Introduction

From time immemorial, immigration has been an experience of man and the origin can be traced back to the Jewish history. The first migration is registered in the Bible, in the book of Leviticus chapter 19 verses 33 and 34, where the Lord commands Moses to announce to the people of Israel as follows: “Do not take advantage of foreigners in your land; do not wrong them. They must be treated like any other citizens, Love them as yourself, for remember that you too were foreigners in the land of Egypt” (The Living Bible 89).

Immigration, which is a type of migration, is a process in which a person moves to live permanently in a country which is not their home. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, an immigrant is “a person who has come to live permanently in a country that is not their own” (777). Immigration is like uprooting a plant from one place and planting it in another. If a plant is transplanted it may take a few days to adapt to that new soil to sprout, bud, and blossom. Likewise, an emigrant also takes a few days, or months, or years to acclimatize to the new social, cultural, political, and religious environment.

Migration does not denote mere physical movement of the people, that is, physical displacement of the migrants, because along with the migrants are transported many other factors, and Jeyaraman in his “Introduction: The study of Indian Diaspora” lists certain socio-cultural characteristic features which the migrants tend to carry with. They have “(a) Pre-defined social identity, (b) a set of religious beliefs and practices, (c) a frame of norms and values governing family and kinship organization and food habits and (d) language....” (16)

People migrate from one country to another, more often than not, with a view to settling there permanently. Various reasons have been cited for their movement or settlement. And some of the important causes might be related to economy, politics, and religion. The most important factor that drives people to move to another country is economic, that is, it is
self-interest which springs from human nature that drives them to go after green pastures. Migration is permitted for the mutual benefit of the immigrant and the receiver. According to Schuck, “Immigration is almost always fuelled by self-interest — that of both the immigrant, who leaves everything that is familiar in order to make fresh start, and the receiving country which carefully considers its national interest in choosing which categories of newcomers it will admit.” (249) Mukherjee B also holds the view that “Immigration was a two way process and both the whites and immigrants were growing into a third thing by this interchange and experience” (3)

The immigrants are more prosperous in the host country and as a result they feel exuberant. Nevertheless the immigrants, in general, when move to another country to settle, they feel that they do not belong to that country, and this is because they feel alienated as the host country is hostile to them most of the time. Hence the immigrants’ experience is a mixture of both euphoria and exasperation. According to Dubey, “The immigrant experience is complicated as a sensitive immigrant finds himself or herself perpetually at a transit station fraught with the memories of the original home which are struggling with the realities of the new world” (22).

The two terms immigrant and expatriate are very important with respect to the phenomenon of migration. According to Gomez, “expatriate focuses on the native country that has been left behind, while immigration emphasizes the country into which one has entered as a migrant. The expatriate dwells on his ‘ex’ status of the past, while the immigrant celebrates his present in the new country” (26). And he further states that

Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion which includes a wistful for the past, often symbolized by the ancestral home, the pain of exile and homelessness, the struggle to maintain the difference between oneself and the new unfriendly surrounding, as
assumption of moral or cultural superiority over the host country and the refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself/himself as a refugee from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country (72)

Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands* recounts that

Exiles and emigrants or expatriates are hunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost: that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (76)

Though the two words *immigration* and *expatriate* have something in common, there are subtle shades of variations with regard to the usage. An immigrant is very much concerned with the country into which he has stepped. His focus is on the host country, that is, its socio-cultural, socio-political, and religio-philosophical environments. The immigrant has entered the new country with lots of hope, expectations, and dreams. He is actively engaged in the hustle and bustle of the city life of the host country. And he gives a little space to the country which he left behind, that is, his native country, whereas an expatriate is interested in the country which he belonged to once, that is, he focuses on the ex-status of the native country. And so he is pensive about the way of life of the people of the native country. An expatriate foregrounds his nostalgic memories of the country to which he belonged to or
Vijayashree sums up the expatriate condition in the essay, “The Politics and Poetics of Expatriation: The Indian Version(s)” as follows:

The phenomena of emigration and expatriation are by no means new but their scale in the present times is dramatic. The growing incident of expatriation, particularly in the post-colonial societies in the second half of the twentieth century, and the psychic states attendant upon the awareness of connections and disconnections it effects, however, constitutes a contemporary phenomenon. This experience of inhabiting two geographical and cultural spaces simultaneously is wrought with subtle and involutes tensions which get polarized into patterns such as dislocation vs. relocation, domicile vs. diasporic consciousness, dispossession vs. integration, heritage vs. hybridity and exile vs. involvement. (147-148)

The immigrant feels exhilarated and proud of the new life, and he is in a mood of celebration because of the allure of the city life. He feels rejuvenated to see the land of dreams. He is anxious and willing to assimilate into the new culture. An expatriate is not quite comfortable in the new land, and he has a feeling of nostalgia. He always looks back on the past life at the ancestral home, recollecting the old culture and religious practices and quite often brooding over the ‘rosy’ past.

The immigrant’s self undergoes a radical change; he is desirous to acquire a new self as a result of the prosperous life he is leading in the new country. In the course of his journey, he discovers a new self in him. The expatriate finds it difficult to adjust to the new environment, and so he struggles a great deal between the new hostile atmosphere and the old way of life of the native land. He is sandwiched betwixt and between the old and the new.
Though the immigrant has accepted and welcomed the new way of life with great anticipation and optimism, he is torn between the two different cultures, attitudes, and habits and as a result of this pull, he becomes a split personality. An expatriate, on the other hand, does not like to be touched or influenced by the host culture, and so he builds a cocoon around himself as a refugee.

The first-generation immigrants usually have intense feelings about the country of their origin. Though these individuals have been displaced from their homeland physically, they never let go off their emotional ties with the land of their origin. So strong is their tie that it interferes with the process of bonding with the host land. They live in a state of unending alienation and cultivate estranged attitude towards the land of their habitation. The following lines from Auden’s “Refugee Blues” echo the predicament of the immigrants:

Say this city has ten million souls
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes
Yet there’s no place for us, my dear. Yet there's no place for us.
Once we had a country and we thought it fair
Look in the atlas and you’ll find it there.
We cannot go there now, my dear. We cannot go there now. (6)

As the first-generation immigrants’ roots are so strong in their native land, in a sense, they might be considered expatriates. In an essay, Rushdie recounts the experience of the expatriates:

we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of mind. (4)
As the second-generation immigrants are born and bred in the new land, their roots are in the new country, and they do not have adequate knowledge about their parents’ old culture and customs. They have no nostalgic feelings like their parents who are reminiscent of the old. They are elated to take part actively in the new way of life, even though their parents try to inculcate the old cultural and religious practices into their children. Though the native people of the new land have close acquaintance with the second-generation immigrants, there is a gulf between the natives and the second-generation immigrants.

