1. INTRODUCTION:

The present introductory chapter basically deals with a background study of the origin and development of Indian novel in English. The study has been set to explore issues of ‘culture’ and ‘transnationality’ as reflected in the contemporary Indian novels in English with special attention to the novels of Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The present study elaborately attempts to explain the definition and meaning of these concepts. The primary aim of the present work is to find out and evaluate the cultural elements in the selected novels of these novelists. This study also aims to search and examine transnational reflections in the selected novels of these novelists. Thus, it aims at showing the established relevance of ‘culture’ and ‘transnationality’ in the contemporary Indian fictional tradition. One of the objectives of the research study here is to define the concepts ‘culture’ and ‘transnationality’ in different facets projected by the novelists.

The hypothesis of the present work is that the novels of the selected novelists reflect transnationality and cultural applications. At the same time the attempt is also made to examine the problems of determining transnationality and cultural crises in the forming a definite in the selected novels of the writers Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as well. To have this survey more close and detail, and to make all the related concepts clear, this section is divided into the seven distinctive parts. All these parts will be discussed in the later parts of this work, they are as:

1.1 Indian Novels in English: A Brief Survey:

The selected novels of Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni had been written in the postcolonial background. As the present work, concentrates on the selected novels written by three Indian Bengali born novelists in English, examine, the Indian people and their life through their novels. Before attempting a thorough analysis of these three novelists and their work, it becomes very essential to offer a brief survey of Indian novel in English.
The novel as a western form of the literary work came into India in the later part of the nineteenth century. During this period, the new writers started writing in the regional languages. Gradually, these novels led to the growth of Indian fiction. It was in Bengal that literary renaissance first manifested itself, but later on, its traces could be seen in other parts of India as well. In this regard, K.R.S. Iyenger rightly says:

“The vicissitudes of the Bengali Novel foreshadow more or less the vicissitudes of the Novel in India. The Western breeze blows sometimes directly and sometimes more significantly, indirectly its velocity chastened in the ample spaces of Bengal.” (1984: 319)

The European enlightenment found an enthusiastic echo among Indian intellectuals especially in Bengal. They demanded social and religious reforms and wrote mostly in English, in order to address the English people and their government. Regarding Indian renaissance well-known reviewer, John Alphonso aptly says:

“It has been said that the readers of these essays and pamphlets spoke out against the old traditions, such as sati, child marriage, social determination and the exploitation of women. This movement has been called as Indian renaissance or the Indian enlightenment.” (1970: 33)

The social climate in Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century was powerfully conditioned by the rise of the middle classes, the spread of English education and the consequent impact of western ideas and culture, the growth of the press and the change of religious, moral values brought by reformatory work of William Bentick, and the teaching of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The stress on the rationalistic view of life, contributed substantially to the rise of individualism. Regarding it, K.S. Rammurthy rightly says that the social conditions set the stage for the emergence of the novel a new literary form in India. He further says:

“Like the birth of prose, the birth of novel too was destined to take place in the Bengal and it to place in the Bengali language, earlier than in any other Indian language.” (1982:28).
Indian fiction in English has gradually changed its theme and form. During the Gandhian Age, Indian novel received in its real form and shape. The novelists like Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan explored the cause of nationalism and patriotic feelings. Mahatma Gandhi’s call for freedom struggle was significantly reflected in the novels of pre-independence India.

After independence there was great change in the social, economic and cultural fields. The evil and bad customs were removed from the society by the work of social reformers. The novelists of this period were influenced by American and European models. The post-independence Indian novelists in English appealed to the heterogeneous community, peoples of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural background. Shashi Tharoor’s first novel The Great Indian Novel (1989) is an outstanding example of new novel. The narrative in Amitav Ghosh’s The Circle of Reason (1986) is punctuated by miracles and eccentrics. Social realism is depicted in the school led by Vikram Seth in A Suitable Boy (1993). The political theme, expressed in the fiction of present period in Narasimha Rao’s The Insider (1981). The novel written by Amitav Ghosh, In an Antique Land (1992) demonstrates, that how history can be enriched by imaginative reconstruction of the past. This is the story of a low class Indian, brought as a slave by a Jewish merchant in the twelfth century. The novel is an exciting combination of history, documentary, travelogue and social portraiture.

Another type of contemporary Indian novel in English is regional fiction. It has been still popularly written by the novelists in the present period. There are novels set in the different states too. For example, the novel by Manohar Devadoss Green Well Year, is set in Tamil Nadu. Another kind of contemporary Indian novel in English is of interior world of the mind and sensibility. This has attracted many novelists. The novel by Amitav Ghosh, The Shadow Lines (1988), shows that the lines are responsible to divide people and nations. Amitav Ghosh, always a restless experimenter, has written a new territory to Indian fiction in his The Glass Palace (2000), which is set in Burma, and which deals with the final days of Hebrew, the last king of Burma. The new type of novel introduced by Jayant Naralikar is science fiction. His novels like The Return of Woman (1989) describes new events and

The women novelists, for example Santha Rama Rao, Kamala Das wrote novels confessing their experiences more effectively. The novels by Anita Desai and Ruth Jhabwala have successfully depicted an encounter between East and West in their novels. Anita Desai’s *Fasting Feasting* (1999), written after her migration to the USA, betrays a curious uncertainty to touch when she posits the contrast between a dull, submissive Indian girl and her neurotic American counterpart. The protagonist in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) is appeared in ship wrecked on a remote island peopled only by women. Here she learns magic from a mysterious crone, who specializes in the power of spices, which are more than culinary. *The Sister of My Heart* and *Queen of Dreams* are her most popular novels. The well-known novels by Rani Dharkar *The Virgin Syndrome*, (1997) and Radhika Jha’s *Smell* (1999) are also the excellent examples of this changing theme of the new novel, in which Magic Realism is very successfully used. Arundhati Roy, the daughter of Keralite woman, who married a Bengali, sets her novel *The God of Small Things*, (1997) in a Kerala village.

This is a brief survey of Indian novel in English as a background for the close analytical study of the selected novels, written by these novelists. Since literature is a mirror of society, it is a reflection of activities that have taken place in the society. Indian novel in English has been dealing with regional as well as national problems. Now the contemporary new novel has crossed the borders of nation and has entered into the international context, in the transnational situation. The culture has now become plural, as the immigrants are deeply rooted in their own culture, but they have to deal with and face the culture of that nation in which they live.

1.2 Postcolonialism: A Background:

Postcolonialism marks the end of colonialism by giving the indigenous people the necessary authority and political, cultural freedom to take their place and gain independence by overcoming political and cultural imperialism. The people characterized in it try to come out of the colonial domination. The postcolonial literature and theory investigate what happens when two cultures clash and one of
them with accompanying ideology empowers, seems itself superior to another, “The term is used to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcraft, et al. 1989:10).

The concept of Postcolonialism dealt with the effect of colonization on cultures and societies. The term was originally used by historians after the second world war to expose the postcolonial state. The concept has also been used by literary critics to discuss various cultural effects of colonization on culture and society. It is quite necessary to understand the term colonialism, in order to comprehend the concept Postcolonialism more effectively. Elleke Bohemer defines colonialism in the book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*,

“As a settlement of territory the exploitation or development of resources and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands”. (1975:04)

The ‘Postcolonialism’ is replete with contradictions and conundrums owing to the varied forms of colonial rule and processes of decolonization. Aijaz Ahmed, states postcolonial is simply a polite way of saying not white, not Europe or perhaps, not Europe but inside Europe. (1995:10)

Postcolonialism, in a way stands for cultures and societies at margin and challenges the centre margin archetype with an intension of the removal of the inequality. Therefore, it eschews the high culture of the elite and espouses subaltern cultures and knowledge. It demands the reclamation of native cultures, by challenging the colonial misinterpretations. Frantz Fanon, in this regard very aptly states that,

“Black men want to prove to white men at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect” (1967:10).

A well-known reviewer, Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* (1978) has enlarged the scope of the postcolonial approach by exposing the Eurocentric Universalism that establishes Western superiority over the East. In this regard he further observes, “European culture gained the strength and identity by setting itself off against the orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (1978:03). Postcolonial scholars attempt to overcome the stigma of marginality or ‘otherness’ by
foregrounding difference diversity. Gayatri Spivak, in this concern rightly pointed out, “When a cultural identity is thrust upon one because the centre wants an identifiable margin, claims for marginality assure validation from the centre” (1990:220).

Dr. Homi Bhabha theorizes postcolonial discourse in his edited books *Nation and Narration*, and *The Location of Culture*, and advocates the plurality of postcolonial cultures as to embrace the European and indigenous traditions (1994:172). This celebration of hybridity, according to Bhabha is a positive advantage that allows the postcolonial writers and critics to analyze the West as insiders as well as outsiders. A well-known reviewer has rightly stated:

“The postcolonial theory is transnational in dimension, multicultural in approach and the movement beyond the binary opposition of the power relations between the colonizer and colonized and central periphery.” (1994:233)

Finally, it can be said that postcolonialism is specifically a post-modern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to and analysis of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. Identity, cultures and ideologies have always been a dominant preoccupation of the Indian novelists in English in the postcolonial era. To conclude, in brief, Postcolonialism is truly a dissensual, subversive theory/practice erasing the debunking of cultural past by the colonizers. It sought reclamation of native cultures through the celebration of indigenous traditions and values.

After the detailed and close analysis and examination of the concept postcolonialism, it’s meaning, origin and development, it is an attempt to focus on the parts of postcolonialism, which help to make its meaning more clear. These parts for example, are: Indian Diaspora, Hybridity, Indian Women Novelist in English, Subalternity and Expatriate Writing, so, it is quite necessary to throw light on these concepts respectively.

1.3 Diaspora:

Since the present work primarily concerns with the terms ‘culture’ and ‘transnationality’ implemented in the novels of Indian novelists in English in the
contemporary period as well as in the postcolonial situations, the cultural studies and transnational approaches cannot be studied and explained closely without attempting the diasporic conditions in which they exist. The contemporary significance of diaspora and its study concerning its scope, nature and meaning has very close relations with the intellectual movement in the academy such as postcolonial studies and the process of globalization. The term ‘diaspora’ is derived from Greek word, ‘diaspeiro’, literary means a scattering or dispersion of a group of people to an alien land away from their traditional home lands, earlier of the Jews outside Palestine. For McLeod A.L. the concept is applied to a number of ethnic and racial groups living abroad (2000:17).

