need for a category that points one in a direction away from established accounts of national identities and ethnicised minorities. \(^{31}\)

The Government of India estimates the size of the Indian diaspora to be around 20 million, while other estimates vary; but whatever the figure, the size and spread of the Indian diaspora is staggering, especially in view of the conventional wisdom about the Indian’s general dislike of crossing the *kalapani* – the dark dreaded seas, for foreign lands. In pre-European times, Indian traders crossed the Indian Ocean to the east coast of Africa and overland to Central and West Asia, while others, over many centuries, reached and colonized the heartland of many South East Asian cultures. \(^{32}\)

The first generation of South Asians saw itself as a part of the extended Asian family rather than solely as Indians, Pakistanis or Sri Lankans. This heterogeneous group tried to establish themselves in the British colonies in the
nineteenth century. It was a common struggle as they mentally recreated the lost land, tried to retrieve disappearing histories, and relate to religious customs in the host country. They looked inward for sustenance trying to form a bond which in spite of occasional strains largely remained unaffected by political tensions between their countries back home. The nineteenth century indentured worker left his home because of economic needs. His cultural and psychological dislocation coupled with a sense of vulnerability and dejection at never being able to return, and the disinclination to accept the new country all contributed to fantasizing, ritualizing, and fictionalizing the ‘home’. Discrimination also strengthened the yearning for home. As Williams and Wanchoo have mentioned in their chapter ‘Negotiating Des Pardes’

Cultural artifacts replaced memory, ritual replaced the actual return, and naming the surrounding replaced lost identity. The process of naming streets, homes, and villages after the places they came from helped in the process of Indianizing in an unfamiliar environment. Though the naming of the physical landscape continues wherever possible, it is the psychological and emotional naming of the diasporic experience through writing that has taken precedence over the earlier form of naming. Established writers like V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee and more recent ones like Vikram Seth, Moyez J. Vassanji, Anita Rau Badami, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Kiran Desai have given ample evidence of this process of naming in their works.  

Between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, the Indian diaspora grew from a few thousand to over a million strong. It was a period during which European governments supported and even encouraged businesses and large corporations
to seek cheap labour from other countries. The aim was to get people in as workers who, even after acquiring citizenship, would function very much like submissive, inert denizens. The conflict between a presumed passive citizenry and an actively engaged diaspora is the context for much of the literary output of the Indian community. The UK was the main destination of the Indian migrant professional till the late sixties probably due to the earlier colonial ties between the two countries and the advantage which India gained from the British system of education with English as the medium of instruction, particularly at the higher professional and technical levels.

By the 1980s, more than half of the non-White population in the United Kingdom was from South Asia. As British laws tightened, scores of South Asians emigrated to Australia, New Zealand or Germany but many stayed back. The last census held in 2001 claims that the percentage of South Asians in comparison to the total population was 4.64% approximately. In recent years, the South Asian diaspora is seen less as a deprived minority and more as an assimilated group that has successfully adapted to a racist, British society by negotiating various cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic resources to create a better future for them. Anthropologists like Roger Ballard believe that:

the new minorities have become an integral part of the British social order, and they have done so on their own terms." ... the changes precipitated by the new minorities ethnicity – that is their commitment to their own religious, linguistic and cultural traditions – have been far more fundamental. Since their ethnicity is intrinsic to
their very being, the resultant loyalties are a major resource in the construction of survival strategies: hence they are unlikely to be abandoned.  

The process of adaptation and crossing cultural boundaries with ease can be both conscious and unconscious as many studies suggest. It is now undeniable that many South Asians have been able to improvise their cultural practices to fit into the British situation.

The South Asian diaspora today, has been the creation of various migratory trajectories which intersect and overlap. Immigrants belonging to the South Asian diaspora today in Britain have shifted from being migrant workers to cultural travellers, postcolonial writers or Third World scholars who can negotiate cultural, ethnic, and political boundaries. Writers who transcend their cultural specificity and yet retain their South Asian heritage have emerged in the last two decades giving a new burst of energy to fiction in Britain. Susheila Nasta claims that:

…writers like Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Sam Selvon, Hanif Kureishi, Ravinder Randhawa, Sunetra Gupta, Aamer Hussein, and Romesh Gunesekhera have helped in redefining the new identity of the postcolonial South Asian in the diaspora.

The second generation of immigrants, lacking the resources to construct their home country, inscribe the identity of the diaspora within the circumference of their cultural environment. Since the second generation receives the image of the
homeland from their parents or through books, they cannot reconstruct their homeland with the same intensity and nostalgia as their parents. In recent years, the process to fantasize about a homeland has become easier through the popularity of the internet and electronic media. South Asians in the diaspora have found their homeland more accessible than before through online newspapers, magazines, and ethnic websites. They see the opportunities their homeland offers and they use their economic resources to enjoy them. When he (re)visits the homeland he resists its discomfort and enjoys its advantages like a tourist. The emergence of a second and third generation has given rise to a fused and hybrid type of identification as “British Asian” with the diasporic identity found in perceived cultural commonalities: food, movies, music, dress, rituals, names.

