CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“If a person plays dissonance long enough, it will sound like consonance. It’s a language that was alien and then it's less and less alien as it continues to live.”

(Jarrett)

Dissonance and Consonance, in music, predominantly signify tension and release. Dissonance, the upshot of deranging harmony, by the addition of foreign tones, always notifies anxiety whereas Consonance, the combination of several harmonic tones, brings forth pleasure. It is apparent that in human life, the man experiences dissonance in an uncongenial domain where he fails to establish harmonious relationship. The man who has adaptability has consonance with the alien sphere and enjoys harmonic existence. All the human beings, especially, the immigrants well encounter this dissonance and consonance in a bizarre environment.

The history of migration is as old as human history. Migration, either voluntary or forced, makes some people alienated beings. It conveys people from their traditional environments to the strange soil with strange tradition, custom and culture. Their conventional modes of behavior become insufficient to meet the challenges of the new atmosphere. In order to readjust and redefine themselves, people face “the enormous compulsion of working out new relationships, new meanings to their lives often under harsh and hostile circumstances.” (qtd. in Jacob 41)

In the process of transplantation, between the severing of old ties and the establishment of new, the immigrants exist in an extreme situation. The immigrants, like the uprooted and replanted plants, sometimes wither away or lead hollow existence while a few survive and rejuvenate to get firmly rooted. Each immigrant, regardless of
sex and nationality, passes through a traumatic stage to assimilate to the dominant culture. Loneliness, despair, estrangement, and an existential anguish trouble the immigrants and cause in them emotional and psychological changes. They become incompetent in refashioning their self and establishing their identity. A few immigrants acclimate to their new setting in more or less parallel fashion, both managing to become culturally and socially competent in the new society and at the same time exiting the ethnic community together. They bear hardships and brutalities in their crucial voyage towards self-realization and identity formation and emerge out as successful beings.

Self-realization is the creative trend of human nature. It is the replenishment or fulfillment of a need. The Psychologist, Carl Roger, in his Person Centered Theory, elucidates Self-Actualization or Self-Realization as, “… the individual is motivated by one sovereign drive rather than by a plurality of drives. This sovereign motive is Self-actualization or Self-realization, which means that humans strive continuously to realize their inherent potentialities by whatever avenues are open. This singleness of purpose gives direction and unity to one’s life” (437). Although self-realization is a universal phenomenon in nature, the specific ends towards which people strive vary from person to person. This is so because people have different innate potentialities that shape their ends and direct the lines of their individual development and growth as well as different environments and cultures to which they must adjust and from which they secure the necessary supplies for growth.

In *Theories of Personality*, the Organismic theorist, Goldstein recognized the importance of the environment in self-actualization:

… both as a source of disturbance with which the individual must cope and as a source of supplies by means of which the organism fulfills its destiny. That is, the environment intrudes upon the organism by stimulating or over stimulating
it so that the organic equilibrium is upset, while on the other hand the upset organism searches in the environment for what it needs to equalize the inner tension. In other words, there is an interaction between the organism and the environment. (442)

The person has to reconcile himself to the environment both because it affords the means by which self-actualization can be achieved and because it contains obstructions in the form of threats and pressures that hinder self-realization. Sometimes the threat from the environment may be so great that the individual’s behavior becomes frozen by anxiety and he or she is unable to make any progress towards the goal. At other times, self-actualization may be hampered because the environment lacks those objects and conditions that are necessary for actualization. Thus, it is obvious that, the immigrant who fails to come to terms with the unfriendly environment faces dissonance.

Further, Goldstein opines that a normal, healthy organism is the one “in which the tendency towards self-actualization is acting from within, and overcomes the disturbance arising from the clash with the world, not out of anxiety but out of the joy of conquest” (443). This statement suggests that acclimatizing oneself to the environment consists primarily of mastering it. The immigrants who mastered the alien environment have harmony with it, realize their self and achieve their own identity.

A sense of identity is a perennial creative force in a man. It assures one’s life and career in the face of overwhelming odds. Identity is a term used to describe a person’s conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliations. Psychology and Sociology relate it to an individual’s concept of his self in relation to the community, country or culture he belongs to. The question of identity is closely related to one’s social interaction against which one’s reputation or notoriety is measured. Much also depends on one’s perception of what he is in the society’s
eyes-distinctive, unique or otherwise. Some social scientists consider the term ‘identity’ as fluid and changing. Due to the migration of people not only across the states but also international boundaries, it has been observed that the identity of a particular man in a particular time and space experiences crisis, often involving threat. It is naturally the threat of identity and existence of the migrant/other subjects submerged in the drive of the dominant class of people and thus problematizing the situation in a society in terms of human relations. He/she becomes an unwanted ‘alien’ and ultimately suffers from a crisis of identity and a sense of alienation.

The quest for identity is indispensable and instinctive in the life of every individual. So search for identity is a typical universal theme in the literature of all ages. This quest also includes one's quest for new roots as man seeks a bulwark, substance and bedrock in life. The ultimate motive of all quests is to attain a personal view of life to make the existence meaningful and give a sense of belonging to man. Literature embodies the process, the consequent crisis of self, its quest and the subsequent discoveries.

Identity is a much debated term in Post-colonial literature. It is a literature of resistance, anger, protest and hope. The term ‘Post-colonial’ specifies a transformed historical situation, and the cultural formations that have arisen in response to changed political circumstances, in the former colonial power. It describes a whole new experience of political freedom, new ideologies and new agendas. The post-colonial writing originated from Africa, Asia, and South America in the mid-twentieth century has constantly reacted to the overarching experience of colonial subjugation. Often resistive in flavor, post-colonial literature has redefined the concepts of identity and history along self-constructed, novel paradigms and indigenous forms of expression. The literature of the ex-colonized, independent countries shows the difference in
outlook and socio-cultural values from the assumptions of the imperial centre, thus making them truly post-colonial. The complexities and varied cultural experience of the independent nations have given birth to a new critical theory called post-colonial literary theory. Imperialism questioned and challenged the rationale behind the native sense of pride in its own culture by imposing its own alien thought patterns upon it and changing the structures of local culture itself: “Post-colonial literature emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension within the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumption of the imperial centre” (Ashcroft 2). Thus, post-colonial writings mean the rejection and dismissal of the colonial imperial discourses along with their value system. The proponents of the post-colonial writings have started questioning about the validity of European theories. Chronologically Post-colonialism can be defined as the period after the demise of empires but on the ideological level it has got a wider meaning. It is a new approach which enables the reader to feel and see a drastic change in the academic practice of literary studies. Meenakshi Mukherjee in *Interrogating Post-colonialism* considers it

…as an emancipatory concept particularly for the students of literature outside the western world, because it makes us to interrogate many aspects of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted; enabling us not only to read our own texts in our own terms but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical locations. (3-4)

Thus, Post-colonial literature is the outcome of resistance of the post-colonial subject to colonial subjugation and so post-colonial literature is read as 'resistance' to 'the colonizer' that is the 'common experience' shared by colonized people.
Post-colonial Indian English literature also largely concerns with issues of decolonization, the cultural and political liberty of people previously hegemonized to colonialism. It critiques the contemporary post-colonial discourse and attempts to reread the emergence of post-colonialism and its literary expression. In the search for identity that constitutes the core of the recent Indo-English novel, one can find an interesting exploration of the East-West encounter with special emphasis on the inevitable confusion of values cropping up in the wake of the conflicts between disparate cultures.

