

*Chapter - 7*

# *Conclusion*

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The history of India is the history of many thousands of Diasporas crossing borders over thousands of years. The modern Indian Diaspora now represents an important force in world culture. It is a very diverse diaspora. From religious preachers, followed by indentured labourers in the nineteenth century, to Indian traders settled in various countries, the outflow of migration has been continuous.

After independence people moved out to take advantage of Britain's need to rebuild the economy after the World War II. Now high flying IT Professionals and Medicos settle in US and Canada. Whether the migrants have been labourers or IT Professionals they have faced familiar issues in different contexts. Making economic trajectory, reconstructing their South Asian domesticity, creating a religious space at home and in public, teaching their children about their culture and relating their politics to the new world these are the tasks all diaspora people have to do.

The diaspora has played an important role in promoting Indian culture and is crucial to India becoming a superpower. The surge of interest in India on the global scene has infused non-resident Indians with a new self confidence and curiosity about their cultural identity. The outward movement of the Indian diaspora is now increasingly accompanied by an inward look that tries to trace roots and find histories. NRIs have now started giving a lot back to the country both financially and politically.

Now many young people of Indian origin are returning to the country to study or work as part of a search for their ancestral roots. Descendants of Indian immigrants who

left the country 300 years ago are now returning and trying to unearth their lineage with the help of the ancestral research center set up at Indira Gandhi National center for the Arts. The new generation of Indians abroad with their historical perspective now feels they are more than just Americans, British, Malaysians or South Africans of Indian origin.

As the overseas community has grown into a vibrant, successful diaspora and modern day travel and communication have developed a closer connectivity with India, the Indian government has made concerted efforts to reach out to the Diaspora. India has not maintained links with her children spread all over the world as China has done. China recognized its overseas community and utilized their services, India on the other hand veered from indifference to disdain before accepting them as people who could contribute to India's interests.

The diasporic studies have become the standard description for academic work on minorities living away from their ancestral homes. There has been no significant economic link between India and her diaspora though these links appear to be developing now. It can be said that the links between India and her diaspora are not those of language, religion, politics or economics, but of religion and culture.

In this modern age with an easy access to information and communication it seems that Easternisation of West and Westernization of East would lead to monolithic culture. True dominance in the new world is not political but economic and cultural, not physical but subconscious. The colonizer is not armed with ammunition but with the glamour of success, success means money; today money has become the ladder of success. Scientific and technological knowledge, coupled with managerial skills, implanted in rational mind is

what is aimed at by the educationists. English has become indispensable to learning in developing countries like India.

The effect of Westernization is evident in the social behavior of students of English medium institutions. The results of the study may prove an eye opener to the people concerned about the preservation of the culture, morals, values and age old traditions of the ancient Indian culture which are at stake not only among the diasporic Indians but also within the country due to the effect of corporate culture and growing economy of the country.

People of Indian origin living in foreign have been conscious in preserving and promoting Indian culture. The need of the hour is to give our children the best possible training through formal education at the same time to protect them from becoming victims of individualism, restless competition, materialism and excessive rationalism. To maintain 'the accepted core value', thereby 'goodness and humanity,' 'promote and preserve their ancient cultural traditions, 'follow religious practices', and retain their cultural identity, these are the concerns of Indians living in foreign .

For example Indians living in Mauritius suffered homesickness and inhuman treatment in the early period of their migration. As their number grew they were able to overcome their troubles, resist the attack made on their religion by means of educating them through foreign language with a view to secure their conversion to Christianity. They made attempts to preserve their language through informal classes held at Baithakas and with support from religious associations from India, transmitted the knowledge of vernaculars to their younger generations.

With the appearance of Gandhi and Arya Samaj in Mauritius the situations underwent a drastic change. With active participation of Indians in politics and with the economic prosperity they achieved, the scenario was altered. They reconstructed their cultural identity, carefully and consciously saved their language, religion and culture. It took several generations in the century for the ex-indentured labour to become prosperous and urban working class.