Immigrant laws safeguarding human rights, the politics of multiculturalism, exile writing, and the works of postcolonial scholars exposing racist hegemonies have all made the diasporic terrain easier to negotiate. South Asian literatures, tourism packages including Festival of India programmes, religious rituals, Indian Art, ethnic food, popular songs, fashion, Bollywood masala feature films, desi diasporic movies, Asian rap, classical dances, Pravasi celebrations, newspapers and journals are just a few of the sites where nostalgia and desire are marketed. To be in the diaspora is quite the in thing today. The flexibility and strength of the new diaspora, made easy through air travel, cyberspace technology, and electronic media, allows the expatriates both to fantasize and visit the mother country whenever necessary. Though the freedom to return permanently always exists,
the many unresolvable problems of the homeland make return difficult if not altogether impossible. Within this tension subtle contours of a new exile are drawn. The South Asians in the diaspora try to self-validate their negotiable identities by claiming a better life, economic and cultural freedom, and more expertise to devise adaptive strategies for the future.

The European commercial and colonial expansion and abolition of slavery in the British Empire led to a large-scale recruitment of Indian indentured laborers for the ‘King Sugar’ colonies of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans during the 19th century. *The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora* records that:

…for much of the 17th and 18th centuries the export of the Indian slaves was conducted through Portuguese, Dutch and French settlements in the regions and shipped by them, and also through British and Danish slaves’. The European factories placed their demand and the poverty struck Indians were only too eager to fill the gap as suppliers. “There was a ready market for Indian slaves in the Dutch settlements of Southeast Asia …the organisation of early indentured migration in the succeeding century would adopt many of the features of the 18th century slave traffic.”

Indentured labour in the early nineteenth century provided a cheap workforce in the colonial plantation economies of the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, South and South-East Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Meant to replace slave labour in the local plantations, these indentured workers provided the foundation of the ‘old diaspora’.
The 19th century brought about free migrants mainly to the British Colonial territory for work and trade of which a majority were from India especially South India. Labour recruitment also took place under the ‘kangani’ and ‘maistry’ systems. Trading communities were more organized. The migrants, a part of the traditional Indian overseas trade, played a catalytic role in creating the modern commercial world of South-East Asia in the late 19th and 20th century.

The Indian government classified migrants who went to the British colonies as descendants of nineteenth century indentured working-class PIOs (People of Indian Origin). The nineteenth century migrations from India were of ignorant people who lacked the ability to assimilate into the mixed culture in the Caribbean. The coolie ships that took East Indians to Natal and the Caribbean Islands took between 12-20 weeks leaving them helpless. Caribbean writer Mahadai Das captures the sense of disillusionment and loss the Indian indentured labourer felt, in her works especially in the poem They Came in Ships, She writes:

From across the seas, they came.  
Britain, colonizing India, transporting her chains  
From Chota Nagpur and the Ganges Plain.  
Commissioners came,  
Capital spectacles in British frames  
Consulting managers about costs of immigration.  
The commissioners left, fifty-dollar bounty remained.  
Dreams of a cow and endless calves,  
And endless reality in chains.37
Rampant corruption made it more difficult for the indentured Indians to progress and economic instability made going back impossible. Lack of education made oral narratives popular. Only when educated Asians began coming to the growing cities of Port-of-Spain and San Fernando in the 1930s, like V.S. Naipaul's father Seepersad Naipaul, that written forms of literature in English began to emerge. According to M Nourbese Philip, a Caribbean-Canadian writer, the alien tongue English became 'a foreign anguish'.\textsuperscript{38} Once the 19\textsuperscript{th} century pioneers settled into their new environment and prospered, they acted as magnets, attracting their kinsmen. They nurtured kinship ties with the homeland and provided resources which allowed others to migrate and settle. They established temples and community centers which served as a support base for the new comers and played a critical role in sustaining the ties of kinship and continuing with the traditional culture. They settled in London, Birmingham and Manchester near the work places and in Indian settlements. They sought to retain their sense of identity and maintained a distance from the native community.