Indian English Literature is irrefutably and steadfastly gaining world acclaim. It has got its own lion’s share in the world literature, gaining wide spread interest, earning many accolades and laurels and sustaining its niche both in India and abroad. Fiction, in Indian English Literature, obviously turns out to be the most powerful form of creative and ingenious expression. Being the most influential and distinctive form of artistic expression today, it has occupied a prominent segment in Indian English literature. Though the novel has taken its roots in India only a little more than a century back, it is considered to be the most flourishing and dominant form of literary expression in the twentieth century.

Novel as a literary form is of recent origin in comparison with drama and poetry. It has developed casually through centuries, framing its own rules, discarding them, borrowing things from abroad and taking a new turn and shape in accordance with the notions of every masterhand. The purpose of the novel is to make man understand himself, to stir his consciousness, to intensify his emotions and to enable him to experience the flavor of beauty. Great novels are the result of great passions. They are capable of changing human personality and turning the whole world upside down. Further, the novel expresses the author’s fundamental experience, the inchoate
urges of his soul, but at the same time, it presents life in its essential nature, with all its vagueness, conflicts and disorders.

The Indian Novel in English in recent years has emerged as a powerful assimilation of hopes and fears, a forceful approximation of human passions and feelings, an optimistic image of life-size articulations and above all a genuine evaluation of the mood of millions of Indians. The theme of self-realization and search for identity is predominant in the framework of the Indian English novels. The novel in English written by Indians is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle “for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English speaking world.” (Williams 109)

Indians started writing fiction in the Indian regional languages as well as in English. Members of the Dutt family (who published their poetry in The Dutt Family Album, 1870) have the credit of writing the earliest Indian English fiction: Kylas Chunder Dutt's A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945 was published in the Calcutta Literary Gazette in 1835, while Shoshee Chunder Dutt's The Republic of Orissa: A Page from the Annals of the 20th Century was published in 1845. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s great work, Rajmohan's Wife (1864), is the first full length Indian novel in English. Toru Dutt, better known as a poet, can be considered the first woman novelist - her unfinished novel, Bianca, or the Young Spanish Maiden was published after her death as a serial in a Bengal Magazine in 1879. Other early women novelists include Krupabai Satthianadhan (1862-94), who authored two novels, Kamala (1894) and Saguna (1895), and Shevantibai M. Nikambe (Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife, 1895).

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the number of those writing in English increased rapidly. However, the emergence of the ‘Big Three’- Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan on the literary firmament brought new hopes and
drew the attention of the critics and scholars. These writers tried their hands at various themes and evolution in the field of fiction. The novels of these three novelists redesigned the thematic fabric of Indian English fiction and laid the foundation of the new Indian English fiction. The post-colonial age represented by these three novelists was chiefly a quest for identity along different dimensions of socio-political and economic order of India.

Mulk Raj Anand formed the integral part of the triumvirate of Indian Writing in English for around seventy five years. His fiction deals with social inequalities and exploitations in the name of caste, industrialization or class-consciousness of the people. His novels explore the thick congested fabric of Indian life and he structured his fiction with unquestionable authority. The crisis of identity is the widespread theme in Mulk Raj Anand’s works. His novels like *The Untouchables* and *The Coolie* probe the hidden facets of human psyche along with socio-economic and cultural features. Barkha’s dramatic reaction to the dishonor of his sister attempted by a Brahmin aptly illustrates the agony of identity crisis at a socio-cultural level. His other novels include *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942).

R.K. Narayan is one of the most celebrated Indian writers writing in English. He is essentially a writer of realistic fiction. R.K. Narayan like a detached observer snaps a small group of men and their oddities and explores the inner thoughts and ambitions of the characters. He strongly believes in the aesthetic or creative pattern of art rather than its suggestive and moral appeal. He examines the idea of the crisis of identity in various dimensions. Almost all his novels are based on the idea of the crisis of identity and the consequent efforts to locate them. *The Guide*, another major novel of Narayan, deals with the same theme. The major characters- Raju and Rosie spend their life locating

Raja Rao, the youngest of the ‘trio’ stands apart from the rest of the Indian novelists in English in several aspects. He has a unique literary character in so far as he is symbolistic, poetic and metaphysical. Of all Indian writers of fiction in English, it is Raja Rao whose work is, both in content and form, perhaps the most ‘Indian’, though he has not hesitated to draw freely upon the West. He has brought to Indian fiction in English many elements in which it has previously been deficient: an epic breadth of vision, metaphysical rigour and depth of thought, a symbolic richness, a lyrical fervour and an essential ‘Indianness’ of style. His novels have been regarded as repositories of great profundity of Indian National Identity. The novels he has to his credit are *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespere* (1965) and *The Chessmaster and his Moves* (1988).

The tradition of social pragmatism and new consciousness was again resumed by Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh. Bhabani Bhattacharya, a social realist like M.R.Anand was richly influenced by the doctorine of Mahatma Gandhi and G.B.Shaw. He thought that the evils of society must be uprooted with the help of good literature. He has both fictional and nonfictional works to his credit. His novels have received much critical attention in India and abroad. He is a conscious artist who has sensitive understanding of the problems of contemporary Indian society. Almost all his novels such as, *So Many Hungers* (1947), *Music for
Mohini (1952), He Who Rides a Tiger (1954), A Goddess Named Gold (1960) and Shadow from Ladakh (1966) are tinged with the colour of realistic portrayal of society, its success and failures, ifs and buts and a confrontation between the high and low, the rough and the sublime.

The world of Malgonkar is somewhat different from that of Bhattacharya. He established himself as a historical novelist who did with political happenings. His best novel, The Princes (1963) deals with the inner life and the conflicting experiences of a prince caught in an age of change and crisis. His other great novels which merit attention are Distant Drum (1960), Combat of Shadows (1964), A Bend in the Ganges (1964), etc.

Khushwant Singh’s name is bound to go down in Indian literary history as one of the finest historian and novelist, a forthright political commentator and an outstanding observer and social critic. Major themes of his novels are religious traditions, moral problems and socio-political tensions of Indian life. Train to Pakistan (1956), The Sikhs Today (1959), Delhi (1990), The End of India (2003) and The Illustrated History of Sikhs (2006) are some of his major works.

The next arrays of writers, who have given new direction to the Indian fiction through their great contributions are Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sahgal. They usher in the era of psychological fiction. The psychological reality expressed through different characters form another aspect of Indian English fiction. The first phase of Indian Literature, covering the period up to 1980, has its own significance because it saw the birth, burgeoning development and diversification of the fiction.

With the publication of Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children in 1981, a new era dawned in Indian English Literature. By the 1980’s the novel had developed
sufficiently in themes, use of language, style and technique. Now the writers like Shobha De, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Vikram Seth and many others have earned name and fame.