In the present age, the term has changed in its meaning, scope, it is now related to migration on the one side and its positive aspects of transnational affiliation on the other. Diasporic fiction is related to cultural expatriation, which is now regarded as intrinsic to postcolonial literary experience emphasizing on writing and making of literature worldwide. Makrand Paranjape, finding himself in a nationalist space, suggests that the diaspora must involve a cross cultural or cross civilizational passage, it is only such a crossing that results in the unique consciousness of the diasporic situation. He, thus says:

“The crossing must force, not voluntary; otherwise, the passage will only amount to an enactment of desire fulfilment or even if voluntary, the passage must involve some significant tension between the source and target culture.” (2001: 16)

Makrand Paranjape, thus has emphasized on the importance of sources and target culture. Another reviewer Dr. Homi K. Bhabha emphasized different type of gatherings, where people belong to different countries representing the way of life and culture. In the diasporic conditions, there is a kind of gathering of the people belonging to the different groups. In this regard Dr. Homi Bhabha says as:

“Gatherings of exiles and emigrants and refugees; gathering on the edge of foreign culture; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or café’s city centres; gathering in the half life, half light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another’s languages;
Gathering the signs and approval and conoeptance, degree discourses disciplines; gathering the memories of under development of other worlds lived retroactivities; gathering the past in a ritual of revival, gathering the present.” (1994: 18)

The diasporic writings, thus are generally marked by a sense of isolation and for removedness from the mother country. Writings of the Indian diaspora in English are, expatriate writing or immigrant writings. In the situation of diaspora, the immigrants have an impact on culture, society and history of the country. There are two reasons for migration. The people for the purpose of job opportunities migrate to the other country or sometimes they are forced to move. The immigrants exercise a great impact on culture, society and history of the country. On the other hand, they nostaligically recall their motherland, its custom, culture, language and people. Diasporic theory deals with the question of centrality, hybridity and transculturation of the people. According to Edward Said, “Diasporic writing is concerned with not only a basic geographical destination, but also a whole scene of interests” (1978:12).

Thus, the diasporic writers are now scattered throughout the world. They are found in the countries, which are different to each other. These countries, for example are Fiji, Trinidad, Malaysia, East Africa and in the western countries like Britain, America and Canada. Since the beginning of Indian writing in English, the Indian writers have been going abroad and reaping a rich literary harvest out of a commingle of cultures and languages. Prof. K.R.S. Iyenger aptly said that Modern Indian literature begins with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who was destined to act as a bridge between India and England (1984:30).

The contemporary postcolonial diasporic writers, for instance, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and many others are likely to be cultural travellers, the extra territorial than the national. The well-known post-colonial diasporic novel is Amitav Ghosh’s In an Antique Land is a witty archaeological travelogue recounting time, he spend in Egypt as a student anthropologist, give emblematic shape to this lively narrative of travelling and to the faith in the interpenatribility of cultures; the way Ghosh tracks his fragmentary history of a medieval Tunisian, Jewish Merchant, who spend his days in the Indian part of
Mangalore. *The Circle of Reason*, another novel by Amitav Ghosh also connects the Indian Bangladesh boarder, the Persian gulf city al-Ghazira and the Algerian Sahara. Amitav Ghosh has lived in England, Egypt and America, for him globalization is an everyday fact of existence.

The diasporic writers settled abroad, for instance are: Salman Rushdie, Ved Mehta, A. K. Ramanujan have been living in U.S.A. The writers like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth are British based. The U.S.A. settled Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meena Alexander and Jhumpa Lahiri as diasporic writers of younger generation.

Vikram Seth’s new novel *Two Lives* cris-crosses between history, memoir, autobiography, documentation and parallel narratives, his own as a young student in London and then America or China where he began his literary career with *From Heaven’s Lake*. The Indian expatriate writers thus have produced literature of various forms. For the better understanding of the literary terms, ‘culture’, and ‘transnationality’ the study of diasporic situation is very important. Regarding it Stuart Hall has rightly claimed as, “An era of globalization, we are all becoming diasporic” (1990:11-23).

In this way, an attempt is made to focus on the explanation of the term diaspora, its origin, meaning, development, history and changing nature from traditional to modern, national to transnational. Thus the contemporary Indian novelists in English describe the modern global picture of society.

1.4 **Hybridity:**

In the postcolonial background, the literary forms generally are situated in the multicultural and multinational conditions. Hybridity, being a component of postcolonialism, can describe and narrate contemporary global society, very widely and perfectly, it is an attempt to define and explain the concept, hybridity. There are two sets of definitions, which for instance are, hybridity is more traditional, nation of the mixing and cross-fertilization of cultures, languages and traditions. The newer postcolonial and poststructuralist approach to intercultural studies in which the intermingling of different ingredients to the Hybrid, stew is treated in terms of, (a) the
processuality of identification moves; (b) the refunctionalization of cultural parameters from one cultural paradigm within the frame of the other, and in the terms of (c) interdependence and mutual, cross influencing substituting between colonial and native traditions, particularly as affecting the hybridization of the colonizers discourse through contact with the native others mimicry of western moves (Bhabha, Homi K. 1994:55).

Hybridity as a colonial phenomenon must not be simply grafted on a new colonial scenarium indeed, the critique of the neo colonial exploitation of native cultures. The process of hybridization that observable in such scenario are more complex than, if uncannily similar to their colonial antecedents, the second recurrium in postcolonial literary studies is that of post-independence states which do not lend themselves to a new neo-colonial description. India is a prominent example of such a postcolonial scenarium one, in which there is no constitutive discrimination against the native culture under the banner of a nationalism that has adopted western standards of civilization:

“The third and most common situation portrayed in postcolonial literature is that of the migrant, usually an immigrant in western societies and most commonly an intellectual at odds with his own culture as well as that of the host country.” (Fludernik, Monika. 2006:262)

This is very perfect and apt definition of hybridity, in which it covers all the three aspects of the postcolonial conditions. The example of this colonial hybridity is E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* in which Dr. Aziz seems to be a course of typical mimic man. R. K. Narayan’s *The Guide* is a typical example of a novel portraying post independence India. It is an example of a novel in the hybridity in the postcolonial scenarium. To the novel *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth also has post-independence background.

Another type of hybridity is the immigrant hybridity that is popular in the recent concern of the contemporary novel. In this case, there is a link between past exist and influence the present experience of homelessness and intellectual malaise for which the term hybridity serves as a popular metaphor. If one sets aside Bhabha’s
plea for a subversive political effect of migrant discourse on the dominant western episteme, the most precise shape and quality of migrant’s hybridity remains to be determined. Let us attempt the next stage in the study of hybridity that covers the whole universe, it is cosmopolitan hybridity. Expatriate Indian writers have moved both to the formerly colonial host country, Great Britain and Canada, or the United States. Their literary work frequently deals with their own situation of migrancy, expatriation and alienation from the mother country. The mixing of cultural norms and expectations in the intermediary position which migrants occupy between the culture of the host country, the marginalized expatriate community, and their own mother country perfectly lends itself to analyze in terms of hybridity and hybridization. The hybridization of the host culture can, therefore be effected only through the impact of all immigrant group joining. The manifestation of hybridity in the short fiction of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. These short fictions for example are *Arranged Marriage, Clothes and The Disappearance*. On such crucial moments of life, in the East as well as West, Chitra Divakaruni therefore says:

“The novelist, with her narrative skills, captures the crucial moments of life at the crossroad moments, caught between past and present excitement for the West and the longing for East, along with the conflict of tradition and modernity.” (1995:24)

The largest percentage of characters in expatriate Indian writing, however, belongs to a new type of migrant, that of the academic or intellectual who has been accepted by the host culture and has acceded to the American, the relationship of this luck one’s dream of self made a group to which expatriate woman. Indian writers, unlike politically persecuted African writers – frequently belong to western cultures display a quite, a different kind of hybridity from that affecting migrants on the lower social level. Most advanced form of hybridity, in a way, is the cosmopolitan hybridity, which is related to the cultural aspects of the different people. This cultural hybridity has thematic relations with the colonial scenarium. The migrant’s most successful move is into the field of multi-cultural ethics, postcolonial studies and the like, an arena from the vantage point of which cultural processes inside the western episteme can be hybridized. After the analysis of the condition of hybridity in the contemporary universal context, thus, expressed in the literary creation becomes
perfect. Hybridity, in this way, describes this new nature of present society, its cultural and social depiction vividly.

Thus, hybridity seems to be the most important aspect of Postcolonialism, an attempt, therefore is made to explain the meaning, origin, development and the changing scenario of national as well as transnational conditions. The contemporary transnational situation appears to be global, that can be examined only in diasporic situation.

1.5 Indian Women Novelists in English:

The study of Indian women writers in English covers most of the part of postcolonialism. An attempt, therefore, is made to focus on the traditional role of woman as well as the modern picture of Indian women writers, who crossed their national as well as cultural borders and entered into new, plural picture in the transnational, global situation. During the Indian Renaissance, the status of woman has become better than the earlier traditional way of life. Breaking the shackles of ancient way of life, these contemporary women novelists in English have become successful in portraying their picture as free but responsible, competent modern woman.

The journey of Indian women novelist right from its beginning up to the present period, has illustrated, that the novel has undergone great changes in the nature and scope. This Indian novel in English has crossed the national borders and has entered into the global scenario. It later on is known as transnational novel. The Bengali born woman novelist, who crossed the national border and migrated to America is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Chitra with the strength of her narrative skill captures the crucial moments of life at the crossroad moments caught between past and present excitement for the West and the longing for East, along with the conflict of tradition and modernity, as well. Since, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is the part of the present research work, primary focus is on the analysis of her novels. Most of her fictional as well as non-fictional work is set in the Bay Area of California. Thus, Chitra Divakaruni, in her work, deals with the immigrant, experience. Since 1991, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has been the president of Maitri, a helpline for South Asian woman that particularly helps victims of domestic violence and other abusive
situation. She says that she sees herself as a listener, a facilitator, a connector to people. Much of her writing therefore centres on the lives of immigrant women, as she herself admits:

“Women in particular respond to my work because I’m writing about them, women in love, in difficulties, women in relationships. I want people to relate to my characters, to feel their joy and pain, because it will be harder to (be) prejudiced when they meet them in real life.”
(Elizabeth @ Black Issue 18 Sept. 1997)

Thus, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s poems and short stories focus on the experiences and struggles of women trying to find their own identities. The protagonist of her novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, Tilo, a magical figure, who runs a grocery store and uses spices to help the customer to overcome their difficulties. Tilo provides spices not only for cooking but also for the homesickness and alienation that the Indian immigrants in her shop experience. In her novels, thus Chitra Banerjee spins a fresh, enchanting story of transformation that is as lyrical as it is dramatic. The women writers in English have developed and scattered not only in India but also abroad. These Indian women novelists very effectively became independent and have their identity in the international literary field. It is a brief account of the present women novelists in English, its beginning, development and changing role of women from traditional to modern, from national to transnational situation and national cultural to plural and transnational culture. The modern women have travelled and have crossed national borders.