Many Indian trading groups grew more and more visible in various trading sectors. The post-war boom catalysed the formation of new Indian firms. Rozina Visram writes “it is often forgotten that Britain had an Indian community.” She also records, in \textit{Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: The History of Indians in Britain 1700-1947}. It is in her well researched book \textit{Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History} \textsuperscript{39} that she records, it was in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century that ayahs, nannies and
servants were brought by British families returning from India. She accounts that it was in the middle of the 19th century that a growing number of Indians began arriving in Britain. More would come after the 1950s in response to the post-war labour needs of the British economy. The founding of the East India Company set in motion a chain of events leading to the movement of people in both directions. The nabobs also brought their Indianised habits and tastes to cities such as London, Bath, Cheltenham and Edinburg (Indian prints, tapestries, calico and chintz) dominated studies and bedrooms. Indian cuisine became sufficiently well known to be included in an eighteenth century cookbook. Visram records a reference to an Indian family in seventeenth century Britain and notes the entry of many educated Indians who came to Britain as visitors, emissaries and teachers. Rozina alludes to Dean Mohammed whose remarkable career gives an unique insight into how one early Indian immigrant managed to find a place for himself and his family. Rozina minutes that from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the First World War in 1914 several hundred Asians lived in Britain – some were born there, a few came from the Caribbean or Africa but the majority came from the Indian subcontinent. Every year thousands of sailors and hundreds of Ayahs continued to be brought to Britain.

In 1938, T. S. Rajagopal described the overseas Indian as “spread over a belt which runs round the equator from the North Atlantic over the Indian ocean to the South Pacific”. A growing number of students arrived to study at the English and Scottish universities. Indian nobility exiled from their kingdoms also lived in
Britain. They formed part of the growing multi-racial society, a result of the empire in India, Africa and the Caribbean.

The second diaspora which came about in the mid-20th century saw a change in the migration pattern.

The Indian diaspora grew in the colonizing nations of Europe and the United States and was more versatile and innovative. For the first time, people moved not to their colonial periphery but to the metropolitan centre at the heart of the Empire-Commonwealth. Initially this movement was to the urban centers in England. The migrants came – some from India itself, some from colonial diasporic communities – to take advantage of laboring or service opportunities in Britain’s post-war economy. Reaching a peak in the early to mid – 1960s, the first movements were directed at Britain because Asian ( and African ) immigration into the white settler Dominions – Australia, Canada and New Zealand – was heavily restricted at that time. By the mid-1960s, restrictions were loosened and migration to the Dominions picked up, in part to ease the plight of Indians settled in East Africa. 41

The second wave of South Asians who travelled across countries were skilled professionals. The professionals who went to Europe and the United States after 1947 were known as NRIs by the Government of India. Spurred particularly by more flexible US policies, highly skilled migrants, showed considerable entrepreneur flair. The US became the prime destination for those who were Non Resident Indian (NRIs), but the new wave also moved into Britain and the Dominions. Rozina Visram further refers to J M Tambimuttu a Tamil from Ceylon
who was known in literary circles as the founder member of Poetry London. She recounts:

… the presence in Britain of People from the Indian subcontinent did not begin in 1950 when the post war labour demands of the British economy encouraged their arrival but stretches back to the founding of the East India company in 1600. Indian encounters and cultural interchanges with the metropolitan society were without doubt governed by the power relationships of colonialism and race but class, gender and religion were also important determining factors.42

World War II marked a crucial watershed in the history of Indian diaspora in the developed world. It was the beginning of the transformation of the Indian presence from one that was miniscule, temporary and marginal, to one that became more sizeable, permanent and central. The largest number of migrants in this period went to the UK, some because of old colonial links and others as a result of wartime experiences as soldiers and seamen. For communities from the Indian subcontinent, the combined experiences of war, the Partition and independence provided the initial motivation for the post-war exodus. This was subsequently strengthened by the nexus of kinship and friendship that enabled others to tap the economic opportunities that were becoming available in labour markets abroad. By the mid-20th century there was a small population of students and activists, petty traders and merchants, industrial workers and professionals, artists and performers from different religions and backgrounds who considered Britain as their home. Indians did not start arriving in the UK in significant numbers until the very end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. As
immigration began to increase, the Commonwealth Immigration Act order was adopted, giving official legitimacy to the British on the settlement of ‘colored’ people from the colonies. The migration of South Asians including Indians, was restricted to ‘primary’ immigrants who were issued job vouchers in one of the three ‘priority categories’ : those with a job offer in Britain, those with special skills that was scarce in Britain and those eligible for an undifferentiated numerical quota based on the ‘labour needs’ of the British economy.

There was, also, a family reunification clause which Indians were able to use to their advantage. The Sikhs, in particular were willing to bring their women folk and were able to move their whole families from Jullunder and Hoshiarpur in Punjab to Britain under this clause. The Mirpuris and the Kashmiris from West Pakistan and the Sylhetis from East Pakistan, also brought their families.

Highly skilled and professional Indians migrated from Africa – and were known as the 'twice-displaced' – in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These overseas Indians acquired the image of being high achievers, intellectuals and software wizards.