Migration is closely associated with diaspora. The word diaspora has gained universal currency. This word derived from the Greek words Dia and Sperio mean “through” and “to scatter” respectively. The literal meaning of the word is scattering or dispersion. It is stated that “Diaspora is the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions” (Ashcroft 70). According to Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, diaspora means “the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country” (423). As to Safran, the diasporic community has the following characteristics:

1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “centre” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not — and perhaps cannot be — fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as a place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return — when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to
relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (83-84)

It is also apt here to point out the different types of diaspora and how Cohen classifies them is the focus of presentation here. Robin Cohen locates a common thread which runs through all the different descriptions of diaspora. He classifies them into many categories: labour diaspora, imperial diaspora, trade diaspora, victim diaspora, deterritorialized diaspora. Each of these classes indicates a particular cause of migration. The experiences of the Africans as slaves can be placed under labour diaspora. The experiences of ill-treated Indians can come under victim diaspora as well as labour diaspora. The experiences of the Chinese and the Lebanese can be kept under trade diaspora, Zionists and Sikhs under homeland diaspora, whereas the British under imperial diaspora, Caribbeans, Sindhis, and Parsi under deterritorialized diaspora. Cohen has profoundly studied the contexts of all the above categories to classify them into different groups. (74)

Generally, diasporic literature deals with certain concepts such as displacement, existential rootlessness, alienation, nostalgia, and quest for identity. It relates the immigrant experiences that emerge out of the immigrant settlement. Jee Jah avers that

Hostility and rejection in the host country produced in immigrant a deeper sense of consciousness about their oppressed condition and compelled them to make a frantic search for their roots and identity. The situation resulted in various psycho sociological problems such as nostalgia, rootlessness, alienation schizophrenia and others in them. Despite living in two cultures, their dilemma whether to stay in the host country or return to home land persisted. (57)
Jha P states that “The trauma of dislocation, an acute sense of loneliness and the pangs of estrangement suffered by the millions of exiled Indians who try unsuccessfully to balance themselves between home and abroad are the major maladies.” (15)

Jha G presents succinctly the different phases of diaspora in his *Current Perspectives in Indian English Literature*:

The first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves ethno cultural issues. The fourth is when they have ‘arrived ‘and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues. (165)

Diaspora may refer to intranational as well as international migration as it refers to the movement of people from one territory to another, either within or outside national boundaries. Though it takes place in their own country or in another country, those people will long for their roots.

*Displacement* is a key term in postcolonial theory which applies to all migrant situations. It refers to both physical displacement as well as socio-cultural and religio-philosophical displacement. According to Shukla

Displacement is a concept that refers to the crisis of identity. The crisis of identity can result from migration, enslavement, voluntary migration for better life. It may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious or unconscious oppression of the indigenous people and culture by a superior racial or cultural model. The displacement creates ‘alienation of vision and the
crisis in self image in the displaced. It often leads to a stubborn assertion of
‘the myths of identity’ in the literature of the displaced. It can also lead to
linguistic alienation resulting from the drowning of one’s culture under the
domination of the other culture....This is the reason why immigrants form their
own Diaspora communities in the host nation. The geographic and climatic
conditions of the host country also create a sense of otherness in the
migrants. (25)

The English word alienation is derived from the Latin word alienato. Alienato is
a noun derived from the verb “alienare” which means “to make,” “to snatch,” “to avoid,” or
“to remove.” In the French language alienate and alienation are used in the same sense as the
English words alienate and alienation. The words anomie and anomia are used as synonyms
of alienation. These words originated from Greek and the meaning of “anomia” is self-
alienation and “anomie” is alienation from society. Generally, the words anomie, anomia or
alienation are interchangeable.

Various interpreters have articulated their views on alienation. According to Arnold,
“To claim that a person is alienated is to claim that his relation to something else has certain
features which result in avoidable discontent or loss of satisfaction” (3). Feur Lewis asserts
that “the word alienation is used to convey the emotional tone which accompanies any
behaviour in which the person is compelled to act self destructively” (4). As Keniston
observes, “Most usages of alienation share the assumption that some relationship or
connection that once existed that is ‘natural’, desirable or good, has been lost” (5).

Finkelstein defines alienation as “a psychological phenomenon, an internal conflict, a
hostility felt towards something seemingly outside oneself which is linked to oneself, a
barrier erected which is actually no defence but an impoverishment of oneself” (7).
Annie has pointed out that
The immigrant alienated from his homeland, his people and his family, feels the wrench of separation. Separation from the nest of his birth and shattered, he longs for the security and warmth of his birth place. This displacement manifests itself in various degrees. Some are accustomed to lapsing into nostalgia and regret. Diaspora and nostalgic memories and inseparable. Ruth of the Bible as narrated by Keats in “Ode to the Nightingale” much have though of the land of her birth nostalgically.... It was natural for Ruth to be nostalgic about the place of her birth where her sister and parents lived and where she passed her childhood and part of her youth. On account of their displacement, immigrants become travellers on the move.... The tremendous difference between the two ways of life leads a person to a feeling of depression and frustration. (35)

Speaking about alienation, Friedman says,

Alienation belongs to logical core of modernity. The separation of the subject from every fixed identity is itself the definition of the problem. The search of identity for a meaningful construction of self-hood in a meaningful existence is predicted on the ultimate arbitrariness of modern identity social movements in their turn are predictable results of the quandary of alienation. Implicated in this notion of alienation is the general loss of control over one's condition of existence. (218-19)

Barche explains in detail the three phases of the alienation process as given below:

When a man is ready to emigrate, his beliefs, responses, attitudes, behaviour pattern, etc., are fully shaped according to the system of the place to which he belongs. This is construction phase. Then he migrates to the new place which has its own life style. So the immigrant has to first deconstruct what is
constructed and then reconstruct according to the life pattern of the new place.

