Chapter Four

Issues of Transnationalism

The concept ‘Transnationalism’ emerged in 1990’s. It makes a better step of connection between persons, groups and societies across borders. It brings about changes in the social, cultural, financial and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination. The faster growth of communication, transport, trade and information networks through globalization has strengthened the networks of migrants to two or more places.

In Desirable Daughters (2002) and The Tree Bride (2004), Mukherjee mythologises a progressive Indian ancestor and lives of the protagonist, Tara Chatterjee and her two sisters living different lives across the globe. Desirable Daughters conveys the tale of Tara’s path from India to San Francisco and back to Mishtigunj, the mythical place that has formerly played a significant part in her family history. Through this novel, she shows the issues of diaspora, community, history and shows the crashes of cultures. It also says the significance of transnational connections in the globalizing world. The people with more than one culture or more than one country are known as Transnationals. These people are global and they have connectivity all around the world.

Modern Diaspora is a transnational community. They are confidently re-rooted in the host land and not at all uprooted from the homeland. They too desire to come to the homeland but their desire is not considered as a nostalgic desire for roots. The traditional and spiritual diversity are acknowledged by the transnationals and thus they have multiple cultural attachments. They are neither considered as assimilates nor separatist. In Mukherjee’s Desirable Daughters, she describes the reality of the American as well as the Indian society and also gives importance to show the
necessity of immigrants to select their home by frequently adjusting themselves to the new homeland and re-transferring their connection with the old homeland. Their old and the new world’s relationship keeps on moving.

Mukherjee as a transnational gives importance equally to India and America in *Desirable Daughters*. It is a story of three sisters named Padma, Parvati and Tara, who belong to a traditional Indian Brahmin family. Their own peculiar methods attempt to break the old age traditional imprisonments of gender roles in order to lead a complete life which could adapt the goodness and modernism of Indian and American soil. This novel is an instance for the philosophy of Diaspora. This can be seen in a variety of ways stretching from Tara and her sister’s tales of transnational migration to the conflict of home and homeland that ends in Tara’s ultimate travelling to India and search for family history. Even though, Tara’s search of her origin gives an identity and secure feeling in the land of birth, it increases a difficulty in the host country. The novel gives a clear idea regarding the protagonist’s reinventing and relocating the home, though she left behind her homeland. The depiction of transnational travel in this novel consist of numerous dimensions such as private, public, nationwide and world-wide.

The transnationals are to some extent different from the immigrants and expatriates due to their traditional connections and clashes in culture because the contemporary migration becomes globalized. So that they widely travel and adopt them self for each and every culture and made connections all over the world. The writers who deal with the transnationalism gives importance relating the plot such as crossing continents, countries leaving behind the family and culture. They often use the metaphor of travel to show the issues regarding ‘diaspora’. Presently Mukherjee is considered as a transnational. She enters into several stages such as exile,
expatriation, and immigration. Her travel changes her character and shades various colours in each stages of her personal life.

Mukherjee in the novel, *Desirable Daughters*, recovers the polygenetic origins of the American nation, its culture, and its individuals. She also recognizes that as a result of globalization, the transnationals succeed and break the boundaries they cross. *Desirable Daughters* tells the lives of three sisters Padma, Parvati and Tara, who belong to Hindu Brahmin background, the two amongst the three sisters endure diasporic issues. Tara, the protagonist, in *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride* is Indian and American by culture equally. The three sisters are the daughters of Motilal Bhattacharje, a trained engineer who had turned his training into tea-business. Their home named ‘Raj-style fortress of a home’ situated on Ballygunge Park Road.

Ballugunge Park Road was an outstanding address in those years, one that practically shouted “old money!” But we were not ‘old money’ by any stretch. Both of my parents were born in Calcutta but their parents still pined for the eternal greenery of East Bengal. My mother’s family hailed from Dhaka, my father from a provisional town called Faridpur, both of which I had not seen until my impulsive visit a year ago. In the way of provisional gentry, my father’s father was the bright boy with prospects, my grandmother the comely town girl from an established family. Her dowry enabled my grandfather to complete his education and move to Calcutta. (DD 33)

Talking about the society to which she belonged, Tara says, “To be Calcutta bhadra lok, as we Bhattacharjeees were, was to share a tradition of leaderships, of sensitivity, of achievement, refinement, and beauty that was the envy of the world. That is the legacy of the last generation of Calcutta high society, a world into which
we three sisters were born, and from which we have made our separate exists” (DD 22). Tara celebrates and gives a clear description about her city called Calcutta,

It’s one of those cities in the world with negative cachet, a city to escape, one of those hellholes made famous by Mother Teresa and mindless comparisons in the American press: Dirtier than Calcutta. Crueler than Calcutta. Poorer than Calcutta. I grew up in a city that never pitied itself, a city that deflected all the abuse. Insults were the badge of our superiority, proof to others’ ignorance. Someone in the family, deep in the gloom of East Bengal shortly after the First World War, the long before independence and the Partition riots, had the courage or the desperate to announce Baba, I am going to Calcutta. (DD 22)

The three sisters, Padma, Parvati and Tara, were born on the same date in October night with three years separating each one of them. Their mother names them and hopes that they will stay alive and flourish so she named them after goddesses. Tara quotes a poem “Sisters three are we . . . as like as blossoms on a tree. But we are not” (DD 33).

Padma, six years senior to Tara, conveys her wish to father at the tender age of fifteen that she wants to turn out to be a performer. Her father does not allow her to choose the acting career. So many offers came to Padma but she puts an end to her career because of his father’s compulsion. She does not totally sacrifice her passion but moves on a similar path of acting, she takes up “multicultural performance artists role for local schools and communities centres staging Indian mythological evenings, with readings, slide shows, recitations and musical accompaniment” (DD 94). Padma, Didi, is a well-travelled women and is the follower of the Indian tradition in her
clothes, hair style, food, but her values are American. Her relations with Ronald, Sohrab, Danny, Harish, Darshan indicate her American values. She works as a television anchor of Indian television programme set in Jackson Heights, Queens, and run by her Indian lover, Devanand Jagtiani (Danny). She lives with her husband Harish Mahta in New Jersey. He is a Punjabi and a divorcee with grown-up children.

The second daughter, Parvathi, who migrates to the United States for studies had settled in Bombay after marriage. Due to homesickness, she leaves the hostland and settled in the homeland. So she is not considered as Diasporic because according to Brah, Diaspora is, “about settling down and putting roots elsewhere” (DD 182). In the United States she meets and marries Aurobindo Banerji who works in the Boston bank. Her only transgression is that she chooses her own husband and marries him. Her immigration experience, thus, includes only impermanent. So Parvati cannot be said to be diasporic. She apparently lives a more comfortable life than any other sisters. She has two sons named Bhupesh and Dinesh. Living on “the fifteenth floor of a spectacular high-rise, building the bedrooms over-looks the Arabian Sea” (DD 52), she occupies the traditional and contented home and exists according to her caste and class. Tara describes Parvati's life therefore:

In her Bombay flat each object has its rightful place. She doesn’t waste time hunting in closets and drawers, as I seem to have to do, for basics such as needle and thread, spot remover, matches, scratch pads and postage stamps. No piled-up dirty dishes in her kitchen sink, even though she doesn’t own a dishwasher, no wet towels on her bathroom floors, no beds left unmade, though she has three to four nuclear family members as houseguests almost every day of the year. (DD 55-56)
The logical characterization of Parvati’s home contrasts exactly so with the absence of organization of Tara’s home in San Francisco and Padma’s in New York. Parvati’s home in India can be supposed to be demonstrative of a so-called reliable Indian household.

Tara, the youngest of the three, is the narrator of the story. She is thirty six years old, modern, postgraduate, convent educated, extremely Americanized and a kindergarten teacher. Her husband is Bishwapriya (Bish) but she got divorce from him and lives in San Francisco with her teen age son, Rabindranath Chatterji called Rabi and Andy, her live-in-lover, a Hungarian Buddhist contractor, a yoga instructor, a Zen master, refugee, red-bearded, former biker, and former bad-boy. Tara spent her childhood with her sisters in Calcutta in the sixties. Three sisters live in different situations and they all undergo self-realization and self-actualisation. They were in search of identity and the sisters such as Tara and Padma suffer from the diasporic problems.

Bish is a transnational scholar, who travels widely. He is born and brought up and educated in India but for higher studies she migrates to Stanford and works there, become a millionaire. Tara travels with him to California and there he has started the company project, CHATTY, the operating system for the world. The following expression shows his transnational network. “I went to Bangladesh” (DD 269), where his family origins are East Bengal. Like the Mughal Emperors, Bish maintains a series of places around the known world, and bestows new wealth. His professional network is transnational.

