CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the prominent writers of Indian Diaspora. Being an immigrant herself, she feels very comfortable in handling the themes of the sufferings of diasporic women. The protagonists of Mukherjee experience the tug of opposing forces in their attempt to belong to America. With a touch from her personal experiences, she elaborates what it means to be an emigrant. Most of her protagonists deliberately or violently move to America and live a miserable and unbearable immigrant life. They make many efforts towards the process of economic, social, and cultural adjustment. The author, an immigrant herself, tries to reveal the darker side of immigration, which is not often portrayed by other immigrant writers. Her fiction depicts the multicultural society and the progressive adaptations by both immigrants and Americans. 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. Thus, the theme of most of her novels is cross-cultural conflict, which is a predominant theme of the postcolonial writing.

Postcolonial studies occupy a position of legitimacy not only in Euro-American academy but also in universities in many countries of the formerly colonized world. Postcolonial Studies Centres have been set up in many
institutions mostly linked to departments of literature, and innumerable conferences and colloquia have been convened. More than three quarters of the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism. Bill Ashcroft et al. view "We use the term Post-colonial however to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by imperial aggression" (The Empire Writes Back 2). The semantic basis of the term postcolonial might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture. This is because there is a continuity of pre-occupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. It is also suggested that the term is most appropriate for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years. The literatures of the African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and South Pacific island countries and Singapore are all postcolonial literatures. The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power and neo-colonizing role it plays, its postcolonial nature has not been generally recognized. Its neo imperial status has prevented it from being a postcolonial country. Edward Said comments that imperialism
is "a word and an idea today so controversial, as fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics, and ideological premises as nearly to resist use altogether" (Culture and Imperialism 3). Gayatri Spivak suggests that "Neo colonialism is not simply the continuation of colonialism: It is a different thing. That is what I call post-coloniality and I find the word Post-Colonialism just totally bogus" ("Neo-colonialism and the Secret Agents" 224). All the post and neo-colonial countries produce literature. What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they have emerged in their present form by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively postcolonial.

The postcolonial style of writing is a branch of postmodern literature concerned with political and cultural independence of peoples formerly subjugated in colonial empires. It deals with the conflicts between the rulers and the subject, the mainstream and the marginals, the oppressors and the oppressed and at the same time celebrates the suppressed "other," challenging the dominant culture and questioning concepts of established authority. This literature that has been produced in former colonies reflects changes in the political, economic, and cultural
practices in freed regions and rebellion against anything that reminds of the colonizer. Once the former masters left, the newly independent countries had to deal not only with many economic and social issues such as poverty and lack of education but also with the aftermath of colonialism. Centuries of maltreatment, complete disrespect, and negation of the natives’ values, and culture alienated the subjugated people from their own lands brought an erosion of their identity. Beliefs established by the colonizers that indigenous peoples were savages and that their culture was less important are proved to be wrong. The postcolonial authors’ challenge was to establish their country’s lost national identity, history, and literature and to define the relationship with the land and language of their former masters. Interacting with the traditional colonial discourse, critical look at imperialism and its legacy, reclaiming the past, searching for the cultural and personal identity, and self-reflection are some of the main features of postcolonial writing. The critics regard postcolonialism as an uneven phenomenon. Mishra and Hodge observe “Post-colonialism, we have stressed is not a homogenous category, either across all post-colonial societies or even within a single one. Rather it refers to a typical configuration which is always in the process of change, never consistent with itself” (“What is Post-colonialism?” 289). Works of literature that are
defined as postcolonial, often record racism or a history of genocide, including slavery, apartheid, and the mass extinction of people, such as the Aborigines in Australia. Critical response to these texts is often seen as an important way to articulate and negotiate communication between writers who define themselves as postcolonial and critics who are not part of that experience. As a historical period postcolonialism denotes the post world war II period. Although the colonial countries achieve political freedom the colonial values do not disappear with the independence of the country. Meenakshi Mukherjee rightly puts it:

Post-colonialism is not merely a chronological label referring to the period after the demise of the empires. It is ideologically an emancipatory concept, particularly for the students of literature outside the western world, because it makes us interrogate many concepts of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted, enabling us not only to read our own texts in own terms but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical location. (“Interrogating Postcolonialism” 3-4)
Postcolonial theory establishes intellectual spaces for the subaltern people to speak for themselves in their own voices and hence it produces the cultural discourses of philosophy and language, of society and economy which balance the imbalances between the colonizer and the colonial subject. The cultural and religious assumptions of colonial logic remain active practices in contemporary society and are the bases of the mother country's neo-colonial attitude towards her former colonial subjects. Hence in his *Location of culture*, the theoretician Homi K. Baba indicated that so long as the western way of viewing the human world as composed of separate and unequal cultures rather than as an integral human world the belief in the existence of imaginary people and places such as "Christendom" and the "Islamic world," "the first world," "the second world," and the "third world" will continue. To counter such linguistic and sociological reductionism, postcolonial praxis establishes the philosophic value of hybrid intellectual spaces where in ambiguity abrogates truth and authenticity thereby hybridity in the philosophic condition that must substantially challenge the ideological validity of colonialism. "Hybridity" as a postcolonial concept was popularized by the theorist Homi. K. Bhabha. As Pramod K. Nayar opines, "Hybridity in post-colonial societies can be in the form of a retrieval or revival of a pre-colonial past - such as folk or tribal cultural forms
and conventions – or to adapt contemporary artistic and social productions to present day conditions of globalization, multiculturalism, and transnationalism” (Post-Colonial Literature 25). Post colonialism as both a body of theory and a study of political and cultural change has gone and continues to go through three broad stages:

1. An initial awareness of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority enforced by being in a colonized state,

2. The struggle for ethnic cultural and political autonomy, and

3. A growing awareness of cultural overlap and hybridity.

A major feature of postcolonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. Bill Ashcroft et al. view “It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place” (The Empire Writes Back 9). Indeed, critics such as D. E. S. Maxwell have made this the defining model of postcoloniality. The sense of self is eradicated by dislocation which is the result of migration or enslavement, transportation, or “voluntary” removal for indentured labor. Many a times the sense of self is eradicated because of cultural denigration or the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of
postcolonial societies whether these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two. Beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity is a feature common to all postcolonial literatures in English.