Besides, there are three basic factors which obstruct or facilitate the completion of the process of rehabilitation, viz, the scale of sensitivity, the previous sanskars and the nature of the conditions at the rehabilitation phase. If the whole process works favourably, the rehabilitation is smooth and the vice-versa. (91)

An immigrant is caught between two nations, two cultures, and so naturally between two different lifestyles like the stuff placed between two slices of bread in a sandwich. According to Chambers 20th century dictionary, sandwich makes reference to the process of “placing something between two layers” (178). And the immigrant is called a Sandwich Man. And sandwich culture plays a significant role subscribing to the heterogeneity of a culture. Multiculturalism has its own set of metaphors such as, the sandwich, the salad bowl/mosaic, and melting pot. The melting pot is a metaphor used to refer to a heterogeneous society which becomes more homogeneous, as different elements — cultures, customs, traditions and attitudes — melt together. The melting pot concept was further developed and the multiculturalists came up with the concepts of mosaic or salad bowl. A salad bowl retains its integrity and flavour while contributing to a new, tasty, and nutritious salad. Likewise, the immigrants also retain their cultural identities staying in the multiculturalists country, while contributing to a hybrid culture.

The melting pot concept is used to describe the flow of immigrants to the United States. The foundation of this theory was perhaps first explained in 1782 by a French immigrant named J. Hector de Crevecoeur, who envisioned America becoming a nation comprising a completely new race that would eventually effect changes at the world scene. The melting pot theory, also referred to as cultural assimilation, draws an analogy between the ingredients in the pot and people of different cultures and religions. The ingredients in the
pot are combined so that they lose their discrete identities and yield an end product which has a new identity that is quite different from that of the original.

This analogy differs from other analogies, particularly the salad bowl analogy where the ingredients are encouraged to retain their cultural identities and thus contributing to a tasty and nutritious salad. There is another food analogy and it is the ethnic stew, where there is a level of compromise between integration and cultural distinctiveness and what these food analogies have taught is that each ingredient is important and the final product would not be the same, if some distinct ingredients are missing. In the case of melting pot all the cultures become reflected in one common culture, however, this is generally the culture of the dominant group. The dominant culture would be infused with new energy through the influences of ethnic groups retaining their distinctive cultural attributes and thereby forging a new, stronger America owing to their divergent cultural contributions. Madhukar has pointed out that

The multicultural society needs to have the value of tolerance to live a peaceful life. Tolerance is an essential and positive value in a multicultural society. If the society tolerates racial differences, cultural plurality, and religious diversity, it will help to minimize the chances of conflict. The differences based on culture, community, gender, race should be recognized and not to be treated as deficiency of a specific society. Cultural diversity needs to be considered as a positive force to a harmonious, peaceful society. (28, 29)

A close study of certain standard definitions will throw light on the salient features of culture. According to George Ritzer, Kenneth C.W. Kammeyer, and Norman R. Yetman, “Culture is the entire complex of ideas and material objects out their collective life. The
culture includes knowledge and beliefs, technology, language, values and norms” (571). As to culture Nagpaul states: “Each society possesses a way of life which is described as culture and that defines appropriate or required modes of thinking, acting and feeling. It is the total social heritage of man in any society, comprising patterns of behaviours developed through thousands of years of experience” (6). Said in Culture and Imperialism writes that

Culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Mathew Arnold put it in the 1860s. Arnold believed that culture palliates, if it does not altogether neutralize, the ravages of a modern, aggressive, mercantile and brutalizing urban experience .... In time culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the stale; this differentiates us from them, almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity (64)

Every society has a culture and so American and Indian cultures are quite different from each other. American and Indian cultures have many a difference between them. American culture is largely derived from Europe, whereas Indian culture has its own distinctive past. Indian culture can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization. While the culture of America is a mixture of different cultures, Indian culture is unique, in the sense, it is a composite culture assimilating many different beliefs, traditions, and religious. Its unique cultural elements distinguish it from American culture. One of the major differences that can be seen between American and Indian culture is in family relations. While Indians are very much family-oriented, Americans are individual-oriented. In Indian culture, familial values are given more importance than individual values. Indians are more committed to their family, whereas Americans are more committed to themselves only. In another sense, it can be said that American culture is more goal-oriented and Indian culture is more people or
family-oriented. Indians may even forsake their individual desires and happiness for the sake of their family. But this is not the case with American culture. Americans believe in dominating nature and controlling the environment around them, whereas Indians believe in living in harmony with nature.

It is also observed between Indian Culture and American Culture that Indians love stability, whereas Americans love mobility. Americans glorify self-reliance and independence unlike Indians who value interdependence. When American children are trained to live an independent life, Indian kids are very much dependent. In India, elders are given due respect and they make most of the decisions, whereas in America it is the individual that makes his/her own decisions. Another difference that is noticed between Indians and Americans is that Americans have great regard for time and recognise its value but Indians are not time conscious and are noted for unpunctuality. And how these cultural differences are encountered by the immigrants in America are delineated in the works of Indian diasporic writers, especially who are in America. The Indians who migrated to America, Canada, and other foreign countries are called Indian diaspora. In this context, it is appropriate to trace the origin and history of Indian diaspora.

In *The Diaspora in Indian Culture*, Ghosh apprises that “the Indian diaspora is one of the most important demographic dislocation of Modern times” (243) Indians have migrated and still have been to other countries for various reasons such as lack of employment, lack of political and religious rights, lack of freedom in the choice of their religion, expulsion by armed forces, and so on. The twentieth century has witnessed many an Indian migrating across the geographical boundaries for different reasons. There are some Indians who migrate to foreign countries inspired by the letters and phone calls received from their foreign-settled relatives, and a few others migrate owing to ample business opportunities available in the foreign soil.
A large number of Indians crossed Indian Ocean during different periods of time in Indian history. Villers in his work notes, Indian Ocean was the birthplace of the art of sailing. Relics of Hindus Valley Civilization found at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro indicate that people had business relations with foreigners about 3000 years ago, that is, even before the birth of Christ. The journey of Indians can be divided into three broad phases: pre-colonial phase, colonial phase, and post-colonial phase. (Pandy 20)