Tara is aware of Bish’s transnational network of his CHATTY. In The Tree Bride, the sequel to Desirable Daughters, Tara tells “At the time of bombing, CHATTY had assembly plants in twenty countries, research facilities on three
continents and a worldwide workforce of well over a hundred and fifty thousand” (TB 17). The CHATTY network is the operating system of billion cell phones with the ever-widening chips. So “the world is getting smaller every day” (DD 256). With this network, Bish, Andy, Jack Sidhu, Rabi, Parvati, Tara, Auro are linked. Bish is thinking of CHATTY’s second and third generation.

The character Tara, both in the novel *Desirable Daughter* and *The Tree Bride*, is linked to Tara Lata, a tree bride. The event happens in 1879, in the place called Bengal, “today’s Bangladesh” (DD 5). At the age of fifteen, Tara Lata’s was engaged to a person and on the day of her marriage he died because of snake bite. “She was now not quite a widow, which for a Bengali Hindu woman, would be the most cursed state, but a woman who brings her family misfortune and death. She was a person to be avoided. In a community intolerant of unmarried women, his Tara Lata had become an unmarriageable woman” (DD 12). Her father Jai Krishna Gangooly is a pleader in High court brings a solution by taking the Hindu custom. He changes her fate and prevents her child from a lifelong curse of widowhood by marrying her to a proxy-husband, a tree: “Tree Bride- she'd been proxy- married to a tree at the age of five” (TB 28). He permits her to occupy the respected position of married woman within the family home:

She is being saved from the fate of a despised ghar-jalani, a woman-who-brings-misfortune-and-death-to-her-family, by the quick thickening of their wise, god-fearing patriarch. May she remains a wife, a wearer of vermilion powder in her hair-par, and not a widow, well into the age of white hair? She heeds the counsel of her elders. Veiled head bent low, she allows them to guide her to her seat before the sacred fire. She concentrates on the lithe flash of scarlet lac dye
around the rims of her bare feet. She cannot shut out the sorrowful whispers of the cursed girl, the unlucky child, but she refuses to believe them. She smells flowers instead of rotting leaves and sour mud. (DD 15)

Tara Lata, a tree bride turns herself as a saint, spiritual healer, and the freedom fighter. She lives the rest of her life in her father’s compound emerging only when she is pulled off by the colonial police for her support to India’s freedom fighters.

The Home of Tara Lata Gangooly (1874-1944), known to the World as Tara-Ma. Behind these walls lived an Untrained Nurse, spiritual healer, and inspiration to generations of peace-loving and peace-seeking individuals from around the world. During the Bengal famine of 1942 she fed the town and the outlying villages. She rallied the cause of an Independent India and United Bengal and protected young freedom fighters from British arrest. She herself was dragged from her home on the Night of October from again. Her death was announced on October 18, 1944, and attributed to a heart attack. (DD 20)

Tara, the protagonist is named after her great grandmother: “I had been named for her – I have felt, for no discernible reason, a profound connection. She had two sisters, as do I. Perhaps we learned the same nursery rhyme: We are sisters three/ as alike as three blossoms on one flowering tree. But my sisters and I are Calcutta girls, a city that Tara Lata never saw” (DD 16). Unlike Tara of The Tiger’s Daughter, Tara Lata in Desirable Daughters, has deep relationships with her ancestry, her culture. She connects her own life with the mythic Tara Lata, a tree bride. The novel is not just a simple tale of the three desirable daughters and their different situations of background but it is a complex transnational tale remarking on the complicated and
mysterious development of growing up and the diasporic problems of these three sisters Tara, Padma and Parvati to stick to their own adjustable self, their cultural moorings in times of crisis.

Tara comes across and come into contact with more number of countries. She belongs to more than one culture/country. She is considered as multicultural. By birth she belongs to the Indian Bengali Brahmin culture and by staying on in the United States, she is an immigrant American and a follower of American culture. She has the impact of Hungarian culture because of her stay with Andy. She lives among the people of different national backgrounds- Hungarian, Indian, Chinese, American, Argentine etc. In an interview by M.Krasny, Mukherjee says that “Tara . . . is living in world where ‘East is East, West is West’ is no longer possible because of globalization, art, culture, trade” (123).

Tara accepts both Indian and American culture and becomes a transnational. Tara is immersed in Indian culture when she first arrives in America. She serves her husband like an Indian wife. When her husband, Bish and his friends watch a Sunday football game she patiently “serves pakoras and freshening drinks” (DD 24). She did all the domestic duties and behaves like a perfect Indian wife and a model for the arranged marriage. On seeing her Indianness, Bish takes great pride in showing his parents “. . . How well-trained this upper-class Ballygunge girl had become, what a good cook, what an attentive wife and daughter-in-law. What a bright and obedient boy she was raising” (DD 82). She sacrifices her studies and wishes to take care of her son. She stays at home like a traditional Indian mother. She devotes her whole life for the welfare of her family. As Khandelwal writes of India culture, “marriages are considered permanent and should not be altered by either partners’ free choice . . . Divorce was taboo, and considered a sure sign of Americanization” (119).
According to the custom of orthodox Indian family, the father in a family will select a suitable guy for their daughters and due to their belief towards their father the daughters accept the arranged marriage. On seeing the arranged marriage of Tara, her friends in America could not believe and find it hard to digest that Tara agreed to marry and gets the knot tied with the person whom she never met because he was her parent’s choice and it has obviously turned out to be a disaster for her. Tara is modern but she marries Bish because her father had told her that “it was time to get married and this was the best husband on the market” (DD 26). The friendly submission to the guidance of the marital market place is not problematic to comprehend in the background of the Indian orthodox families. However, Tara could see through the limitation of her narrowed psyche as she realizes that “I wasn’t, perhaps I’ll never be, a modern woman” (DD 27).

Tara represents a position of diasporic inadequacy, which Gayatri Spivak describes as being particularly susceptible and incomplete:

The disenfranchised woman of the diaspora . . . cannot . . . engage in the critical agency of civil society . . . to fight the depredations of global economic citizenship . . . . For her the struggle is for access to the subject ship of the civil society of her new state; basic civil rights of decolonization at home and abroad, she is not yet so secure in the state of desperate choice as to even conceive of ridding her mind of the burden of transnationality. (252)

Tara after some years of stay in California, adopts and assimilates herself to western culture. She has, by then, twisted her back on all those orthodox pictures of how married women of India have to be-obedient, submissive, self-sacrificing and chaste and so on. Tara becomes more at ease with American culture, she moves from
seeing herself as a good Hindu wife-to-be to an independent, liberal Californian, and
one of the unblemished appearances of this change of identity, the manner in which
Tara’s awareness of her sexuality changes over the years. Nevertheless as Tara adapts
herself to life in California, she starts to give out definite long-standing ethnicities and
finds assimilating to a Western environment a progressively easier development.

The “boy” (they are always “boys” when fathers choose them for their
daughters) who was selected to jumpstart my life, to be worshipped as
a god according to scripture was (and is) Bishwapriya Chatterjee. . . .
His American friends call him Bish . . . I, of course, as a good Hindu
wife-to-be, could not utter any of his names to his face. But we're
progressive people; after crossing the dark waters to California I called
him Bishu, then Bish. (DD 23)

Tara acknowledges when she says her ‘American’ desire for freedom had
made her choose sexual promiscuity as a way of getting away from her background,
but it had only made her lonelier, whilst that “loneliness had made me wanton” (DD
263). She feels isolated and secluded. “After a decade of marriage when she realized
that the promise of life as an American wife is not being fulfilled, she divorced him”
(DD 82). Her husband’s traditional mental attitude to limit her to work makes her feel
boredom. So she looks for divorce but stays in touch and serves as a provider and
protector. The divorce is friendly, but the East Indian Community has no longer of
formalities for divorce so the divorce is a kind of open secret, understood but not
really acknowledged.

There are so many restrictions placed for women in India and her San
Francisco adventure wouldn’t happen in India. There, a divorcée is considered as
different and they will not be allowed to have a live-in-lover but life in America is
different. For the question why should Tara “decide to leave her protector and provider” (DD 66). Her mental situation makes to divorce her husband. Mostly she is alone at home, not allowed to work, and wants to drive but she thinks what will the society say, and where should she go? This is the way a typical Indian woman would think. Bish is a typical Indian husband who cannot understand her needs and problems, yet permits her what she wants to do – divorce, job and live-in-relationship too. They stay in touch with each other for the sake of their son.

