A study of this kind usually begins with a review of the critical literature done previously on the subject. But unfortunately, not many book-length studies have been done on the response of Asian American women writers to immigration, although by now a good number of critical articles, which address the issue, are available. I have referred to these articles at appropriate contexts in different chapters of my study. At the beginning, I have recounted the historical facts about the immigration of people from Asia to North America, which began more than one hundred and fifty years ago. This, I feel, would properly contextualise the writings of Asian American women writers.

I have restricted my discussion to works of writers of three Asian American communities only. The literary works of the immigrant writers from countries like Korea and Vietnam are mostly not available in India. I, therefore, decided to concentrate my attention on the works I could manage to collect from different places in India and, through friends, from abroad. The Chinese and Japanese immigrants were the earliest to arrive in North America. Writers belonging to these communities played an important role in shaping the “Asian American consciousness.” About the American writers of Indian origin, I felt that I might have a better understanding of their backgrounds and perspectives.

Insufficiency of critical literatures in Indian libraries inevitably hampers research works. Even the National Library in Kolkata (as Calcutta has been recently renamed) leaves much to be desired. I did not get much help from this well-known library. Books and periodicals on emerging areas like Asian American literature are
mostly unavailable in India. The only library where I found some very useful materials is the American Studies Research Center (ASRC), Hyderabad. This has been recently renamed Indo-American Center for International Studies. I had to make several trips to Hyderabad to consult materials available there. But since I did not have the opportunity to avail myself of either any research grant or study leave, I had to be satisfied with only very short periods of stay. I could, however, effectively utilise the facilities that the library offered within my short stays because of the unstinted cooperation I received from the library staff. I am really grateful to them. During my stays there I discussed my project with Professor Isaac Sequera, Senior Academic Adviser and with Professor Mohan Ramanan and Professor Sukhbir Singh. I am indebted to them for their advice and cooperation. I am also grateful to the librarian and staff of the American Resource Center, USIS, Kolkata. They helped me whenever I approached them.

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(Himadri Lahiri)