When the Britishers withdrew from India after two hundred years of Imperialism they left behind in the wake of Partition two independent nation states – India and Pakistan followed by Sri Lanka. Soon after there was another split and
Bangladesh evolved out of Pakistan’s eastern region in 1971. These three nations also shared almost similar trajectories of migration and settlement. Among ethnic minorities in UK, we have Indians heading the list in numbers followed by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Sri Lanka was the first region substantially controlled by Europeans and it became a microcosm of European imperial history in South Asia. The Sri Lankan diaspora did not originate from a continuous process or a sudden one. Wikipedia states that it can be divided into three distinct periods:

1. **British Colonial Period** – With Britain establishing colonies rapidly, they required hard working local people to take up the posts of clerks. Many Tamilians left during this period to work as indentured workers in different far flung corners of the British Empire. This is how the first wave of migrations began to countries such as Malaya or Malaysia, Singapore and India.

2. **Pre 1983** – The pro-Sri Lankan government introduced policies supporting them. Further, the “Sinhala Only” Act supported the Sinhalese youth especially in government jobs. The Act was removed in 1959 but it did not prevent Tamils from leaving Sri Lanka for better employment opportunities.
3. **Post 1983** – A period of ethnic conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) which saw Sri Lankan Tamils migrating in large numbers, to find refuge around the globe. Unlike India, here professionals emigrated first.

According to the most reliable national enumeration – the decennial 2001 census claimed that 283,063 Bangladeshis lived in the UK and formed 0.5% of the total population. This led to the formation of various diasporic communities with hyphenated identities such as “British-Bangladeshi”, “British-Muslim”, “British-Asian” or even “Br Asian” which have been coined to express their multiple, transnational and diasporic identities and ties. Wikipedia refers to Bengalis and comments that they were first present in the United Kingdom, when Sylhetis arrived as Lascars on ships during the eighteenth century. This continued till the 19th century and throughout the years the connections continued with Sylhet. Many arrived during 1970s to find work and earn a better living. Much before India achieved independence in 1947, the Bengali presence in UK could be traced. From the beginning of the 20th century small groups of Bengali seamen settled near the docks close to East End of London. During the Second World War, many Asians obtained jobs as manual workers and the post-war economic boom in Britain saw many from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh joining the work force. The Bengali population, mainly single, male, was first to arrive in the UK and other European countries after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971,
initially to study, then to seek a better life or avoid political unrest back home in the 1970s and 1980s. They finally brought their wives in the 1990s.

The Pakistani population in Britain is the largest outside of Asia and makes up the second largest group of British Asians, there are around four times more Pakistanis in the UK than USA. The Pakistani diaspora came into focus after the partition of 1947. They came to Britain singly by taking part in low skilled jobs. These migrants came through chain migration following the steps of earlier migrants but gradually skilled labourers with a certain degree of education were more. By the 1990s the Pakistani diaspora had succeeded in making a major name in its religious practices. In UK among ethnic minorities we have Indians heading the list followed by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The majority of migrants come from two districts of Pakistan, Kashmir: Mirpur and Kotli and have not done so well in comparison with their urban counterparts. It is also a youthful population with over 30% under the age of 16. Educational data show lower levels of academic achievement than their Indian counterparts and also gender variations in their society.45

Judith Brown46 claims that many South Asians who went in 1950s and 1960s to work in factories in UK were ‘twice migrants’ who moved from East Africa to Britain or came back from Trinidad, Tobago and Guyana. Indians took up jobs in South East and Midlands region, migrants from Pakistan went to West Midlands
and the textile towns in the North. Bangladeshis were concentrated in pockets in inner London. Among the South Asians, the Indian migrants prospered the most, particularly those from East Africa. Pakistanis lived in industrially declining areas and had a large majority of skilled, manual workers while the Bangladeshis were mainly semi-skilled and un-skilled workers. The Bangladeshi diaspora believed in giving back economically to its homeland through remittances. Britain was seen as the “promised land” in terms of economic opportunity and material advancement, allowing the Bangladeshis to save money which was later on sent to relatives to buy property in the home land. In the Preface to *Writing Diaspora*, Yasmin Hussain records that the term ‘South Asian’ is inclined to suggest an ‘imagined community’ one which needs deconstructing into its constituent parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka”.47

The evolution of the Indian diaspora is summed up in a movement which began in the 19th Century and is classified as three waves48 by Kavita Sharma, Adesh Pal and Tapas Chakrabarty in their book *Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora*. The ‘first wave’ includes those migrants whose journey began in the colonial period as indentured labourers to Mauritius, Caribbean, Fiji and South Africa. The ‘second wave’ during the 1970s occurred when professionals, artisans, traders, factory workers went in search of opportunities in the wake of an oil boom in West Asia and the Gulf. The ‘third wave’ included professionals and the educated elite who sought fresher pastures for economic betterment in
the more advanced countries of the world. Judith T Shuval in her essay *Diasporic Migrations* explains:

Immigrants in the 1990s are less contained inside the physical and cultural boundaries of their host country than ever before. There is travel to and fro from homelands and on-going communication with family and friends who remain there.\(^{49}\)

Due to its diverse beginning, a non-conforming pattern of migration and settlement and dissimilar degrees of assimilation or integration into the culture of their new homeland, the Indian diaspora defies easy categorization. It is a complex convergence of many discreet cultures, languages and histories.