Tara’s choice to break up Bish signifies a certain stage in the direction of a new realisation in which the ethnicities of Indian philosophy no longer take over Tara’s activities and where the sentiments and decisions of others do not stance a continuous threat. Mukherjee has been criticized for her protagonists’ unqualified choosing of America by discarding India. Brinda Bose also mentions the challenging features of such a choice. She claims: “What gets covered in the furry of change and action is the conflict and confusion of the whose cross-cultural business . . . the trauma of getting used to the idea that one is not going to be completely at home in either place” (49).

Marriage and migration have given her boundless and undreamed independence. Tara takes a bold decision to leave her husband and selects a school for Rabi to reconstruct and redefine an identity of her own. Her choice to get separated from her husband, a wealthy, fascinating, attractive and a very popular man clearly shows that in the migrated America also the wife requires a little else from marriage than being limited to the role of a wife; endlessly on display at dinners and openings. Her requirement to be an American wife is not satisfied by Bish.

Tara lives in San Francisco and relates sexually with many men whom she likes and needs. A typical American divorce settlement follows. She accepts to share
her house with Andy and as her lover too. Andy is an immigrant American whose origins are in Hungary, who has migrated to America, has travelled in India, Japan, crossed Austrian border as a two year old during the 1956 uprising. Sexual, jealous and frustration almost certainly drove him to the distressed action. As Mukherjee writes: “What set him could well have been the attempted reconciliation of Chatterjee” (DD 275).

She defines her relationship with Andy as follows:

We were exotics to each other, no familiar moves or rituals to fall back on. He interpreted my fear as shyness. He was not my first American lover, but he was twice the mass of any man I’d ever known, a bearman, red-bearded, woolly armed, hairy-chested gently spoken but, I was sure, given to violence. Something in me (and it’s not hard to figure out where) responded to those incongruities. (DD 77)

Tara likes her love-life with Andy because she senses that there is a little unusual, to some degree that describes the set standards and structures. Regarding the love, they have privacy and have their own definition.

Rabi is different from the Indian Brahmin culture. Although he is the son of Indian parents he adopts the life-style of American culture. With his Americaness, he reveals his sexual co-ordination to his mother, which is ridiculous in the Indian background and in addition to that, he is also under the influence of drugs. Tara is in search of freedom for herself but she is not satisfied with the excess freedom available to her son. She is frightened with the liberty in his school. Tara says, “Overnight, he was going to school with the children of San Francisco’s bohemian elite, kids who’d never harboured an illegal thought, nor suspected the existence of repressive social codes and norms of behaviour” (DD 153).
Tara was warned by the family members and Bish regarding Rabi’s education. Bish wants Rabi to have an Indian setup. The men in her life who represent two diverse cultures and her cultural background, brings out the struggle of imposing an Indian pattern of parenthood:

I took Rabi and the first time in my life, I want to slap him, scream at him and tell him to shut up, but parents can’t feel this way. No, that’s not right, I’ve seen them in parking lots and supermarkets. They get furious and make fools of themselves and security guards have to be called and they get in the papers for child abuse and end up in the jail. Indian mothers don’t; we don’t have violent feelings except against ourselves, and never against our children, at least not against our sons.

(DD 40)

Even though she is not such a serious mother, her relationship with him is not an easy one. Her struggle with Rabi is well represented in the passage in which she feels like slapping him when he asks her why she hates her sisters. She considers his question as disrespectful. Her inability to deal with her son does not seem to be exclusively a matter of generation conflict, but also a matter of cultural conflict. Rabi is bred in the American culture. Owing to his exposure to the host culture, he evaluates his parents’ culture objectively. He too is a transnationalist, he is quite ease both in the United States and in India. Identity is not so much the act of choosing between cultures, but rather it is having the power to redefine the terms of cultural practices and customs to fit one’s own experience.

The American magazines show the prospects of sexuality different from their own. This attracts Tara and other Indian wives and mothers living in Atherton. She uses to look at those while she lives with Bish during her early days in California. She
wonders on the topics in the magazine which are forbidden to women regarding the gender relation. In addition to sex, these magazines also arise womanhood to chat regarding their issues and share their dissatisfactions. These topics are consider as bad topics in the Indian societies and the people feel shy to read these kinds of topics. But in California they are very open and these magazines often encourage women to experiment with “sex positions, and pointedly meaningless one-night stands” (DD 83). She discusses these with her Indian friend Meena Melwani and they are amused:

Does your husband know how to satisfy you? First time, I have heard husband and satisfy in the same sentence, giggled one of us. Are you his breakfast, his snacks, the main course- or the dessert? Definitely his Alka-Seltzer! We giggled again. These American magazines and American marriage were not geared to the lives we led. Do women marry the best lovers they ever had? I think, unfortunately, we can all say yes. (DD 83)

Her free decision to live independently from Bish reveals her strong bravery. The life in United States changes Tara as a woman who is not just satisfied with traditional philosophies of a husband being merely a provider and a protector, she wants something more in the form of a true companion, more sharing, more opportunities, more freedom and more understanding of the matters of the heart. And that did not seem her possible with a husband who spent more than fifteen hours away from home in his office and she alone having to take care of their only infant. That marriage is a deal in the marital marketplace where women are thrown so unprepared by their families is so realistically built up but also through Tara’s marriage.

Tara successfully relocates herself in the New World and works as a kindergarten teacher. She separates from her family and community. At first she feels
a lot on thinking about her past life and comforts herself by the contact of her sisters, memories and calls from the family members but later she embraces the American freedom, adopts and assimilates to the New world environment. The change in identity is not as easily as a snake skin.

A vast change came in the life of Tara by the entry of Chris Dey, a bastard child of Padma Didi. This made Tara to investigate about the family origins and the secrets. Tara cannot believe that her unmarried sister Chris Dey Padma Didi had become pregnant and gave birth to Chris Dey with the illegal relationship with a Bengali Christian, Ronald Dey. She becomes upset and thought that Chris Dey cheats her in some way. On the advice of Rabi and Andy she discusses this matter with her sisters, Padma, who lives in New Jersey with Harish Mehta, a non-Bengali businessman and Parvati, who lives happy in Bombay with her husband and her two sons, Bhupesh and Dinesh. The sister makes her aware of the gangsters in Bombay and cautions her to be cautious of Chris. Tara doesn’t accept Chris Dey as her son (bastard). Tara surprised whether her sister could have a kid out of wedlock, her parents helpful in protecting the complete affair secret and whether she is the only one who does not know. She thought it as a kind of impossibility. Padma who is often referred to as Didi states desire for Ron Dey, a desire that is unfamiliar to her family. Nobody recognizes when the relationship began between Ron and Didi. Tara says “Passion like Didi’s is foreign to our family, recklessness unknown. She is our true American, our improviser, although I am the only one to hold the passport” (DD 31). The birth of Chris Dey, the consequence of premarital relationship is a hushed up family secret. She disowns the baby but the evidence is increasing and Chris produces a letter written by Ron Dey to Tara which creates doubt in her mind. It appears
possible that the young man’s statement is true and that Padma did bear an illegitimate child.

Tara calls the Sikh detective assigned to her case. This renews her link with the questions that surround the mysterious Christopher and also – by the implication – Padma’s relationship to him. It is revealed through the call of Jack, the detective that Chris is a criminal, member of an influential Indian mob and a murderer. Jack tells that she, Rabi, and Bish, together on a vacation, fail.

Her sisters ask her to give a complaint to the police regarding Chris Dey and Ron Dey, lover of Padma in India. Ron Dey places the child in an orphanage in Madhya Pradesh and supports him throughout his childhood and adolescence. Soon Ronald Dey had died in an accident in Bombay and after his death, and Chris Dey continues to grow up in an orphanage and sent to United States for education. After reaching adulthood Chris had been lastly informed of his parentage and he decided to meet his mother. He has only Tara’s address so he had come to the bay Areas but meanwhile Abbas Sattar Hai murdered Chris, gained entry into her house in the appearance of Chris with a letter supposedly from Ron Dey.

A “body was found in delta. It was Mr. Christopher Dey, the Indian national, of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India” (DD 276). The Dawood gang has planned to kill Bish and his family and so the member of the gang named Abbas Sattar Hai who was born in Bihar, raised in Calcutta and later joins Dawood gang in Bombay. He is an internationally wanted person for murdering and fire-bombing, poses himself as Chris Dey to enter in the life of Tara and he visits her frequently in the public places. Transnational network of crime is drawn through the portrait of fake multilingual Chris Dey who claims Tara as his aunt, ‘Tara mashi’. The multiple identities of the importer Chris Dey are signified with numerous names such as Abdul Rehman, Diego
D’Sauza, Sunil Ghose, Harilal Guha and Wahid Ali Ahmad. He is “known to assume the identities of his victims . . . a true chameleon” (DD 220).