1.6 Subalternity:

The term ‘subalter’ literary means, ‘of inferior rank’ and in Gramsci’s study it serves as a coded way of referring to classes such as the peasantry and the working class, social classes other than the ruling class. It is important to note that Gramsci uses the plural form and refers to the Subaltern Classes; at the beginning of ‘History of the subaltern classes’ he stresses that the subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a ‘state.’ To understand the meaning and definition of the word subaltern, the efforts of Italian communist Antonio Gramsci are very important. The term ‘subaltern’ is taken from Gramsci’s
essay on the Margins of History and is used by the subaltern studies group to identify a mode of historical practice that seeks to recover an indigenous culture which it assumes to be unaffected by colonialism. In this regard Ranjit Guha in the introduction to his work, Subaltern Studies, says:

“Parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics, in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes. This was an autonomous domain….far from being destroyed or rendered virtually ineffective….it continued to operate vigorously… adjusting itself to the conditions prevailing under the Raj.” (1982: 4)

The meaning of the term can be explained by attempting to the subaltern consciousness. In this regard, Rosalind O’Hanlon argues that:

“At the very moment of this assault upon western historicism, the classic figure of western humanism – the self originating, self determining individual – is readmitted through the back door in the figure of the subaltern himself.” (1988: 218)

The place of subalterns in relation to history, in postcolonial theory is at its centre. The subaltern studies group was the first organized group that problematized history in relation to postcolonialism. In her influential article, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak says that, ‘the phased development of the subaltern is complicated by the imperialistic project’, and notes that this is a question that has been confronted by a collection of intellectuals who may be called the ‘subaltern studies’ group. According to Spivak the group’s project is to rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of the discontinues chain of peasant insurgencies during the colonial occupation. What Said has formed is, “The permission to narrate.” (1988: 283) For these critics, in a way, the subaltern groups include poor peasants, women, tribals and other marginalized groups. Regarding the same other subaltern scholar, Dipesh Chakrabarty states:
“In nationalist versions of this narrative, as Parth Chatterji has shown, the peasants and the workers, the subaltern classes, were given the cross of inadequacy to bear for, according to this version, it was they who needed to be educated out of their ignorance, parochialism.” (2007: 33)

After making the meaning and definition of the term ‘subaltern’ clear, it becomes very essential to attempt how the novelists have used this term in their novels. Amitav Ghosh’s most recent novel is characterized by a ‘rich’ metaphoric style that derives from his associations with the Subaltern Studies. His ethnography *In an Antique Land* follows this trajectory. Influenced by his association with the subaltern studies, scholars, Ghosh reforms to a rigorous mode of empirical research to recover the historically situated subjective of a network of traders and their slaves operating between North Africa and Southwest India during the middle ages. Thus, in the contemporary novel in English, Subalternity is generally implemented in order to present the common class society and people.

### 1.7 Expatriate Writing:

In the era of globalization, the Indian writers in situation of diaspora have set a distinctive trend of fictional perspectives. Their writing represents a strong quest for the native cultural heritage with the longing for the assimilation in alien culture. This condition creates a time fabric of human sensitivity and relationship. The term ‘exile’, ‘rootlessness’, ‘displacement’ and ‘alienation’ are partially judicious to communicate the sensibility of expatriates but they cannot elucidate the visible and invisible expressions working on the inner psyche of the characters. The process of assimilation requires the forgetting of ‘past’ but the absolute negation of ‘past’ is difficult to achieve because the lingering shadows of persistently interact with the present and the hinder the process of assimilation. Expatriation sensibility involves social assimilation and the reconstruction of psychic self. Regarding the same Christina Gomez says:

“Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful longing for the past, often symbolized by ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the
differences between oneself and the new unfriendly surrounding, as assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity force one of the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around her/him or refuses from cultural dilemma and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country.” (1995: 72)

The reviewer Bharati Mukherjee has explained the psychology of immigrant, which is divided into two parts, their longing for the past, Indian culture and the present culture of the natives. “The agony of migrancy depends on the level of education, age and motive behind migration. Regarding the immigrant psyche, Bharati Mukherjee in her recent interview in Times Book Review says:

“We immigrants have fascinating tales to retell many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries which are placed by civil and religious conflict…. When we uproot ourselves from these countries, and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must know about 200 years American history and learn to adapt to American society. I attempt to illustrate this in my novels and short stories. My aim is to explore, Americans to the energetic voices of new settlers in this country.” (1988)

The same divided psyche of the expatriates is also emphasized by Jasbir Jain. Jasbir Jain describes the expatriates related to two different cultures, in this regard she very aptly says:

“Writers who have moved away from one culture to another are caught between two cultures and are very often engaged either in a process of self recovery, through resort to history and memory or in a process of self preservation through act on transformation.” (2003:101)

In the contemporary Indian society, the Indian has been exposed to Western ideas. He approaches his own society and culture through Western norms. The self of an Indian is divided. The same problem which is shared by expatriates, immigrants. They are on the periphery and their selves are divided. The immigrant is concerned
with arrivals and not with departures. Immigrant writing has made a place for itself. From amongst writers from the subcontinent a large number are now known, for instance, Salman Rushdie, Kamala Markandaya, Bharati Mukherjee, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Allan Sealey, Shashi Deshpande and other writers. Migrant communities, thus are discriminated against, have to confront similar problems as native in their relationship to the colonial power. Postcolonial migrant literature can be described as a literature written by elites and defined and colonized by elites.

The migrant novel thus draws attention to the regenerative experience of struggling worlds. Grown fat on their different cultural riches, it brings into prominence the translations and migrations of which it is a product. Expatriate Indian writers have moved both to the formerly colonial host countries Britain, Canada, the present attempt is to deal with their own situation of migrancy, expatriation and alienation from the mother country. The mixing of cultural norms and expectations in the intermediary position, which migrants occupy between the culture of the host country. The marginalized expatriate community, and their own mother country perfectly lends itself to an analysis in terms of hybridity.

In order to apply Bhabha’s scheme, the host country needs to be conceived of as antagonistic to the expatriate community, the symbolic successor of the former colonial power. This condition met since immigrants with a working class status encounter, social discrimination based on racist attitudes that treat Indians as racially inferior and equate them with Africans. The threat of Indian immigrants to their ‘hosts’ is minimal since the migrants constitute a tiny minority and are usually a fairly unimportant group within the many other much more numerous immigrant communities. The impact of all migrant groups affected the hybridization of the host culture. So, the problem of migrant has been taken up by many Asian writers both in England and in America. The introduction of the West into the psyche of the immigrants and the post-colonials is much deeper than the readers may take it to be. Cultural expatriation is now widely regarded as the intrisit to the postcolonial literary experience, impinging on writing and making of literature worldwide.
2. CULTURE :

Since its inception of human evolution, culture significantly infused and embedded into human life. As the infant enters the world cultureless, his behaviour, his attitudes, his values, ideas and beliefs as well as his daily activities are influenced by the culture that surrounds him all sides. Not only every stage in the life of man is influenced by culture but also it completes man’s life. Culture is therefore a man made environment. Thus, it can be said that once culture is established, it has a life of its own. It is also believed that man’s pre-human ancestors used tools habitually and that habit later on became custom, through the transmission of tools using from one generation to another long before articulate speech came into being. The customary use of tools became a powerful stimulus in the development of a brain that was capable of symboling into primitive social life was revolutionary. This section of introductory chapter thus, focuses on the origin and growth of culture. Indian fiction in English is considered as the documents and sources of cultural knowledge about India. In this regard, Dorothy M. Spenser rightly has said:

“Indo-Anglian fiction is a major source for a systematic study of cultural contact and cultural change with the Indian worldview as a focus of the Westerners to increase their knowledge of acculturation processes.” (1960: 10-11)

2.1 Definition and Meaning of the Term ‘Culture’:

The term ‘culture’ has been described differently by the various writers. There are many definitions of culture, which express the detailed and changing nature of human society. This part of introductory chapter deals with a brief survey of different opinions expressed by anthropologists, sociologists, reviewers and literary artists on culture. The concept of ‘culture’ is well-defined in The Unabridged Oxford English Dictionary (A new English Dictionary on Historical Principles, 1961) indicates:

“ ‘Culture’ deriving from the Latin word ‘cultus’ which means cultivation, tending and in Christian authors, worship the action and practice of the cultivating the soil, village or husbandry; the cultivating or rearing of a plant or crop. The term culture means the cultivating
and the development of the mind, faculties, manners, the improvement or refinement by education and training, the intellectual side of civilization.” (1961: 1247-1248)

According to the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, the word ‘culture’ is well understood as, “Intensively as humanity’s effort to assert its inner and independent being.” (Hastings, James (ed.) 1951; 559) Edward B. Taylor, British anthropologist, who in 1871 first gave a standard and systematic definition of culture as, “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (1903: 01).

This definition of culture emphasizes on the art, customs and habits of man. The reviewer thus, again says that culture is possession by man alone. After reviewing and analyzing number of definitions, U. S. anthropologists A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, were led to their conclusion that, “Culture is an abstraction from concrete behaviour but it is not self behaviour.” They further define culture as:

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievements in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached value; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.” (1952: 181)

The work of American anthropologists L.H. Morgan, was instrumental in tending scientifically to this view. Morgan formulated to study societies at different stages of their cultural revolution. Significantly, his important work is titled Ancient Society researches in the line of human progress from savagery through Barbarism to civilization. Morgan, thus rightly observes:

“The latest investigations respecting the early conditions of the human race, are tending to the conclusion that mankind commenced their career at the bottom of the scale and walked their way up from savagery to civilization.” (1956: 3)
Morgan’s formulation was not just descriptive but evaluative. Culture, after Morgan’s work came to be viewed as telos of mankind’s progress from the state of savagery. This idea of culture was racist and Eurocentric and provided a scientific rationale for imperialism in its subjugation of the savage and primitive. These definitions of culture thus explain and express its meaning. In the sixteenth century, the term ‘culture’ was used as a refinement or well being. It gradually becomes a product. During the eighteenth century, the idea of culture emerged as a chief concern in the work of various writers as a reaction to and as a part of the sudden and great changes that could occurring in the society. They are for instance the industrial revolution and the consequent mechanization of social life. Threatened by machine, writers approached to culture as a redeeming agency that could save society from degeneration. ‘It was Herder, who effected a significant and radical change in the usage of the term ‘culture.’ He attacked the enlightenment thinker’s unilinear view of culture – the view that described history as a single continuous movement leading to the highest attainment of the eighteenth century European culture. It is very interesting and significant that Herder challenged the imperialist and racist descriptions of culture.