The Indian diaspora can also be read as two relatively autonomous diasporas designated by the terms ‘old’ and ‘new’. As Brij V Lal states,

The use of ‘old’ and ‘new’ here is not meant to isolate communities: the old diaspora has become part of the new through re-migration (Fiji-Indians moving to Vancouver or Trinidadian – Indians to Toronto) and has also undergone transformations. The distinction between the two has to be kept in mind, however, so as to avoid merging two rather different diasporic experiences and to ensure that the global sweep and economic strengths of the new diaspora located in Western nations do not silence the lives of diasporic Indians whose history is marked by the experience of indenture.\(^{50}\)

In the Indian case, there is a common ancestral homeland from which people left for various reasons, voluntarily and involuntarily, heading to all corners of the
globe. Many in the diaspora, particularly descendants of those who moved during the ‘age of merchants’ and the ‘age of colonial capital’, may have never been to India, but the country retains its place in their consciousness.

The diaspora of the nineties has been a witness of events which have been major ones in many ways. Avtar Brah refers to wars, genocides; traffic in people and political resurrections all over the world as its mainstay. She feels that the contemporary world is being reinvented through a postmodern form of imperialism. The second and third generations absorb as well as modify the values of the diaspora and the dominant culture to form a new identity that can mediate between both the worlds. Makarand Paranjape takes a cue from, The Empire Writes Back and classifies the diaspora into ‘settler’ and ‘visitor’. To the first category he ascribes the forced migrations on account of slavery or indentured labour, and the second includes the voluntary migrations of businessmen and professionals. As Vijay Mishra puts it:

This narrative of diasporic movement is, however, not continuous or seamless as there is a radical break between the older diasporas of classic capitalism and mid-to late twentieth century diasporas of advanced capital to the metropolitan centres of the Empire, the New World and the former settler colonies.” He calls these two “interlinked, but historically separated diasporas” as the “old (‘exclusive’) and the new (‘border’)” diasporas.
Speaking about the second diaspora Makarand Paranjape affirms that:

the new attitude and values of the second generation comes in conflict and often clashes with those of the first. The narratives of the new diaspora, then, are elaborate and eloquent leave takings, often elegiac in tone. All that it can do is to try to incorporate its fictional idea into a borderless, deterritorialized, but yet commercially lucrative marketplace whose multiple sites are scattered across the most advanced nation-states of the world.54

Acculturation refers to a cultural change or modification in behavior that results from continuous first hand contact or socialization between two distinct cultural groups. While adapting to life in Britain, the migrants, both the first and second generation find their traditional values increasingly challenged by Western cultural values leading to some degree of personal changes by a process called acculturation. Here competencies and strategies are developed for adapting to life in the new land. Immigrants involved in cultural transition because of migration must cope with their new cultural-societal pressures and standards for which they have to adapt themselves in the ways of the host culture. Social scientists have attempted to theorize this. When specifically applied to the context of international migration, acculturation refers to the process of adaptation along two dimensions:

- Adoption of ideals, values and beliefs of the receiving culture
- Retention of ideals, values and beliefs from the culture of origin
This is not a static, stagnant process because a change in the cultural values depends on the host surroundings where immigrants live. Each culture is porous and subject to external influences. Adaptation is influenced by global processes and also the desire to assimilate. Access to equal opportunities help in abandoning old behavior patterns which is necessary to develop new ones. In the process identity grows to encompass national, religious, regional, linguistic aspects. Distanced from familiar territory, dominant practices, relations, common languages, these immigrants find comfort in practices which are self-familiarising. The process of acculturation will be considered in the context of hybrid histories, borderland and Diaspora cultural practices. It does not mean disguising or casting away one’s ethnic identity but co-relating both and finding an appropriate ‘Third Space’ within it.

In a descriptive scheme designed as early as 1965, Johan D. Speckerman, talks of the following five phases of diasporic experience:

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 middle class)
5. Accelerated development (including greater occupational mobility, educational attainment and political representation)
Acculturation also brings in a feeling of being the ‘other’ or ‘marginalized’ or even being ‘racialized’ and these experiences show a self-hood that is constantly evolving even if hyphenated and fractured. Immigrants constantly maintain, resist, reinvent identities and form hybrid ones.