Displacement applies to all migrant situations concerning people who have left their homes to settle in countries or communities which are initially strange to them. Displacement refers both to physical displacement and a sense of being socially or culturally out of place. The alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image which this displacement produces is as frequently found in the accounts of Canadian "free settlers" as of Australian convicts, Fijian-Indian or Trinidadian-Indian indentured laborers, West Indian slaves, or forcibly colonized Nigerians or Bengalis. Although this is pragmatically demonstrable from a wide range of texts, it is difficult to account for by theories which see this social and linguistic alienation as resulting only from overtly oppressive forms of colonization such as slavery or conquest. An adequate account of this practice must go beyond the usual categories of social alienation such as master/slave, free/bonded, ruler/ruled, however important and widespread these may be in postcolonial cultures. The free settler, formally unconstrained, and theoretically free to continue in the possession and practice of "Englishness," show clear signs of
alienation even within the first generation of settlement, and manifest a tendency to seek an alternative, differentiated identity. The most widely shared discursive practice within which this alienation can be identified is the construction of "place." The gap which opens between the experience of place and the language available to describe it forms a classic and all pervasive feature of postcolonial texts. This gap occurs for those whose language seems inadequate to describe a new place, for those whose language is systematically destroyed by enslavement, and for those whose language has been rendered unprivileged by the imposition of the language of a colonizing power. Some admixture of one or other of these models can describe the situation of all postcolonial societies. In each case a condition of alienation is inevitable until the colonizing language has been replaced or appropriated as English. That imperialism results in a profound linguistic alienation is obviously the case in cultures in which a pre-colonial culture is suppressed by military conquest or enslavement.

Multiculturalism has a special usage in the postcolonial literature and features high on the political agenda of most states today since most states incorporate a variety of ethnic, religious, and other diversities. This term signifies the co-existence of multiple cultures, though not always in peaceful relations with each other. The problem has become exacerbated in recent decades because of the increased influx of immigrants
into the advanced capitalist states. During colonial and postcolonial period, individuals from the colonies and former colonies migrated to the metropolis and led to a surge of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism sees culture as open-ended, permeable, and continually reproduced by cross-cultural encounters. Multiculturalism represents new kind of universalities where integration of individuals into the states is not predicted on a total engagement from particular communist ties. It cherishes cultural diversity and envisions a society in which different communities forge a common identity while retaining their cultural provenance and acknowledges the existence of diverse communities, but what is more important is that it accords positive value to the collective identities of all ethnic communities.

Postcolonial studies essentially focus on persistence of colonial forms of power in contemporary world politics, especially how the social construction of racial, gendered and class differences uphold relations of power and sub-ordination. It addresses issues such as identity, gender, race and ethnicity. Postcolonial theory is also built around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion or opposition which can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity individuality etc. One of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies is “Hybridity,” commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. It emerges as an important concept in
postcolonial theory referring to the integration of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures can be seen as positive enriching and dynamic as well as oppressive. "Hybridity" is also a useful concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures or colonizing cultures for that matter are monolithic, or have essential unchanging features. Like many other terms in postcolonial theory and discourse that popularly suggest detachment from metropolitan or local spaces, "Exile" has been deployed as a concept beyond simply a forced removal from a given physical location. "Exile" in everyday use invokes images of individual political dissidents sent overseas or large groups of people banished to distant lands forming various diasporas. In these cases there is something, a presumption that the exiles are different from casual migrants who forget their original homelands and form new allegiances with the places in which they settle. Exiles retain a sense of longing for a real or imagined homeland. One does not need to be physically removed from the "homeland" in order to be exiled. Exile can take place in different cultural spaces especially through processes like modernization. What is important in postcolonial exile is therefore the profundity of the impact of colonialism and ongoing imperialism. The term itself has to be over determined so as to suggest the magnitude of cultural transformations inflicted by Colonialism the type
of consciousness exile produces and the responsibility exile should uphold.

Identity crisis is one of the foremost phenomenon that marks postcolonial writing. The identity of an individual may be either a group identity or an individual identity. When a person migrates from his birth place most of his beliefs also migrate to the immigrant country. This concept is aptly named by a critic as the “socio-cultural baggage.” A man’s identity depends on the society where he/she is living in. When necessity demands he/she happens to settle in an alien country. Now the man is unable to adapt to the alien nation since he is unable to forget his homeland. The new immigrants find it very difficult to assimilate into the new culture. They are nostalgic. Once in a foreign land, the migrated people stick to their identity of home and nation. This leads to the formation of diasporic and ethnic identity of the diaspora communities. The concept of home nation and cultural identity does not remain the same from individual to individual. In the first generation of immigrants, migration creates alienation, nostalgia of the past and rootlessness at the place of migration as he or she is still clinging to the cultural beliefs, practical norms of the homeland. Again it is the loss or alienation caused by displacement or dislocation which creates a position to “live in between” or “living on the border” which Homi Bhabha discusses in his Location of culture. The second generation of immigrants try to assimilate to their
adopted country in spite of their parents standing in between
their getting assimilated into the home culture they try to
adapt. "Unhomeliness" is a new term used by postcolonial
critics such as Homi Bhabha to describe the feeling of the
immigrants who though living in their own homes feel a sense of
unhomeliness. This problem is the result of the cultural
difference they suffer - the native and that of the borrowed.
Dual identity or plural identity is the problem with the second
generation immigrants.

