INTRODUCTION
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The word ‘Migration’ is derived from the Latin word ‘migrare’ which means “physical movement by humans from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi permanent residence, usually across a political boundary”.¹ Historically this movement was nomadic and it continued under the form of both voluntary migration within one’s region, country or beyond and involuntary migration, which included slave trade, trafficking in human beings and ethnic cleansing.

The migrant leaves one place or country in the hope of finding opportunities for achieving optimum satisfaction elsewhere. Vidyarthi² says that, every movement is motivated by social and economic needs although this insecurity may not apply to every sphere of social life. The motives of the migrants are so fixed up that the individual himself is at times unaware of the factors responsible for his migration.

The United Nation defines a migrant as³ “an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means regular or irregular. An immigrant is also a migrant who crosses an international boundary in the process of entering a new country and eventually establishing a residence there”.

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In every international migration, a migrant is simultaneously an immigrant and an emigrant. A key element in the definition of an immigrant is the establishment of a permanent residence in the country of destination, for at least one year, and is referred to as “long-term immigration”. It can be defined that people who migrate into a territory are called immigrants while at the departure point they are called emigrants. Also immigration differs from colonization in being a mass movement composed of individuals or families not forming a coherent association. It is essentially a peaceful movement in which the citizens of a foreign country are allowed free access to a modern state, provided they come as individuals and on their own initiative. Immigrants differ from tourists as they settle in a foreign country, whereas a tourist returns home without establishing any settlement.

Immigrants who entered into America gave their strength and skills to build a new country. The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour has symbolized freedom for generations on immigrants. Mounted on the pedestal is a tablet reproducing a poem “The New Colossus”. It was written in 1833 by Emma Lazarus, who was born in New York of Jewish parentage and was deeply concerned with the plight of the Jews driven from Russia to the United States:

Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp cries she,
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore—
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the Golden door!”

Nov 2nd, 1883 Emma Lazarus.6

Immigration is very important to America. Almost every American, whoever lived, was either an immigrant himself or a descendent of an immigrant, except the Cherokees. Some anthropologists believe that the Red Indians themselves were immigrants from another continent who displaced the original Americans—the aborigines.

Heterogeneity of the Indian Diaspora

Indians have migrated to different countries for various reasons at various periods of its history. According to the estimates by the Government of India besides six million Indian citizens, there are more than twenty million people of Indian origin all over the world.7

The two main phases of emigration of Indians to other countries can be distinguished as ‘Overseas emigration in the nineteenth century’; and ‘Twentieth century migration to industrially developed countries’ which are termed as colonial and the post-colonial phases of Indian Diaspora.8

The emigration of Indians has a much longer history than what the reference point of colonialism seems to suggest. In the history of ancient India, the
Buddhist Bhikkus travelled into the remote corners of Central and European Asia. Maritime history of pre-colonial India records the contacts between the Kingdoms of Coromandel Coast and the Islands of Southeast Asia. The trade with East Africa led to the permanent Indian settlement there. McNeill \(^6\) observes that “there is some reason to think that a colony of Indian merchant lived permanently in the Memphis, Egypt from about 500 B.C”.

The early migrants to East Africa belonged mainly to small trading communities like the Ismailis, Bhoras and Banyas of the Gujarat region. Their counterparts covering Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Burma (now Myanmar), Malay (now Malaysia), Thailand and Indonesia. Large-scale emigration of Indians into far flung lands was facilitated by the integration of peripheral economies into the emerging World Capitalist System, the onset of a revolution in transportation and communication and the opening of the Suez Canal.

The trade surpluses earned by the European mercantile class in the wake of geographical discoveries were invested in the mines and plantations in Asia and Africa. This created an enormous demand for a cheap and regulated labour force.
Tinker\textsuperscript{10} provides one of the most comprehensive surveys of the emigration of the Indian labour overseas during the colonial era. He identified three distinct patterns of emigration.

(1) *Indentured labour emigration*, so called after the contract signed by the individual labourer to work in the plantations. It began in 1834 and ended in 1920. These labour emigrants were taken to the British colonies of Guiana (now Guyana), Fiji, Trinidad and Jamaica, the French colonies of Gaudeloupe and Martinique and the Dutch colony of Surinam.