In the pre-colonial phase, the first Indian migration took place in the 5th century BC when the colonists from western India settled in Ceylon, and they were converted to Buddhism during the reign of Ashoka. A few Indian merchants found their way to Malaya, Sumatra, Java and to other parts of South East Asia, and settled there permanently, and even they married the native women of those countries, and this practice was later followed by even Barhmans and Buddhist monks. Thus Buddhism as well as Hinduism of India influenced the South East Asians and Sanskrit became their official language. Sanskrit is still in use in Java and the survival of a version of Ramayana legend in Indonesia is another evidences to the fact that Indians migrated to these countries. (Pandey 21)

Indian emigration has been taking place in India for centuries. During the colonial period the migration started with the migration of Indian soldiers to various British colonies and they accompanied their masters to participate in different wars. There was a large scale migration mainly owing to the recruitment of labourers under bond scheme and they were sent to different colonial masters all over the world. According to Pandey “three distinct patterns of Indians emigration are identifiable in this (colonial) period; they are Indentured labour immigrant, kangani and maistry labour immigrant, passage or free immigrant” (22).

Labourers were required for plantations as well as for the construction of ports, harbours, townships, roads, and railways. India and China became an extensive reservoir of
cheap, docile, and dependable labours, especially to work on plantations. During the 19\textsuperscript{th} and the 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries a large number of Indians were employed as labourers in Mauritius, the Caribbean Islands, Malaya, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, Burma, Ceylon, Fiji, and Africa.

The labourers recruited under kangani and maistry systems from Madras presidency were legally free, as they were not bound by any contract or fixed period of service. These systems, which began in the first and the third quarter of the nineteenth century, were abolished in 1938. Emigrants from India did not cease with the abolition of indenture and other systems of organized export of labour. There was a steady trickle of immigration of members of trading communities from Gujarat and Punjab to South Africa and East Africa and people from South India migrated to South East Asia. Most Indian labourers immigrated to East Africa to work on the construction of railroads.

These emigrants were not officially sponsored; they themselves paid for their passage and though they were, in a sense, slaves they were not forced to sign any bonds. Migration to Australia took place in phases. The first wave of migration started during the early part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century when both Australia and India were under the British rule. The Indians who initially entered Australia were mainly Sikhs and Muslims from the Punjab region in northwest India. These emigrants had moved there to work on the banana plantation and also as dockworkers.

In the post-colonial phase, that is, during the post World War II period, migration of Indian labourers and professionals became almost a worldwide phenomenon. In countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, where Indians had made their presence felt, this migration was voluntary. A large scale migration to the United States of America and Canada took place after Indian Independence in 1947. The immigrants were mostly Sikhs from four or five districts of Punjab. Initially, ex-servicemen migrated to North America who
had served in the British forces in countries like Hong Kong. A few immigrants reached Canada, and as there were more job opportunities more Indians migrated to Canada. Indians found jobs on railways, and farming. But as Indians grew in number an anti-Indian sentiment also developed against them.

In the 1960s, the United State of America was fast turning into a multicultural nation. The migration of Indians to the United State of America increased after the promulgation of the Immigration Act in 1965. Many an Indian travelled to various countries and specifically to the United State of America looking for better education and job opportunities. Most of them had planned to return to their native country after gaining a few years of experience or obtaining a master’s degree or after earning a good fortune of wealth. But in many cases the return did not materialize for various reasons, including adaptation to a better life style, greater opportunities for advancement and professional satisfaction. But most Indian Americans retained their permanent resident status till their children began growing up in America. Long admits that

Immigration made America what it is. I write as an immigrant myself I can testify to the generosity of the people and the spirit of the country. America offers opportunities to everyone who is willing to take advantage of the ethic individualism, opportunities and hard work and to identity with America's hope and purpose. (113)

The twentieth century has witnessed many Indians migrating across the geographical boundaries for various reasons. A few of these immigrants, especially the ones who moved to the United States of America, over a period of time, have become distinguished writers. And these writers can be regarded as diasporic writers who live outside their country but they remain related to their homeland through their works.

The writers who belong to the postcolonial period mostly concentrate on the social
awareness, the East-West confrontation, and search for roots. However, a post-colonial sensibility was felt only in the 1960s, marked by an expression of the private voice. As Mukherjee M remarks, “The fiction of this period has turned introspective and the individual’s quest for a personal meaning in life has become a theme of urgent interest for the Indian English writer.” (204)

The Indian-American writers not only recount their past experience in India, but also relate their present political stand and other issues. Das S also agrees to this fact and further adds that

the new diasporas (of mid-1970s and afterwards) include Indias who went in search of better life, greater promises of prosperity, material success and a bigger market for their writing. The new immigrant was a new king of colonizer, taking advantage market for their writings. The new immigrant was a new kind of colonizer, taking advantage of the war-time labor market, at the same time having no interest in ruling over the land. They had a home to go back and an identity to protect; they were ‘resident aliens’ who kept up the citizenship of their own country. New fiction in English is mostly written by the people of Indian diaspora. Living in the west (either for a brief or long period), and using English almost like a mother tongue, the writers of Indian diaspora are thoroughly exposed to modern western literary movements like Post-modernism and magic Realism. This has resulted in a fresh approach to fiction. At the same time, the cream of writers of Indian diaspora continues to have strong roots in India. (58)

Diasporic literature, more importantly, deals with the sense of belonging and alienation, and it emerged as a result of migration and expatriation, and the diasporic writers
have probed into the cultural, psychological, and gender conflicts in their works. Issues of history, historiography, and colonialism have also been represented in some of the works of the Indian diasporic writers such as V.S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Meera Alexender, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, and Jhumpa Lahiri. Pandey in his book *Indian Diasporic Literature* vocalizes about the diasporic writers as follows:

> The Indian diasporic community has made a substantial contribution to the literary output of their host countries... A large number of these diasporic writers have been giving expression to their creative urge and have brought credit to the Indian English fiction as a distinctive force. Some eminent creative writers have been accorded recognition, for their endeavours, at home and abroad. It has not been the quantity but also the quality. (118)

V.S. Naipaul (1932), a Trinidadian by birth, an Indian by descent, and a British by choice, began his career in the 1950s. He is recognised as one of England’s best-living writers. He is a person who is associated with the world and he is usually not considered an Indian English writer. His novels, set in developing countries, are known for their pessimistic and cynical tone. He is best known for his novels *A House for Mr.Biswas* (1961), *In a Free State* (1971), *A Bend in the River* (1979), *A Way in the World* (1994) and *Half a Life* (2001). *A House for Mr.Biswas* is an imaginative account of an Indian and his visit to India.