"Feminism" is a postcolonial perspective. It was believed
that women’s oppression was common worldwide until the 1980s. It
was a universally accepted phenomenon that women faced problems
all around the world unmindful of their divisions. A feminist
perspective requires that one has to learn to read literary
representation of women with attention both to the subject and
to the medium of representation. Feminist perspectives have
been central to postcolonial studies from its inaugural moment.
Postcolonial feminism seeks to disrupt the power to name,
represent, and theorize by challenging Western arrogance and
ethno-centricism, and incorporating the voices of the
marginalized peoples. Postcolonial feminism is often perceived
as an academic construction inextricably allied with the rise
of postcolonial literary studies in the western academy. "Third
world women," "subaltern" "essentialism" and "identity" are
some of the key concepts of feminist perspectives.
There are tensions between feminism and postcolonialism and between Western feminism and postcolonial feminism. There are tensions between feminism and postcolonial feminism. There are many differences in the feminist perspectives among the women in the first world, women in the diaspora communities, and women in the third world. Postcolonial feminism is a dynamic discursive field. Young points out some key issues of postcolonial feminism: “Feminism in a post-colonial frame begins with the situation of the ordinary woman in a particular place, while also thinking her situation though in relation to broader issues to give her the more powerful basis of collectivity. It will highlight the degree to which women are still working against a colonial legacy that was itself powerfully patriarchal, institutional, economical political and ideological” (Post Colonialism: A Very Short Introduction 25). It has brought into being various concepts such as identity crisis and multiculturalism. With the advent of feminism a new set of paradigms like modernity, self-assertion and economic independence has stepped in. Western women have adjusted her to the changes and have asserted herself in many fields. Yet trapped in the clutches of the cultural ethos the Indian women hesitates to be too assertive. Urbanization, collapse of old family bonds, and lack of emotional support add to the tensions of the Indian women. The pursuit of a career, being economically independent does not mitigate her problem. It is like riding two horses at a time. Since the Indian mind is
still unwilling to alter the paradigms, a wide hiatus prevails between her dreams and desires and the expectations of the society. Her crusade of opposing traditional taboos and conventions often isolates and alienates her. The women novelists focus in their novels on the existential predicament and the travails of the subdued women of a male-dominated society governed by rigid principles and restrictions. These writers, being women, dive deep into the inner mind of the repressed women by virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight and bring to light their issues which are the outcome of Indian women’s psychological and emotional imbalances. Most of the women living in orthodox Indian families are unable to raise their voices against their suppression owing to their rigid code of conduct imposed on them by the dominant patriarchal society. The suppressed women’s desires, emotions, and ambitions are faithfully expressed in the novels of the postcolonial women novelists. Their novels show how these women, in spite of their education, are still suffering due to inferiority complex and deep sense of inhibitions. The postcolonial novelists have beautifully delineated the alienated characters through feminist perspective.

Postcolonial feminism wishes to bring to light the typical problems of women of the third world nations. The postcolonial writers work for the betterment in the lives of the women of postcolonial origin. Feminism is a fabulous field of study
across the world. Postcolonial feminism has never operated as a separate entity from postcolonialism; rather it has directly inspired the forms and the force of postcolonial politics. Long history of prejudices and inhuman remarks against women prevailed over countless social and cultural texts ultimately led to the emergence of feminism during the late 60s and early 70s of twentieth century in the West. Since then feminists set their mind to re-examine issues of sex, gender and even language in literary and cultural discourses. Some of the postcolonial feminists are Gayatri Spivak, Uma Narayan, Sara Suleri, Lata Mani, and Kumkum Sangari. These Postcolonial feminists are closely associated with Black feminists such as Alice Walker and Angela Davis as both the group strive for recognition not only by men in their own culture but also by Western feminists. Gayatri Spivak raises her voice for the suppressed female in her most popular essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In this essay she explores possibilities to recover the long silenced voices of the subaltern women. In “Can the Subaltern Speak” Spivak encourages but also criticizes the efforts of the subaltern studies group, a project led by Ranajit Guha that has reappropriated Gramsci’s term “subaltern” (the economically dispossessed) in order to locate and re-establish a voice in postcolonial India. Spivak’s argument is that the Subaltern cannot speak for himself or herself. The reason behind this is that the very structure of colonialism prevents him from speaking. The subaltern must be spoken for
(that is represented) but not romanticized. Spivak argues that by speaking and reclaiming a collective cultural identity subalterns will in fact re-inscribe their subordinate position in society. The academic assumption of a subaltern collectivity becomes akin to an ethno-centric extension of Western logos a totalistic essentialist-mythology as Derrida might describe it— that does not account for the heterogeneity of the colonized body politics. Though the Postcolonial women remain passive to bear male oppressive environments they seek to emancipate themselves through education, struggle, and hard work.

India is a distinctively postcolonial country. In multicultural countries feminist approach looks highly fragmented and multivalent. The forms and colors of feminism in Indian context are unique and surprising. Since India is the seat of cultures, feminine complexes are too much. In India all four kinds of feminisms do exist and they are respectively, first world, second world, third world and fourth world (Dalit feminism). The Indian women honour their tradition and culture with traditional feminine colour. As a result of the explicit cultural barter transported between the colonizer and the colonized, subsequent generations of Indians not only uphold but hallow the hegemonic remnants of Western culture. This translation of culture, language, and ideology is described by Simon During as “imperial residue.” He says that this imperial residue is smeared upon the landscape of all postcolonial nations. And this residue is constantly in a state of flux and
both the culture and capital remain shifting realities—subject not only to the postcolonial paradigms of complexity and hybridity, but also global capitalism and market economy.

Indian English literature pertains to that body of work by writers in India, who write in the English language and whose native language could be one of those several regional languages in India. It is also associated with the works of the members of the Indian diaspora, like Bharati Mukherjee and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, mostly of writers who were born in India, and were raised outside. As a category, Indian diasporic writing comes under the broader realm of postcolonial English literature in India. The publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and subsequent winning of the Booker Prize lead many Indian Diaspora writers to contribute to fiction. There was an enormous flow of fiction by the Indian diaspora group. The emergence of Postcolonial discourse with the foundational works of theorists such as Frants fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha on the one hand and the critical interventions of writers such as Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Ngugi Wa Thiang’o, had a great impact on Indian postcolonial studies.

Diaspora is defined as a set of people with common origin who reside outside the borders of their ethnic homeland. Diaspora members identify themselves or identified by others as part of the homeland’s national community and as such are often called upon to participate
or are entangled in homeland related affairs. Agnew Vijay opines, “The concept of the Diaspora has been widely adopted in academic discourses on forced dispersal, immigration, displacement and the establishment of reconfigured transnational communities. Memories are the glue that holds the past and present together” (Diaspora, Memory and Identity 19). Diaspora is not the consequence of globalization, instead it is determined by the effects of globalization. Diaspora consciousness belongs to a stage beyond identity politics. In the tradition of Christianity, the fall of Satan from the heaven and the mankind’s separation from the Garden of Eden, metaphorically the separation from God, constitute Diaspora situations.