Thus, Indian English Fiction giving a new shape, vision and color, gained a rewarding identity and unceasing admiration in the world of fiction during the recent decades. The creative works following indigenous literary pattern, are absolutely original, and deeply Indian in theme as well as spirit. The works of these writers have left their indelible impression on the pages of literary history, which cannot be erased with ease. Attaining national and international fame and receiving fabulous royalties by bagging many prestigious awards like Booker Prize, Salmon Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and many other novelists proved their worth in their creative capability in the international limelight.

Indian women writers also established their own identity by producing fiction, which represents a major segment in Indian English Literature. These women writers, by dint of their flair in creativity and imagination and acknowledging their novelty, uniqueness, inventiveness and resourcefulness by spilling much ink in bringing to light the various untouched and unnoticed facets of life and the indigenous aroma of the soil to their work, have made landmark contribution to literature and remained as fountains of stimulation and inspiration for the subsequent generations.

During the twentieth century, women’s voice started becoming an inevitable part of the domain of literature. Before this time, women were considered as inferior beings to men and were fit to do only household chores and had no potential to participate in literary or other activities. As independent India progressed, women came out of the confines of their homes and learnt to assert themselves. Mahatma Gandhi had
set the ball rolling: he solicited women’s cooperation in the freedom struggle and gave them the necessary impetus which instilled confidence in them. There were women writers in pre-independence era, but after independence and with the increased awareness by education, more and more women embarked on fiction writing both in English and regional languages.

Contemporary Indian English writings by women attempt to engage and grapple with living realities of women of various echelons and attempt to expose life in all its splendour and complexities. Their art explores the subterranean layers of feminine existence. They begin writing about Indian women, their dissensions and plights against the setting of contemporary India. The works of some of the recent well known Indian English women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Bharati Mukherji, Jhumpa Lahiri and Arundhati Roy and others offer a full range of experience of the emerging Indian woman, who, though tradition bounded, is firmly committed to re-define her role in the society in the light of modern thought and consciousness. One can find in these works, recognition and appreciation of the potential of independent selfhood of woman, with all its agonies, conflicts and contradictions.

The women presented in the recent female writings seem to struggle against everything that binds or confines their dreams, desires and passions, though their efforts do not always attain success and sometimes even leave them in utter chaos and anarchy. It is the image of an emerging and struggling woman with no clearly defined path or destiny and hence the usual share of pain, anguish, sorrow, conflicts and the humility to accept failures are suppressed in them. But on top of these, the most significant aspect in these contemporary novels is that, they try to project women’s myriad roles, aspirations and images, conscious of her rights and responsibilities,
sometimes falling victim to the glitter of modern life, at other times successfully breaking through the traditional barriers and yet other times marching ahead with all her limitations to an unknown and unfathomed path of realizing her full potential as an independent human being.

Kamala Markandaya occupies a prominent place among the Indian English women novelists. She is acclaimed worldwide for her very first novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*. Kamala Markandaya’s forte lies in creating realistic and poignant stories of both rural and urban India. Her novels basically mirror a new awareness of fulfilment of feminine identity without losing their traditional individuality. The women in her novels are gifted with depth and basic principle thinking and are aware of value system. They are able to make their own way of living despite constant suffering, dominance, poverty etc., in order to project the image of a new woman as ‘person’. The impressive oeuvres of Kamala Markandaya are *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *Possession* (1963), *A Hand Full of Rice* (1966), *The Coffer Dams* (1970) and *Two Virgins* (1975).

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the prolific Indo English writers who write in the stream of national consciousness. She has the unique distinction of being the political novelist on the Indian English literary scene. Her work has a strong realistic base and reflects not only her personal values but also the changing values of a society. Husband-wife alienation resulting from lack of communication, East-West encounter, extra-marital relationship, existentialistic problems and temperamental incompatibility form the major themes in Sahgal’s works. The novels for which Sahgal is known today are: *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *This Time of Morning* (1965), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich Like Us* (1985), *Plans for Departure* (1985), *Mistaken Identity* (1988) etc.

The fictional world of Anita Desai is quite different from that of Kamal Markandaya and R.P.Jhabvala. The novels of Anita Desai mark a parallel stream in the history of Indian English fiction. It is however undeniable that her novels have been knit around the complex idea of identity crisis with a female character on the focus. She dives deep into the inner chamber of the protagonist and brings out the hidden mystery of human psyche rather than the political and social realities. She voices the silent miseries and helplessness of millions of women. The famous novels to her credit are *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Bye-Bye Blackbird* (1971), *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *The Clear Light of Day* (1980), *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999).

Shashi Deshpande, an Indian novelist in a true sense, maintains a unique position among the contemporary Indian writers in English. She sensitively portrays the lot of women and their mute, convoluted self-abnegation in her novels. Deshpande mainly dwells on desperation and frustration, misunderstanding and incompatability, sense of guilt and loss, loneliness and alienation of a sensitive woman pitted against an

Shobha De is one of the most eminent Indian novelists of present day. This modern novelist is famous for portraying the sexual mania of the commercial world in a very frank and straightforward way. She explores the world of urban women in India through her fiction. It is through her characters’ actions, assertions and behaviour that Shobha De has shed significant light on the important issues pertaining to matrimony and gender bias. Her novels show the novelist’s perceptive portrayal of the secret depths of the human psyche; her accurate characterization; her saucy, racy and captivating style. She titled her works with the letter ‘S’ as *Socialite Evenings* (1989), *Starry Nights* (1991), *Sisters* (1992), *Sultry Days* (1994), *Shooting from the Hip* (1994), *Small Betrayals* (1995), *Second Thoughts* (1996), *Surviving Men* (1998) and *Speed Post* (1999).

Arundhati Roy published her maiden, Booker Prize winning novel *The God of Small Things* in 1997. The novel deals with human suffering because of man’s individual limitations and social codes. She deals with man who becomes the victim of many ugly social forces like the shameful inhuman practice of untouchability and the caste bias prevalent in India. She shows how women and untouchables are treated as non-entities and records her protest against Indian male dominated society which makes woman a dependent being. Her other books are, *The Cost of Living* (1999), *War Talk* (2003) and *Power Politics* (2001).
These women novelists have shown their extraordinary calibre and immutable imprint in the realm of Indian fiction in English. They have shown their mettle in every field and in some respects, far better than the male. They have played a crucial and momentous role in enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian English Fiction. Their rich contributions have widened the spectrum of issues deliberated in the novel. Thus, these new voices of emerging modern India succeeded in drawing the attention of the public towards the pressing problems of gender inequality, social evils and exploitation of women in a patriarchal society.