Following the publication of this novel, to his dismay, he found only the displacement due to colonialism had stripped him of any contentment there. He received the Nobel Prize in 2001 for his novel *Half a Life*. It is a story about an Indian immigrant to England and then to Africa. The novel *Magic Seeds* (2004) is a continuation of *Half a Life*. *The Mimic Men* (1967) is the result of his feelings of alienation, his disregard for both England and Trinidad, and his sense of responsibility as a post-colonial writer.

Bharathi Mukherjee is an Indian-American author of eight novels and two collections of short stories. Bharathi Mukherjee, in the course of an interview with Alison Carb, says,

> We immigrants have fascinating tales to narrate. Many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries...we have experienced rapid changes in the history of the nations in which we lived. When we uproot ourselves from those countries and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must absorb 200 years of American history and learn to adapt to American society. Our lives are remarkable often heroic. (648)

Her fiction has a large range of characters and situations, and the settings of her fiction are not confined to India. *The Middleman* is set in South America and the action is dominated by sex and violence. In many of the stories she sketches the immigrants who do not consider themselves Americans. Her notable award is National Book Critics Circle Award for her *The Middleman and Other Stories.*

Chitra Banerjee Devakuruni is an Indian-American author who is a poet-turned fictionist, and to her credit she has three volumes of poetry, four novels, and six short story
collections. She was awarded The American Book Award for *Arranged Marriage: Stories* and these eleven stories are set in different countries such as Calcutta, Chicago, and California and she pictures the lives of immigrant Asian women.

Meena Alexander is an Indian-American poet, essayist as well as a novelist, and she has written ten poems and two novels. Meena Alexander is known for lyrical writing that deals with migration and its impact on the subjectivity of the writer, and sometimes violent events that compel people to cross borders. Though confronting such stark and difficult issues, her writing is sensual and polyglot. Nevertheless she maintains a generous spirit. She is a PEN/Open Book awardee.

In this line of Indian diasporic writers appears Jhumpa Lahiri who is an Indian-American author. Das S has stated that “Diaspora is of two kinds: old and new. The old diaspora belonged to the colonial era, when the poor and the underprivileged were forced to leave the country to work elsewhere as indentured labourers. The new diaspora refers to the upper class educated people who left the country on their own in 1970s and after, to earn name and fame abroad.” (57) Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the latter category. She was born in London on 11 July 1967. She is the daughter of immigrant parents from West Bengal. Her family moved to the United States when she was two years old, and she grew up in Kingston at Rhode Island where her father Amar Lahiri worked as a librarian at the University of Rhode Island. Lahiri’s mother wanted her children to grow up by knowing Bengali culture. So they often visited their relatives in Calcutta.

When she was in her kindergarten in Kingston, Rhode Island, Lahiri’s teacher decided to call her by her pet name, Lahiri, because it was easier for her to pronounce than her proper name Nilangana Sudeshna. She graduated from South Kingstown high school, and received her B.A. in English literature from Barnard College in 1989. Lahiri then received multiple
degrees from Boston University, and the degrees were M.A in English, M.F.A. in creative writing, M.A. in Comparative Literature, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies. She took a fellowship at Provincetown’s Fine Arts Work Center. Lahiri taught creative writing at Boston University and Rhode Island School of Design. In 2001, Lahiri married Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush, a journalist, who is a senior editor of “TIME” Latin America. Lahiri lives in Rome in Italy with her husband and their two children, Octavio and Noor.

Her debut short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and her first novel, *The Namesake* (2003), was converted into a film of the same name. Since 2005 she has been a Vice President of the PEN American Center. PEN American Center is an organization designed to promote friendship and intellectual cooperation among writers. In February 2010 she was appointed as a member of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and Lahiri was directly appointed by the U.S. President, Barack Obama. Her novel, *The Lowland*, was published in 2013 which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award for fiction. The US president, Barack Obama, presented the prestigious National Humanities Award to Lahiri in 2015.

In 1999, she got O Henry award for her collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*. In 2000, she won Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *Interpreter of Maladies*. In 2008, she was given Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award for her *Unaccustomed Earth*, and also in 2009, Asian American Literary award for the same work. Jhumpa Lahiri was passionately attracted to books and her creative writing started to sprout even in her school days and it was admitted by Lahiri herself: “I was a shy child, uncomfortable in groups, so I sought out those with a similar sensibility- quite girls who liked story.... I started writing ten page novel, during recess, with my friend” (Lahiri 1999).
In a conversation with Mary A Dempsey, Lahiri has revealed how several authors have inspired her:

Different authors have inspired and influenced me in different ways at different times and the discovery of a great author or the rediscovery of one I’ve encountered in the past, is one of the deepest and most exciting experiences in my life. I have always loved reading literature from an early age .... When I first began writing seriously, I studied stories by James Joyce, Anton Chekhov, Flannery 0’ Conner, and Gabrial Garcia Marquez. Vladimir Nabokov and Virginia Woolf were also important at that stage. (Lahiri 2009)

Jhumpa Lahiri’s fiction reflects the sufferings, sacrifices, struggles as well as the sophisticated life of the Indian immigrants. Jhumpa Lahiri’s Bengali parents, her birth in the United Kingdom, and her life at Boston in the United States have armed her with multiple paradigms of thinking which find expression in her writings. On women’s writing Wolff says, “What women write or point is clearly related to their experiences. These experiences, in the nineteenth century, early twentieth century and now, have been very different from those of men. Women writers have focused on and concerned with the situation of women in society.” (3)

While speaking of the realisation of the rootlessness of the Indian English writers Verma states that

When an Indian English writer comes in contact with the alien culture, he becomes aware of his rootlessness, and thereby the inadequacy of his mission. He feels that he is a foreigner, an outsider, an exile. Confrontation with the West leads him to a discovery of his country, of his own self Invariably, he
has a desire, lurking in some niche of his heart, to return home, to belong and read just himself in the county of his origin. (12)

The immigrants presented in Jhumpa Lahiri’s fiction go through accretion and attrition. According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, accretion means “growth or increase by means of gradual additions” (9). In Oxford Thesaurus of English, the word “gain” (10) is also given in the list of synonymous words. With respect to the title taken for study, all these definitions point out that accretion is a gain or the process of gain. An immigrant undergoes a new experience in a host land and as a result it might lead him to economic, intellectual, cultural, psychological, and spiritual gain. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines attrition as “a process of gradually weakening somebody’s strength and confidence” (66). In Oxford Thesaurus of English the word “weakening” (54) is also given in the list of equivalent words. These definitions point out that attrition means weakening or a process of weakening somebody. The immigrant also experiences the pangs of displacement, alienation and loneliness, psychological trauma, and cultural confrontation.