“Men of all the quarters of the globe who have perished over the age, you have not lived solely to manure the earth with your ashes, so that at the end of time your posterity should be made happy by European culture, the very thought of a superior European culture is a blatant insult of the majest of nature.” (1968: 14)

The term ‘culture’ has attained larger dimensional of meaning over the years. The British scholar William Raymond defines the term ‘culture’ as, “An individual habit of mind; the state of intellectual development of a whole society; the arts; and the whole way of life of a group or people.” (1977: 11-20) Thus, the word ‘culture’ is very closely attached to the human life. The aim of life is to pursue perfection in all walks of life. T. S. Eliot, well defines the concept:

“Culture means the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs and in their religion.” (1962:120)
Most of the 19th century writers expressed an anxiety over the changes being affected their conviction that culture understood as refinement of certain qualities could not be compatible with the new social order. According to Matthew Arnold, culture as the great helps out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters, which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the words:

“...Culture which is the study of perfection leads us... to conceive of true human perfection as a harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity, and as a general perfection, developing all parts of our society.” (1971: XIII)

1.2.2 Cultural Theory:

The Frankfurt School of Social Research was set up in 1923 and it comprised chiefly of Jewish intellectuals who fled to North America and various parts of Europe with the rise of Nazism to power in the 1940s. The chief focus of the school was on the impact of industrial capitalism has been successful to a large extend in overcoming its contradictions and there by acquired resilience and stability and further, with the rise of an affluent working class, largely consumerist in character. Schools’ most significant contribution to cultural theory is the concept of ‘cultural industry.’ The ‘culture industry’ formulation is of critical importance in understanding the impact of media on society and also in the analysis of the political economy of cultural production. During the 1960s, European theory began to make its mark on the Anglo American academic field and cultural studies, too come under its influence. Structuralism marked the beginning of the new phenomenon. Structuralists saw culture in terms of the language paradigm. Cultural practices were seen as signifying practices made possible by an underlying system of differences. Regarding cultural industry Allen O’ Connor aptly says, “to study the unconscious foundations of the culture of primitive societies. His analysis cooking, manners, dress, social and cultural practices in terms of language system” (1989: 405-406).

The most important aspect of his work is the study of myths. Postmodernism represented a radical break with the scientific objectivist and universal claims of knowledge. In this brief survey of the rise and growth of cultural studies, it clearly
emerges that cultural studies has widened its scope over the years; its politics, too have undergone a sea change. Despite the fact that in the U.S., it is championed by those who have nothing to do with politics, as O’conner points out, cultural studies still involves questions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, oppression and inequality. With the globalization of communication and the rise of the multinational corporate hegemony over cultural production and the media, cultural studies has acquired a profound importance. It is an attempt now to present the implementation of the concept ‘culture’ in the selected seven novels for this study, written by three Bengali Born novelists, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Three novels of Amitav Ghosh have been selected for the present study, basically deal with the elements of culture in India and abroad. His first novel The Circle of Reason presents Indian culture, encountered with the culture of Al-Ghazira. The novel is based on the ancient religious books like Bhagvadgita, Katha Upnishada and Myth. Indian culture is reflected in the first half of the novel. Though the main character, Balram is influenced by science and reason, he also believes in Indian religion and culture, as there are images of God and Goddesses in his house. Bhudeb also is interested in organising religious festivals. The six feet high ma Saraswati reflects Indian culture. In the second half of the novel, the characters like Alu, Rakesh, Professor Samuel, Zindi, Kulfī Didi and Chunni Devi planned to visit Al-Ghazira for the purpose of job. All these people represent Indian culture in the Arab countries, celebrating religious festivals and events. Mrs Verma also celebrates religious, cultural activity by performing Chitragandha in Al-Ghazira.

Another novel by Amitav Ghosh, In an Antique Land (2009) is undertaken for this study, also deals with the encounter of Indian culture with Egyptian one. Amitav Ghosh as a student anthropologist, who visited the village in Egypt, where a native muslim person, Abu Ali who offered him a room and also warmly welcomes him. It shows that how the Egyptians liked the Indian people and their culture. The young boys in the village asked Amitav number of questions, regarding Indian religious, cultural and political activities. These questions, for example are: the worship of cow, the richest person in India, Indira Gandhi, the burning of dead body in India, Hindi cinema and songs. The political relations between India and Egypt were also good.
These local boys also ask many questions about Indian agriculture and water pumps. The novelist also answered most of the questions.

The third novel of Amitav Ghosh included in the study is *The Shadow Lines*; it explores the post independence India and the post partition activities between India and Bangladesh. During this period the religious clashes, strife also took place between the Hindu and Muslim people. The novelist, thus, focuses on the close relations among the countries like India, England and Bangladesh. The Price family of England also visited India. Mr. Price and Datta Chaudhari have family relations between them. Tha’mma’s house was in Dhaka before partition, for her Dhaka became a foreign country. She has to cross the shadow lines of the borders between India and Bangladesh. To visit her house, she required passport and legal activities. The encounters among the Hindu culture, Muslim culture and the culture of England are the main theme of the novel. Tha’mma and Tridib, the narrator of the novel also visited England. The Indians and the English people liked each other’s nation and cultures.

Two novels written by Vikram Seth are also selected for the research study, they are *A Suitable Boy* and *An Equal Music*. The former novel deals with the Indian social, religious and the cultural life, while the later deals with European culture as well as the culture of England. Vikram Seth has been known as a citizen of the world. as well as a cultural traveller in his literary studies. The novelist thus have tried to present Indian culture in his prose as well as poetic work. His most popular novel is *A Suitable Boy* (1993) which is set in a newly post independence, post partition India. The social, religious, political and cultural life of the Indians is presented by the novelists perfectly. The imaginary town, Brahmpur is located on the Ganges between Banaras and Patna. In this fictional town, people belonging to all the religious, social groups live together it is a perfect picture of Indian village, a mini India. As it is a postcolonial novel, it presents Indian culture as well as the culture of England. This epic novel covers various issues faced by post independence Indians, including Hindu Muslim strife, Abolition of Zamindari, Land Reforms and many others. The primary concern of the novel is the celebration of wedding ceremony. Right from the selection of a suitable boy and girl for married life there are number of rites, rituals, customs and traditions as well as religious activities followed strictly in the Hindu marriage
system. During the wedding ceremony, number of activities take place, even after the marriage many such activities also occur. In the Hindu marriage tradition, real ceremony begins with the Haladi, programme, ‘Bangle’ ceremony is also important one. All these activities and events reflect Indian culture.

The novelist also has presented muslim people, their festivals and culture. The novelist, thus has presented a kind of co-operation and brotherhood between the Hindu and Muslim people. They also participate each other’s festivals and religious activities. In other words, the novel *A Suitable Boy* presents a complete picture of post independence India.

*An Equal Music* (1999) Vikram Seth’s another novel. It is a love story, set in Europe has European characters only, therefore it deals with western culture. Here making love and making music has become Seth’s central theme. The musicians, artists and singers represent their culture. In a way, music has been recurring pre-occupation in Seth’s work. The music of a nation is expressed through its social religious and cultural life, art, music, dance, paintings, sculpture, food and the way of life of the people. The central characters Michael and Julia along with their co-artists, musicians perform their art, music, that represent their culture. These musicians also do their practice, rehearsal and perform it in the programme in different places of the world. The musicians life is divided into two parts: The past life and culture of their traditional home and the present life and culture in which they live in the other country. This cultural encounter thus, is the major theme of the novel. The musicians society has its own way of celebration, cultural activities on different occasions. These musicians travel from one place to other for their performances, they really can be called as the cultural travellers. Both the novels in other words reflect culture.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s literary work deals with the immigrant experiences of cultural shifts, an important theme in the mosaic of American society Jasbir Jain, regarding the expatriates says:

“Writers who have moved away from one culture to another, we are caught between the two cultures and are very often engaged either in a process of self recovery through resort to history and memory or in a process self preservation through an act of transformation. Chitra Divakaruni is popularly known as a South Asian American woman
novelist, writes about the expatriate Indian women’s experience and culture encountered with the American one.” (2003:101)

Two novels by Chitra Divakaruni are selected for this work entitled, *The Mistress of Spices* (1997) and *Queen of Dreams* (2004). The immigrant women carry Indian culture with them to America. The narrator of the novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, (1997) Tilo becomes The Mistress of Spices by magic. She uses her knowledge of the magical properties to help many other outsiders who pass through her little shop in Oakland, California through it she not only provides the spices, food items, mithai to the people but also solves all their personal as well as domestic problems. The names of Indian spices like Til, Turmeric, Fenugreek, Ginger, Makardhwaj and Mithai like Burfi, Rasgulla and food items like Atta, Basmati Rice, Masur Dal and the Indian names of the people, Indian proverbs, signs of swastic, religious rites, rituals, customs and traditions really reflect Indian culture in America.

*Queen of Dreams* (2004) is the second novel written by Chitra Divakaruni selected in this study. In this novel the novelists spins a fresh enchanting story of transformation. The protagonist of the novel Rakhi is an young Indian artist, living with her divorced mother in Berkeley, California. The life of Rakhi is divided into two parts: The lure of her mother’s past in India and assimilation of modern America. As the novel is the result of the tragic event of 9/11, Chitra remains haunted by not only the images of what happened, but also the gesticulations felt through the country, especially in the South Asian American Community. Rakhi’s mother reads the dreams of women who came to her to get their dreams analysed and solve their problems from the dream journals. All this process has Indian cultural background. The young characters in the novel always talk about ancient Indian cultural and traditional life. The character like Jespal, visited Gurudwara in America reflects Indian culture. Ancient Indian musicians and singers visited Rakhi’s chai-house also represent Indian culture. The Hindi cinema and songs are very popular in America. The Indian painters paint the pictures of Indian food items for Rakhi’s Kurma House International, also reflect Indian culture. Thus in the seven novels written by the three Bengali born Indian novelists reflect Indian culture in the transnational age.
2.3 **Literature and Culture:**

After attempting the definition and meaning of culture along with its origin and growth, it becomes very important to focus on the relationship between literature and culture, which are mutually related. Literature is more than realistic depiction of human life. It highlights the whole panorama of human life by subsuming in it the cultural traits, institutions, social stratifications and power structures of a society. Edward Said has acknowledged the interrelationship between literature, culture and society. He thus expresses as:

“Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of orientalism has convinced me that society and culture can only be understood and studies together.” (1978: 27)

Further, literature embodies social, cultural and universal values, which can affect human life in various ways. A literary work is organic, holding within it a number of cultural themes. As Terry Eagleton, in this regard, rightly says:

“Literary work itself comes to be seen as a mysterious organic unity, in contrast to the fragmented individualism of the capitalist market place; it is spontaneous rather than rationally calculated, creative, rather than mechanical.” (1996: 17)

Literary creation has its roots in various social sections such as language, economics, politics, race, ethnicity, class, gender and culture. A text, thus is an organic unity of socio-cultural relations, racial differences, religious ideologies, class conflicts, gender biases etc. through it one can view the web of human relations and values of a society. The study of literature of a country therefore can be enlightening. African literature for instance, puts before the international audience of various cultural aspects pertaining to Africa. It is through the means of literature that the international audience becomes aware of the ‘life’ of various countries. History and the press can keep people informed of other cultures, but literature takes them closer to human life and hence it is more appealing. Thus, it can be said that culture and literature cannot be separated from each other as literature depicts human life, which is deeply rooted in a particular culture.
Of all forms of literature, novel has greater scope in critiquing human life and social culture. The canvas of the novelist is vast and as a social being he can depict, at any length, the changing relations of life in their social and cultural contexts and transforms them into art. It may be, therefore, said that the success of the novelist depends on the intensity with which he depicts the cultural roots of the society he presents in his work. From above discussion, it has been emphatically said that literature is the mirror of society. Thus, we may say that Indian fiction in English is considered as a document and source of cultural knowledge about India.