Diaspora writers explore the problems faced by the Indian Diasporians who experience many conflicts in diaspora life. The prominent writers of Indian diaspora are: V.S.Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Kavita Daswani, Kiran Desai, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Uma Parameshwaran, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohiton Mistry, Chitra Divakaruni, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meera Syal, Suniti Namjoshi, Rishma Dunlop, Anita Rau Badami, and many others. Many of these writers express in their novels their own diasporic experiences such as uprooting and exile, nostalgia, trauma, alienation etc. These writers explore problems and possibilities engendered by the experiences of migrancy and diaspora life. T.S.Anand views “Diasporic
literature reflects challenges, aspirations and anxieties of a person who migrates to a New Land. The first generation of all immigrants always suffer from a broad sense of nostalgia … cling strenuously together in order to preserve their cultural religious and linguistic identity” (“An Interview with Iqbal Ramoowalia” 12-14).

People belonging to different groups at home fuse into a new identity in their diasporic country. The Indian diaspora is no exception. Many things differentiate them inside India-religion, caste, dress-code, culture, food, political groups etc. they assert their difference inside the Indian territory but they happily get united as Indians in the USA because they see themselves as different from the Westerners. It is on account of their great variety of native customs, religion, and beliefs that the Indian identity in the USA cannot be anything but ethnic in orientation which is undefinable. Tanu Gupta says, “A Diasporic person lives two lives at once. He lives in two cultures simultaneously. However this particular mode of existence is not free from problems. Too often Diasporas have been ghettoized and excluded from feeling that they belong to the new country and suffered their cultural practices to be mocked and discriminated against” (“Identity Crisis in Indian Diaspora” 26).

The Indian women diasporic writers are dominant among contemporary South Asian women writers. They write anywhere
from the world. They focus their attention on the problems
faced by Indian women abroad. These Indian women writers of
the contemporary era are prolific. Most of these writers
share a common feature: they are raised and brought up in
India. It is a curious fact that most of the Indian
diasporic writers are currently located in the USA and most
of their novels have a backdrop of location in the Indian
surroundings. These writers are very unique in that they
are very different from their Western counterparts. They
are people who are multicultural and multilingual. They do
not regard themselves as fully belonging in either culture
and have practically evolved a sub-culture peculiar to
themselves. They try to take the best from both the worlds,
but suffer the sense of hybridity and cultural
entanglement.

Apart from this cultural entanglement there is one
more thing common among Indian diaspora writers. They have
a deep desire to look back to India, to write and discuss
at length, the confusion of identity they are experiencing.
This process of looking back which has been described as
nostalgia seems irresistible to diasporic writers. Although
the diasporic writers may reflect their identities through
fragments of broken mirrors these reflections are imbibed
by others in the diasporic community. But, for many
literary images advancing and propagating a certain way of
life which is labeled as diasporic South Asian results in
the diasporic community trying to reproduce what they have read. Writers are partially responsible for the contributing to the creation of a diasporic culture. In brief, the imagined and fictionalized diasporic experience may have become more real than reality.

From the contemporary writings of Indian diasporic women writers, it appears that the Indian diasporic women feel the tug of loyalties and confusion of identities until they learn to balance dual identities or double consciousness and combine those into certain equilibrium. A majority of the Indian women writers portray their protagonists fighting the dual battle for ethnic and racial rights and recognition and the battle against patriarchy and traditional cultural restrictions and taboos. These battles are made even more complicated by the fact that the protagonists are usually seeking acceptance both within the inner circle of their families and in the outer, racially, and culturally different world.

The formation of identity for Indian diasporic writers is contingent upon many factors, both individual and social, personal as well as collective. As these women live in between the push of opposing cultural forces, the result is the creation of the self that is multiple as the different components that helps compromise it. These women live in conflictual situation. They want to practice their own culture and value systems and remain reluctant to
imbibe new ones. As a result they remain disappointed and alienated in their new situation. This new self does not require the relinquishing of one culture for the appropriation of another, but instead it allows for the possibility of possessing modified aspects of both cultures at one time. The diasporic women writers of India portray that the women have greater ability to adapt and assimilate to the Western culture.

Bharati Mukherjee is an established voice of the Indian Diaspora of the recent past. Her preoccupation is to deal with the problems and issues that are related to the South Asian women, particularly India. Being herself an immigrant, she has been preoccupied with women and their problems of assimilation in America and Canada. Her basic concern is to delineate the problems of cross-cultural conflicts faced by Indian immigrant women. The immigrant women get involved in an act of sustained self-removal from her native culture balanced by a conscious resistance to total inclusion in the new host society. Anita Myles says:

Bharati Mukherjee has successfully fused together her several experiences, life and background so to say, into a new kind of literature, the new immigrant literature, the main thrust area in her novels being a description of the condition of the Asian immigrants in north America with particular reference to the changes taking place
in South Asian women in the new world. Though her characters are aware of the social oppression and the brutalities inflicted on the women characters yet they emerge as survivors who have successfully borne the brunt, both physical and emotional. (*Feminism and Postmodern Indian Women* 107)

The novels of Bharati Mukherjee transport us to the complex realm of the culturally displaced and alienated characters who migrate to countries like America and consequently face the tensions of alienation, adaptation, and assimilation. She writes in her own perspective the problems faced by Indian diasporic women to get assimilated into the Western society. She exemplifies the ambivalences caused by the sudden transplantation from the familiar to the exotic.