Diasporic Literature has its significant share in the world literature. It deals with traumatic experience faced by the diasporic writers in an entirely different society. The migration of Indian people to the U.S.A., Canada, Britain, Trinidad and so on, their condition in the alien land, and their nostalgic feelings for the home land, as well as their estrangement to the new one are the major subjects dealt with by Diasporic writers. The traumatic experience of the writers helped them to have a broad idea about the society of both their mother land and migrated land. They are caught physically between the two worlds. Hence they lead in-between existence, in the odyssey of moving from one cultural set-up to another, responding equivocally to dual cultures, attempting to assimilate between the nation and the self. Even when these Diasporic writers struggle to integrate with their new environment, they remain attached to their familial traditions, customs, languages and religions. The themes of these writers are identity crisis, search for the roots, nostalgia, isolation, sense of death and separation and distressed trauma. The renowned authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Kavita Dasvani, M.G. Vassanji, Salman Rushdie, V.S.Naipaul, Arun Joshi and Hari Kunjru, to name a few, have contributed in this regard.
Diasporic Literature consists of an idea of a native land, a place from where the migrant displaced and the elucidation of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. The Greek term ‘diasperien’ is the etymological root of the word ‘diaspora’. Dia- means “across” (through) and –sperien denotes “to sow or scatter seeds”, which literally means scattering or dispersion. The word ‘diaspora’ was used originally to denote the dispersion of Jews when they were exiled to Babylonia. However, in this modern world, it has come to mean a group of people living outside their own country and sharing some common bonds that give them an ethnic identity and consequent bonding. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, “Diaspora does not simply refer to geographical dispersal but also to the vexed questions of identity, memory and home which such displacement produces.” (218)

Indian Diaspora is the population outside India, particularly of those who have migrated to foreign lands and in course of time renounced their Indian citizenship. The term stands for the fragments of Indian population outside India who have acquired the citizenship of the foreign countries and now belong to the country of their migration but can trace their origin from another land. The Indian Diaspora could be broadly classified as Colonial and Post-colonial. The Colonial Diaspora began during the period when the British Empire had spread it tentacles around the globe and the red stain of imperialism had leaked into diverse land-masses. It had its beginnings in the 1830s, when sometimes forcibly and at times voluntarily; some Indian people were dispersed throughout the British Empire. This Diaspora was sparked off by the official end of slavery, when Indian peasants were transported to the Caribbean and the Fiji islands to fill the gaping holes in the work force on sugar plantations there. Indian labour was also used to construct railways and roads in Africa and to work in the rubber and the tea plantations in Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Rohbin Cohen calls this ‘the labour
diaspora’ (57). The forced diaspora was followed by voluntary migrations to these countries by small-time entrepreneurs who followed the imperial flag in search of trade. In the post-colonial category, the trajectory of migrations takes in education as well as employment opportunities.

Almost all these Diasporas have been well-represented in creative writing. The Caribbean diaspora has V.S.Naipaul as its figurehead and the tail is brought up by writers such as David Dabydeen. From the African diaspora has emerged M.G.Vassanji. Fiji has given Sudesh Mishra, Satendra Nandan and Subramani. The Post-colonial Economic and Academic diaspora has its own representative writers in North America- Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Chandra and Bharati Mukherjee. In Britain there is towering figure of Salman Rushdie whose father migrated to the U.K. via Pakistan. Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* initiated the interest in Indian writing in English and consequently led to the theorization of post-colonial literature and the focus on Diasporic discourse.

The diasporic writers immediately indicate the immense variety in their writing. The Indian diasporic writing cannot be a monolithic, hegemonic construct. There are distinctions of time, space, race, religion and gender among these writers which inform their writings as much as does the condition of being in a diaspora. Naipaul and Dabydeen’s diaspora is one of the oldest in this category and loss of home land is most keenly to be noticed in their texts. The creation of imaginary homeland therefore is greatest there as is also the assimilation in the geopolitical space. The distances in time, space and culture to be bridged by the Fijian writers of Indian descent are equally great and sets them apart from writers such as Mistry, Vikram Chandra and Bharati Mukherjee.
Diasporic fiction by these writers lingers over quest for identity, alienation, loneliness, homelessness, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, questioning, protest, and assertions; it also explicates issues related to confluence or disintegration of cultures, discriminating margins of two varied social milieus, internalizing nostalgia and suffering a forced amnesia. Further the Diasporic writing is a journey into the quest for self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. Writers like V.S.Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee and many others take up issues like identity crisis, alienation, marginalization and racism in their writings.

In diasporic writing, cultural encounter plays a significant role. The cultural pulls help in the creation of a new culture emerging out from the intermingling or synthesis. The cultural encounter is one of the most striking features of diasporic writing which gives birth to a new culture. This creation of a new culture revealed that culture is the part and parcel of life and every sphere of life is being influenced by it. Culture has great influence on literature and “genres are also often culture specific, some forms flourishes better in certain cultures, the romance as novel as the tale of an individual; has flourished in the West, while the novel as epic, as community dominant, has flourished in the East.” (Jain 15)

Diasporic consciousness is the outcome of the feeling of alienation or dislocation which one goes through, when one is away from one’s own culture and faces another culture. In this way, one is caught between two cultures, and this dilemma gets expression in post-colonial literature. Subsequently, dislocation and consequent loss of identity become its popular themes. Diasporic consciousness of the writer leaves her/him with a sense of dislocation and this sense always prevails in their works through their protagonists. In this way, a diaspora is left with the dilemma of what to
Diasporic consciousness thus, deals with the basic problem of the diasporic psyche that is unbelongingness and rootlessness.

The Indian diasporic post-colonial writers are writing under the influence of colonial ideas, as most of them are living away from their land of origin. They are describing the situation with the colonial mind about their societies, material and ideological situations. The exposure to western ideas, educational processes and power structures have resulted in the evolution of a man, who approaches his own society and culture through western norms. Thus, like them their fictional characters too are on the periphery and their selves are divided. The complexities faced by them in their post-colonial societies are very well shown in their literary expressions through their protagonists; they work as their mouthpiece. “On the one hand they are unable to step out of the historical content; on the other there is a deep unconscious need to step out of it. The need to discard the ‘self’ created by the foreign rule, to formulate a new ‘self’ not so alienated is very urgent.” (Jain 5)

Post-colonial diasporic writings end up experiencing a hybrid identity, where the identity of a person is no longer restricted in relation to his country or culture but it has evolved out to become a hybrid, facing dilemma of being caught between different cultural aspects and “cultural crossovers pave way for a hybrid culture and a new process of cultural assimilation. A mixed cultural milieu makes room for vistas of communication and dialogue in this cosmopolitan world” (Sarangi 140). Like their characters, the diasporic writers are also caught between two or more cultures. Often comparison is made between the life styles, ways and values of native land and the new world or adopted land. Adjustment is required both by the uprooted immigrant writers and their fictional characters and that causes Dilemma. The fictional world of diasporic writers is full of a wide range of hybrid figures created by mixed culture. These
characters represent a race of displaced and dispossessed people and their schizophrenic existence.

V.S. Naipaul has carved a unique niche for himself in the Commonwealth Literature. He was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad and the second generation descendant of an East Indian grandfather who came to the West Indies in the early 1900s as an indentured labourer in the British colonial administration. Naipaul’s works take the reader on a journey of experiences from the local to the global and from a narrow perspective to a broader and more encompassing vision. He is best known for his knowing depictions of Trinidad; for his explorations of modern India, his ancestral land; and for his dreary, ungrudging portraits of post-colonial countries in Africa, Asia and South America. His fiction is often highly autobiographical, returning again and again to the themes of alienation, the burdens of the past, and the confusions of the present. His works which brought him name and fame are *The Mystic Masseur* (1957), *A House of Mr. Biswas* (1961), *The Mimic Man* (1967), *A Bend in the River* (1979), *A Way in the World* (1994), *Half a Life* (2001) and *Magic Seeds* (2004).