The Americanized Indian policeman, Singh Sindhu, is assign to investigate this case and upcoming danger says about the danger in the life of Tara, Rabi and Bish. The Dawood gang are into drugs, prostitution, movies, home invasions, kidnapping, extortion, arson and bombing. Singh informs Tara, “They go where the money is. Drugs are big, movies are big, but the biggest thing in India now is high-tech . . . designers and chip engineers” (DD 223), the Dawood gang “controls organized crime in Bombay. They’re a full-scale criminal cartel with network all over Asia and the Middle East. They’re headquartered in the Gulf” (DD 222). Vandana Singh observes that “Desirable Daughter flaunts introduction of underworld network and terrorism on the American scenario” (193). Transnational network of crime is drawn through the representation of false multi-lingual Chris Dey. Cohen and Kennedy says, “Globalization greatly enhances the possibilities of white collar crime because of more open borders, computer link-ups and enhanced links of transport and communication” (158). Mukherjee tells Micheal Krasny in an interview that “the gangsters that I’m writing about in this novel are . . . smaller in their vision, narrower in their vision, and they go for not the world Trade but for the house that the ex-husband of the narrator, Tara, is visiting, because he’s the Bill Gates” (126-127).

In the meantime, an unknown person, sets a bomb in her house where Tara, Bish and their son Rabi are present. In order to save the life of Tara, Bish injures in a bad manner and was admitted in hospital. Even though he was recovered, he was crippled. Though her house is bombed by some unknown person, the police suspected Chris Dey because of his frequent visit to Tara’s house.
As soon as her house is firebombed she is totally exhausted making her longing for native land and traditional life more severe. A journey back to India reawakens a wish to discover her family’s ancestral origins and their place in the history of pre-independent India. She meets her parents at Rishikesh and visits the home of Tara Lata of Mishtigunge. Tara likes to see her husband, Bish, in their house to overcome from the current tension in her life. Both Bish and Tara blames themselves for the divorce and realized the value of relationships. However, a dreadful bang in the house astonished the moment of their reconciliation. The fire set to her house by her live-in-lover, Andy because of his jealousy towards the relationship of Tara and Bish. Formerly Bish thinks that Tara has unknowingly opened the gas and forgets to close the gas. Bish hopes that it is because of the foolish act of Tara, the fire accident happens but when he comes to know the real plan of Andy, he becomes furious.

They are remorseful for ruin each other’s lives. Tara comforts Bish, “Bish please, it my fault, my head was turned. I was naive I had too much time and no enough to do” (DD 265). Bish also accuses himself for his failure- “he had failed in his dharma, the basic duty in the house holder phase of his life, to support and sustain his marriage” (DD 265).

In the case of diasporic Indians travelling is not going away from Home, but rather from home to another. Tara frequently visits her lost homeland, India and also visits her land of origin, Bangladesh. Throughout the novel, both India and Bangladesh are in her conscious and unconscious mind. As a transnational character she visits her birth place in search of roots and it is neither homesickness nor nostalgia that made her to restore her past. She does not want to be in the birth place permanently.
Therefore, Tara, the desirable Indian daughter combines in herself the features of a distinctive Indian mind-set along with open-minded change for freedom offered by her acceptance of new American culture establishes in her live-in-relationship with the Hungarian lover. The change in her even after retaining the old world mares and morals indicate the identity dilemma at the heart of her position. She is not capable to agree to take the circumstance of her sister’s adultery and the way of life of her bastard son which shows that Tara, with her American clothes, hair-cut and language, is after all a typical Indian housewife. Tara Lata’s transformation from a docile Bengali Brahmin girl into a freedom fighter of resistance against the British raj is the source of Tara’s American identity and her own transformation. Tara’s return to the rooted self and infusing it with new meaning or understanding is for transformation/ mongrelisation. There is a hunger for connectedness.

Americanized Tara “. . . has been named for Tara Lata” (DD 16), which shows Tara’s deep association with her descendants and land of birth and she senses it. The change in Tara’s identity is not shown by change of name, like other characters in Bharati Mukherjee’s Jasmine in *Jasmine*, Hannah in *The Holder of the World* and Devi in *Leave It to Me*. She takes so many identities such as an American wife to Bish, live-in-relationship with Andy, a teacher in her school, an investigation reporter in the case of Chris Dey, Tara as a curious person to visit the homeland and search of her ancestral history. She is a combination of Indian expatriate, immigrant American and transnational identities. The names of Bishwapriya Chatterjee, Rabindranath Chatterjee, Devanand Jagtinati, Christopher Dey, Andras Karolyi, and Ronald Dey are shortened into Bish, Rabi or Rab, Danny, Chris, Andy, Ron. It is a token of their Americanization.
Tara’s awareness of her race and background also changes when she starts to assimilate to the American culture. She is at the top as she raises in a high class Bengal Brahmin family, Tara’s idea of race restricts to the ranked class system of Indian ancestral descent. Therefore once Tara moves toward to America with this definite idea of race, she is surprise to get such differences vanish and Indian culture considers as an outstanding thing rather than a large quantity of groups. “We’re a billion people, but divided into so many thousands or millions of classifications that we have trouble behaving as a monolith. Yet each Indian is so densely packed with family that he or she seems to contain hundreds of competing personalities” (DD 199). While debating the influence of the Indian caste system upon the racial realization of diasporic South Asians, Nazli Kibria writes:

Like other minority groups in the United States, South Asian American view issues of racial identity in ways that are influenced by conceptions of race that originated in their home countries. Because South Asian American communities are transnational in character-maintaining active relations among multiple countries of origin and settlement, the influence of these ‘native’ conceptions of race may be particularly sharp for them. For South Asian Americans, these ‘native’ conceptions of race may provide a frame of reference by which to resist the dominant society’s racial thinking. At the same time, these concepts contribute to the group’s racial ambiguity . . . (71)

Tara cannot be separated from her roots, even though Tara has opportunities to move completely from the traditional roles. Tara has a live-in-lover Andy, who provides physical comfort, after her divorce but she was not mentally comfortable and she is alienated and isolated. In her inner mind, she considers Bish as her husband and
it shows that the Indian women cannot free from the Indian traditional norms and Tara cheers it so she feels emptiness after the separation from Bish and the presence of her husband provides her inner comfort. She does not deviate herself from her motherly duties and so she keeps Rabi with herself, provides education and worries about the welfare of him. Though she is comfortable in jeans than silk saris she cannot escape from deep-rooted Indian background. She attracts toward the Indianness area in Jackson heights, New York where she goes with her elder sister, Didi, to purchase saris and jewellery for a party. She inspires by a high number of South Asian residents and business in New York. Tara says:

The attraction of Jackson heights, for me, had always been people pleasures; sidewalks full of Indians, every face is Indian, every shop and storefront features Indian jewellery, Indian clothing, Indian travel, Indian food and spices, Indian sweets and restaurants. The smells and the noises are familiar; seventy-Eighth Street and all the side streets are clogged by double-parked cars and delivery vans. It’s the loud, naked swagger of money being made- not quite the husband music and water fountains of Silicon Valley – but wherever, it’s intoxicating. (DD 199)

Tara is different from the other people in America even though she behaves in American manner. Often her sister Parvati accuses her of becoming too America. In an attempt to encourage her to come home, Parvati writes a letter to her confidently affirming, “. . . you child isn’t American or Indian and if you stay there any longer, you won’t be either” (DD 66). But Tara does not response and taken this letter seriously because her change in her life style is liked by her and it is hard to give up all those things which was created by her in California. Tara’s struggle is a longing of making hybridity and establishing new forms of identity and ethos in space.
Mukherjee has beautifully expressed the issues of transnationalism, such as assimilation of traditionalism and spiritualism of East with materialism of the West, through her novel *Desirable Daughters*. Most of the characters of the novels are transnationals and they have a land of origin and a host land. They are connected with their homeland even though they emigrated from the country. They cross the borders of nation-states, travelled, migrated, and they are transnational. Remarking on this aspect in her novels Pushpa N. Parekh writes, “Fear, anger, pain, bitterness, confusion, silence, irony, humour as well as pathos underline her observations as she discovers for herself the undefined median between the preservation of old world and a situation into the new one” (117).

