Abstract

The modern Indian diaspora is in a dynamic phase of transition and its exploration is a crucial part of the field of diaspora studies. The thesis ventures into the area through the readings of the relevant works of Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Sunetra Gupta, and Jhumpa Lahiri. The literary angle provides meaningful insights and lends depth to the theorizing. The four chosen writers represent the gradual development of Indian writing in English and their work maps the thesis topic with appropriate justifications, especially because these writers themselves straddle a spectrum that the diaspora portrayed by them exhibits. Chapter One introduces the sociological phenomenon of displacement and takes a critical look at diaspora formation. It then goes on to give a historical framework of the old and the modern Indian diasporas and of the concerned literature. Chapter Two deals with each of the selected writers' distinct diasporic conditions that fashion her individual literary style. Through comparisons and study of influences the chapter aims at giving an overview of the themes of gender and subjectivity in the chosen texts. Chapter Three explores certain important facets of diasporic life such as alienation, rootlessness, and loneliness. It further goes on to show how human relationships act as an antidote for such conditions. Chapter Four depicts how self-fashioning, in all its various forms, gives a dynamic aspect to the Indian diaspora. Chapter Five shows that it is not only the diaspora but equally the host society that changes, thereby highlighting the postmodernism of the globalized world. Chapter Six goes a step further to argue that just as the diaspora changes, so also the various theories of diaspora change accordingly. Thus the thesis demonstrates the exemplary and pivotal importance of studying the transition of the Indian diaspora in all its specificity.