Amitava Kumar's *Husband of a Fanatic* clearly reflects his biographical influence on his writing. It is a fiercely personal reflection on the idea of the enemy. It is a personal journey through India, Pakistani relationship of love and hate. Mr. Kumar happened to fall in love with an academic named Mona Ali a few years ago. He was a Hindu from India, she a Muslim from Pakistan, and they felt that it happened because they were away from their countries. Mr. Kumar, a secular Indian liberal, was irrevocably in love with Ms. Ali. The Kargil War didn't stop their marriage, nor did their families.

However, Mr. Kumar had to go a charade of religious conversion, adopting the name Safdar, because he was told had he not converted, their marriage would not be deemed legal in Pakistan. In an honest and moving rendering of the thoughts that crossed his mind, Mr. Kumar confesses his ambivalence about his conversion, aware that it would be painful for his parents. They frankly told Mr. Kumar that they would not have expected Ms. Ali to convert to Hinduism, and his mother also told him that now he had no right to criticize Hindus.

Mr. Kumar wants to understand why his conversion, which he describes as insincere and fake, is such a big issue - not only for his mother but also for hundreds of Hindu nationalists from the Indian Diaspora. He steps out of his ivory tower, and meets the paper

tigers in their dens. Being happily married to a Muslim woman, Kumar attempts to understand the nature of the divide between Hindus and Muslims and the consequences that arise from it.

Much of Kumar's book occupies itself with exposing the shallow, unexamined and compensatory machismo of the hindutva ideologues who dominated Indian political life in the 1990s. Kumar provides important reminders of the fusion between Muslim and non-Muslim culture in India before and even after partition. But perhaps the shallowest part of the book is Kumar's highlighting of his wedding and his "half-conversion". Kumar understands South Asia's upsurge in violent religiosity in terms of its economic, social and governmental roots. The proliferation of religious violence also forces him to scrutinize the efficacy of India's secular leadership, as well as his own secular intellectual beliefs and idealism.

Throughout *Husband of a Fanatic* Kumar gets progressively more skeptical of secularism's ability to combat religious fundamentalism and begins to see it as an elitist force that is unable to remedy the problems that affront India. Instead of being forced into a secular identity, Kumar wants to be truthful to a more personal identity - that of being the son of Hindu parents who married a Muslim woman and converted to her religion, albeit just on paper. He "must not speak in the language of rational certainties but in the faltering vernacular of doubt and half faith I am a Hindu, and I am not".

Thus *Husband of a Fanatic* reflects Amitav Kumar's view about forbidden love, his own marriage, tragic-comic border tension, Gujarat riots and the poisonous issue of conversion as seen and experienced as a person. In this fiercely personal essay he examines

the relationship not only between India & Pakistan but also between Hindus and Muslims inside India.

This book is an account of a writer's experiences with religious violence and ultra-nationalism. While divisions along caste lines seem to have been eliminated to a great degree at least in urban India but still it influences society. Caste violence exists in very real and dangerous forms all over India. Twice in his book he comments about the Indian brand of secularism being somewhat undemocratic because the English-speaking elite of India has not granted the likes of him (Barotia, the Hindu fundamentalist character) a proper place under the Indian flag. Later again he had similar thoughts while talking with the BJP guy Dalmia.

There is much to criticize about Islamic, Christian, Jewish and other forms of fundamentalism. This book is an attempt to write a travelogue against the backdrop of the fundamentalism experienced from the closest quarter in particular Hindu fundamentalism. It is a writer's account of a series of his encounters with violence.

Throughout the narrative the divisive forces between the two religions are highlighted forcefully. The Hindu-Muslim divide is almost always interchangeable with the India-Pakistan border and divide. Yet dichotomies abound as they surely must where complexity accompanies conflict. For instance, the hierarchy of caste and religion that forbids interclass marriages coexists with other forms of division.