The protagonist of the novel, Tara is also a transnational and she is more connected with Parvati, who lives in India, than Padma who is in the United States. Tara says, “At least once a week I talk with Parvati in Bombay and about once a month with my parents in Rishikesh, a holy town on the banks of a holy river in Uttar Pradesh state, where they now live” (DD 52). She knows more about Parvati than Padma. Padma and Harish have married for twenty years but Tara has never met him. She muses “I’ve been trying to catch up (Padma) for 30 years” (DD 197).

The diasporic Indian identity becomes unclear with self-perception changing as one’s perceptions on the nearby atmosphere and ethos change. In *Desirable Daughters*, the formation of identity appears as a non-stop progression, continually changing and not ever really complete. Tara being a transnational, owns many identities at one time. This permits her the freedom to assimilate while at the same time holding the characteristics of Indian culture that she desires to preserve. Identity is no longer an established set of characteristics given away by family name, ethnicity and gender roles, but rather it can be smashed, melted down and rebuilt. It is fluid and
ever changing, subject to the experiences that will forever be moulding it into something new.

In *Desirable Daughters*, the protagonist is a transnational and she is neither separatist nor assimilationist. Tara clings to the homeland and the host land in a clever manner. She has both the Indian and American aspects such as her communication in Bengali and English, the food she cooks in Indian and American, the clothes she wears are Indian and American, even her sexual life indicates that she sustains both the Indian and American identities. The three different sets of experiences – as an expatriate, immigrant and transnational – are reflected in the works of Mukherjee but in all the sets the protagonist suffers from the issues of diaspora and they are not comfortable in any of the sets.

In the novel, *The Tree Bride* (2004), a sequel to *Desirable Daughter*, the protagonist is the same Tara Chatterjee. In this novel also she is consider as a transnational. After the fire-bomb in the novel *Desirable Daughters*, she journeys to India and searches her ancestry history. In *The Tree Bride*, Mukherjee deals with the powers determining the social order and patterns of relationships in nineteenth century colonial British India and the twentieth century America and India. For the transnationals, the most important aspect is the adaptation of the new homeland and conciliation with the old homeland. Nalini Iyer states that “Mukherjee’s work emphasizes the need for immigrants to choose their home by constantly adapting themselves to the new homeland and by constantly renegotiating their relationship with the old homeland” (29).

Britishers started to emigrate during the seventeenth century and India was one of their colonies where they reached and adapted into the cultures of natives. The East India Company plays very dynamic part in the grounds of British Raj in India.
The resources of India fascinated foreigners to the magnificent land which was filled with milk and honey. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I signed a charter to do trade in India so number of people migrated from England to India and English East India Company started to flourish in India in seventeenth century. To a great extent, they started to rule our country, India during the second half of the eighteenth century. Queen Victoria’s proclamation in 1858 sent the ICS officers to handle its administration. The British outlook in the direction of India experienced important modifications along the passing years. In pre-mutiny times the British were idealistically interested towards India. But later they turned as dominant rulers in India. After the First World War their trickery of stability was devastated. India’s freedom movement succeeded under Mahatma Gandhi, S.C. Bose, Pandi Nehru. In the last years of British Rai they were full of depressed for losing their control. Soon the misgovernment of British came to an end and Indian came to power.

Some of the people has settled and acknowledged the Indian nationality after 1947. They were determinedly deep-rooted in their new country. Cohen says, British outstanding diaspora in India were immigrants, because “instead of arising from a traumatic dispersal, diasporas could be generated by emigration in search of work, to further colonial ambition or in pursuit of trade” (61). The people came to India for the purpose of trade are known as Trade Diaspora. Those people assimilated the Indian life style such as they adopted the Indian way of clothes, language, food, religion and they almost become as an Indian. In the novel, *The Tree Bride*, the greatest examples for this kind of assimilation are the characters such as John Mist and Coughlin but even though the character like Treadwell does not change their own homeland culture, they adopted the Indian tradition to some extent. As Diasporas, they were in search of identity and Mukherjee has drawn the colonial history of India to present.
Her purpose is to portray the British imperial Diasporas in India, how they adapted and shaped their individuality as expatriates or immigrants or transnational. East India Company has chosen Calcutta as the headquarter and it has become as a powerful seat of Kingdom. Tara tells,

It was the wealth of India that underwrote the industrial and commercial prosperity of England. Britain started its India trade by purchasing Indian textiles. A hundred years later, to keep English mills operating, Indian textiles were banned, Indian weavers were killed, and India was forced to buy inferior British cottons. . . . The invisible hand of the market became the supreme adjunct of imperial authority . . . . It all began in 1833. (TB 45)

History plays a significant role in the novel The Tree Bride. Mukherjee portrays the diasporic circumstances and through that she formed amusing possibilities for the understanding of various histories, culture and the traditions. The change in the psyche of the displaced individual is a consciously directed self-fashioning. The traditional marginal community is frequently mandatory to proclaim its genuineness in an alien land just to guard and keep up its history and its space. These are the issues that provoke the diasporic Indian-American individual. Anita Balakrishan says, “Authenticity, relationality and the politics of representation are situated alongside each other and place similar demands on the diasporic subject. The very notion of authenticity demands a univocal response, yet diasporic identities are necessarily multifaceted” (256).

A transnational doesn’t root in any one home country but more than one. He is neither an oppositional nor assimilationist. In The Tree Bride, the characters such as Tara, Victoria, Bish, Yash are rooted in the countries of their homeland as well as host
land. Tara and Bish have come across a severe happening like firebombing of her
house but after that also they are residing on in United States. After the firebombing,
Tara plans to go to India but she doesn’t think of a permanent return to the native
country. Tara, the Transnational has a constant touch with the host land and the home
land and respect both the cultures.

In *Desirable Daughters*, Tara’s journey is from India to America but in *The
Tree Bride*, Tara, an Indo-American Tara’s travel, is in an opposite direction. Her
return to India is not like an expatriate but her transnational attitude of Tara that
makes her the traveller of the world. Migration/transmigration kindles transnational
connection. Travel plays a significant role in the life of the transnational. Migration
includes the issues of historical re-writing. In *The Tree Bride* Mukherjee excellently
intermingles past and present as she hints the relocation of British colonials to India
and some of like Vertie Treadwell ultimately return to England. The narrator, Tara
Bhattacharjee-Chatterjee, who is pregnant, a researcher, an American immigrant and
descendent of a Hindu Bengali Brahmin from India narrates the story of John Mist,
Vertie Treadwell, Nigel Coughlin, Owens and Tara Lata Gangooly, an Indian freedom
fighter. Psychologically Tara travels wherever her roots go after reading of the
sources of her research and her book. Tara is a little bit mobile in *The Tree Bride* than
in *Desirable Daughters*.

From her six years research she understands that Tara Lata is a relative of
herself through her maternal grandmother. Tara Lata stays in the same place of her
father and whoever come across her have left the places of their origin particularly
British and her own descendants like Tara, her sisters Padma and Parvati. The
attention on connection highlights the story that “. . . there are no coincidences, only
convergences” (TB 27). Tara Lata is pulled from home in 1944 by colonial authorities, who declare her passing away six days later.

The idea of research came to her mind after seeing the visible ghost of Tara Lata. She visits her house on Beulah Street and Tara hears and feels Tara Lata’s presence. She appeals to Tara to do the rites of cremation. Tara plans to India with Bish and her children to perform the rites of Tara Lata. This is conveyed in the epilogue of the novel. Tara trolls the internet for a round trip, San Francisco-Varanasi airfares and hotel rates. Ridiculously, Bish says, “I don’t think commercial airlines like to fly eight and half months-pregnant ladies . . . yet she decides . . . to go to Kashi”. (TB 283-284).

The first time I went back to India on my own, it wasn't just to see relatives. I took Rabi with me know my own American-style roots search, into the East Bengal-now Bangladesh- of my grandparents and a hundred generations of Gangoolys and Bhattacharjees . . . I felt for the first time how recent my family's Calcutta identity was, just two generations, how shallow those urban roots were, not much deeper then Rabi's in California. I saw my life on a broad spectrum, with Calcutta not at the center, but just another station on the dial. (TB 20)

Tara arranges the ceremonial cremation in the place called Kashi, the place where she lived and died. It is geographically located in Bangladesh, a country where Muslims lives in majority. Tara wants to perform Tara’s rites in her own religious culture to set free bride's soul free. “She named the town: Kashi . . . Kashi, she explained, is both the City of Light and the City of Liberating Cremation. When the cosmos chars into total blackness, Kashi glows because Shiva created it as a sacred where to die is to be saved” (TB 5). According to Tara, the ancestors is of opinion that
death is not the end of life but it is a starting of new life. She also recollects the story of her great-grandmother’s story: “story of god Shiva showing Kashi to his bride, Parvati. Kashi, the luminous city, where death holds no terror and no finality” (TB 285). In Kashi, “death would not have indicated the end of life, but the soul's return to the Abode of Ancestors, in realm invisible to mortals, to be judged, and returned in time to a new existence” (TB 284).