2.4 East-West Confrontation:

The British rule of one hundred and fifty years had exposed the Indians to a culture that was alien to them. Dialectic between the values of the East and of the West becomes therefore, a natural corollary to this cross-cultural encounter. Anand Shankar Ray in his article says, “The meeting of East and West” presents a searching analysis of the historical factors which were responsible for the East-West confrontation” (1958: 1-2 April).

The educated Indians unjustful who were unhappy on the Britisher’s impartial behaviour with the Indians found expressions in reformation movements like Arya Samaj and Swami Vivekananda’s efforts for Swadeshi Movement later on resulted in the partition of Bengal. There are, also many reasons for the presence of East-West theme in the works of many Indo-English writers can be traced to their endeavour to address themselves to a western audience and of their desire to define and interpret the East for its benefit and in the process rediscover their country and their own identity. Again, while recognizing the cultural antagonism that exists between the East and West, there has been a continuing effort of the part of some of the novelists to explore areas where these differences can be explained away and any understanding reached. Large number of changes in the Indian society has taken place after the India’s independence. This period is known as a part of several conflicting forces, for example, modernity and the relations between East and West.

The theme of cultural conflict or reconciliation assumes a pivotal place in the novels written in the post independence India. The writers in this period were all the time aware about the changing circumstances in Indian society. Later on the Indian
writers became very close to the Western culture and values. This intercultural nature of his own image becomes for such a writer of profound interest. The East-West confrontation, therefore, is found to be a prominent and recurrent theme in Indian English fiction, “The adoption of western scientific techniques and western way in manners and customs, in dress, in eating habits etc. hence made India’s new way of life” (Iyengar KRS. 1984:28).

The Western education and culture injected new thoughts and belief in the minds of those Indians living abroad and after their return to their country, their subsequent struggle to readjust and reevaluate the terms in which to face life constitutes major issues in a number of these novels. The early novelist thus presented this new theme in their novels. The protagonists in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand revolt against the existing social conditions. Anand believes in the new progressive and advance methods. He considers the enlightened modernity as the most effective tool to fight against the age and evils of rural society. His characters, for example Mannu, the coolie, Bakha, the untouchable, Bhikhu, the Chamar, Gangu, the labourer, Gauri in the ‘The Old Woman and the Cow’ and other characters all are presented by the social systems for their non-conformity, for looking forward to a changed and prosperous future when, “There will be water from the wells with electric pumps and medicine will renew the earth” (1960:252).

In the novels of R. K. Narayan, the conflict is between two systems of values, of the old India and the westernized new India. The novels of R. K. Narayan present the gradual disintegration of old values of life and induction of new values. The Vender of Sweet emphasizes on the theme of East-West confrontation. Mali, comes from America with new knowledge and new thinking along with his foreign wife, symbolizes modernity and comes into clash with traditional values upheld by his father. The other novelist of this period also attempts the same theme. In Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope, the conflict between the East and the West i.e. – tradition and modernity assumes a new range and depth. In this novel, Ramaswamy represents tradition, which means Brahmanical India, which represents the quite sense of Advaita philosophy. The modern cosmopolitan India of the Northern states is rejected by him as Alien to the traditional pattern of Indian life, “I could not understand the North-Easterners going from Strict Purdah to this extreme modernization with unholy
haste. We, in the South were more sober and very distant, we lived by tradition………” (1968:31).

The novelists of first generation thus focused on the coming of two cultures together and create a new one in their fictions. The writers of new generation look the traditional and modern way of writing novels differently. With the publication of Salman Rushdie’s work in the 1980s, the Indian English novel made its presence felt in the world of literature in English. Thus the success started with the phenomenal emergence of Rushdie’s *Midnight Children* which infused new energy and courage into a number of Indian fiction writers – like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allen Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Rohinton Mistry and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

Breaking the linguistic barriers, thwarting the efforts of earlier novelists, these writers with contemporary outlook and experimentation in form and structure have changed the whole scenario of Indian fiction in English completely, and brought a new internationalism to their works. These new novelists are becoming dominant and have continued to win, in competition with writers abroad whose mother tongue is English. It is also very significant that these writers are getting their novels published in abroad very easily. During the early period to get publisher at abroad was nearly impossible, but now a days even a young novelist finding with ease a prestigious foreign publisher for his first effort. This new writer’s handling of English language has become a significant feature of the new fiction. Born and brought up in the post-colonial world the new novelists, many of whom are part of the new Indian diaspora, have had no reason to feel self conscious in handling the English language. The new novel is more globalized than the earlier novel in Indian English. These new novelists deal with the new social structure with its different cultural aspects and transnationality. Since the main concern in this work is to find out the cultural aspects, in the novels of Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, the detailed analysis of their seven novels will be seen in the separate chapters of the work.

### 2.5 Cultural Studies:

Cultural studies has emerged as a separate field of interdisciplinary study during the past three decades, initially in Britain, but more recently in the United
States and in other countries. A cultural study is interested in the processes by which power relations between and within groups of human beings organize cultural art facts and their meaning. Pramod K. Nayar, in his book *An Introduction to Cultural Studies*, makes the meaning of culture related and referred in the cultural studies. ‘Culture’ for him in this regard means:

“Culture is the mode of generating meaning and ideas. This ‘mode’ is a negotiation over which meanings are valid. Meanings are governed by power relations. Elite culture controls meaning because it control the term of the debate. Non elite views on life and art are rejected as ‘tasteless’, ‘useless’ or even studied by the elite. What this implies is that certain component of culture gets more visibility and significance.” (2008: 4)

The meaning and scope of culture has changed from its earlier traditional meaning. The nature and meaning of ‘culture’ in the cultural studies has widened, as it covers almost all the activities and stages in life of modern man and society. Cultural studies looks at mass or popular culture and everyday life. It is the culture of the everyday life of the larger number of people. It is graffiti, comic books, mass cinema, popular music sports etc. this mass culture considered as inferior. The term ‘mass culture’ was used pejoratively. Cultural studies argue that culture is about the meanings a community/society generates. In this way, we can say that cultural studies mostly deals with popular culture, which is the set of practices, artefacts and beliefs shared by the masses and is constituted by the everyday life of the mass; the food habits, fashion forms of transport, the music and etc. Cultural studies believe that the ‘culture’ of a community includes various aspects: economic, ideological, erotic and political. It includes all the branches of social study. Culture is not a natural thing it is produced.

The growth of cultural studies is linked to the rise in interest in popular culture in western societies in the 1960s. Within the academy cultural anthropologists, sociologists and historians were beginning to express greater interest in social history, especially these of the subordinated groups such as women, African – Americans and colonized. The term ‘Cultural Studies’ is associated with the Birmingham Centre for
Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) found by Richard Hogart and his colleagues in 1964. The efforts of the working class intellectual’s engagement with culture resulted in (BCCCS). These cultural studies, in a way began from outside the establishment and in the working class movement. Regarding the beginning of the cultural studies, Stuart Hall reflects as:

“Cultural Studies really begins with the debate about the nature of social and cultural change in post war Britain. an attempt to address the manifest break-up of traditionally class cultures, it set about registering the impact of the new forms of affluence and consumer society on the very hierarchical and pyramidal structure of British Society.” (1990: 11-12)

The change in culture can be seen in a some different in the work of English writers in the beginning with the Romantics. The idea of culture emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a part and reaction to the changes were being effected by the Industrial Revolution. ‘Culture’ became the keyword of the time. In the nineteenth century, various writers have expressed on the perfection in different forms. In this regard S. T. Coleridge says culture as, “The harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity.” He, thus further says:

“A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain head of the humanities, in cultivating, and enlarging the knowledge already possessed and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science being likewise the instructors of such as constituted or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order.” (1972:2)

Cultural studies adopt methods of analysis from various disciplines: media studies, cultural anthropology, discourse analysis, popular culture studies and audience studies. All cultural forms are linked to institutions, the market, consumers and regulatory bodies. The intellectuals believed that we cannot ‘read’ cultural artefacts only within the aesthetic realm. A novel must be read not only within its generic conventions and the history of the novel but also in terms of the publishing
industry and its profits, the community of reviewers, the academic field of literary criticism, the politics of awards and the hype and publicity machinery that sells the book. In the twentieth century, the serious and true debate began about cultural studies in England by F. R. Leavis. According to him, the anti-humanistic or dehumanizing aspect of the ‘Technologico-Benthamite Culture’ could be brought by a small minority – namely, the literary intelligentsia, whose centre would be the university. He writes:

We have to make provisions for keeping alive, potent and developing that full human consciousness of ends and values and human nature that comes to us (or should) out of the long creative continuity of our culture. (1972: 2)

The continuity of our culture was preserved in literary work, he further says that, it was this continuity threatened by technology and mass media that the scrutinizers set out to preserve and protect. Apart from these comments and expressions regarding the cultural studies and its role in the contemporary social structure the contemporary cultural studies takes everyday life very seriously. Everyday life especially in metropolises and fortunately, cultural studies seems to be interested mainly in metropolitan cultures – is a site that is multi-layered and contested. Everyday life is about the practices of the routine.

The society, in a way is constituted by cultural artefacts used by the people even as the cultural artefacts are themselves introduced and consumed by society. Cultural artefacts in the social realm can be studied through the analysis of everyday life. Apart from the analysis of cultural studies and its importance in the modern society. During the 1960s, European theory began to make its mark on the Anglo-American academic field and cultural studies, too came under its influence. Structuralism derives from the linguistic work of Furdimand De Saussure, who refined language in terms of a system of signs. According to Jonathan Culler structuralist method is:

“Treating phenomena as the products of underlying systems of rules and distinctions, structuralism takes from linguistics two cardinal principles: that signifying entities do not have essences, but are defined
by networks of relations, both internal and external and that to account
for signifying phenomena is to describe the system of the norms that
makes them possible.” (1990: 78-79)

In this way the structuralists saw culture in terms of the language paradigm, cultural practices were seen as signifying practices made possible by an underlying stem of differences. The anthropological work of Claude Lévi-Strauss best illustrates the structuralist interpretation of culture. Lévi-Strauss uses Saussure’s definition of language to study the unconscious foundations of the culture of ‘primitive’ societies. He analyses cooking, manners, dress, aesthetics activity and other cultural practices in terms of the language system. The idea of Louis Althusser had an enormous influence on cultural theory in the 1970s. As Stuart Hall has suggested, “it was Althusser’s concept of ideology that was of critical importance to the discussion of culture” (1990: 11-23).