Though the theme of immigrant experience pervades almost each of her novels and short stories, her main focus is on her women characters, their struggle for identity, their bitter experiences, and their final emergence as self assertive individuals free from the bondages imposed by relationships mostly of the past. Patrick M.O’Neill observes, “Mukherjee’s fiction considers the additional complexities of being a woman caught between cultures and between radically different definitions of feminism” (*Great World Writers* 945). In Mukherjee’s fiction the
transformation of the protagonist does not come easily. They have to face the struggles and confusions of being aliens who seek to define themselves in both their new and old homes. When the women in Mukherjee’s fiction immigrate to America, they encounter feminism and American representations of Indian women as seductive, wise, and all knowing. As Patrick M.O’Neill observes, “The women must therefore struggle with their gender and define themselves in new territory” (945). Mukherjee’s plots move across culture, immigrants leave their homes usually Calcutta, to take up residence in the United States. She portrays paradoxically the Eastern culture where the heroine was born and bred and the Western culture in which she experiences a new life. The immigrants carry the original cultures with them and simultaneously must change to survive in the new world. Her protagonists do not fully adapt American way of life, yet when they return to their homelands as in *The Tiger’s Daughter* home is never the same as when they left.

Bharati Mukherjee is an established voice of the Indian diaspora in North America. She was born into a Bengali speaking Hindu Brahmin family in 1940. She was the second of the three daughters of Sudhirlal, a chemist and Bina Mukherjee. She lived with forty to fifty relatives until the age of eight. Born into a extra-ordinarily close knit and intelligent family, Mukherjee and her sisters were
given ample academic opportunities and thus have had all the opportunity to receive excellent schooling. In 1947, her father was given a job in England and he brought his family to live there until 1951, which gave Mukherjee an opportunity to develop and perfect her English language skills. She earned a B.A. Honors from the University of Calcutta in 1959. She and her family, then moved to Baroda, India where she studied her Master’s degree in English and Ancient Indian Culture in 1961. Having planned to be a writer since childhood, she went to the University of Iowa in 1961 to attend the prestigious “Writer’s Workshop.” She planned to study there to earn her Master of Fine Arts, then return to India to marry a bridegroom of her father’s choice in her class and caste.

However a lunch break on September 19, 1963 changed that plan transferring Mukherjee into a split world a transient with loyalties to two cultures. She impulsively married Clark Blaise, a Canadian writer, in a lawyer’s office after only two weeks of courtship. She received her M.F.A. the same year and then went to earn her Ph.D. in English and Comparative literature from the University of Iowa in 1969. In 1968, Mukherjee immigrated to Canada with her husband and became a naturalized citizen in 1972. Her fourteen years in Canada were some of the hardest in her life as she found herself discriminated against and treated. She had spoken in many interviews of her different
life in Canada, a country that is hostile to its immigrants and one that opposes the concept of cultural assimilation. Although these years were challenging Mukherjee was able to write her first two novels *The Tiger’s Daughter* (1971) and *Wife* (1975) while working up to professional status at McGill University in Montreal. During these years she also collected many of the sentiments found in her first collection of short stories reflects, *Darkness* (1985) a collection that in many sections reflects her mood of cultural separation while living in Canada. Her other works include *The Middle Man and Other Stories* (1988), *Jasmine* (1989), *The Holder of the World* (1993), *Leave It to Me* (1997), *Desirable Daughters* (2002), *The Tree Bride* (2004) and the latest *Miss New India* (2011).

Finally, fed up with Canada, Mukherjee and her family moved to the United States in 1980. Since then she lives in the United States as a permanent resident. After holding several posts in various colleges she settled in 1989 at University of California, Berkley. Because of the different experiences she has had throughout life, she has been described as a writer who has lived through several phases of life. First as a colonial, then a national subject to India, and then she shifted as an immigrant to Canada and at last she settled as a citizen in the United States. She now fuses her several lives and backgrounds in the intention of creating “a new immigrant” literature.
Diaspora writing directly reflects the immigrant experience that comes out of immigrant settlement. Uma Parameshwaran has defined it very cautiously “…the first is the one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in strange land. The second is a phase in which one is so busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is shaping of Diaspora existence by involving themselves in etho-cultural issues. The fourth is when they have arrived and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues” (Trishanku and Other Writings 165).

Mukherjee’s main theme throughout her writing discusses the condition of Asian immigrants in North America, with particular attention to the changes taking place in South Asian women in the New World. While the characters in all her works are aware of the brutalities and violence that surround them and are often victimized by various forms of social oppression, she generally draws them as survivors. Though victims of immigration, her protagonists fight for their right as a woman and as an individual. They prepare themselves to be their own gravitational force instead of revolving around their male counterparts. Mukherjee has often been praised for her understated prose style and her ironic plot developments and witty observations. As a writer she has a sly eye, with which to view the world and her characters share that
quality. Although she is often racially categorized by her thematic focus and culture origin, she has often said that she strongly opposes the use of hyphenation when discussing her origin in order to avoid “otherization.” Rather she prefers to refer herself as an American of Bengali origin.

*The Tiger’s Daughter* is a fictionalized story drawing from Mukherjee’s own first years of marriage and her return home to a visit to a world unlike the one that lives in her memory. The protagonist Tara Banerjee, returns to India after marrying an American and faces a different India than the one she remembers leaving. Bharati Mukherjee’s writings largely reflect her personal experiences as a woman caught between two cultures. Tara is a young Indian born women who like the writer, returns to Calcutta, after having spent seven years in the United States to visit her family and discovers a country quite unlike the one she remembered. She becomes painfully aware that while she has not yet eased herself into American culture, she no longer derives sustenance from values and mores of her native land. Memories of general Brahmin life style are usurped by the new impressions of poverty, hungry children, and political unrests. The first novel reflects Mukherjee’s personal difficulties she experienced by being caught between two worlds homes and cultures and in an examination of who she is and where she belongs. Sushma Tandon observes, “The theme of adjusting to a new culture, the trials,
tribulations and traumas that afflict immigrants trying to make it in the new world have been deftly handled. Bharati Mukherjee appears to have gone into the psyche of the culturally uprooted and seems to be presenting some of her own experiences through the characters" (Bharati Mukherjee’s Fiction 36). Similarly Days and Nights in Calcutta, co-authored with her husband is a shared account of the first trip they took to India after being married. Each offer a different India through their separate journals and ultimately the two tell tale of a relationship that faces the daily difficulties of cultural barriers that have been drawn and separate pasts that linger.