Tara learns from her research that Tara Lata was the daughter of a moderately westernized and partly traditional Jaikrishna Gangooly, bigamous lawyer. From the prologue of the novel, Desirable Daughters, one can know the clear story of Tara Lata. On the day of her marriage at the age of five, her would-be husband died of snake bite and to protect his daughter from the life-long disgrace, Gangooly made marriage arrangements of her daughter Tara Lata with a tree. She becomes a tree bride and becomes a freedom fighter. She boldly answers and faces the British colonial like John Mist, Treadwell and Nigel.

The Diasporas changes their name to indicate the fluid identity and transformations of central characters is slightly changed in The Tree Bride. Instead of female, the male character is renamed. John Mist, an orphan is renamed like Mukherjee’s female protagonist, Jasmine, Hannah, Devi and Dimple. He is renamed from- Bast’d Snow to Jack Snow to Jack Snow Mute to Master Snow to John Mist and travel from one place to another place. John Mist, is a teenager travelled from England to Calcutta, India. His specific distressing life possibly twisted him immigrant in India. His Mistnama, “mini-epic” (TB 66) narrates the story of his journey from England to India and his life, poor English boy’s life. “He had boarded in London as Jack Snow: cabin boy but anyone could see that he had emerged as a man, fully deserving a name of his choice . . . John Mist” (TB 120). There is also a
psychological journey, the transformation of John Mist who “Felt reborn” (TB 137). In India,

He trekked top Amarnath, the sacred ice-cave in the Himalayas where the Ganges comes to life; he visited Benares and slept in alleyways with the beggars; he prayed in mosques and honoured the burial sites of very pir; he tramped the length and breadth of India, surviving on the generosity of strangers. He was taken for Indian wherever he went. His origins were never suspected, even when passing the occasional Britisher. We are the same people, he wrote. A hundred miles east to Burma, a hundred miles north into Assam…” (TB 149)

He was removed over half a world from his London origins. He is known as cast-exempt Hindu. He has considered the villagers of Mishtigunj as his children. The spiritual sensibility has nothing to do with religion, culture, country. This is the change in his sensibility. His transformation is mysterious.

He is an English orphan who runs away from the dissimilarities of his orphanage life in England and in 1820 he was put outside the entrances of orphans and Foundlings Betterment trust, where he is called Bast’d Snow to differentiate him from the half dozen other bastards. At the age of six, he was sent to the work of sweeping animal waste and ditch line and he was called Jack Snow. There he spoke hardly ever and was called Jack Snow Mute. Then he came into contact with Captain Partidge and he called him as Master Snow. Soon he becomes as a pet of the Captain and an assistant of a surgeon named Miss Olivia, a bright lady and the future wife of an East India company director, Mr. Humphrey Todd-Nugent, mid 40s. Miss Olivia is a passenger in the ship and supposed lost at sea. So Todd Nugent brought burdens of
mutiny against the surviving statement of belief. At this moment Jack Snow the boy had died and John Mist, the young man was born.

At the arrival in Calcutta in 1832, all the crew in the ship, John’s mentor named Tom Crabbe, the Captain and Jack Snow were punished for the harm to Malabar queen, the ship in Mutiny. Again, John Mist is sent to an orphanage to learn trade for three years. There he met Rafeek Hai and Owens, who helped him against the fight with Captain Todd- Nugent. He takes revenge against him and sent to jail.

John Mist is released on parole and got a job in the company. He decides and says that “I no longer speak English” (TB 137) only Bengali. He also decides “... never to wear English clothes again ... native” (TB 114). He plans to murder Todd Nugent and his assistant. He is mistreated by the white East India company community in Calcutta. So he escapes deep into rural Bengal and creates a Utopian village, named after him – Mishtigunj, after his death. There he builds a good relationship among Muslims and Hindus and himself, a Christian. They lived peacefully there. He is called napoleon Bonaparte of the Bengal forests. There is “education, justice, health, food, a spirit of co-operation, and uninhabited worship of one’s god” (TB 150).

John Mist and his Mishtigunj show Mukherjee’s purpose to show the combination of cultures that was imaginable in the late eighteenth century India. Mist is adapted not only on particular level, John Mist personified the hybridity by becoming nearly Indian, but not moderately to the point that he gave up his language and declared. Hasanat says,

With his newly acquired hybrid identity in the home that he built in Mishtigunj, John Mist constructed a new life free from his past crimes and guilt. Mishtigunj thus became his Utopian vision of a home of hybrid perfection. He died like a hybrid saint, even in death
mnimicking the person he was but not quite (an Indian), accompanied by his friend Rafeek Hai, a Bengali Muslim lawyer with British education. (279)

In Mishtigunj only, Jai Krishna Gangooly and Rafeek Hai were the lawyers and Tara Lata Gangooly spent sixty five years of her life in Mist Mahal. In 1880, Mist and Hai are hanged by the British for disobedience. Tara Lata becomes an eyewitness of John Mist and Hai’s hanging. Hai saved him but they died together. Mist is the “British Hindu . . . such a total transformation . . . John Mist . . . British Hindu” (TB 149), who had barred Christians from Mishtigunj. Mishtigunj is originally named as George’s Bight, later renamed as Razakpur, after the local nawab, Razak Abdul Mohammed, whose father was an insignificant owner of Mishtigunj.

John Mist is considered as a significant stage in the colonial history. Likewise Virgl Arnest Regnald Treadwell, whose acronym is Vertie Treadwell. He is another important stage in the colonial history. He is just an opposite of John Mist. Vertie Treadwell was born in India and was sent to England for education and then he was in ICS, at Bombay, posted to Bengal, being a district commissioner from 1930 up through Independence. The British Colonials in India, especially the superiors sent him to a remote colonial station and so he was very angry and exposed his anger by hunting a tiger, which is the national animal of India. He doesn’t give respect India and Indians. But in an interview with Desai and Barnstone, Mukherjee says that “I wanted Vertie to come off as not an entirely unsympathetic character” (117). Treadwell has felt dissatisfied in his Indian career.

Vertie’s life is ruined by happenings in his family life in England before he sails to India. His legitimate colonial wife Iris and daughter Irene rejected him and went to NZ. Once again Iris married a person and his daughter, Irene is murdered by
her lover-husband. His illegitimate son lived in Alberta and British Columbia, days. The whole Treadwell family is moving, travelling around the world. Vertie’s last wife Thelma mark out the World War record for his son who is in northern Canada, and transmitted the Treadwell papers in a bag. These papers are thrown away on Victoria by her father due to her curiosity of history. Vertie even transformed in the final days of raj, he was Edwardian in his mind. So the Treadwell’s family is considered as transcontinental. The communication of American Victoria Treadwell and Ian Stone from New Zealand show it. Ian writes:

The world was far more integrated in those years than it is now. I mean simply that members of single family residing on the five continents and significant islands in between were not at that time considered out of the ordinary. Of course, I am an old man and speak with some authority only on matters pertaining to the British diaspora to the corners of its late Empire. (TB 229-230)

His parents and grandparents were born and buried in India, work for India, but Vertie doesn’t have house in the free India and had no right to own a plot of Indian soil. Vertie Treadwell’s wife went back to England with her legitimate daughter. Generally ‘memsahibs’ go back to England for their children’s education and ‘Sahibs’ visit every few years, even after “their daughters . . . got married . . . “ (TB 162). Victoria senses the unpleasantness of her father, the bastard’s anger. Vertie Treadwell never saw his children again. He was careless of them. His children have abandoned him. Even his granddaughter, Victoria, does not likes him. Victoria has multi-surnames. She is V.Khanna. ‘V’stands not for “Veena or Vibhuti?” (TB 7), but for Victoria. She is known as Victoria Alexandria Treadwell, Victoria Treadwell Percy, and Victoria Treadwell-Khanna. She is the wife of Yash Khanna, an American
immigrant from Delhi, India. By roots and marital relationship, she has obtains these multi-surnames because in India, the identities for the women were provided by father and husband. She is connected to India by Treadwell family’s imperial diaspora state and by marriage. She is changed even at the psychological level. So she says to Tara-
“I’m Indian . . . Just us five (Victoria, Yash, Bish, and Tara and their unborn daughter) little Indian” (TB 242).