(2) *The Kangany*, from the Tamil Kankani, meaning Foreman or Overseer system which prevailed in the recruitment of labour for emigration to Sri Lanka and Malaysia. A variant of this system called the Maistry, derived from the Tamil word Maistry, meaning Supervisor, was practiced for recruitment of labour for emigration to Burma. These labour emigrants were free as they were not bound by any contract. These systems which evolved in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, were abolished in 1938.

(3) *Passage or Free Emigration*: Emigration from India did not cease with the abolition of indenture and other systems of organized export of labour. Most labour emigrants started immigrating to East Africa to work on the construction of railroads. These emigrants were not officially sponsored, they paid their passage and were free in the sense that they were not bound by contract. A new kind of emigration began in 1947.
Three patterns can be identified in the post-independence emigration:\textsuperscript{11}

a. The emigration of professionals and semi-professionals to the industrially advanced countries like the United States of America, England and Canada;

b. (The emigration of skilled and unskilled labourers to West Asia; and

c. The emigration of Anglo-Indians to Australia and England.

The large scale and steady emigration of professionals and semi-professionals to the industrially advanced countries of the west in the late 1960s and 1970s lead to the Brain Drain in our country.

Social, Cultural, Economic and Political factors influence migration. From the Demographic point of view\textsuperscript{12} migration is the third component of population change, the other two being mortality and fertility. The migratory movement is deliberately made and an element of human volition is involved in the decision to move if the migrant sees better prospects in the place of his destination. Migratory movements are “a response to human organism to economic, social and demographic factors in the environment”.\textsuperscript{13}

**Conceptual Framework**

Migration has become an essential characteristic feature of modern society. Though the movement of population is an ongoing phenomenon since time
immemorial, the advances made in the field of science and technology have given it a greater flip.

The Functional Theory of human migration stresses on the assumption that transport and other modes of communication have strengthened the migration process. Duncan advanced a theory of migration and stated the following causes for its occurrence,¹⁴ "(a) economic and technical causes, (b) social causes, (c) personal causes (d) natural causes and (e) miscellaneous causes." In his opinion migration produces the same effects as some other structural changes.

Lee in his theory of migration¹⁵ has given four parameters of the migration process "(a) factors associated with the area of origin; (b) factors associated with the area of destination; (c) intervening obstacles; and (d) personal factors." According to Lee there are positive, negative and neutral factors on both sides, destination as well as origin. And a person is likely to move only when the balance of factors in favour of the move is large enough to overcome the natural inertia and the physical and economic obstacles.

Standing developed the Materialistic Theory and he discussed the levels and patterns of migration by references to social relations of production, forms of property, land tenure and limits to development of productive forces within specific social formations. He conceptualized that "migration is necessary for
industrialization and the development of modern capitalism that goes with it".  

New Sociological theory of migration presented by Kabat and Hoffman Nowotony made the observation that it is difficult to bring under one roof the divergent explanations of migration. According to the new paradigm a society must provide a sufficient number of meaningful relationships to a large variety of persons to tie them to their respective communities. The deviants and those who are most difficult to control, the youthful, the healthy and the intellectually alive have the highest probability of migration.

Based on the ethnic composition of the settlement country, the politics of ethnicity and identity there, the duration of stay and legal status of the immigrants, they are divided into three subtypes:  

1. **People of Indian Origin (PIOs).** These are immigrants who have stayed for a sufficiently long period of time and have become citizens of the respective countries or hold a Permanent Resident Status.

2. **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).** They hold the work permits and extended visas for legally sanctioned stay. Many prolong their stay so that they become eligible for the Permanent Resident Status. The illegal immigrants also fall in this category because as and when they are caught they will be deported to their homeland.
3. *Transient Diasporic.* They are migrant workers who notwithstanding the duration of their stay in the country they are working, cannot hope to become Settlement Community. Their return to their homeland is ever impending.

**Causes of Asian Immigration to the United States**

Motivational factors responsible for migration are in themselves complex. They may be personal, political, economic and natural forces which may operate individually or one factor may be highly motivating. Sometimes many factors act and interact together to cause human migration.