A concise summary of each of Lahiri’s novels and short stories, focusing on the joyful as well as painful experience of the Indian immigrants, is given in order to make the readers comprehend the analysis.

Interpreter of Maladies is the first short story collection of Lahiri, and in eight out of nine of her short stories many a character is displaced from their homeland. The stories “Mrs. Sen’s,” “The Third and Final Continent,” “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,” “A Temporary Matter,” and “This Blessed House” deal with the sufferings as well as the exuberant experience of the protagonists (immigrants) in their host land, whereas “Interpreter of Maladies,” “A Real Durwan,” and “Sexy,” deal with both the bright as well as the dark sides of their experience in their own country. In almost all the stories the characters are longing to
go back to their native land, and to lead the life that they led in India before migrating to the host land. According to Jones,

The strange and often hostile environment in which they found themselves sharpened the nostalgia of immigrants for their homelands, led them to cherish old loyalties, and drove them in upon themselves. The most obvious expression of immigrant yearnings for the familiar was the tendency to congregate in distinct areas. (136).

Even the second-generation immigrants are not totally cut off from the country of their origin. With respect to nationality and politics they are Americans, but because of their parents’ affinity with their native land, they too have the sense of alienation.

In the story “A Temporary Matter” Shoba and Shukumar are American citizens of Indian origin. They live a happy life for some time. But Shoba gives birth to a still born child, when her husband is away for a paper presentation, and the death of her child is a traumatic experience for Shoba. After this incident, instead of being closer to her husband, Shoba avoids him as much as possible by watching game shows or proofreading files. The death of the child completely changes the lives of both of them. Though there is nothing to indicate that she will not be able to give birth to a child in the future, there is a lack of understanding between the couple which creates crisis in their marital life. Like editing a textbook, Shoba edits elements of her own life following the death of her still born child. Usually, in India, a man has specific or authentic identity than a woman as he is a bread winner, but in Shukumar’s case, his wife works and he has been a student. Before their son’s death Shoba cooked for him and took care of him but now she is avoiding him and he starts cooking for her. The couple, Shukumar and Shoba, is unaware of their affections towards each other. This can be seen when they think alone and confess their secrets in the dark and subsequently
they perform acts of intimacy and show gestures of affection that they have almost forgotten. So the darkness due to power cuts provides them enough space for their close interactions.

“This Blessed House” is another story that explores various aspects of marriage and the effects of communication between Sanjeev and Twinkle. Sanjeev and Twinkle have just started their married life in the United States of America. Though the parents of Twinkle and Sanjeev are old friends, they come from different cultural backgrounds with varied experiences. As the parents of the couple are emotionally attached to each other they want Twinkle and Sanjeev to get married. This story deals with a relatively early period of the married life of Twinkle and Sanjeev. As Twinkle and Sanjeev do not know each other well, they fail to live up to the expectations of each other. All the couples in all the short stories of *Interpreter of Maladies* experience the loss of the sense of togetherness and this results in a feeling of loneliness.

Sanjeev gradually understands that Twinkle has been very much influenced by Western ideals, and she is even inclined to Christianity. This makes Sanjeev feel strongly that the woman she has married, Twinkle, has no regard for Indian socio-cultural values, and so he feels nostalgic about Indian marriages and Indian heritage.

Even though in the beginning, Sanjeev faces marital conflicts, later he understands her. Lahiri not only points out the importance of money in their marital life in this story but also the adjustments that the young immigrant Indians have to make with the new culture and beliefs. The story focuses on the adjustments that the couples make and the mutual understanding between them that helps to lead a happy married life. The story arrests our attention, as it records the emotional and cultural clashes between a husband who is a Hindu and a wife who has fascination for Christ’s artifacts. But it is found that the cause is not religious differences, but the subtlety of human feeling.

In the title story “Interpreter of Maladies” Lahiri explains in detail the marital
conflicts between Mr. and Mrs. Das. They are born and bred in America. Lahiri uses Mr. Kapasi, the protagonist, as a mirror to reflect Mrs. Das’ own unfulfilled emotional life. Lack of communication is also a strand that runs through this story. Mr. Kapasi works as an interpreter of symptoms for Gujarati-speaking patients. Besides this profession, as a tour guide, Mr. Kapasi takes Indian American couple Mr. and Mrs. Das and their children to the Sun Temple at Konarak. The entire family appreciates the beauty of the Sun Temple to Mr. Kapasi’s delight. He watches Mrs. Das, the first person to take an interest in him. When Bobby, son of Mr and Mrs Das, picks up a stick and plays with one of the aggressive monkeys, Mr. Kapasi compliments the boy and Mrs. Das retorts and reveals the secret that Mr. Das is not the boy’s father. Mrs. Das has kept the secret for eight years, that is, since his birth.

In the short story, “A Real Durwan,” Boori Ma is a sixty-four-year-old woman with poor health and she is the durwan in an apartment in Calcutta. Each day, she trudges up the steps, carrying her reed broom and flimsy mattress behind her. As she sweeps, her raspy voice details her losses and sufferings. She feels alienated in her own nation, that is, in India itself. She is a refugee who is deported to Calcutta after the Partition. She is separated from her husband and two daughters. Tied to the end of her sari is a set of skeleton keys belonging to coffer boxes that house her valuables. She chronicles the comfortable and sophisticated life she led. Each resident of the building has a different interpretation of her tales. Mr. Dalal of the third floor cannot fathom how a landowner ends up sweeping stairs and the ladies think that she is the victim of changing times. Boori Ma has many a sleepless night. Boori Ma comes to the roof to dry lemon peels. She explains to Mrs. Dalal, who has a soft corner for Boori Ma about her lost comforts. The women in the apartment are sympathetic to Boori Ma and Mrs. Dalal and other women decide to buy a new bedding to Boori Ma. As it does not
materialise, she has to sleep on newspapers. She is even denied a bedding to sleep on, though all the tenets in the apartment are quite rich.