Vertie is considered as a ‘nowhere man’ even though he is an imperial diaspora. After his retirement he went back to England and dies there. In his hallucination he frightened that he would be murdered. Vertie Treadwell gave a speech moderating his Indian home and identity:

I am one of the India-born. Fully ninety percent of my life has been spent in India. I have probably spent a greater percentage of my life in India than Mr. Nehru has, and certainly more than the late Mr. Gandhi has. I have participated in many of India's greatest moments. I have endeavoured from love to keep India free of modern contaminants.

(TB 201)

Nigel Coughlin is Irish by origins and he is born and brought up in India at Darjeeling. He is a transnational and a mystical. He has written for the Asiatic Society a monograph entitled “The true Crime and Infamous Execution of John Mist” (TB 264). He is Hindu at heart and he is regarded as “White Hindu” (TB 267). He was attracted towards the Bengali terra-cotta sculptures and in the same manner he likes the Bengali language. He likes to wear the traditional ‘dhoti’ and woollen scarf. He visits Tara Lata and willing to serve her. Nigel states “I’m of the Church of England in India . . . Devotee of goddess Durga . . . In religion . . . Indian . . . Political commitment: Russian . . . personal aspects of my life, I follow Greek ideal” (TB 268).
David Llewellyn Owens is a ‘British Hindu’ who dresses in the Indian clothes, has Hindu wives. Tara observes “many britishers came to India and became more Indian than the natives. . .” (TB 119). They are real immigrants and assimilated and turned Indians themselves.

Through the English characters such as John Mist, Owens Treadwell, Coughlin and Indian Rafeek Hai, Jai Krishna Gangooly and his daughter Tara Lata, the tree Bride, Mukherjee has shown realistically these historical events in the nineteenth century and the first half of twentieth century. By these fictional characters but she directly talk about the historical names like Nixon, Churchill, Edward, Nehru, Subash Bose, and Mahatma Gandhi. In an interview with Desai and Banstone, Bharati Mukherjee says,

What I was doing with Mishtigunj and with John Mist was reflecting on the early paradise-like fusion of cultures that was possible in the eighteenth century India. As Britain embarked on its colonial adventure and appropriated India as the most sparkling jewel in its imperial crown, relationship between whites and locals changed. The three white guys, John Mist, Vertie Treadwell, Nigel Coughlin . . . are guardians of, or emblems of, different periods in Anglo-Indian relationships. (117)

The modern diaspora, Tara, is “far too American” (TB 58). Her transformation from a Bengali Brahmin into American immigrant reflects in the language she speaks and writes (English) and her American values of life. But Tara is caught between the ideas she has inherited as how time and destiny operate and her gradual Americanisation and her exercising the free will. She is also looking backward (root search). Tara narrates in Desirable Daughters about the tale of Tara Lata’s marriage
and in *The Tree Bride* she continues the life of Tara Lata, not as a normal married Indian lady but one who is bold enough to transform her life as a freedom fighter. Her present ‘made identity’ is the party of colonial legacy. So she traces the roots in British colonialism. Her past is coloured with colonialism. There is a double relocation of her family. The transformation of Tara Lata is the past of Tara who also boldly transforms herself into an American immigrant, Tara says, “I suddenly knew the future and the past” (TB 117).

Tara is caught between two worlds, values of India and America because of her transformation as an American and a backward look as an expatriate. ‘Divorce’ according to Mukherjee, is a misadventure of Tara like Dimple’s murder of her husband, Amit Basu in *Wife*. These are the Indian attitudes of the American Mukherjee. Tara and Bish are American and Indian, the transnationals. They don’t face the dilemma to choose identity. Yet her looking back/search for roots/her involvement in past is more concentrated by Mukherjee. She follows the Indian value like ‘Dharma’, duty, “duty above all” (TB 291). Might be due to it Tara has taken care of her crippled husband to cure him. It is her duty to serve/worship husband. Even though heavy with pregnancy she thinks of the liberation of Tara Lata’s soul. It is her duty to perform the rituals of cremation. She believes that Tara Lata’s soul is restless, turned as a ghost, it visits her in San Francisco, and she feels the presence of her soul. A ceremonial cremation is necessary for its liberation. Tara believes in ghost/ preta and ‘pitr’. She desires to visit ‘kashi’ for cremation of Tara Lata. Tara’s reassessment of her past in *The Tree Bride* is an indication of her expatriate identity. Tara’s attempt to reconcile the part of her tied to her Indian heritage with her life as an assimilated American is at the center of the novel.
Mukherjee's fiction reflects her preoccupation with cultural conflicts, with the results of change, and with the influence of the past and the present. Typically her characters are Indian women raised in a society where life is governed by tradition, as interpreted and enforced by the elder members of large extended families. When such women find themselves in the very different environment of the alien land, the result can be terrible for cultural assimilation doesn't come naturally.

Tara Lata is called the Tree Bride due to her marriage to a tree in 1879. From 1879 to 1943 she is the Tree bride in the novel. Later she is called Tara- Ma by the villagers. Though she remained single, she sacrificed her life for a noble cause. She helped the poor and the needy and fought for India's Independence. She helped the beggars, the sick and then the young soldiers who indulged themselves in the freedom movement. She transformed herself from the unfortunate Tree-Bride to Tara Ma, a saint and a freedom fighter.

Her house was open to all. Though it came visitors from abroad, men and women descending from polished motor cars. Gradually, the people of Mishtigunj believed the evidence of their own eyes, which told them that Tara- Ma, as she was familiarly called, dwelled on a higher spiritual plane . . . Years later, in the eyes of many, she had become a goddess, prayed to by unmarried women needing husbands and by wives seeking sons. (TB 255)

She is a transnational who imagined that “she would live to see the day when Indians and Britishers could sit together sharing only the best of their common foods and experiences” (TB 267). By meeting Coughlin, she thought it was possible.
Tara Lata, the title character doesn’t step outside the father’s Moist Mahal compound. “She was rooted to her father’s house” (TB 251). Hence Tara- Lata the Tree- Bride, had become a family legend:

After the night of her marriage, Tara- Lata returned to Mishtigunj and, at least by legend, never left her father’s house. Unburdened by a time-consuming, emotion-draining marriage and children, never having to please a soul, she grew up and grew old in a single house in an impoverished village in the poorest place of earth, and in that house, the world came to her. She lived there seventy years and gradually changed her world. (DD 17)

Only three she has left it, but her soul travels in the vayumandala. Between incarnations the soul wanders in a dreamless state. It is the state Hindu concept of ‘soul’ and ‘rebirth’. She muses “Hinduism is very scientific very mathematical” (TB 284). So Tara believes in the ghosts. The sage of Mishtigunj-Tara Lata encounters the migrants like John Mist, Treadwell, and Coughlin and can understand and judge their feelings.

Sameena and Tara Lata are of the same age and Tara Lata didn't consider Sameena a servant's daughter. They both would play in the dark glade of Uvaria trees. Now after reading the history of all these important persons Tara Chatterjee gets an idea about the coincidence of history. In 1880, when she was six years old, Tara Lata's childhood friend and chief house servant, Sameena, was married to Shafiq Mohammed Hai, a student in the local school who was destined, according to his father, Rafeek Hai, for a career in medicine in Dhaka or Calcutta. When Rafeek Hai was hanged and denied a proper burial. Sameena and the crowd led by Jai Krishna had fought with the authorities to handover the body, but Shafiq was struck across the
face by a British truncheon. Somehow, Shafiq got admission in medicinal college in Dhaka, while Sameena stayed back in Mist Mahal, serving Tara Lata.

Shafiq returned back as a doctor after seven years, and became Tara Lata's personal physician. Sameena gave birth to a son and they named him Gul Mohammed. Shafiq went to Mecca, and became Hajji, and in 1932, he was honoured with the title Chowdhury by the newly installed district commissioner, Virgil Treadwell.

Sameena, a cook’s daughter, married the son of the towns leading Muslim. In the Muslim community they should offer dowry for the daughter. Abdulaq would not have been able to afford the dowry expected by an educated doctor from a leading family. Sameena's dowry was the house that she never owned. Therefore Sameena and her husband, Tara Lata's personal physician plotted to take possession of Mist Mahal. In 1943, after the death of Tara Lata Gangooly, her house was passed to Begam Sameena Chowdhury, widow of the late Dr. Hajji Shafiq Mohammed Chowdhury. She was the mother of Gul Mohammed Chowdhury, “the old Hajji I'd met in Mishtingunj on my second visit. I'd met Hajji's son, on leave from the New York restaurant while he pillaged his father's holdings, on my third visit. And of course, I've had dealings with Sameena's great-grandson, Abbas Sattar Hai, in San Francisco” (TB 277).