The main reasons for migration seem to be the attraction of more favourable conditions. The other reasons could be family, health and housing motives. Sometimes marriage, and motives independent of the mover, such as love of change or aspiration to study in a different atmosphere for better opportunities, or wars, political events, natural calamities and military service are the other motivational or forced reasons for migration.

**Religious Freedom**

The Reformation, a religious movement that began in the early 1500s in Europe, was fuelled by protests against the doctrines and corruptions in the Roman Catholic Church. Christianity splintered into two groups, Catholic
and Protestant. This led to religious wars and persecutions across Europe, the Pilgrims and French and German Protestants were among the first groups of people who immigrated to America in search of religious freedom.

The severe religious persecution in Germany forced the German Protestant sects, such as Mennonites to immigrate to America. In France, Protestants known as Huguenots grew rapidly and the members became targets of persecution by Catholics. The loss of religious freedom forced them to immigrate to the United States.

The rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, forced many to flee and seek refuge in other countries, including the United States. Thus many Jews entered the United States.

**Political Stability**

In the 1800s, Germans, predominantly Jews, homosexuals and social democrats immigrated in the year 1933 to 1945 to escape persecution during the Nazi regime. Eastern Europeans displaced after World War, including 2,05,000 people and 17,000 orphans who were unwilling to return to their countries, immigrated to the United States in 1948.
After 1965 there were many immigrants from Asia and Latin America, owing to the political turmoil. Since Fidel Castro's rise to power in Cuba in 1959 about 1 million Cuban refugees fled the country. Following the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 nearly 1, 30,000 Vietnamese refugees immigrated to the United States. As Communism continued to spread through Southeast Asia thousands of refugees immigrated to the United States in search of asylum.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced thousands of refugees to flee to America. The rise of Taliban in 1996 increased the outflow of refugees. During the first Persian Gulf war in 1990-91 and continuing through 2002 Iraqi's were given refuge in the United States. Following the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003, more displaced Iraqi's looked to the United States for refuge from the war.

Economic Opportunities

Early immigrants to America also came for economic reasons. The pilgrims were struggling financially and slipping into poverty due to difficult labour market in Holland. Spanish explorer Francisco Vasquez de Coronado made his journey in 1540 as far into America in search of "fabled riches" in the New Land, he had heard about. The Spanish established St.
Augustine on the coast of Florida in 1565 as a Fort to protect ships sailing to Spain laden with treasures discovered in America.

Among the first French immigrants were those planning to establish what was believed to be lucrative fur-trading monopolies in the New World. After the Civil War and continuing into the mid 1900s most immigrants to the United States were described as economic migrants. They were poor and uneducated and the United States was seen as the land of opportunity. American's westward expansion also created work opportunities for immigrants.

Chinese and Irish immigrants were used as labour for building the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads. Mexican immigrants worked on farms and railroads in California. Other immigrants started businesses ranging from restaurants offering foods from an immigrants home land, to barber shops, retail establishments, repair shops, construction companies and more. In the 1960s skilled professionals from India, the Philippines and South America were encouraged by the United States Government to come and fill jobs going unfilled due to a shortage of American Professionals.

In the 2000s, the United States continued to struggle with the shortages of professionals to work in fields such as technology, medicine and teaching, causing the country to look beyond its borders to find people to fill the jobs.
Many of the new immigrants who responded to Americas' call for workers were teachers, nurses, technology experts and other educated professionals. They were enticed to immigrate to the United States by the promise of much higher wages, than they could earn in the countries they left behind.22

Nationalism

The Meriam-Webster Dictionary defines "Nationalism as the loyalty and devotion to a nation. It is especially a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above the others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups".23 The nation is imagined as limited because even the greatest of them, encompassing a billion human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs to dream of a wholly single planet.24

There are three types of nationalism: "diaspora accepting", "immigrationist" and "diaspora annexing".25 Some nationalisms such as the diaspora accepting variety are content with partial union, they are less troublesome because they make fewer territorial demands on their neighbours. The immigrationists type seem to incorporate their diasporas in the national state,
but are content to pursue union by seeking immigration of the diaspora. Such immigrationists are easy to accommodate. Finally some nationalism seek to incorporate their diasporas by means of territorial expansion. Such diaspora – annexing nationalisms are the most dangerous of the three, since their goals and tactics produce the greatest territorial conflicts with others.