*The Namesake*, Lahiri’s first novel, has autobiographical elements, that is, she frequently draws upon her own experiences as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances, and others. In this novel most of the characters suffer as well as live happily in their new country. The characters, Ashoke and his wife Ashima, migrate to the United States of America from India. The experiences of Ashoke and Ashima in the foreign land are vividly portrayed in the novel and they are not able to absorb American culture fully as they happen to be the first-generation immigrants.

When Ashima is at the labour ward of Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge there is no one around to comfort and console her and so she feels alienated. Ashima is even afraid of raising her child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, and where life seems so uncertain. When Gogol is born, Ashima realises that the members of her family in India are not able to help her or her son. When Ashima returns to her home from the hospital, she says to Ashoke in a moment of angst: “I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back.”(33) The pain of child bearing is temporary but during the course of her stay in the United States of America many an incident happens in her life which makes her realise at the end that her alienage in America is like a perpetual state of lifelong pregnancy. The language also arises as an issue as Gogol and Sonia grow old. The Bengali couple, Ashima and Ashoke, send their children Gogol and Sonia to classes to learn the Bengali language and culture. But the influence of the Western culture and language makes them forget their own culture and language.

In this novel, Lahiri presents cross-cultural conflicts through the first-generation immigrants, Ashima and Ashoke, and the second-generation immigrants, Gogol and Sonia,
their children. Being born and bred in America, Gogol behaves like an American but his looks reveal that he is from India. He does not like the name given to him as it does not give him the identity of an American. He falls in love with a socially aggressive American girl by name Maxine. Though their love proceeds well in the beginning, after the death of his father, there is a change in the mindset of Gogol about Maxine. Soon Gogol wants to put an end to their relationship, that is, to their love. He starts giving importance to Bengali culture only after his father’s death.

The immigrants who have settled in other countries are not there in the foreign soil to suffer; they all wish to lead a sophisticated life. They even feel some sort of discomfort when they visit their homeland. Ashoke, Gogol, and Sonia earn as much as possible and all of them are satisfied with their income. As an immigrant in the United States of America, Ashoke enhances his educational qualification by pursuing Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering at MIT, and as a result he gets employment in a University, and in course of time even he purchases a house on Pemberton road which helps his family lead a comfortable and sophisticated life. Even when they are treated as kings and queens when they go to their native land, they are not quite comfortable because of the impact of Western culture in their life. Even though Ashoke is a first-generation immigrant, he too feels like his children. With respect to assimilating into the host culture Ashima who prepares her Indian food at the beginning of the novel prepares Christmas cake at the end of the novel. And this signifies the fact that for the sake of her children, she adapts to the Western culture and values. Lahiri’s presentation of the immigrant characters in the novel reveal that they experience pain of alienation and displacement amidst leading a comfortable life.

*Unaccustomed Earth* is the second short story collection of Lahiri. Lahiri has divided *Unaccustomed Earth* into two parts. The first half of the book has four individual stories and the titles are “A Choice of Accommodations,” “Unaccustomed Earth,” “Only Goodness,” and
“Hell-Heaven.” The second part of the book is a collection of three interlinked stories, which are about the two eponymous characters of the novella, Hema and Kaushik, and the titles of the stories are “Once in a Lifetime,” “Year’s End,” and “Going Ashore.”

Lahiri focuses on the generation conflict in the story, “A Choice of Accommodations.” Amit and his wife Megan attend the wedding ceremony of one of his former schoolmates in Pam Borden. Amit is from an Indian upper class family but his wife Megan is a white American who is five years older to him. Megan’s ordinary background and their age difference disappoint Amit’s parents, and as a result, after his marriage, he severs his ties with his parents. And yet he has a lot of misunderstandings with Megan, as she loves independence and wants to lead an independent life unlike Indian women. This attitude of Megan depresses him. The crack in the relationship between Amit and his wife Megan is commented when they return from the wedding reception of Pam. He gets drunk and he even tells Felicia, a strange woman, about how he is disappointed with his married life. But before their departure, Amit and Megan spend the last night together in a school dorm and the couple begins to reveal their secrets and the true feeling towards each other. The story ends with a happy note and Amit is optimistic that from now on, he can have better relationships with his parents and Megan.

In the title story, “Unaccustomed Earth,” Ruma’s mother is desirous to introduce Indian culture to Americans. But the irony is that she even fails to teach the tradition of the motherland to her children. Ruma’s mother is worried because her daughter prefers pants and skirts to saris. Her mother fears that it is a sign of losing Indian values.

In spite of Ruma’s suffering as an Indian woman she fails to give importance to their own nation’s culture and language. According to Tejero, “the proposed hybrid immigrant woman is that who, by re-evaluating her homeland's culture, rejects tradition to adapt to the
new convention found in the United States, no matter if those conventions are even more misogynist than those of India.” (81) Ruma’s father comes to America in search of better educational opportunities. He receives a Ph.D. degree in biochemistry; he finds a rewarding job in a pharmaceutical company, which helps his family to live a comfortable life. Mrs. Banchi has a lot of dreams when she enters America. She wishes to go to America to enjoy freedom and independence. Banchi escapes from India fearing that her parents might force her forced to remarry after her beloved husband’s death. She receives a doctorate in statistics, and becomes a lecturer at a university, and she leads an independent life as she wishes.

In the story, “Only Goodness,” the main character Sudha’s mother, like Ruma’s mother, plays an important role in instilling Indian values into her children. She wears saris, cooks Indian food, and tries to prevent her children from following the culture of American society. Sudha’s mother does not approve of his drinking habit which is not a taboo in the new country. Her mother says, “That’s the problem with this country… Too many freedoms, too much having fun. When we were young, life wasn’t always about fun.” (143)

The habit of drinking alcohol destroys the familial harmony in many ways. Rahul’s dismissal from school which leads him not to have prosperous future, Rahul’s mischief in Sudha’s wedding party, and Rahul’s attitude that almost endangers Sudha’s baby are some of the factors that destroy familial harmony. It is the role of parents, especially mothers who must prevent their children from anything that destroys their future. But in both the stories their mothers are very much disappointed because of their children’s attitude.