2.6 Marxism and Culture:

Marxists approach to the cultural studies primarily relates arts with social contexts. Karl Marx and Friederich Engles located all forms of culture – music, painting and literature – within a social context. They considered art as an important component of human life. During the nineteenth century, both Marx and Engels started their study of the condition of culture in the context of politics and economics. Novel is a cultural form. It locates all cultural forms within social and economic conditions existing in particular society. In a way, it is said that cultural forms reflect social conditions and the novel reveals the truth about classes, class conflict and power relations within a society. In other words, Marxist approach seeks to explore the links between a literary artefact and social, economic conditions. Marxist view of culture deals with a social referent, a term favoured by John Hall in his book on ‘The Sociology of Literature’, he says, “A social referent describes the themes and representations within a work of art that somehow refers to the actual existing social conditions” (1997: 20).

Marxist approach to culture thus, focuses on both the production and consumption of the cultural artefact it, in other words, locates a material basis for culture. Marxist’s approach pays attention to the financial and cultural profits. The
Marxist Scholars, thus believed in culture as a product. It therefore, emphasizes that cultural artefact, which becomes material basic for culture. On connecting on Marxism, Pramod K. Nayar says:

“The sociology of culture in Marxism focuses on the social contexts of the author and reader, the production and consumption of cultural artefacts. It examines the author’s context – social, economic, cultural, technological…culture produces certain kinds of text and particular meanings of those texts.” (2011: 128)

Marxist literary and cultural theory therefore has certain key modes of analyzing cultural texts. The cultural artefact represents the world in certain ways so that the readers obtain particular meanings from them. Cultural forms are modes of representation. The task of Marxist Criticism is to see how such representations reflect or refract existing economic conditions so that the dominant classes retain their power in society. Pramod K. Nair thus again says, “Cultural forms are modes of representation of reality. The representation of society by rich class can be treated as valid or (real) correct” (2011:198).

Culture, through the analysis by Marxism, Williams Raymond (1981) says that it is ordinary; it is a whole way of life. Art is affected by the social, political and economic changes. These processes are always reflected in the cultural practices and Williams traces the history of the word from its Latin roots (meaning cultivation, tending) to show how the words’ changing meanings can be linked to a changing’ new social and intellectual movement. In his book Culture and Society, Williams traced English social change especially after the Industrial Revolution through the writings of Blake, Wordsworth, George Orwell. According to Williams, Cultural materialism never abandoned the economic and political bases of cultural practices within the actual means and conditions of their production (1981:64-65).

2.7 Cultural Industry:

To Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, two German theorists, in their work Dialectic of Enlightenment (1895-1944) like other things, culture is a product of social and economic conditions in any society. The term ‘Culture Industry’ proposes a
more political function for culture. According to them Cultural Industry is, “Culture industry takes up the ability that consumers derive from any commodity, and makes it a product of the capitalist system” (1995:99).

This term culture industry is used to describe mass cultural forms. It transforms the individual from thinking and discerning individual into an unthinking consumer. Culture industry refers to mass culture where entertainment and its forms individuals into passive consumers. According to Adorno, the masses are not primary but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery:

“The customer is not king, as the culture industry would have us believe, not its subject but its object… The masses are not the measure but the ideology of the culture industry, in his essay, culture industry reconsidered.” (1995: 99)

The cultural industry has converted the value, meaning and pleasure to be obtained from the use of the product into the product and its elements. Adorno and Horkheimer say urbanism as a form of the culture industry. They argue that housing projects that are supposed to respect the individualism and independence of the individual actually transforms him/her into one more ‘unit’ like thousands of others. This section of the first chapter basically deals with the term ‘culture’, therefore, in this section the focus is on the following points. The meaning and definition of the term ‘culture’, the evolution of culture right from beginning; different approaches to the study of culture; culture in terms of patterns and configurations; cultural traits; cultural areas, cultural types, culture in terms of institutional structure and functions; i.e. social organization, religion and belief and custom, law and many more.
3 TRANSNATIONALITY:

3.1 Definition and Meaning:

There are number of incidents, events and activities in the selected novels reflect transnationality, which can be defined elaborately. The terms ‘nation’, ‘nationality’, ‘international’, ‘post-national’ and ‘transnational’ have different meanings and definitions in the ever changing society in the age of globalization. Regarding the meaning of ‘nation’ as presented in Modern English Dictionary is:

“A large aggregate of people so closely associated with each other by a factors such as common descent, language, culture, history and occupation of the same territory as to be identified as a distinct people especial when organized or potentially organizable as a political state.”
(Brown, Lasley. 1993; 1887)

All the selected novels are written by the contemporary Indian novelist in English, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee, Divakaruni in the modern period, thus reflect cultural aspects and transnational elements. The anti-colonial movement in most cases, posited the idea of a nation with a continuous and common tradition. In the postcolonial studies the nation can be described in many ways, It has been again argued, under the influence of Benedict Anderson that the nation is ‘imagined’ people from corners of the geographical territory who will never meet or know the rest continue to see the other part of this territory and their cultures as a component of our nation. The nation is a collective that exists primarily in acts of imagination and thinking a unity that might be more fantasy than reality, but is powerful:

“This sense of collective unity generated and sustained by symbolic forms, such as songs, films, cultural practices like stories, traditions, history writing. Every nation, according to Timothy Brennan (1990) demands a narrative form where continuity, contiguity and commonality are invented packed and sold to the people.” (1983:151)

Thus, the nation is a myth that has a very real hold over the people. A national identity is the consequence of such an enabling myth. It unites people under the
umbrella, provides them with a sustaining form/story and asks them to function together in the name of the nation. Nation is the western idea, as Parth Chatterjee rightly notes that the very nation is western. Anti-colonial/nationalist movements adopt the idea of a nation. He further argues that the natives transform the western idea of a nation in three stages:

“In the first stage, the natives accept modern Western ideas of progress and modernity. In the second, the elite in the colony turn to folk and popular cultural forms in order to generate both mass support as well as a new form of identity based on local cultures. In the third stage, the western and folk cultural forms are projected as a native nationalism by the elite.” (1993:10)

The concept of nation is closely related to its large population and collective identity. Jan Aart Scholte, in this regard has acknowledged general distinguishing features regarding the concept of nation.

### 3.2 Features of the Concept, ‘Nation’:

The characteristics of the concept ‘nation’ are presented by the reviewers regarding the development in the term ‘nation’ is very keenly observed by the reviewers. The feature of the concept nation makes its meaning more clear. The characteristics of nation are presented by the reviewer, Sholte Jan A. Regarding it says:

“The first feature of the term nation is, a nation encompasses a large population. Its size is substantial enough that each number has face to face contacts with only a minor proportion of the total national group. Nations are thereby distinguished from smaller scale affiliations like neighbourhoods and traditional kinship circles, whose members have regular direct interactions with one another.” Second feature of nation is distinguished as a form of collective identity by attachment to a specific territorial homeland, which usually has larger populations than a district or province. Each nation roots itself in a particular country, even if a majority of group resides. The third feature as – the nation
defines itself through as emphasis of attributes that set it apart from other nation groups. Each nation declares itself to be unique on the basis of difference.” (2005: 56)

All these three characteristics may relate to language, customs, sensibilities, art forms, religion, race or more. The nationalists generally connect these marks of distinction to a shared heritage in the past, a joint struggle, in the present and common destiny in future. In the next features, the nations are mutually constitutive. They do not arise autonomously, but through the international relations. The nation, in this way, identified its purportedly unique characteristics largely by contracts with foreigner.

The nations have usually forged and sustained themselves in good past through acts of collective defence against external instruction such as military attacks or colonial domination. At the same time, nations have tended to consolidate in part by asserting privileges insiders that are denied to outsiders. On each of these counts, nationality and internationality have been two sides of the same coin. The fifth characteristics of the nationhood is, however, states and nations are far from the same. A nation is a type of group identity while a state is a type of governance apparatus. Nations, like individuals, too have their identities. National identity, as Bhikhu Parekh points out:

“Is the identity of a political community, its values and commitments, its characteristic ways of talking about itself and conducting its political affairs, its organizing principles and many such factors?” (2000: 6)

A nation-state is a territorial community that means to be ruled by a corresponding state apparatus. However, many states are not nation-states. Likewise many nations are not state nations. Historically, the governance structure of statism and the identity structure of nationalism have had close interconnections. The main form of national identity between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries was the state nation. Thus, the Brazilian nation was linked with Brazilian state, the German state to German nation.
During the earlier period, notions of ‘nation’ and state were so tightly interwoven; so many people treated the two notions as synonyms. Nations can also take non-state forms. Many large groupings of people that claim distinctive collective attributives and attachments to the territorial homeland lack of corresponding state. The meaning of transnational is extending beyond national, bounds or frontiers and transnationally means in transnational manner. Thus the meaning of the terms in the above manner cleared in the dictionary.

3.3 ‘Nationalism’:

‘Nationalism’ is a concept recently developed and emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century. The American and French resolutions were the first striking manifestations of nationalism spread throughout Europe and Latin America, Germany and Italy became a unified nation. In the twentieth century, anti colonialism was the moving force behind nationalistic movements in Asia and Africa. After the collapse of soviet socialism, nationalism has once more appeared on the agenda of world affairs. Nationalism was once regarded as Europe’s gift to the world and till the 1960 considered as the moving force behind anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa. Oxford English Dictionary again defines nationalism as, “Devotion to one’s own nation; patriotic feelings, principles or efforts.” (1961: 1888). In this regard, Hutchinson and Smith define nationalism as:

“Nationalism was, first of all, a doctrine of popular freedom and sovereignty. The people must be liberated – that is, free from any external constraints; they must determine their own destiny and be masters in their own house; they must control their own resources; they must obey only their ‘inner’ voice. But that entailed fraternity. The people must be united. They must dissolve all internal divisions; they must be gathered together in a single historic territory, a homeland and they must have legal quality and share a single public culture.” (1999:13)

In this definition, the writer has presented as all the required features and characteristics for nationalism, in which every citizen is free to live happily without any internal problem. Nationalism is an imagined community. In the following
definition Michael Billing observes another type of nationalism, by which the spirit of nation is considered. The reviewer thus says:

“The spirit of the nation is kept alive by the stuff of everyday life. He calls this ‘Bengal Nationalism’. It is the nationalism of flags, of national anthems, of rousing language and celebrations to mark national days or battlefield heroics shrouded in the mists of time.”

(1999:12)

Transnationalism as concept, theory and experience has nourished an important literature in social sciences. In practice of transnationalism refers to increasing transborder relations of individuals, groups, firms and to mobilizations beyond state boundaries. Individuals, groups, institutions and states interact with each other in a new global space where cultural and political characteristics of national societies are combined with emerging multilevel and multinational activities. Transnationalism is a part of the process of globalization.