Acculturation is a two way interaction resulting in actions and reactions to the contact situation. It is also used to describe the results of contact between two or more different cultures where a new, composite culture emerges, in which some existent cultural features are combined, some are lost, and new features are generated. Acculturation strategies refer to the method that individuals use in responding to new cultural contexts. All host cultures tend to become ethnocentric and oppose successful diasporas from anywhere. Within a diaspora, acculturation is uneven and unsynchronized and does not move in a linear process for the immigrant. The immigrants who integrate by accepting an in-between position with both the heritage culture and the larger society are better adapted than those who acculturate by orientating themselves to one or the other culture, by way of separation or assimilation. It depends upon an individual's educational surroundings, family upbringing, religious beliefs and practices, family constraints and capacity to speak the language of the host nation. Human agency has a significant role to play in hastening or delaying the process of acculturation.
A key characteristic of diasporas is a strong sense of connection with the homeland which is maintained through cultural practices and ways of life. This ‘homeland’ might be imaginary rather than real and its existence need not be tied to any desire to ‘return’ home. Acculturation strategies refer to the plan or method that individuals use in responding to stress-inducing new cultural contexts. A four-fold classification is proposed that includes ‘assimilation’, ‘integration’, ‘separation’ and ‘marginalisation’. Berry and Sam suggest:

**Assimilation** strategy occurs when the individual decides not to maintain his or her cultural strategy by seeking contact in his or her interaction with the dominant group. When the individuals from the non-dominant group "place a value on holding onto their original culture" and seek no contact with the dominant group, then they pursuing a separation strategy. When individuals express an interest in maintaining strong ties in their everyday life with both their ethnic group and the dominant group, the integration strategy is defined.\(^57\)

The fourth strategy is marginalisation in which individuals lose cultural and psychological contact with both the traditional culture and the larger society.\(^58\)

Integration, an important aspect of acculturation is taken as a major strategy in assimilation. Inherent in the integration strategy proposed by traditional acculturation theories is the conviction that immigrants can somehow ‘positively’ assimilate the values and ideologies of both the dominant, mainstream group and their own ethnic group. Cross-cultural psychologists are of the opinion that the integration strategy works best in a society which is explicitly multicultural. The progress of hyphenated identities involves a constant process of negotiation, intervention and mediation which is connected to a larger set of political and
historical powers which in turn is linked to and shaped by issues of race, gender, sexuality and power.

Acculturation is better with positive family dynamics. The criterion for acculturation is the presence of bicultural influences, regardless of the relative strengths of the two cultures. Acculturation comes about at the individual and also the group level. The concept of 'bicultural competence' suggests that an immigrant can possibly achieve a happy, balanced blend that entails “becoming effective in the new culture and remaining competent in his or her culture of origin”. Kim Young Yun’s early work on acculturation and immigration was intended to investigate the communication patterns of immigrants, where the acculturation phenomena is characterised as:

- When foreign immigrants move from one culture to another, behavioral modes and values in the old setting may prove maladaptive in the new.
- Sooner or later, immigrants come to understand better the norms and values, and adopt salient reference groups of the host society.
- Communication is crucial to acculturation. It provides the fundamental means by which individuals develop insights into their new environment.

Her work focuses on mass media and interpersonal communication channels. "Among many forms of human communication, interpersonal communication and mass media consumption are the two most salient forms in the cultural learning process". Her theory also maintains that increasing use of the host
environment's mass media will increase acculturation. These mass media channels, expected to be reflective of the new host culture, would be expected to cultivate the predominated world view of the host culture in the viewer. She maintains that "the complexity with which an immigrant perceives the host society will be influenced by language competence, acculturation motivation, and channel accessibility, mediated by interpersonal and mass communication experiences." 62

This causal model puts communication directly in the path of acculturation. The communication channels of interest are interpersonal communication and mass media. Complexity of perception is an integral part of acculturation and plays an integral part in the development of an intercultural identity. The ability, including language and opportunity, to access interpersonal communication and mass media channels, combined with the motivation to do so, results in acculturation into the new culture and the development of an intercultural identity.

The theory of acculturation has been adapted to include contemporary concepts of culture and cultural adaptation that maintain a level of individual ethnicity far beyond the temporal point of initial acculturation.

Communication and acculturation occur in and through the interlocking interaction process of 'push' and 'pull' in the relationship between an immigrant and his new sociocultural surroundings. Acculturation results not only in the immigrant but also in the host society. 63
She maintains that acculturation is a natural process of adaptation of an individual who has been socialized in one culture and moves to another culture. This adaptation process does not forego ties to the original culture. This adaptation process not only makes the individual more effective in the new culture, but also brings aspects of the old culture into the new, changing it as well. The rich diversity of cultures that results from these new arrivals makes the host culture different as time goes on. The next individual that immigrates or sojourns into the host culture will move into a changed and changing environment. The society matures by taking on an intercultural identity of its own, compared to how it was before the interaction with the immigrant, sojourner, or international business agent. This ‘push’ and ‘pull’ constantly allows the individual and the host environment to evolve, without forsaking any heritage that went before. In her later work, she expands her view of acculturation to include the establishment of an ‘intercultural identity’ for an immigrant, sojourner, or business person that successfully integrates into a new environment. Intercultural identity is used to identify an individual’s ability to grow beyond their original culture and encompass a new culture, gaining additional insight into both cultures in the process. These theories of acculturation and intercultural identity describe communication as the mediating process required to facilitate the transition from one culture to the next. Kim’s theory of acculturation maintains that increasing interpersonal communication within the new host environment will result in increased acculturation. Interpersonal communication with those residents of the new host culture is expected to facilitate acculturation. ‘Ethnic communications’
with those from the home basis culture are not expected to enhance intercultural identity.