In the novella, the characters Hema and Kaushik suffer from the trauma of being dislocated. Hema can have a negotiation with her past but Kaushik is unable to do so because of his melancholic disposition. Hema suffers due to her in-between state, and her aspiration is to marry a white man but she marries an Indian and follows Indian culture. Kaushik’s sense of rootlessness is the result of his father’s remarriage and he dies in a tsunami in Indonesia.
The sense of alienation and displacement is found in both of them at different levels and ways.

The first story “Once in a Lifetime” speaks of their childhood, the second story “Year’s End” their adulthood, and the third story the death of Kaushik and the unhappy married life of Hema. These three stories are narrated by the character Hema herself. Lahiri uses this character as the narrator as well as one of the protagonists. The story “Once in a Lifetime” describes the interactions between two Indian immigrant families from the point of view of a thirteen-year-old girl Hema. Kaushik’s family comes back to America after six years and stays in Hema’s home for a few days. Hema has to give her bedroom for him and so she is forced to share a room with her parents. Being a second-generation immigrant she feels uncomfortable and shy to stay and sleep with her parents, and this is a common sight in India. And in the second story “Year’s End,” Kaushik’s father remarries a Bengali widow after the death of his wife. Kaushik never mingles with her step-mother and step-sisters. Hema falls in love with an American and she plans to marry him but at the end she marries an Indian. In the third story “The Years End” Kaushik works as a Photojournalist which provides him an opportunity to travel more and also to spend less time with his family members. But at the end he dies in tsunami in Indonesia while taking photographs.

_The Lowland_ is a tale of two Bengali brothers who take very different paths for themselves as they grow up in Calcutta during the 1950s and 60s. They look and sound alike but they are very different from each other. When the novel begins, Subhash was thirteen, older by fifteen months to Udayan.

After their successful school years, they are admitted to two of the city's best colleges. Udayan has gone to Presidency to study Physics and Subhash to Jadavpur to study chemical Engineering. They have their unique preferences in matters of study or play.

In 1967 through the newspapers and on All India Radio, they started hearing about
Naxalbaris. A dynamic, charismatic, and impulsive Udayan finds himself propelled by social conscience into the Naxalite movement. True to the spirit of the movement, Udayan feels convinced that he should strive hard to make the living conditions of India's poor through violent uprising.

Subhash goes to America to do his Ph.D. programme and he feels nostalgic when he remembers about his homeland culture. When he returns to India to visit his parents after a long time, he still remembers and follows Indian tradition. He goes back to America and then after some time Udayan marries Gaur, a Bengali girl. Quite unexpectedly Subhash receives the sad news that Udayan is killed and also he comes to know that Gaur is being ill-treated by his parents. Subhash marries Gauri and they leave their homeland and in America she gradually adjusts herself with the new environment. Gauri adapts the American style and changes her appearance by wearing jeans. This proves that Gauri is proud about her new appearance. She looks different from other Indians in America. This new identity gives her more confidence. She is not afraid of anyone and she is confident that she can express herself. Subhash has also already adapted to American culture. In America when he meets his college friends or professors in a party or an event he does as other Americans do. For instance, he drinks beer with them. He does it because he wants that Americans should consider him a citizen of America. When he goes back to India he does not behave like an Indian but as an American.

Speaking of Lahiri’s characters, in general, Shukla says,

Her characters are mostly Indians with Bengali identity and she has tried to identify her immigrant self through them. The facts she narrates in the stories are trivial and mundane, but her characters are sometimes autobiographical and unlike herself, they have the multi-cultural experiences in which they are being oxygenized by the thinking of home issues. All the stories and novel
offer a wonderful variety of experiences gathered largely from the cultural clashes rippling outward in diverse directions. The stories chronicle the traumas and sufferings of the Indians settled abroad, who fail to find their identity in a world where they cannot have a sense of belongingness. She portrays faithfully the trauma of cultural dislocation, disorientation and displacement suffered by millions of exited Indians, and they try desperately to balance themselves between home and abroad. Lahiri has done her best to interpret the maladies of their major issues. (146-147)

Lahiri also has distinguished relationship with “The New Yorker” magazine in which she has published a number of non-fiction including “Cooking Lessons: The Long way Home,” “Improvisations: Rice,” “Reflections: Notes from a Literary Apprenticeship,” and “Teach Yourself Italia.” Apart from writing novels, short stories, and non-fiction in English she has also written two non-fiction in Italian and they are In alter parole and In Other Words.

Lahiri’s works have figured in many magazines and journals. Lahiri’s contribution to diasporic literature has invited many critical assessments. Nigamananda Das has published two volumes of critical perspectives on Jhumpa Lahiri titled Jhumpa Lahiri: Critical Perspectives. There are nearly twenty doctoral theses on the fiction of Jhumpa Lahiri combined with other writers. These twenty theses mainly focus on cultural identity, womanism, and generation gap.

There have been six doctoral theses on Jhumpa Lahiri’s works alone. The following titles throw some light on various perspectives of different aspects of Jhumpa Lahiri’s fiction: Shukla’s thesis on “Cultural Negotiations in the Works of Jhumpa Lahiri,” Madhukar’s “Reflection of Diasporic Sensibility in the Writings of Jhumpa Lahiri,” M. Vijayakumar’s “Native Visions and Alien Voices in the Works of Jhumpa Lahiri,” N. Priyadarshini’s “The
Aspects of Indian Diasporic Womanism in the Selected works of Jhumpa Lahiri” Rajendrakumar Suthar’s “Multiculturalism and Indianness in the Works of Jhumpa Lahiri,” and Deva Doss’ “Experience and Expression in Jhumpa Lahiri’s Interpreter of Maladies.” They have focused on the cultural issues, womanism, multiculturalism, and Indianness. The Indian immigrants’ experience of enjoying the benefits of independence, economy, and culture in the United States of America and the traumatic experience of the physical and cultural displacement and the resultant issue such as identity crisis, alienation and loneliness and mental agony as a result of their prolonged stay in America have made a deep impression on the researcher. This has encouraged the researcher to attempt a detailed study on the topic.

The next chapter is devoted to the study of the position of immigrants who stand at the crossroads of two different ways of life: the Indian and the American.