Mukherjee’s second novel Wife is a more distant story about Dimple, a young naïve Indian woman trying to reconcile the Bengali ideal, perfect, passive wife with the demands of her new American life. As a young woman who was raised to be passive, Dimple lacks the inner strength and resources it takes to cope with in New York city as the young wife in an arranged marriage. Mukherjee deals with the complications that come from being thrown between two worlds and the strength and courage it takes to survive and ultimately live. Being an immigrant, Dimple was caught between conflicting cultures in her attempt to find an identity of her own. She undergoes the traumatic process of acculturation in her search for identity in an alien land and fails in her attempt. In most eccentric state of
madness, she murders her husband. Anita Myles views, "The novelist delineates Dimple as languid and irresolute woman lacking in zeal, suffering acutely from a sense of insecurity and self pity. Her paranoia due to cacophony between expectation and reality results in dangerous hallucinations. Nevertheless, Dimple makes serious efforts to get out of this psychological plight through her endeavors tend to be morally incorrect with recourse to extra-marital indulgence seeking stead-fastness" ("Progression from Feminine to Female" 310-11). Wife was often dismissed because its heroine fails to make the transition from one world to another and was often judged to be weak. Although both of Mukherjee’s first two books weave complex tales, they lack the strength of storytelling that her later works are more successful at capturing.

_Darkness_, her first collection of short stories, focuses on the natives of South Asia who crave for success and stability, but are burdened by their histories and face the difficulties of prejudice and misunderstanding. This collection was a transitional work for Mukherjee, who was reflecting back on her difficult years in Calcutta and cherishing opportunity to establish herself in the United States. This collection of twelve short stories deals with the difficulties that Indian immigrants have in adjusting to life in Canada and the United States. It deals with the problems of the immigrants, including language issues and
other cultural differences. They often become the victims of racial prejudice and violence that limit their freedom and opportunity as well. The stories depict severe racism in Canada. Sushma Tandon views, “‘Darkness’ was a book about old wounds. The characters - The Indian immigrants - were forever shutting between the old and the new world. The theme was still exile. The title was still revealing. It was a transitional book. Bharati Mukherjee’s concern with racism and racially motivated violence is a significant aspect of “Darkness” as well, though racism in its more virulent forms is present mostly in stories that have a Canadian setting” (Bharati Mukherjee’s Fiction 35).

In 1988, Mukherjee had a public breakthrough that lifted her into the top of all writers. She was awarded the National Books critics circle award for her fiction The Middle Man and Other Stories. In this collection Mukherjee becomes a valuable Middleman linking desperate worlds. She tells her tales from many perspectives with a keen eye for the concept of self within a larger society. She wrote this collection in a lighter, more celebratory, tone with characters who are adventurers and explorers rather than refugees and outcasts and are a part of new changing America. Sushma Tandon opines, “The Middleman is sometimes savage but largely celebrated view of immigrant life. It depicts larger than life characters from a Caribbean nanny to an Iraqi hit-man exuberantly engaged in the process of
reinventing themselves on new territory” (101). She discusses the trials of the third world immigrants to assimilate in to the “melting pot.” All stories of this collection have a different setting and atmosphere such as New Jersey, Queens, Toronto, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. She wants to emphasize that the third world people try to assimilate with new dreams and hopes. The stories of the middleman are completely different from those of Darkness. Unlike the anxiety ridden figures who predominate in stories included in Darkness, the third world immigrants whose lives are depicted in the middleman are conquerors, as Bharati Mukherjee calls them, who boldly stake their claim to their adopted and adoptive land. These eleven characters do not belong to India alone but to many third world countries. The stories present an optimistic broad view of American living and society. Bharati Mukherjee has explained to Barth Healy, in a famous interview, that her stories were about “the eagerness and enthusiasm and confidence with which the new immigrants chase the American dream. But sometimes they get their American codes wrong, being too aggressive. In my earlier novels I left my characters in the trip of nostalgia, much too timid. Now they are involved in the process of conquest over themselves” (“Interview with Barth Healy” 22).

Jasmine, Mukherjee’s most popular novel was generally received enthusiastically, but there was some criticism
that it was too short and its plot too contrived to be too successful work of fiction. It is a novel that stems from an earlier short story from *The Middleman and Other Stories* and was expanded to a story of a young widow who uproots herself from her life in India and re-roots herself in search of a new life and the image of America. It is a story of dislocation and relocation as the title character sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward while constantly fleeing pieces of her past. In it, Mukherjee rejoices in the idea of assimilation and makes it clear that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant of her life, because in the third world she faced only despair and loss. Sushma Tandon views, “Bharati has carved out the assimilation of third world immigrants into American melting pot, which is itself enriched by those she describes as new pioneers, a survivor with courage. Using flashbacks and cross cuts, the novel forges ahead weaving the story of the heroine’s life, from her early days in Hasnapur to her extraordinary adventure in the United States” (*Bharati Mukherjee’s Fiction* 108). What Mukherjee hoped that people would read in the story is not only Jasmine’s story, but also the story of changing America. Jasmine has reinvented herself and has delineated herself a new identity in the adopted country. A victorious immigrant is one who is reborn in the adopted culture.
Leave It to Me the next novel of Bharati Mukherjee discusses the story of a child born to a hippie from California. This story happened on his pleasure trip to India. The story includes a character called “Guru” who has the dubious distinction of leaving behind a trail of used and abused women, illegitimate children, rapes and murders across the Indian sub-continent. An unwanted female child is dropped like a hot brick in the nearest orphanage, where she is called Faustine. The child was later adopted by an Italian American family and christened as Debby Di Martino. Despite the love and affection for her foster family, Debby grows up with the awareness of being different, the feeling that she is unwanted obstacle in a world that hurls on towards its mysterious destinations. The feeling is sometimes haunting when everyone is surrounded, someone is feeling alone. At the conclusion she comes to, as she sets out in search of her past, her origins, and the unknown "bio-parents" who have callously abandoned her. As the story progresses with jerks and shocks in a picaresque fashion, bringing together a variety of characters who may or may not help the protagonist in her search for her "bio-mom." The story mainly revolves around that girl but at the same time takes some of the important aspect of life in a beautiful manner. Mukherjee seems fascinated with the changing identities of an individual. In many of her stories we see the same angle.
Her next novel is *Desirable Daughters*, which is a tale of immigrants and their attitude to the situations they face in the new land. It is the story of three sisters, Padma, Parvati, and Tara, who are a blend of traditional and modern outlook. *Desirable Daughters* is a tale of immigrants and the attitude of three sisters and their ways of dealing with situations. *Desirable Daughters* as the title suggests, are such daughters, for whom every parent would crave. The three sisters, who are the daughters of Motilal Bhattacharya and the great-grand-daughters of Jai Krishna Gangooli, belong to a traditional Bengali Brahmin family. Padma, Parvathi, and Tara are symbolic names of Shakti (Goddess) do not flaunt the some ethical values but have the grit to carve a niche for them. They are a blend of traditional and modern outlook. Padma and Parvathi do not regret their choices, the former an immigrant of ethnic origin in New Jersey, and the latter married to a boy of her own choice and settled in the plush locality of Bombay with an encourage of servants to attend on her. Tara, the narrator of the novel goes on an arranged marriage with Bishwapriya Chatterjee, a big shot of the Silicon Valley. Tara finds that her married life is not fulfilling and she walks out of her traditional life, a typical American divorce settlement follows. Tara works as a volunteer in a pre-school. She enjoys her love life with Andy, a Hungarian Buddhist. The fluidity of her identity, testifies not only
her own but also the fluidity of all the immigrants. The novel takes a twist when she gets united with her former husband Bish. Finally Tara returns to her father’s house in India for peace of mind. Tara is the representation of the well-educated modern and sophisticated woman, who has come off the stages of Tara Banerjee of *The Tiger’s Daughter*, Dimple of *Wife* and Jasmine of *Jasmine*, in that, she has rooted herself independently as a true American, acts on her own free will and does not dwell much upon her losses.