Rohinton Mistry is different in a unique manner being a Parsi and hence experiencing a diasporic situation even within India itself. He was born in Mumbai and at age of 23, he migrated to Canada where he studied in the University of Toronto. Mistry’s works seek to evolve a vision that involves both the community centred existence of Parsis and their involvement with wider national frame work. His novels are concerned with the experience of the Parsi in India. Nationalism, alienation, oppression, human-relationship, fear and temptation are the major themes in his works *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), and *Family Matters* (2002).

Vikram Seth, an expatriate Indian, was born in Kolkata, India and later moved to England for higher studies. He has written novels, poetry, children’s literature, and biography/memoir. He has widely traveled and lived in Britain, the US and China. He rocked the literary scene with his monumental love story *A Suitable Boy*, and twenty years hence, Vikram Seth continues to bask in the glory of the same fame. He has been praised all around for his sharp eye for social nuances. In his works, Seth has very exquisitely delved historical, political and social discerns embedded in the society. Problems of identity- personal, religious and national are discernible in his works *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1993), *An Equal Music* (1999) and *A Suitable Girl* (2013).

Arun Joshi is an outstanding novelist of the human predicament who has chartered in his novels the inner crisis of the modern man, discontent, dilemma, frustration and alienation. Certain awareness of man’s rootlessness and the consequential loneliness and anxiety marks Joshi’s vision of the predicament of modern man. His fictional world is a revelation of a world where man is confronted by the self and the question of his existence. Some of his notable works are *The Foreigner* (1969),

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the most significant women writers of Indian diasporic literature who brilliantly portrays femininity in its vivacity. Her female protagonists are impressive and true representations of diasporic Indian women. Tilo in The Mistress of Spices (1997) is a genuine representative of diasporic identity. Born in India, lived on seas, educated to be mistress on Spice Island and finally living in America, eventually preserving her identity by merging herself into its culture, Tilo represents all diasporic paradigms. Divakaruni’s women protagonists are portrayed as marginalized, rebellious, docile, traditional and modern. Her Sister of My Heart (1999), Arranged Marriage (1995), One Amazing Thing (2010) and Mistress of Spices all deal with different identities.

Jhumpa Lahiri, one of the Indian American authors, won Pulitzer Prize for her novel Interpreter of Maladies in 1999. Born to Bengali Indian immigrants in London, Jhumpa Lahiri moved with her family to the United States when she was three years old. Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of elegant short stories telling the lives of Indians in exile, of people navigating between the traditions they have acquired and the mysterious New World they must encounter every day. With a remarkable insight, she delves deep into the psychological depths of her characters and reveals their inner world by a fascinating yet deceptively simple style. The loneliness, a deep sense of remorse and emotional isolation are some of the problems that her fictional characters go through in her works. Her other works include, The Namesake (2003), Un Accustomed Earth (2008) and The Lowland (2013).

Kiran Desai is one of the most celebrated authors in the country, since her second novel The Inheritance of Loss won the 2006 Man Booker Prize. The novel was
also awarded the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. Even though she is a citizen of India, Kiran is a permanent resident of the United States. Writing does come naturally to Kiran, being the daughter of the noted writer Anita Desai. Her first book *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, a novel, published in 1998 has received many praises from the distinguished figure Salman Rushdie. In her novels, the theme of alienation, cultural clashes, displacement and exile are presented in the broad perspective of globalization. The sensitive socio-political issues concerning immigration, intercultural communication, identity crisis, alienation, multiculturalism, racial discrimination, social realism, and search for home are projected within the realm of her novels.

In the recent years, with the awakening awareness on independence, the writings of the Indian Diasporic women are permeated with a theme of refashioning of self. It has been argued that feminism became an obsolete issue and women have successfully accomplished equality and confronted patriarchal norms. Moreover, Indian diasporic women writers started penning down novels with better themes than the perennially taken issues like emancipation of women, subjugation, injustice, gender inequality and so on.

Among these fascinating diasporic voices, Bharati Mukherjee comes under the focus of this research as she projected the optimistic aspects of the immigration through her energetic characters. She created characters who reflect the tendency to succeed, for they stand for ‘survival of the fittest’, the true diasporic inherent characteristic. They are presented as an epitome of energy and strength, quickly adapting themselves with the changing circumstances. According to Mallikarjuna P. Rao and Rajeshwar, Mukherjee’s characters “move from one stage to another in a seemingly endless quest for their significance despite having gone through the trivialities” (281). Mukherjee's
protagonists leave a long lasting influence on readers mind as they finally emerge out as successful being in their adopted land. Their encounter with the west strengthens their existence and enhances their personality, in this way they are capable of challenging their subjugation. Pandey, Mithilesh.K rightly observes: “Among the writers of Diaspora, Mukherjee has secured a special position and her work reveals a kind of approach towards life where a protagonist has to work hard to establish her identity in the society.” (123)

Bharati Mukherjee occupies a very prominent place in the annals of immigrant writings in English. She spurs up the appetite of Western readers by sprinkling Indian exotica in her novels. People of the west are curious, at the same time fascinated by Indian ethos. Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian by origin, who settled in the US, desperately seeks a place for herself in the American book market by packaging Indian culture in her fiction. Although she tries to obliterate her Indian roots, she makes abundant use of Indian themes in her work. She digs in the great Indian past and weaves her stories around it. She distances herself from her culture and heritage and looks at it through American lenses and with a touch of irony twists it to look queer and different for her western audience to lap it up. Her language is American, tone is American but the theme is Indian due to that she finds a place in the American mainstream writing and at the same time in the American book market. Her work is replete with Indian mythology that becomes her chief weapon in drawing attention to her fictional output.

Bharati Mukherjee was born on July 27, 1940, to an upper- middle class Hindu Brahmin family in Calcutta, India. The second of three daughters of Sudhir Lal, a chemist, and Bina Mukherjee, she lived with her extended family of more than thirty people until the age of eight. Sudhir Lal’s ancestral place was Faridpur and his wife’s
Dhaka, both parts of the present Bangladesh. Their families moved to Calcutta as many of the elite Brahmin families did during partition. This was the first diasporic experience which has become a part of Mukherjee’s ancestral history. Born in an extraordinary close-knit and intelligent family, Mukherjee and her sisters were always given ample academic opportunities, and thus have pursued academic endeavours in their careers and have had the opportunity to receive excellent schooling. Bina Mukherjee wanted to ensure that her daughters were protected from the humiliation meted out to women in a traditional Hindu-Bengali society. She defied the members of the joint family, sent her daughters to English medium school and demanded a separate home for their family. Bharati Mukherjee bequeathed from her mother the courage not to be bogged down by the cultural mores of the Indian society. Her mother was her source of inspiration and the first true feminist she had met in life. She had gained great things for women at a time when women were treated as mere slaves.