The aim of this thesis will be to examine the strategies of acculturation used by the second and third generation South Asian immigrants. This will include an understanding of the socio-cultural, economic and political scenario of that time. The parameters which will be examined in detail are homeland, family, the Non-resident South Asian (NRSA), women and language. Approaches used will be diaspora theories, and certain aspects of postcolonial and postmodern literature.

This thesis works towards exploring acculturation strategies. These strategies have been categorized into Physical, Social, Psychological, Cultural and Religious. There is a focus on memory and cultural markers which help to constitute the immigrant identity and also on issues arising from the social situation like racism and assimilation. The research attempts to locate acculturation strategies in the following novels: Meera Syal’s *Life isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee, Anita and Me*, Atima Srivastava’s *Transmission* and *Looking for Maya*, Ardashir Vakil’s *One Day*, Preeti Nair’s *One Hundred Shades of White*, Gautam Malkani’s *Londonstani*, Sara Suleri’s *Meatless Days*, Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* and Romesh Gunesekera’s *The Match* and *The Sandglass*. However, during the analysis a brief review of the emotion and actions of the first generation immigrants who suffered from a strong
sense of alienation and marginalization will be recorded. The writers have set the novels in the milieu of the last two decades in Britain with the exception of Hanif Kureishi whose novel is set in the London of the 70s.

The research project is an attempt to trace certain concerns like hybridity, mimicry, fragmentation, agency, decentering the dominant culture, appropriation, ventriloquation which have been used by the authors in a multicultural set up. The subsequent chapters will attempt to give an overview of the initial phase of the writers of the first diaspora from the subcontinent. The writers here range from Mulk Raj Anand to Ruksana Ahmed. However, this will be a brief sketch only of their diasporic output dealing with concerns between India and Britain which have been raised by the texts. Other chapters will showcase an analysis of the acculturation strategies used with reference to the novels stated above. An attempt will be made to establish the hypothesis that the deep rooted values of the homeland exists in spite of living in the hostland. An attempt will be made to redefine, reset the notions and retainers of one’s homeland. It is anticipated that South Asians are colonizing the face of the country which had earlier colonized them. The final chapter will analyse the strategies used in connection with language issues. An analysis reveals aspects like bilingualism, code switching and the creation of a hybrid language.

The diaspora involving the second and the third generation has emerged out of a conscious, voluntary decision taken by qualified people who went to lands that
were economically richer and more developed with established sites of power and hegemony. There is a greater diversity of professional, educational qualifications, and an even sex ratio. The second generation of immigrants, inscribe the identity of the diaspora within the circumference of their cultural surroundings. They, being twice or thrice removed from the homeland, cannot create it with the same intensity and nostalgia as their parents despite receiving its images from them, books and media. A new cultural identity that can mediate between both the worlds successfully is formed by the process of absorption and modification of the values of the diaspora and the dominant culture. This new identity comes in conflict with that of the first, and the popularity of diasporic literature under this theme bears ample testimony to the fact. The second and third generation, global in its outlook, local in its food, culture, religion and traditions is marked by a high sense of distinct identity. It is highly conscious of the contributions made by its parent culture.

Even with voluntary immigration, the freedom to return to the motherland is not easy. The hostland creates its own control and denies an easy return while readjustment to daily living, education, changed social values and new ideals make it physically difficult. The space of the diaspora heightens imagination and sharpens one's reminiscences. Diasporic lives represented in and through the literary, become intricate sites marked by both discrepant memory and an awareness of their location in a multicultural world.
With improved immigrant laws, acceptance of a multicultural identity and enhanced visibility, the diasporic territory is easier to negotiate. Often there is a tussle between the hostland to retain what the immigrant offers and a campaign in the homeland to woo him back with various offers. The new generation immigrant has easy access to ethnic food, curry restaurants, popular fusion music, latest flicks with exotic locales, desi diasporic movies, dance forms and media. The elasticity and potency of the new diaspora, has improved through cheap travel packages, the internet, media and allows expatriates both to fantasize and visit the mother country whenever necessary. Wanchoo and Mukesh Williams elucidate:

The Indian Muslims in Hong Kong, the Hindus in South Africa, the East African Gujarati in the United Kingdom, the Punjabi Mexican Californians in America, the Sikhs in Canada, the Patels in Los Angeles, the Kerala Syrian Christians in Kuwait, the Sindhis and Gujaratis in Osaka and Kobe are all knit together and linked to their mother country through the Hindi feature film, grocery stores, curry restaurants, arranged marriages, ethnic newspapers with matrimonial ads, and community celebration of Hindu religious festivals.  