While Mukherjee has been received favorably by many critics and academics she has also faced a good deal of criticism particularly from East Indian scholars and critics. It has been said that she has often represented India in her fiction as a land without hope or future. She has also been criticized for her tendency to overlook unavoidable barriers of caste, education, gender, race, and history in her tales of survivors, particularly within *Jasmine*, giving her character more opportunities than their social circumstances would realistically allow. The latest novel of Bharati Mukherjee is *Miss New India*. The heroine of *Miss New India* is a young woman, Anjali Bose, who escapes the constrictions of small-town Bihar, one of India’s most backward states, for the promise of Bangalore, one of the country’s and the world’s, fastest growing cities. There she works at a call center, falls in love, meets dynamic young entrepreneurs, and marvels at the
fortunes being made all around her. She encounters her share of hardships – police brutality, real-estate sharks – but ultimately succeeds in reinventing herself. As its title suggests, then, Miss New India is a kind of parable for the new nation. This parable is not without its pleasures: Mukherjee’s writing can be evocative, even poetic. Her descriptions of Anjali’s cultural dislocation are often marked by a keen psychological acuity.

Mukherjee is currently a distinguished professor of English at the university of California-Berkley. Her husband with whom she shares a literary marriage teaches at the University of Iowa and they have two sons together, Bart Anand and Bernard Sudhir. Mukherjee has established herself as a powerful member of the American literary scene, one whose most memorable works reflect her pride in her Indian heritage, but also her celebration of embracing America. As she has said in an interview in The Massachusetts Review, “the immigrants in my stories go through extreme transformations in America and at the same time they alter the country’s appearance and psychological make-up” (Carb 646). And so we are given a writer whose voice tells the tales of her own experiences to demonstrate the changing American society.

The present study entitled “Ailing Aliens in Bharati Mukherjee’s Select Novels” has attempted to portray the depth of sufferings, the immigrants undergo in Western
countries, particularly in America. For this purpose the thesis has been divided into five chapters - "Introduction," "The Sense of Alienation," "The Struggle for Assimilation," "The Effects of Multiculturalism," and "Summation." The introductory part, introduces Bharati Mukherjee as an established voice of the Indian diaspora. It also focuses on the various aspects of postcolonial literature and the chief characteristics of diasporic writing such as identity crisis, multiculturalism, hybridity, and feminism. The brief life sketch of Bharati Mukherjee is then discussed so as to establish how her personal experiences as an immigrant influence her writing and characterization. All her works, including her short story collections, have been briefly discussed. A review of the relevant critical works on Bharti Mukherjee is included. Thus the first chapter provides all the introductory features to the thesis.

The second chapter is entitled "The Sense of Alienation." The protagonists of The Tiger’s Daughter and the protagonist of Wife are discussed as alienated from the society in which they live. Dimple suffers alienation in America as she could not cope with the cross-cultural confrontation. Born in Calcutta, she marries an engineer. After some days’ stay in her in-laws’ house in Calcutta she moves to America with her husband. Even from her initial days in America she began to realize that she could not
adapt to the living style of that country. She is afraid to move out of the home for fear of the language spoken in the streets. She is afraid of the violence-pruned American cities where one kills the other for petty reasons. She comes to a conclusion that she could not live with people who did not understand “Durga Puhja.” So she alienates herself from the society and seeks refuge in watching TV and sleeping during day time. In due course, she becomes depressed and mentally de-stabilized. At first she thinks of committing suicide and plans various ways to kill herself. Later she places the blame of her sufferings on her husband and thinks of killing him. In the end, she kills her husband in a hysteric fit with a kitchen knife.

While Dimple suffers alienation in another country, the protagonist of The Tiger’s Daughter, Tara Cartwright suffers alienation in her own country. Her long stay in the United States changes her manners and attitudes that she could not accommodate with her own people. So when she comes back to India, after a prolonged stay of seven years in America, she is unable to live with her own people. Though surrounded by friends and relations Tara felt alienated from others. She felt her to be an “other” who could not mingle with them. Tara senses her alienation even in the company of her close friends of “Camac street friends.” Tara’s sense of being an alien and an out caste among family and friends assumes monstrous proportions when
her friends accuse her of abandoning her Brahmin caste by marrying an American who is construed a “meleccha,” an outcaste. She has committed a blunder, which her friends and neighbours are not ready to accept. She becomes a secondary citizen in her own country and is unable to mingle with others wherever she goes. She had reminiscences of her life in America at her father’s home. It is understood that she did not belong to America also. She was always under stress in America and she longed for her return to India. When she returns to India after seven long years she is not the same Tara. She is the American-wedded Tara Cartwright who perceives India in a different way as the Westerners do. She is indirectly influenced by the Americans idea on India and Indians. She believes her visit to India would relieve her from all such pains. But instead she suffers from the foreignness of spirit in India, more acute than she had in America. So she decides to get back to America. She is a woman who is entwined between two worlds and could not live in either of them. She is thus alienated in her own as well as adopted country.