The definitions of transnationalism are different, but generally centre on exchanges, connections and practices across borders, thus transcending the national space as the primary reference for activities and identities. The exchanges and interactions across borders are a regular and sustained part of migrants realities and activities. These exchanges may take the form of ideas, values and practices as well as political mobilization and economic contributions. Thus the concept transnationalism connects the migrants establish between countries. Transnationalism, thus, creates a greater degree of connection between individuals, communities and societies across borders, bringing about changes in the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes of societies of origin and destination.

Cross-border connections between societies resulting from migration necessitate the formulation and implementation of appropriate policy inventions by states. Every migrant can be an agent as well as a subject of transnationalism, engaging in transnational activities and practices to a greater or lesser degree. This conception has the merit of highlighting non governmental relations between countries and non-national forms of social bonds, for example transnational religious and class solidarities. However, ideas of transnationalism offer less when it comes to
elaborating a more specific conception of the character of these non statist and non nationalist circumstances. The term Transnationality take the nation state country as its reference point and to that extend retains traces of methodological nationalism and statism. Indeed, transnational relations are usually conceived as transactions across state borders, “Many scholars are of the opinion that contemporary transnationalism helps usher in a new post-national era” (Appadurai, 1996:12).

But such transnationalism does not necessary weaken nationalism. ‘Transnational’ is an apt term to describe the general conditions of the contemporary era. Replacing the older concept of the ‘international’ as the name for the play of ideas identities and communities beyond the nation, the transnational opens up new conceptual and theoretical spaces for imagining solidarities, social formations and cultural practices which might exceed what many feel to be the parochialism and paternalism of the nation the politics of the nation state era. The use of the word ‘transnational’ originates as a description of corporations that not only have a presence in different countries, but whose commercial and financial activities have allowed them effectively to transcend national boundaries and the legal and legislative controls once exerted on them by nation-states. The concept of transnational is theoretically productive, not only because it captures the present mode of capitalism that very effectively mobilizes bodies, money and energies across national boundaries, but also because it holds open the promise of a new politics beyond the dead end of the representative democracies of contemporary liberal states. Appadurai further says:

“The ‘transnational’ acts as an incitement for new kinds of theoretical manoeuvres that might help to produce human communities and solidarities no longer in thrall to global capitalism and which cut across the always artificial boundaries of national belonging while nevertheless maintaining the lived reality of cultural disjuncture and difference.” (1996: 49)

As a concept that names both the conditions of contemporary economic, social political and cultural life as well as the new situation that a left cultural politics would want to bring into existence, it could be claimed that much recent theoretical work has
been written with the problems and possibilities of the transnational in mind. The term, thus describes the global, transnational social, political, religious and cultural situation in modern universal society. Appadurai, in this regard further says about the universalizing:

“Contemporary theory, which has to see the conceptualization of extra or post-national, forms of belonging, political social and cultural as one of its major problematics. Examples of the range of recent work on the transnational include the vast literature on globalization and its discontents.” (1996: 50)

Some texts in transnationalism, like, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak’s book *Death of Discipline* is about the implications of the transnational for ideas of disciplinarily and the universally. These texts are heterogeneous enough to make it evident that work on the transnational does not constitute a clearly defined ‘school’ or distinctive theoretical approach. The transnational is largely a periodising concept whose specific contents are worked out in highly variable and distinct ways in the writing of different theorists. Transnational is a broader and more general than any other concepts of the contemporary period. Transnational plays very important role in the activities of both cultural studies and theory. Similarly, the general problematic named by the transnational has also generated important reflections on the grounds and origins of both practices. As theory and cultural studies have gone global and have found themselves circulating outside their spaces of ‘origin’.

3.4 Transnational Theory and Cultural Studies:

The transnational theory and cultural studies regard themselves as self-critical practices attentive to their own analytic and conceptual limits. This theory, in a way contains a certain potential to push cultural studies beyond the latter’s own understanding of the implications and challenges of the transnational. The cultural study has intended to focus primarily on the epistemological issues and quandaries that the transnational raises for politics of culture carried out with the entire globe in mind. What it has consequently often failed to consider adequately in doing so is the bride’s deformations and transformations of the category of culture itself, which have both accompanied and helped to produce the massive changes in contemporary
economics, social and politics that are identified with the transnational. For the transnational forces as to consider seriously that the very object of cultural studies – culture – has been radically changed in ways that require the activity of the field to shift from what has remained its basic orientation: the study of cultural objects and practices of everyday life in relation to power:

“The cultural studies are related to the transnational very closely. The relationship of cultural studies to the transnational is very intimate and close. The transnational functions within cultural studies on at least three distinct levels.” (Imre Szeman, 2009: 202)

The evocation of the transnational signifies perhaps first and foremost the spread of cultural studies beyond the national sites and spaces with which it has been typically identified beyond that familiar trajectory that begins with Birmingham, before splintering it to the United States, Australia and Canada. In the first instances, cultural studies becomes transnational when it has exceeded the spaces of its Anglo American origins, still finding itself in the U.K., but now also in England, Taiwan, Turkey and Brazil, thereby becoming as globalised as the popular cultural forms with those analysis it is still often identified. The development of cultural studies has been the creation of the Association of Cultural Study (ACS), which has held its bi-annual meetings at Tampere, Finland, Birmingham, U.K., U.S.A. and in other countries.

There are at this time cultural studies associations in Australia, Austria, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, U.K. and U.S.A. The cultural studies, its centres, networks and programmes in many more nations, including China, Denmark, Finland, German, India, Israel, Jamaica, Sweden, Turkey, the Netherlands and others. The conferences and colloquia held in still other locations such as Portugal and Greece. The transnational and cultural studies in other way, relates to the sites of cultural analysis themselves. Cultural studies have come increasingly to explore genuinely transnational scenes and scapes. This second iteration of the transnational in cultural studies draws attention to the limits of cultural analysis that fail to read the politics of cultural production and consumption without due attention to the new globalized “flows” of power people and discourse flows that have recognized significantly the long imagined cultural facility of the local to the national or of
individuals to their physical communities. Cultural studies, in other way, deals with the details of location, but now a days it focuses on the cultural spaces between the nations. Thus, transnational has widened its scope from academic approach to the political, social and economic in order to analyze and describe the universal society.

The next function of the concept of the transnational in cultural studies goes further and it is transferred to the social, political, national and intellectual. Cultural studies, now changes its approach from traditional nature to the historical and social and economic conditions. These three functions of cultural studies on the international and transnational level in its widened nature and approach.

The cultural studies has been thoroughly investigated by Akbar Abbas and John Nguyet Enry in their book, *Internationalizing of Cultural Studies*. Here, the attempt of these writers is to add the work in this regard from the outside to the Asian studies, that is the dominant stream of Anglo-American cultural studies. In this regard they write:

“In the current moment of what we call the ‘postcolonial predicament’ of cultural studies, in which a broad hegemony of western modernity is increasingly being questioned among cultural studies. Scholars from around the world, we must consider any form of internationalization as an effort and a critical context for facilitating the visibility, transportability and the translation of works produced outside North America, Europe and Australia.” (2005: 1-12)

This process of internationalizing cultural studies, adds the work from outside of the West to the earlier approach of the cultural studies. The transnational challenges cultural studies to take seriously the idea that the practices associated with academic work in cultural studies are to be found in other social and cultural spaces. The overall impact of the transnational on cultural studies is thus to pull it as an academic practice towards a consideration of the globe and to push it in the direction that it has always wanted to go out of the academy and into the world. The transnational insists about the culture primarily in relation to geographic space the end of the link for instance of culture to nation that originates in Romanticism in the work of many writers.
The expansion and transformation of culture to fill the entire space of the social necessitates new forms of cultural studies that no longer rely on culture to the social and to power, but which engage with this new situation in which somehow, everything is cultural, though not in the way we have long imagined culture. Cultural studies, in a way in the modern and global context, there is something new about culture and power in relation to the transnational. This new approach is an incitement to understand the continuing function of culture within forms of control that are immanent to the global social body. This is the crucial contribution theory can make to the transnational adventures of cultural studies in this new century.

The Changing nature of contemporary literary scene of globalisation that has created as worldwide culture of transnationalism made up of cosmopolitan individuals. The concept of transnationalism refers to a world where political and economic interactions span national boundaries. The academic disciplines have examined these solutions of global society. The literary studies have not paid enough attention on the ongoing changes in national cultures. In the contemporary period, transnationalism thus focuses on issues of identity and belongings. This concept, however examines identity on a much larger scale by discussing the changes that are happening to the structure of nation. With the changing scene of national culture in transnationality that is revealed in literature. In the transnational era, novel as a literary form has changed drastically. The cultural popularity takes place, it is rather unavailable even in the growth of transnationalism as well as globalisation. According to James Field Jr. that a war plays a key role in the growth of transnationalism starting that “Multiplication of new sovereignties which followed both the World Wars only emphasizes the limitations of national structure.” (1973:20)

Another renowned reviewer, Clavin in her study concentrates on the evolution of the word transnationalism, “America’s migration and identity in 1919 in the 1950s it signifies supranational interest and replace the dirty world that ‘Multinational’ had become, and in 1980s it denoted delaying involving more than three nations and non-national relevant today” (2005:433). The critic and the literary scholar, Paul Jay argues that:
“The growth of transnationalism will have to impact our study of literature. In this process, national culture disappears. The present day national culture is not fixed on a rigid centre/periphery model since locations are created and shaped by how the scholars choose to study specific space.” (2010:414)

With the scene of transnationality in the contemporary period the attempt, here is made to concentrate on the elements of transnationality, reflected in the selected novels for the present study.