Nationalism is the sentiment of a group of people, united together by power ties and bonds - such as common race, having same faith, common language, a common pattern of life, a common history and a common ideal for the future. It can be more precisely presented as a sentiment of nationhood, in reality it is more than a mere sentiment.

The essence of nationalism is a unifying, integrating, all pervasive feeling among the people or peoples of a country who owe their first and last duty to the nation. Nationalism is a great liberalizing force which unifies and elevates and seeks to preserve and promote all that is best in a nation. It inspires a spirit of self confidence in an individual.

The spirit of nationalism amongst immigrants is seen when they try to accept and adopt an alien culture while simultaneously spreading a culture they had already adopted. Bhiku Parekh points out with regard to Indian migrants that homelessness is not an essential condition for them and the “diasporic Indian” is not rootless, rather “like the banyan tree ... he spreads out his
roots in several soils ... he has several homes, that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world”.  

The Role of Immigrant Literature

Literature is the most explicit record of the human spirit. In the American Journal of Sociology, Milton Albrecht explains the relationship between literature and society. He says, “Literature reflects accepted patterns of thought, feeling and action, including society’s unconscious assumptions”.  

Literature reflects not only the social reality but also shapes the complex ways in which men and women organize themselves, their interpersonal relationships, and their perceptions of socio-cultural reality. Of all the literary forms the novel is considered to be the most socially oriented because it depicts human relationships in its varied aspects. It is the most acceptable way of embodying experiences and ideas in the context of time.

Immigrant literature provides a unifying theme. It is like a prism through which one can empathize with a diversity of voices both past and present. Immigrant literature reveals a great saga and it lends itself to a multi-disciplinary study. The themes transcend time and space and speak of people who are in search of a new identity. It also explores the issues of immigration and assimilation. Besides immigration laws and theories, there can be a better
understanding of the history, customs, and culture of the countries the individual left and occupied.

The main focus of the thesis being immigration and the life of the immigrants in the United States, some of the Asian American writers and the focus of their writings are presented. Between 1943 and 1965 when the quota system was in effect, 50 percent of the quota was reserved for professionals and the contemporary Asian American writers belong primarily to this middle and upper class. They encompass a multiplicity of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures, which is reflected in their works. Indo-American Agha Shahid Ali, Meena Alexander, Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth, Pakistani-American Sara Suleri, Javed Qazi, Indo-Canadian Rohinton Mistry, Uma Parameswaran, Sri Lankan-Canadian Michael Ondaatje are among those who made a remarkable impression through literature. These writers recreate their familial, social, political histories and locate them in their present spaces, giving them, a local habitation and a name. They provide new imaginative ways of returning home through the imagination and, of sustaining the human spirit that is capable of inhabiting different spaces simultaneously. Here Bharati Mukherjee’s reconceptualization of national space shares resonances with what Homi Bhabha has called the “third space” within which cultural elements encounter and transform one another. Such a negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It is thus the third space assigned by the
immigrant to flourish in his New Home. Bharati Mukherjee’s fiction truly reflects the temperament and mood of the present American society as experienced by the immigrants in America and hence has been selected for a study.

Etymologically a migrant is like an amoeba with regard to his changefulness. Unless a migrant changes in every aspect survival is impossible. This amoeoboid nature of the migrant expresses itself in the migrant writing hence the study of immigrant literature becomes interesting.

**Review of Literature**

Literary texts are an important medium for exploring questions of identity and belonging. Asian Americans found it difficult to be recognized within an ethnic category that it might be today. These immigrants represented their views of ethnicity, discrimination, racism and many such issues more openly through their works.

Frank Chin\(^\text{29}\) regarded as the Godfather of Asian American writing is the first Chinese American to rise to stardom. He helped in organizing the first Asian American literary curriculum. Born Paik Kuang Sun, in Korea, Mary Paik Lee\(^\text{30}\) became the only autobiographer of early Korean experience in America by writing Quite Odyssey. Meena Alexander\(^\text{31}\) one of the most forceful South Asian post colonial feminist, is noted for her strong sympathy for the plight of
Indian women. She focused on the issues of memory, history, diaspora, belonging, transnationalism and identity crises.