The second phase of Bharati Mukherjee’s life began when her father took his family to England in 1948. In England she enjoyed the privacy and independence. She also got an opportunity to develop and perfect her English Language skills. She attempted her first novel, which was about a child detective, at the age of nine. The family returned to Calcutta after three and a half years and Mukherjee entered the best school run by Loreto nuns. There are frequent references to the unforgettable memories of her days in the Loreto convent in *The Tiger’s Daughter*. After schooling, Mukherjee earned her bachelor’s degree from University of Calcutta in 1959 and master’s degree from the University of Baroda in 1961. Having planned to be a writer since childhood, Mukherjee attended the prestigious Writer’s Workshop in the University of Iowa in 1961. She planned to pursue her Master’s of Fine Arts and then returned to India to marry a bridegroom of her father’s choice in her class and caste.
Conversely, Mukherjee’s plan changed, when she met a Canadian student, Clark Blaise during a lunch break at Iowa University on September 19, 1963. After a very brief courtship of two weeks they got married during that lunch hour in a lawyer’s place above a coffee shop. She obtained her M.F.A. the same year and then went on to earn her Ph.D. in English and Comparative literature from the University of Iowa in 1969. Then, the couple moved to Canada and Bharati Mukherjee became a naturalised citizen of Canada in 1972. As Mukherjee says in an exclusive interview with Alison Carb, she had a very tough time during the 1970s when she and her husband lived and taught in Toronto. There was a pattern of discrimination against Canadians of Asian origin. The fourteen years in Canada were perhaps the most difficult years of her life for she witnessed herself as a victim of racial and ethnic discrimination. She was denied service in stores. She was taken for a shoplifter. Once she was physically roughed up in a Toronto subway station. Such incidents prompted her to become a civil-rights activist. In 1980 she left Canada resigning her professorship at McGill University and settled in the United States, where she was granted the status of a permanent resident. She felt relieved and free to write the experiences of her own. After holding several posts at various colleges and universities, in 1989, Mukherjee moved to California as a distinguished Professor at University of California, Berkeley.

Bharati Mukherjee has created a fair place for herself in the literary circle abroad, by her contribution to English writing. Her commendable works place her in the class of great immigrant writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, M.G.Vaasanji and V.S.Naipaul. The traumas and the agonies, that people of Indian Diaspora face in fulfilling their dreams, constitute the prime concern of her literary oeuvre. She mainly focused on her women characters, their struggle for
identity, their bitter experiences, and their final emergence as self-assertive individuals, free from the bondages imposed on them.


In addition to these books of fiction, short stories and nonfiction, she has published a number of articles. The significant articles are “*Kautilya’s Concept of Diplomacy: A New Interpretation*”, “*Immigrant Writing: Give us your Maximalists*” and “*Beyond Multiculturism: Surviving the Nineties.*”

Bharati Mukherjee’s academic and professional career won her many laurels. Twice she availed herself of Grants from Mc Gill University in 1968 and 1970 besides winning Canada Arts Council Grants in the years 1973-74 and 1977 respectively. She was also awarded the prestigious Shastri-Indo-Canadian Institute Grant during the year
1976-77. She was a receiver of Guggenheim Foundation Award in 1978-79, and Canadian Government Award in 1982. She has also won the first prize from Periodical Distribution Association in 1980 for her short story *Isolated Incidents*. Mukherjee has also been honoured with the National Book Critics Circle Award for her short story collection, *The Middle Man and other Stories* in 1989.

Bharati Mukherjee is a perceptive observant of the contemporaneous socio-political condition. She is at her best when she draws on her experiences of the old world while writing with insight about the New World to which now she belongs. This versatile and celebrated novelist describes herself as, “A writer from the third world I left India by choice to settle in the U.S. I have adopted this country as my home. I view myself as an American author in the tradition of other American authors whose ancestors arrived at Ellis Island” (Carb 650). Her most remarkable works reveal her pride in her Indian heritage and also her celebration of embracing America. Her writings were well recognized because of her depiction of immigrant experiences, especially, that of the South Asian Diaspora in North America. Through her writings, she voices her own painful experiences to expose the changing shape of American society. She proclaims herself as unhyphenated American and she does not want to state herself as a hyphenated Indian- American. “I maintain that I am an American writer of Indian origin, not because I'm ashamed of my past, not because I'm betraying or distorting my past, but because my whole adult life has been lived here, and I write about the people who are immigrants going through the process of making a home here.” (Carb 645)

Bharati Mukherjee, an apostle of immigrants, has also experienced alienation, cultural shock and racism in the foreign as well as in native milieu. Her several phases of life, first as a colonial, then as a national subject in India, as an expatriate,
a post-colonial Indian in Canada, and finally as an immigrant, later as a citizen in the United States, is implicitly exposed through her female characters. The terms 'immigrant' and 'expatriate' in general refer to persons who live outside their native country. Yet, these two terms presume distinct connotations in the works of Bharati Mukherjee. The 'immigrant' readily transforms herself/himself to acclimatize to the host culture and has consonance with the New World. The immigrant experience includes the continuous rebirth of 'self' in its relation to the environment. The 'expatriate', on the other hand, is a rigid holder of native values, finds it hard to attune with the new culture which in turn ends in dissonance with the alien atmosphere.

An examination of the works of Mukherjee reveals a movement from expatriation to immigration. This movement coincides with her immigration from Canada to the United States. Mukherjee's traumatic experience in Canada led her to see herself as an expatriate and the theme of expatriation permeates her writings in Canada. In the United States, there is a growing recognition of herself as an immigrant with an increasingly strong attachment to America and this experience of immigration is revealed in her writings in the United States.

Expatriation implies the nostalgic feeling for the native country and also the culture and tradition left behind, whereas, immigration emphasizes the adaptation to the New World and its culture. As Christine Gomez comments:

Expatriation is actually a complex state of mind and emotion, which includes a wistful longing 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 surroundings, an assumption of moral and cultural superiority over the host country and a refusal to accept the identity forced on one by the environment. The expatriate builds a cocoon around herself/himself
as a refuge from cultural dilemmas and from the experienced hostility or unfriendliness in the new country. (72)

Bharati Mukherjee has successfully fused together her several experiences in an alien country, her life and background into the immigrant literature. In her works, she has written about a small minority group that tries to adapt itself to the patterns of American culture. This group has to assimilate the two hundred old years of American history and get attuned to the new environment. Her main theme throughout her writing discusses the condition of Asian immigrants in North America, with the main focus on the psychological changes taking place in South Asian women in the host country. Her protagonists are well-known of the violence and hostility that surround them and are often made victims by various social constraints; she characterizes them as survivors. The phenomenon of migration, the status of new immigrants, and the alienation and estrangement experienced by expatriates and the wrestle of Indian women as immigrants are the major themes of her novels.

Mukherjee’s fictional works are illustrations of her attitude to immigration; she views immigration as a positive and creative act; not an act of loss and alienation but one of transformation and metamorphosis. It enables her characters to invent new selves. As Padma observes, “the most prominent aspect of Bharati Mukheijee’s handling of diaspora, is use of woman as hero in the only way modern life and hence modern literature will allow any one to be a hero, not as a conqueror of fate but as a contender for full rights over achieving a self-forged fulfilling identity.” (139)

From her early novels to the later novels, one can identify the progression of immigrant sensibility in her writings. Expatriate sensibility is expressed in her first two novels The Tiger’s Daughter and Wife, then her immigrant sensibility is shown in Jasmine and in The Holder of the World. Her movement from expatriation to
immigration and assimilation is better depicted in the novel *Jasmine*. Assimilation is a term referring to another part of the adaptation process initially proposed by Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist. Through assimilation one takes in new information or experiences and incorporates them into the existing ideas. Cultural hybridity is exposed in *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*. Hybridity is a catch-phase from post-colonial migrant situations. It refers in its most basic sense mixture. The term originates from biology and is subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century.