The presence of Abbas Sattar Hai in Tara's San Francisco life is inevitably a sort of deconstruction of the multiracial notion of home. Tara Bhattacharjee's home in Calcutta was burnt leaving Tara standing outside. In her attempt to rewrite history of the tree bride, Tara encounters multiple layers of narratives that either threaten to destroy or reformulate history relocating the teleological history as fiction.
Abbas Sattar Hai attached himself to our son as a way of burrowing into our family and destroying an Indian foothold in America- and both he and Agnes succeeded. “I can imagine that Agnes Harpenny decided to destroy every sign of Vertie Treadwell except her own son, who was already safe in his English orphanage” (TB 235). Abbas Sattar Hai had targeted many people as, “Victoria died because the pasts of Vertie Tredwell, Rafeek Hai, and Tara Lata Gangooly conspired to reconnect us, their ignorant descendants” (TB 283).

Transnational Tara, Bish, Yash and even Victoria have maintained the connection in the countries from which they emigrated. Tara’s visits though for short period display that Americanized Tara does believe in the Indian values. So she thinks “A ceremontial cremation . . . is necessary for its liberation . . . the Tree bride would not permit burial; outside India. We’re trying to bury a phase of history” (TB 282-283). She is now aware of the cause of Victoria’s killing, she thinks “. . . the pasts of Vertie Treadwell, Rafeek Hai, and Tara Lata Gangooly conspired to connect us, their ignorant descendants” (TB 283). Such transnational identity is configured in her relationship to more than one nation-state. Victoria accepts her Indian identity as her ancestors are from England and India. The father is in Canada, and her husband is from India and she lives and dies in the United States. To which country does she belong? Who is she? What is her identity? She declares “I am Indian” (TB 242).

The descendants of Treadwell, Tara Lata, and Hai are transnational. They are connected to their country of origin and residence. They connect whenever they like and want the help of the technologies of communication, information and transportation. It is the position of our time that migrants live in an increasingly borderless world where cultural and economics frontiers are constantly eroding. The pregnant Tara is checked by Dr. Victoria Khanna and the doctor is able to know
“what was inside and building” because of X-ray, an MRI scan etc. These are used to diagnose her position.

CHATTY systems have transformed the method and swiftness with which America converses. Bish works on voice stimulated laptop. Yash Khanna, husband of Victoria Treadwell, has invented information design. Bish and Yash are tied up in designing communications for the twenty first century, occupied on all acceptance mathematics of communication. So generally there is the usage of internet, cell phones, laptop by the transnational characters. Tara communicates with Jack Sidhu on his caller ID. The technology is useful at the same time it is used for violence. Tara thinks, “... Cell phones are the most dangerous technology on the planet. Digital communication made Bish and Chet Yee famous but from a block away it also triggered the bomb hidden inside a boom box that nearly destroyed our lives” (TB 240). Abbas Sattar Hai has used ‘cell phone’ to attack Tara. Just he left it and the police turned it on to investigate. The explosion kills Victoria.

Both Tara, the protagonist of Desirable Daughters and The Tree Bride as well Mukherjee, the author of those novels are satisfied of her Indian origin so, she says “Indian science in the Vedic period had already invented airplanes, telephones, radios, and chariots faster than the news cars. Hindu science had solved every known question of the universe while Europeans still lived in caves” (TB 253-254). Even though Tara and Tara Lata Gangooly, the Indian women share a name, there are massive differences between them. On the one hand, Tara Lata, is rooted as a tree, even though she is surrounded in the isolated range of her home, manages to have an active voice in the public life of her country and fights against the British imperialistic oppression. On the other hand, the rootless Tara is a diasporic woman whose small defeats are narrowed exclusively to the private sphere. The Tree Bride’s home is very
well defined and she is faithful to it throughout her life. She never disappoints her father and plays the gender roles she is assigned to even though she is only symbolically married to a tree. She lives according to tradition and the gender roles prescribed for her, never disappointing her family. The modern Tara, however, leaves her home and breaks the rules of the gender roles as prescribed by her class and caste. In this sense, she is not faithful to the figurative concept of home. On the contrary, she feels pain due to a displacement from home and chooses not to follow some of the roles that this social space expects from her.

Tara, the protagonist recognizes how diverse she is from her namesake, and she understands: “I will grow old, but I know I will never change the world” (DD 18). At the same time rootlessness makes Tara leave her home, she is never sure which place she should call home. Although the protagonist’s mother defines home as where you belong, such definition of home does not match Tara’s experience. She does not know exactly where she belongs and feels she is always in-between. She has transgressed too much to simply go back to India and she is too critical to simply assimilate into American culture. Tara tries to balance between her home - India and America trying to acquire some sense of belonging but to no avail. The cultural clash suffered by Hindu women accomplished on the traditional moral codes that contradicts them even a separate existence but who are given a western education in India is highlighted by Tara’s dilemma. They are caught between cultures and this feeling of being in between or being contrasted positions for them the problem of trying to maintain a balance between their dual affiliations. In the case of the immigrant women it is more pronounced and prominent. She carries the burden of cultural values of her native land with her to her new country, thus making it more difficult and problematic for her to adjust.
Today Transnationals live in a Global village where they can use mobiles, video cam, internet, aeroplanes as a common thing. So the Diasporas now-a-days is not at all lives as an expatriates/immigrants, but as a transnational. The technologies plays a significant role to alter the attitude of Diasporas. Though they feel alienated, homeless, nostalgic and homesick, they try to manage and overcome from those feelings because they are connected to ‘Home’ and ‘away’. Therefore the number of South Asians in America has increased since 1990s. Tara says, “There are Indians in every town, every hospital, every high school and college, in banks, motel . . . and taxis, and a startling number have begun appearing in everyday American families. I see Indian faces at family picnics in Garden Gate Park” (TB 19). Tara is aware that “twenty first century technology speed shrinks space and time” (TB 13).

Today the mode of transport becomes very cheap. Even in airlines, the fare is very low and majority of the population can travel by aeroplanes because of the offers available in the booking. There are more number of mode of transports available but during the colonial period the print media was used for everything. Now they can make a call or they can take a plane and converse with the people within some minutes. Tara gets the sources like Mistnama, monographs, memoirs, pamphlets, letters, books to know about nineteenth century colonials and her ancestors. Colonials travelled by ship which took more time, money and energy. Trade relationship between India and England was accepted on through ships. Malabar Queen in the tree bride is one such ship headed by Captain Partridge and assisted by Tom Crabbe and Jack Snow.

The concept of assimilation has changed today because of the facilities provided for them to cross the border whenever they think. They are now a transmigrant whose daily life depends upon multiple and constant interconnections across
international border. They adapt in the country of his residence. However they engages in the country from which she has emigrated. They maintain connection in the homeland and host land.

Transnational migration is the development by which immigrants forge and put up with imitations, multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. Mukherjee’s struggle for a constant identity, first as an exile from India, the an Indian expatriate in Canada and an immigrant in the United States has led to the transnational identity in a country of immigrants by keeping relations to the homeland and host land, India, Bangladesh and America. Mukherjee sees migration as an advantage while other Diaspora writers see the arrival in the New World as loss. This is a basic difference in her outlook and method to the issues of migration. She is fast at least a quarter of century to other contemporary writers.

Transnationalism is a new concept which came only in the late twentieth and twenty first century. Due to that, there is a combination of western social standards and Indian outdated principles. Mukherjee’s writings has become an expression of her transnationalism, immigration and expatriation. Her Desirable Daughters and its sequel The Tree Bride displays such mixed identities. Due to the growing development in the transport and communication, the transnationals are fit tightly to the homeland. Thus those people does not forget the culture and the people of the homeland at the same time never miss the life in their host land too. With the transport facilities they can fly to any country when they wish. So the distance is not a problem for the transnationals. Migrants can turn as an expatriate or immigrant and transnational, it depends on their attitude and outlook to the host land and host culture and their acceptancity by them and satisfactoriness of themselves.
Both the novels, *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*, deal with the same track of thinking back through history. This chapter explores the cultural conflicts of the two worlds, America and India. It also deals with history in its numerous covers of transcultural spaces, and migration is engraved as a key feature that kindles transnational connections. Thus Mukherjee expands historical narrative of diaspora and broadens the scope for historical rewriting. Tara, the protagonist of the novel is a transnational and through this chapter one can understand that contemporary Diasporas are transnational because of the advancement in the latest science and technology. In the transnational level also, as a Diaspora they undergo some problems but they can easily get out from their problems due to the developments and availability which makes contact with the homeland and host land.