Agha Shahid Ali\textsuperscript{32} speaks eloquently about his relationship with his mother and the grief of her death in his sonnets. Samina Ali\textsuperscript{33} speaks of inverted duality in her semi-autobiographical work, Madras on Rainy Days. Carlos Bulosan’s\textsuperscript{34} America is in the Heart set in the early twentieth century United States tells the tale of a Filipino who leaves his homeland to move to America, based loosely on his own life experiences. It highlights the economic hardships and the limitation of the free education in America, and also the struggle against racism. American Knees by Shawn Wong,\textsuperscript{35} confronts issues of gender, race and sexuality in Hollywood lifestyle while offering reflections of endless witticism on Asian Americanness. Michael Ondaatje\textsuperscript{36} speaks of Sri Lanka and the ongoing communal conflicts. Samrat Upadhay,\textsuperscript{37} is the first Nepal-born South Asian writer to gain prominence in the West with his collection of short stories Arresting God in Kathmandu which consists of nine short stories. David Mura\textsuperscript{38} a third generation critic and playwright deals with a broad range of subjects surrounding racial identity and desire.\textsuperscript{39}

The award winning Indian American novelist Bharati Mukherjee is a first generation immigrant as much as a well established South Asian American novelist, and she has found a rich textual resource in her own experiences of
emigration. She vigorously challenges and contests ideas of nationhood through a body of work which embraces a number of genres and literary techniques, and spans a period of 30 years. She captivated my attention, as her stories and novels are full of characters that confront various identities in different geographical spaces. Her novels also reveal a trajectory pessimism to affirmative optimism and the inference drawn is one must learn to transform in order to survive in contemporary, multicultural America.

The Aim and Objectives of the Study

Literary texts are powerful tools of knowledge. They give sense of what it is like to be defined by others as different and with which to assert positive ideas of difference. The experience of migration and settlement is an important theme of recent writing. Among the key themes presented are the problems and conflicts that result from moving away from ones homeland. Narrative - the telling and reading stories - is the key way in which people make sense of their lives at an everyday level and imagine experiences and modes of living that are different from their own. It also allows for the exploration of emotions that are important in understanding racism both from the perspective of its perpetrators and its victims. Imagined as the move to a better life, the reality depicted is an important aspect of immigrant writing. The thesis is aimed at projecting such a genre.
The aim and objectives of the present study are to present the concept of immigration and its impact on literature.

a. To provide a conceptual framework of migration and the theories relevant to migration.
b. To present the demography, population movements, the causes and conditions of migration.
c. To present the life of immigrants, and the problems of Adjustment, Assimilation and Acculturation.
d. To discuss the literary works of immigrant Asian American writers.
e. To study the select works of Bharati Mukherjee.

Methodology

The material and data for this thesis have been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the texts written by Bharati Mukherjee an Asian American writer as they present the life and lifestyles of the Asian American immigrants in the United States which is the focus of this thesis. The secondary sources are journals, magazines, critical views, reports and a collection of reviews. Frequent visits to libraries such as The American Information Resource Center, Connemara Public Library, The Chennai District Library, Anna Centenary Library, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College Library and the library of Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies helped in the collection of information and the required data.
Chapterization

The thesis is divided into four chapters in addition to the Introduction, Conclusion and References. The introduction gives the definition of migration and immigration. Chapter two presents the Conceptional Framework with theories relevant to Immigration and also discusses the key variables of the Indian diasporas such as Demography of Population Movements and the Causes and Conditions for Migration. Chapter three focuses on the Life of Immigrants, and the Concepts of Adjustment, Assimilation and Acculturation. Chapter four gives an insight into the works of Migrant Asian American Writers. Chapter five presents the select works of Bharati Mukherjee and the issues of identity, that one must learn to transform in order to survive in contemporary, multicultural society. The last Chapter forms the Conclusion of the thesis.

References

4. ibid.
8. Ibid. p.227.
13. Ibid. p.753.
20. Ibid. p.36.
21. Ibid. p.36