Bharati Mukherjee’s first novel *The Tiger’s Daughter* is autobiographical and is shaded by the dark mood that had overtaken Mukherjee in Canada. The novel illustrates the uprooted condition of Tara, who goes to the United States for higher studies. She settled in New York by marrying an American, David Cartwright. Tara Banerjee confronts bewilderment when she visits India after a gap of seven years. Tara jolts between Calcutta and New York, straddling Indian and American cultures leading to her psychic depression. She remains rootless despite having experienced two cultures, two countries, two homes and two men. In this novel, the primary concern of the novelist is to underscore the futility of the expatriate’s search for roots. Here, the theme of expatriation and isolation is handled with assurance.

Bharati Mukherjee’s *Wife* is a psychological study of Dimple, a young woman from Calcutta and of her problems in settling down in New York with her new husband Amit. Brought up to be passive and dependent as per Indian standards of womanhood she lacks the inner resources to cope with fear and cultural dilemma and ultimately descends into unexpected violence. Dimple as presented here is a neurotic and solipsistic individual who brings an end to the marital conflict in her life by murdering her own husband. Bharati Mukherjee has explored here the inner dimensions of the
protagonist and has surrealistically depicted the psychological changes due to transplantation. *Wife* has a special place in Bharati Mukherjee’s fictional world mainly because it depicts the plight of an Indian expatriate wife very vividly.

*Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee’s magnum opus coming fourteen years after *Wife*, is the story of an immigrant woman from East to the United States who had been grubbed up and re-planted in an alien soil. The protagonist Jasmine is an embodiment of old-world dutifulness, ever conscious of her sacred relationship with her husband, Prakash. Pushed from one disaster to another, she emerges not as a tragic character but as one who is determined to change her destiny and explore the infinite possibilities. *Jasmine* portrays the spirit of life that gives strength to minds.

The individuality and self confidence portrayed through the character of Jasmine are reflected in a broader dimension in Mukherjee’s next novel *The Holder of the World*. It is also a story about the trauma of dislocation and joy of transformation arising out of the union of two cultures. The novel has an unusually wide canvas that sweeps across not only continents and countries but also various cultures and religions. The novel reinforces expatriation as a journey of the human mind. Hannah Easton’s voyage to the orient is a pre-determined truth which effectively voices and manifests the latent tensions, aspirations and ambitions of the protagonist. Despite the sufferings, eventually, Hannah succeeds in burying her past as a native of Puritan England and emerges as a real fighter for life.

*Leave it to Me* continues with the theme of immigration thus completing the trilogy begun with *Jasmine* followed by *The Holder of the World*. Debby DiMartino, the central character of *Leave it to Me* is a young sociopath seeking revenge on her American mother and Eurasian father who abandoned her in the late sixties. This novel is the narration of conflict between the Eastern and the Western worlds as well as the
mother-daughter relationship. Debby is portrayed as tough and vulnerable. The evolution of Debby from a helpless infant rejected by her biological parents to a young woman of reality divulges a step further in the mental progression of Bharati Mukherjee’s women characters. In spite of the onslaughts of fate, Debby emerges as a strong independent woman trying to strike equilibrium in her otherwise chaotic life.

*Desirable Daughters* presents a more nuanced chronicle of the feminine immigrant experience. In this novel, Mukherjee celebrates the joys of immigration, but acknowledges the dislocations and the difficulties it entails. *Desirable Daughters* traces the life of three Brahmin daughters Padma, Parvati and Tara, all agog to forge an identity of their own in very trying and complex socio-cultural situations. Of the sisters, Tara is portrayed as perceiving immigration as a positive opportunity of self remarking by carving out an Americanized individualistic and independent feminine self, disregarding Indian conventions and traditions. *Desirable Daughters* throws fresh perspective on the collision and synthesis of multicultural strands, New World sensitivity and tradition, mythology and Old World values. This is just the beginning of Tara’s story which will be unfolded in a trilogy, the second part of which is Bharati Mukherjee’s next novel *The Tree Bride*.

*The Tree Bride* once again embarks on an in depth exploration of the life of Tara Lata Gangooly, an East Bengali ancestor, married a tree at the age of five after the tragic death of her bridegroom and eventually emerges as a nationalist freedom fighter. The novel has a very complex and mysterious plot shuffling between cultures and continents. Mukherjee also takes up pages of history weaving them dexterously into a convincing narrative. In *Desirable Daughters* and *The Tree Bride*, the novelist propels Tara to re-examine her life, whenever she comes to the conclusion that she cannot
separate herself out from her roots. Through the life story of Tara, Bharati Mukherjee creates a palpable and personal history of British colonial rule in India.

*Miss New India*, a kind of parable for the new nation, is Bharati Mukherjee’s eighth and latest novel published in 2011. The new novel presents an account of young people washing up in the call centres and coffee shops of today’s Bangalore. Set in a contemporary Indian society, *Miss New India* provides an interesting insight into the changing culture of the country with its increased share of the global market due to western outsourcing. In this novel, the protagonist Anjali never leaves India, but the hardships she faces, the grim realities of leaving ‘home’, and the difficulties of trying to orient oneself in a hostile, foreign environment, are all experiences that mirror those of immigrants around the world.

The non-fiction *Days and Nights in Calcutta* is a dual account of Bharati Mukherjee and her husband’s stay in Calcutta for a year in 1973. Another non-fiction *The Sorrow and the Terror: The Haunting Legacy of the Air India Tragedy* explores the incidents surrounding the air crash of Air India flight 182 in 1985. This book proved to the world the racial prejudices of the Canadian government and its apathy to the families of the victims of the crash who were all Canadians of Indian origin. Her short story collection entitled *Darkness* highlights her dark days in Canada. *Darkness* captures the broken identities and discarded languages of South Asian immigrants fighting for space in the new world. Her next collection of short story, *The Middleman and Other Stories* explores the lives of Third World immigrants who are struggling to come to terms with the American culture and their identity as Americans. *The Middleman and Other Stories* tries to enlarge the concept of American national identity.
Out of eight novels and four short stories of Bharati Mukherjee, five novels have been selected for the present study to represent the major themes on the basis that, out of struggle and displacement, the characters search for their personal identity in their place of existence and in the place of their birth. The objectives of the study are:

- To project the problems of cultural conflicts faced by Indian women in the Multi-Cultural environment.
- To depict the transformation, struggle and the successful rebirth of women.
- To analyse the immigrants’ struggle for self-actualization, quest for identity and their assimilation.

And also to get a broader perspective of the image of woman as a survivor or a victim of immigration, the research purports to study the women characters in the novels selected.

**Review of Literature**

Bharati Mukherjee’s literary corpus, both her fictional and non-fictional works, has attracted a lot of critical acclaim and research. The inbuilt multiplicity of her works have made the critics view her works as national and cultural discourse, as narratives of diasporic consciousness, and as expressions of Mukherjee’s preoccupation with immigrant women’s sufferings in the alien environment.