The first novel of Amitav Ghosh *The Circle of Reason* (2008) received considerable appreciation for its bold experimentation with content and form. Amitav Ghosh’s abiding concern about the relation between the culture and imperialism is evident in this picaresque tale. But the novel goes far beyond presenting the simple binary divide between tradition and modernity set in an East/West axis. Amitav Ghosh proposes the theme of “complex cultural imbrications in the novel.” (2000:36)

The major character in the novel is strongly influenced by the western scientific ideas. Pasteur and a book *Life of Pasteur*. Balaram’s idea of ‘school of reason’ itself reveals that how transnational aspects are reflected in the novel. As Balaram says, “science doesn’t belong to any nation, they belong to history to the world” (2000:57). The discussion between Balaram and Gopal about world loom civilization the cotton trade had developed in the ancient period at the international as well as transnational level. Regarding it Balaram says:

“Indian cloth was found in the graves of the pharaohs. Indian soil is strewn with the cloth from china. The whole of the ancient world hammered with the cotton trade. The silk route from china running through central Asia and Persia to the ports of the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Africa and Europe bound continents together for more centuries that we can count.” (2000:59)

Another example of transnationality in the novel is as the people like Alu, Rakesh, Professor Samuel, Zindi, Kulfi Didi and Chunni Devi decided to go to Al-Ghazira, for the purpose of job by the boat Mariamma. People belonging to different
countries and culture gathered in Al-Ghazira. ‘The Durban Tailoring House’ in which Jeevenbhai Patel worked. The international tradesmen and merchants of jewellery trades went for first time Mozambique, Dares, Salaam, Zanzibar, and Aden. The novelist describes this international gathering of the traders as:

“Al-Ghazira was merchants paradise, right in the centre of the world, conceived and nourished by the flow of centuries of trade, Persians, Iraqis, Zanzibari, Arabs, Omanis and Indians flattened upon it and grow rich and Malik, fast in mudwalled fort on the great hill behind the town, smiled upon them, took his dues and disbursed a part of them in turn when British gumboots paid their visits to the little harbour.” (2000: 328)

These and many other instances in this regard emphasize the presence of transnationality in the novel. The second novel selected for the study is Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land* (2009). It is a story of two Indians in Egypt, an Indian slave Bomma and the student anthropologist and writer, Amitav Ghosh, who traced the story of Bomma some 800 years after it occurred. The reviewer Renalto Rosaldo describes the novel at the transnational level. He rightly says:

“This novel is an archaeology of a great mercantile civilisation that from about the tenth century to sixteenth century extended from Fez and Seville in the west through Cairo and Aden around Red Sea, across the Indian Ocean to Calicut and the Malabar Coast.” (1992:17)

The slave Bomma belongs to the Jewish Merchant Abraham Ben Viju, who traded between Aden and Mangalore on the Malabar Coast. He came to India via Egypt around 1130 A.D. The novelist describes the traders from different countries represent their cultures, for example, the Jews from Africa and Egypt, The Muslims in Arabia and the Indian Traders. Indian culture encounters with the social, religious, and cultural life of the Egyptians. The political relationship between Egypt and India is also focused in the novel. The people in the Egypt ask many questions to Amitav Ghosh about Indian religious and cultural issues. The characters like Abu Ali, Khamis, the Rat, Shaikh Musa, Ustad Mustafa, asked the questions. It shows that there are number of instances, elements reflecting transnational aspects in the novel.
The third novel of Amitav Ghosh *The Shadow Lines* (2008) also reflects many transnational aspects exist in the novel. The novel thus explores the authors major concern about wider cross border humanity with striking insight into the issues of ethnic nationalism and communalism. The writer in this novel creates a realm that melds pre-independence India, Britain in the Second World War and post-independence India. The novel also deals with the intermingling cultural, religious and political paradigms and ideologies. On the background of partition, the disturbed relations between the Hindu and Muslim, India and Bangladesh reflects transnationality in the novel. The border lines divided people from each other. The sketch of story *The Shadow Lines*, Tridib saw May Price as a little boy when he went to England with the parents in 1939. The friendship between the families started when Mrs. Price’s father Lionel Tresawsen, and Tirdib’s grand mother, Mr. Justice Chandrashekhbar Datta Chaudhri met in Calcutta. These characters and families belonging to India, England and Bangladesh reflect the presence of transnationality in the novel. The novelist thus proposes the theme him as a critic Murray Prasad says:

“The complex culture imbrications, as a crossing and intercultural flows. This pre-occupation with transnational cultural process, including author’s nuanced critique of the exclusive notion discrete cultures, gains a new focus and dimensions in *the Shadow Lines*. (1991:81.95)

By confronting burning social and political issues of their times created by transnational cultural, political and economic flows the transnational writers deploy their sensibilities, one western and one home-grown to engage in a dialogical relationship with society and to overcome restraints that deradicative the literary works of the ‘Third World’. Ghosh’s novel narrates the story of three generations of the narrators family, spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and England.

The violence took place between the Hindu and Muslim after the partition creates a threatening atmosphere in the novel. Tha’mma wants to visit Dhaka and her old house to bring Jethamoshay to India, experiences the dividing border lines between people and two nations. There are number of events and episodes in the novel that reflect transnationality. These three novels, thus are here analysed and
examined in the study focusing transnationality implemented successfully by the novelist Amitav Ghosh.

The literary work of Vikram Seth can be seen in a variety of eclectic traditional forms and the locations of the prose and poetry moves across the world making literary homes of distant land and cultures. His two novels have been included in the present study, they are for example, *A Suitable Boy* and *An Equal Music*. There are number of cultural aspects as well as transnational elements scattered everywhere in these novels. The literary work of Vikram Seth describes his visit to many countries and it’s journey like China and other European countries. By setting his novel *An Equal Music* (1999) in England and outside natal order, Vikram Seth once again eschews his localised status for transnational identity.

Vikram Seth was interested in Indian classical music, but later on he also changed his interest in the Western classical music. Actually, this novel is all set in Europe, between London, Venice, and Vienna. There are no Indian characters and all cultural references are to European artists. These artists perform their music, singing performances at different places. The central characters in the novel are Michael and Julia. The musical performances at the house of Helen, The Maggie Quarter, other singers and artists gathered in the house are Billy Pieres, Michael, Helen, Nicholas and many more. As these artists travel and wonder in different parts of the world here transnationality is reflected.

*A Suitable Boy* (1993) is Vikram Seth’s another novel included in the present study, takes place in the post-independence India in the 1950’s in the imagining community of Brahampur. As the novel is written in English, it is to inform world about India. The epic novel covers various issues faced by post-independence India, involves Hindu-Muslim strife. Abolition of Zamindari System, Land Reforms and many others.

There are four main families mentioned in the novel, entitled The Mehras, The Kapoors, The Khans and The Chatterjis representing their culture and social background. The novel as well as some characters are influenced by western culture. Arun Mehra is true representative of western culture. The British colonizers left India in 1947; they also left their impact, way of life and culture in India. Young Indians in
the novel returned from Oxford or Cambridge seek employment in prestigious firms. The Indian novel in English crossed the national borders, the people in America and Britain liked Indian novels to get information about India. The worldwide popularity of the novel results in it’s transnationality. The characters in the novel travel from one nation to other. This border crossing of Indian culture creates transnationality. The journey of Malti’s father to Afghanistan also is an example of transnationality.

During the freedom struggle, the Indians fought against the British government on different levels. The struggle by Indian socialists and politicians compelled the British government to quit India. Subhash Chandra Bose fled to Germany and Japan and established the Indian National Army. These efforts of Subhash Chandra Bose later on influenced number of Indians in Germany and Japan, here also is reflected transnationality through these national as well as international activities. In this way there are number of elements and aspects in these novels reflecting Indian culture and beyond it, in other words, transnationality.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni creates narratives of transnational migration that go beyond one way, definitive movement from one place to another, capitalizing on the dynamic, multiple connectivities between identity and place. Migrant women’s relocation stories are based on the liberating potential of narrative to articulate the trauma of dislocation, translating family traditions across borders and creating transnational families, translating cultural norms, building self esteem and redefining the concept of home and the related experiences of homelessness.

Divakaruni’s California based novels depict lives of dislocated individuals, whose survival depends on ‘other’ world functioning like an active concrete mode of supplanting the ‘real’ and in which the things left unsaid are mirrored concretely. Divakaruni’s novel The Mistress of Spices (1997) and Queen of Dreams (2004) basically deal with the life and experiences of migrated Indian women to America. In this process, Indian culture crosses the boundaries of Indian cultural, social, religious and spiritual life into the native culture. The novelist, thus depicts these diasporic Indians in the transnational era. The novel The Mistress of Spices (1997) opens with the introduction to the protagonists and the narrator herself as: “I am a Mistress of Spices... But the spices are my love.” (Divakaruni 2005: 3) Tilo learned magical
power on the island with it she tries to solve all the difficulties and problems of the immigrant people around her in Oakland, California.

In her shop, there are spices, their Indian names, and usefulness on different illness. Indian food and mithai items as they are Emerald Green Burfis, Laddus and Rasgulla reflect Indian culture. Tilo knows the importance of each spice. The novelist through these spices, food and mithai items and ingredients creates an Indian atmosphere in Oakland California, which is resulted in transnationality. The Indian woman Ahuja’s wife, Lalita visits Tilo’s shop to purchase Masur Dal, Atta, Jeera and other useful things in her kitchen. Unlike India, their everyday begins with ‘Namaste’ that is with Indian culture. The reference to the words like- Bhagwati, Surp-kanya, Samundra puri, Nagraj guarding mounds of treasure, and Ekadashi, thus reflect Indian culture. The names of Indian characters like Ramu and Geeta, Hare Krishna tradition in America, Ravan, Haroun reflect Indian culture in America also reveals transnationality.

Chitra Divakaruni’s second novel for this research work is Queen of Dreams has a background of 9/11 affected greatly to the south Asian American community. It is a story of a south Asian American artist in Berkeley, who tries to terms with the people closest to her heart; her elusive dream teller mother, her silent father, her growing daughter. The protagonist, Rakhi lives with her dream interpreter mother in Barkley, California. Rakhi also knows the art of dream reading, after her mother’s death as she discovers her dream journals.

Divakaruni’s novel Queen of Dream (2004) set in the San Francisco, Bay Area, the character of Rakhi is developed from national to transnational level. Through her coffee house and people belonging to different cultures in the coffee house, create a cultural space. With these socio-cultural elements, make Rakhi a part of transnational community developing herself as a cultural citizen. Rakhi’s continuity of a transnational tie emerges when her chai house becomes a site for a vibrant multicultural in the transformed ‘Kurma House International’. Thus, the novel and its characters live in America, there is transnationality, as they cross Indian borders. There are number of events incident and episodes that reflect transnationality in the novel.
Thus the first section of the introductory chapter of this work focuses on the detailed survey of the Indian novel in English in general and the selected novels written by the contemporary Indian novelists in English. Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in particular. This survey also focuses on Indian Novel in English, its development and changing nature from the early period to the present one. This chapter also concentrates on the definition and the meaning of the concept ‘Postcolonialism’ alongwith its components like diaspora, hybridity, expatriate writers, Indian women novelists in English and subalternity. These aspects are also elaborately discussed.

The chapter also throws light on the important concept ‘culture’ is discussed in detail, with its definition and meaning, its development and changing meaning right from its inception till present period. The term ‘culture’ is used by the novelists of the different periods in their novels. Moreover, this section also focuses on ‘literature and culture’, ‘cultural industries’, ‘marxism and culture’ elaborately.

Similarly this chapter focuses on the another important concept ‘transnationality’ which is defined in detail along with its meaning and development. In the age of globalisation, how the terms ‘culture’ and ‘transnationality’, have become prominent and useful. In the recent studies the young scholars and writers have turned to ‘culture’ in order to study contemporary period. The concept ‘transnationality’ has become common since it is related to crossing borders. These two terms are reflected in the selected seven novels written by Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni of this research work in order to picturise the contemporary scenario of cosmopolitan world. As these three novelists have settled abroad, they travel frequently crossing borders, similarly all the characters presented in the selected novels for the study live and wander across the borders, really represent transnationality.
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