The third chapter “The Struggle for Assimilation” presents an analysis of the life of the protagonists of Jasmine and Desirable Daughters and intensity of the struggle they undergo in the course of their assimilation into the multicultural America. She portrays paradoxically
the Eastern culture where the heroines were born and bred and the Western culture in which they experience a new life. The immigrants carry the original cultures with them and simultaneously must change to survive in the new world. Mukherjee has presented the assimilation of the third world immigrants into the American “Melting Pot” which itself is enriched by those she describes as new pioneers. Jasmine is one of those pioneers, a survivor with courage. In *Jasmine*, the protagonist’s struggle symbolizes the restless search of a rootless person irked by a depressing sense of isolation all around. Her journey through life leads Jasmine through many transformations in various locations. In her land of opportunity Jasmine is thrown from one state of insecurity to another and she lets go all her hold on things which she could have held dear in India. The protagonists of her first two novels Tara and Dimple are completely dislocated both in India and in America, whereas Jasmine survives and reinstates herself to a new life. The exuberance of immigration which comes with the acquisition of Americanness and the immigrant Indianness as a sort of fluid identities to be celebrated does not come easily.

*Desirable Daughters* is the story of the three different paths taken by the three sisters – Padma, Parvati, and Tara. Tara and her sisters were renowned for their beauty, intelligence, wealth, and privileged
positions in the society. The three sisters were given enough freedom and expression at its furthest from its realities in their up-bringing. Of the three sisters, two get married and migrated to America while the other settles at Bombay. Padma lives in New Jersey with Harish Mehta, her husband. She is a TV professional anchoring a famous programme on an Indian channel run by her lover. Padma is the provider of her family. Padma is a type of Indian celebrity in New York. Padma is entirely Indian in her attire and cuisine. She maintains her image as an Indian symbol in all ways. She always advocates the Eastern tradition and is seen criticizing Tara for being too Americanized. Padma, even after long years after stay in the US, has not assimilated into the American main stream while Tara has fully immersed herself. Parvati lives a contended life with her family in a posh area in Mumbai. Tara is the most detached Indian of the three sisters. She is a divorcee who lives in San Francisco. Her marriage was a purely arranged one unlike her sisters. She was married to a multi-millionaire, Indian Silicon valley Icon, Bishwa Priya Chatterjee. After the marriage customs were over, Tara lived in Atherton with her husband in a gated community. Being a successful businessman and excellent provider, Bish did not allow Tara to engage in any kind of activity. Tara comes to California to fulfill the role of a traditional Indian wife but instead realizes that she is
not the fittest to play that role. Tara’s decision to divorce Bish represents a new consciousness in Tara where the regulations of Indian traditions and culture no more bind her actions. The patriarchal Indian society can no more dominate Tara’s actions. The opinions and judgments of others do not pose a constant threat. After the divorce Tara becomes more independent and more Americanized, she had ceased to be a good Hindu wife. After divorce she tries to live as a true valley woman – she works as a volunteer at a pre-school unmindful of her husband’s high position in the social ladder; she is a single parent of a teen-age son, who reveals him to be gay; and she lives with her Hungarian lover Andy, who is an ex-biker and Buddhist. The Protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee successfully overcome their deep-rooted traditional rules and regulations by enjoying sexual freedom. Tara sees herself an American but is constantly aware of the India that is always with her. Thus both the protagonists of Jasmine and Desirable Daughters strive hard to assimilate into the main stream American culture but with little success.

The fourth chapter “The Effects of Multiculturalism,” discusses the effects and the impact of multiculturalism on the diaporians’ lives. In this chapter, the conflicts arisen out of cross-culture are delineated in detail. The protagonists of the selected four novels – Tara Banerjee Cartwright, Dimple, Jasmine, and Tara Chatterjee – suffer
the cross-cultural conflicts. Tara Banerjee Cartwright is the protagonist of The Tiger’s Daughter. She is born to a well-to-do Bengali Parents who send her to Vassar, America to pursue her higher studies. She suffers the pangs of cross-cultural conflict in her early days in America. But accidentally she marries an American and settles in America. She is always nostalgic and is longing to see her own people. Her wish comes true only after seven years gap. In the meanwhile she has unknowingly developed Americanized thoughts. So when she comes back to her own people she is unable to tolerate the things very common in India. Now she views everything in the American concept. The result is that she is unable to adjust her living in India. So she now yearns to go to her David in America. But accidently she is encountered by a violent mob and Tara’s fate is left to the imagination of the reader. In the next novel Wife, the protagonist Dimple is a Bengali, born to middle class parents. She is married to an engineer and goes to America with him. There she encounters all kinds of cultural confrontation which destabilizes her mentally. She suffers depression, insomnia, and hysteric fits which are the results of her cultural alienation. In the end of the novel, unable to balance her mind, she eventually kills her husband with a kitchen knife. Jasmine is the third novel discussed in this chapter. The protagonist Jasmine is a young Punjabi widow who migrates to America to give life to
her dead husband’s wish. She faces a lot of problems due to cultural confrontations. But she is capable of overcoming her problems and she finally assimilates into the New Land. Tara Chatterjee, the protagonist of *Desirable Daughters*, marries an Indian-born American businessman and settles in California. The multicultural America bothers her in her early days. But later she tries to assimilate. Though she tries vehemently to subdue her Indianized ideals, it only dominates in her and in the end of the novel she finds happiness only with her relations in India. Thus the fourth chapter deals with the effects of multiculturalism in the protagonists of Mukherjee.

The last chapter “Summation” presents an overall view of the research design along with the findings which were the output of the following objectives:

- To find out the problems faced by immigrant women
- To trace the exploitation of women within and outside the family
- To trace the phases of acculturation in the select novels

The chapter concludes with the suggestions for the future research.