The full-length studies on Bharati Mukherjee’s works are Nagendra Kumar’s *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Cultural Perspective* (2001), Sushma Tandon’s *Bharati Mukherjee’s Fiction: A Perspective* (2004), Vandana Singh’s *The Fictional World of Bharati Mukherjee* (2010), and Stanley M. Stephen’s *Bharati Mukherjee: A Study in Immigrant Sensibility* (2010). According to Kumar, Mukherjee’s focus has changed over the years from expatriation to ramifications of immigration and the necessity of assimilation. The three stages of her life and work, that is the Phase of
Expatriation (1972-79), the Phase of Transition (1980-88) and the Phase of Immigration (from 1989) are studied. Sushma Tandon examines into the socio-cultural dimensions of the American community in which Mukherjee’s immigrant characters are placed. Vandana Singh deals with Mukherjee’s psyche, myriads of her characters, experience of expatriates and immigrants, their fluidity and Mukherjee’s style. It also shows the cultural difference of the First and Third World countries.

Continuing with the strands dealt with by the previous full-length critical works, Stanley M. Stephen examines the notions of home, belonging and the convergences of the past and present in Mukherjee’s novels. Some of the extant collections of essay on Mukherjee’s works have also been published. Emmanuel S. Nelson’s *Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives* includes the articles of several scholars such as Maya Manju Sharma, Brinda Bose, Samir Dayal, Janet Powers, Pushpa Parekh, Alpana Sharma-Knippling, Debadani Banerjee and others. This book throws light on Mukherjee’s life and Literary contributions. R.K. Dhawan’s *The Fiction of Bharati Mukherjee: A Critical Symposium* is a collection of thirty critical essays by several scholars on her fiction. These essays center on her Americanness, disintegration, violence, displacement and transformation. Somdatta Mandal’s *Bharati Mukherjee: Critical Perspectives* focuses on different aspects of Mukherjee’s oeuvre. It depicts her position as an Asian American writer, and reevaluates the narratives of multiculturalism, expatriation and Bengaliness in her works. The volume carries critical studies of individual texts beginning from *The Tiger’s Daughter* (1971) to *The Tree Bride* (2004). This collection also includes articles on Mukherjee’s non-fictional works.

Indira Nityanandam’s *Three Great Indian Women Novelists* (2000) is a comparative study of the fictions of Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bhatrati
Mukherjee. She offers important information on the striking roots of Mukherjee and her characters in *The Tiger’s Daughter, Wife and Jasmine*. Jaydeep Sarangi’s *On the Alien Shore: A Study of Jhumpa Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee* includes four research articles on Bharati Mukherjee by Patel, Gaijan, Verma and Lata Mishra, who study Mukherjee as a diasporic novelist, a post-modern writer and her logic of transformation along with her Indianness.

A vast gamut of articles has been published by scholars and writers from different parts of the world on Mukherjee’s fictional and non-fictional works. To name a few, Uma Parameswaran’s “Home is where your feet are, and may your heart be there too!” (1998); Brinda Bose’s “A Question of Identity: Where Gender, Race and America Meet in Bharati Mukherjee” (1993); M. Sivaramkrishna’s “Bharati Mukherjee” (1982); Enakshi Choudhury’s “Images of Women in Bharati Mukherjee’s Novels” (1995); F.A.Inamdar’s “Man-Woman Relationship in The Tiger’s Daughter and Wife” (1993); Shakuntala Bharvani’s “Bharati Mukherjee’s The Holder of the World” (1995); Sandra Ponzanesi’s “Bharati Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*: The Exuberance of Immigration, Feminist Strategies and Multicultural Negotiations” (2001); Nalini Iyer’s “American / Indian: Metaphors of the Self in Bharati Mukherjee’s *The Holder of the World*” (1996) and Christine Gomez’s “The On-Going Quest of Bharati Mukherjee from Expatriation to Immigration.” (1995)

Besides the above studies on Bharati Mukherjee, Bradley C.Edward’s *Conversations with Bharati Mukherjee* (2009) compiles some of the interviews given by the writer.

Globalization and technological advancement have made immigration more universal and significant. The effect of migration from the land of origin to an alien domain leaves indelible marks on the immigrants. The customary modes of behavior of
the migrants become inadequate to confront the challenges of the new atmosphere. Failure to forge new ties instead of the severed ones leads the cultural transplants to remain as eternal aliens. In a state of perplex they struggle very hard to establish their identity. It is here that this kind of research would add to the knowledge and perception of people giving them insights into the phenomenon of immigration. Hence the researcher proposes to undertake a detailed study of Mukherjee’s fiction with a view of exploring the Dissonance and Consonance of the immigrant women characters with their host land and their anguish to achieve identity.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters.

The First Chapter, entitled Introduction has presented the evolution of Indian Writing in English as a new and independent discipline. It divulges into the service rendered by the male writers to establish this as a new genre. It discusses the emergence of women novelists and evaluates the works of major novelists of the period. Then it briefs Diasporic writing and dilates into the comparative account of Bharati Mukherjee’s contemporary diasporic writers and places Bharati Mukherjee, an internationally known, read Indian women fiction writer in her cultural milieu. This chapter gives a short account of all her works and ends with the methodology.

The Second Chapter, Multiculture Creating Rootlessness, deals with the rootless condition of the protagonists in The Tiger’s Daughter and Wife. It analyses the protagonists’ conflict with their own culture and the acquired alien culture. The protagonists of the select novels are expatriates and alienated individuals seeking solace in the world of cultural confusion. And also, it depicts the women characters futile attempts to tackle the problem of loss of culture and their ineffective endeavour to assume a new cultural identity which make them victims of cultural conflicts.
The Third Chapter, **Transformation and Struggle for Authentic Self,** describes the transformation and struggle of the protagonists in *Jasmine, The Holder of the World* and *Desirable Daughters.* In these novels, Bharathi Mukherjee fictionalizes the process of immigrants’ self-realization by tracing young women’s experiences of trauma and triumph in their attempt to forge a new identity for themselves. The Characters do not have the nostalgic feeling for their homeland. Jasmine and Hannah Easton evolve a new identity each time when they undergo series of transformations. Tara of *Desirable Daughters* wishes to be a modern American woman and at the same time she wants to maintain her ties with her native land. So she is portrayed as a hybrid. The characters are real fighters for life and trend setters in the immigrated land.

The Fourth Chapter, **Disintegration and Reincarnation,** delineates the protagonists Tara Banerjee and Dimple’s psychological disintegration due to multiculture and their tragic end. Further this chapter stretches to explain the several physical and psychological reincarnations of Jamine and Hannah Easton to adopt themselves to the new land and their emergence as a new woman by acquiring a new identity. The protagonist Tara Chaterjee’s search for roots in the process of finding her identity is analysed.

The Fifth Chapter, **Summation,** analytically sums up the main themes discussed in the previous chapters. Mukherjee’s narrative technique and style are also discussed here. Moreover, it pinpoints the findings of the research and the immense contribution of the author under consideration for the status of the immigrants in the Third World. The chapter concludes by mentioning the scope for the further research.

The dissertation follows the methodology recommended by the Seventh Edition of *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*