The last few decades has witnessed the maturity of the diaspora as it has attained self-apprehension and self-expression in all aspects. The old diaspora has made inroads into the new and has helped the new immigrant to arrive as a hyphenated individual. Jasbir Jain quotes:

The “immigrant” or the “diasporic” self is simultaneously open to two epistemologies, two histories and social realities. There is the history (and the memory ) of the colonial past and the racial
discrimination, which jostles with the native history of resistance and freedom struggle. Two systems of knowledge and two sets of cultural influences construct identity and the socio-economic reality of both the societies confront the self.  

Judith Brown contends,

...becoming a diaspora is a long term business managing change and continuity, and of negotiating old and new senses of identity as people come to terms with their new environment, and as they raise succeeding generations who in turn look critically at the position and achievements of an older generation of migrants and make their own decisions about who they are, how they should fit into their new homeland, and how they should relate to the land from which their parents, grandparents or even more remote ancestors came.

Within the politics of race and nation, the burgeoning growth of the diaspora is seen as the manifestation of a hybrid culture which Homi K. Bhabha calls the 'most enduring lessons' of our times. Diasporas appropriate new cultural modes through social interaction and reconfigure themselves. As they interact with other cultures and their motherland, diasporas transform those cultures and in turn get transformed. This process of eternal configuration and change, influence and reconfiguration, can be seen as the strength of this hybrid cultural form. The transforming energies of the diasporas is not altogether easy or conflict-free. In the process of interacting with dominant cultures, diasporas come in contact with latent forms of hegemony and control. The way they are able to mediate between
their parent culture and the new culture decides their success or failure in those areas.

Makarand Paranjape explains:

It may actually be a form of bi-culturalism, a richer and a more complex way of being that is equally at home and abroad, in the *des and pardes*, sometimes reversing or inverting the one for the other. Moreover, this diaspora may have a very significant role to play in the shaping of the future of the homeland itself. Thus, we might be actually witnessing the birth of new global Indian identity that is as comfortable in New Delhi as it is in New York. Certainly, one see an astonishing cultural continuity when one crosses boundaries these days – one never has to leave India, so to speak, even as one leaves its shores.67

The novels chosen here are rich in diasporic overtones and can be primarily treated as immigrant writing. However, the arc of diasporic location undertaken here in the thesis will be restricted primarily to India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The four countries chosen are because they share an interlinked historical and cultural background with certain similar values and ideologies. Any reference to these four countries individually or in isolation will have terms like ‘Asian’, 'Br Asian’ or ‘South Asian’. The restraining factor in this research is the lack of any established theories in literature on the strategies of acculturation adopted by the immigrants, but is textual and basis personal experience or feelings of the immigrant writer.
To conclude with a quote from Bhikhu Parekh about the state of the diasporic individual today:

The Diasporic Indian is like the Banyan tree, the traditional symbol of the Indian way of life, he spreads out his roots in several soils. Far from being homeless, he has several homes and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world. 68
Endnotes:


4. Ibid. p.145

5. Ibid. p.147


11. Ibid. p.16


13. Ibid. p.7


17. See Judith T. Shuval. “Diaspora Migration”, In Ajaya Kumar Sahoo and Brij Maharaj (Eds.) Diaspora Migration, Sociology of Diaspora – A Reader. Vol.1


34. Ballard, Roger. Desh Pardesh : The South Asian presence in Britain, UK :


38. Ibid, p.247


43. Wikipedia, ON 15 Mar. 2009,

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Tamil_diaspora>

44. Wikipedia, ON 15 Mar. 2009,

< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladeshi_diaspora >


49. Shuval, Judith T. “Diaspora Migration” In Ajaya Kumar Sahoo and Brij Maharaj (Eds.) *Diaspora Migration, Sociology of Diaspora – A Reader*. Vol.1 Jaipur: Rawat Publications 2007, p.32


60. Kim, Young Yon. "Communication patterns of foreign immigrants in the process of acculturation" In Human Communication Research.4, (1, Fall), pp.66-77

61. Ibid. pp.66-77

62. Ibid. pp.66-77


64. Williams, Mukesh and Rohit Wanchoo. Representing India- Literature, Politics and Identity, New Delhi : Oxford University Press 2008, p.241


68. Parekh, Bhikhu. “Some Reflections on the Indian Diaspora” In Journal of Contemporary Thought, Baroda 1993,p.106