The term diaspora comes from the words dia meaning “away” and speirein meaning “scatter” or “sow.” Connotatively, diaspora has been defined variably. Initially applied to refer to the dispersal of Jews outside Israel, the term diaspora as per the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary now applies to “the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country” (Hornby, 347). A distinction is often made between the two, i.e., Diaspora with “D” in the upper case and diaspora with “d” in the lower case: the former stands for dislocation of Jews and the latter stands for cross-cultural displacement in a very general sense. The term diaspora is also sometimes used to connote the evolution of human civilisation all over the world. The origination of the primitive human and subsequent dispersal to establish human societies in different parts of the world signifies diaspora and the diasporic condition.

In the conventional sense, diaspora signifies a homogeneous entity of geographically displaced people such as indentured labourers or slaves basically under the Empire and often referred to as exiled or expatriates. This standard term also includes the descendants of these expatriates under its ambit. Bill Aschcroft et al. refer to it as “voluntary or forcible movements of the people from their homelands into new regions” (Ashcroft, 1999, 68-70). According to another source, the term diaspora refers to a journey across civilisations. Vijay Mishra in the introduction of his article entitled “Diasporas” labels post-war South Asian, Chinese, Arab and Korean communities settled in Britain, Europe, America, Canada and Australia as diaspora.

What is evident from the above definitions is that diaspora must involve dislocation in terms of a significant crossing of territorial borders, i.e., movement from one’s own country into another. But such literal definitions that identify diaspora solely as physical migration, only half explain the ramifications of diaspora. In fact, the term has not one but multiple implications beyond the literal. Now that diaspora is becoming a significant force on the global scene, the term is being approached from new slants, more importantly symbolic ones. Major metaphoric dimensions are
applied to its study, more so, related to experience of unsetlement rather than of dislocation and relocation. It is no longer looked upon as a mere demographic shifting but rather greater emphasis is laid on the implications of such a shift. The crossing of borders is significant in terms of cultural changes that it entails, as well as the transformations that the dislocated self undergoes from within and without. The discourse of the diaspora entails so many aspects, such as loss of homeland and longing for it, alienation in new land, fixities, sacrifices, adversities, compromises and redefining identity; therefore it needs to be approached from different stances. And post-nationalism is often seen as the poetics of space against time. Thus, there is an evident shift of interest from the physical to psychological and cultural nuances of diaspora. In the thesis, the term diaspora has been used as a marker of movement across cultures and the dislocation such movement causes.

The development of diaspora through the various stages of its history substantiates the ripening of the diaspora into becoming the very condition of culture. The history of diaspora can be broadly divided into three phases leading to the postmodernist diaspora, namely: ancient diaspora, medieval diaspora and the modern diaspora. The ancient diaspora can be traced to the traditional reference of the term “Diaspora” (with “d” in the upper case) indicating the dispersal of Jews from Israel back in the sixth-seventh century B.C. and later in the second century A.D. from Jerusalem. The Jewish movement then is defined as a movement of exile, as it was a forced emigration resulting in pain of separation from the homeland and relocation as lost communities in the new lands. The medieval era from about 200 A.D. to 900 A.D. was witness to large-scale migrations, especially due to opening up of trade routes between different countries. Many tribes relocated themselves in search of better life. Later propagation of religions also became a motive behind exploring more grounds in new lands. The modern era movements during the period of colonialism were largely due to war, slavery and search for economic betterment. People from colonised lands moved to other colonies as indentured labourers or were transported as slaves. Many people belonging to the Third World countries became refugees in other nations as America and UK during the Cold War era. And now in the postmodernist age, the movement from one country to another has become the underlying and compelling logic of multicultural/multinational world order guided primarily by economic interests. In all the phases of its history, diasporic experience has brought about complex renovation both in the individuals as well as the native and the host countries involved.
Diaspora has its complexities in terms of its types and degrees of displacements. William Safran in “Diasporas in modern societies: myths of homeland and return” identifies six features of the diaspora namely dispersal, collective memory, alienation, respect and longing for the homeland, a belief in its restoration, and a self-definition with this homeland (Safran, 83-99). These six features amply point towards the complexities encountered in dealing with the subject of diaspora. Diaspora is not a compartmentalised subject, singular in nature. There are all kinds of dissimilarities inherent in this experience in terms of its ethnic, regional and linguistic composition that result in a helpless state of the diasporic individual hanging in between a space characterised by an irreconcilable gap between the desired and acquired. The irreconcilability is also because the diasporic experience is not just confined to movement from one country and culture to another but rather it is a crossing over numerous precincts evolving from the implications of such a crossing.

The cross-civilisation passage of diaspora has to negotiate with the existence of multiple dualities within its ambit by creating segregations such as “source country and a target country, a source culture and a target culture, a source language and a target language, a source religion and a target religion and so on” (Paranjape, “Displaced Relations”, 6). Constant exploration and immense fluidity mark this “away from home” experience. There is a persistent feeling of the sense of “Otherness” with ‘O’ in the upper case for emphasising the extent of strangeness in the diasporic mind. Diaspora is a state of dislocation marked by perpetual confrontation in the diasporic psyche between the place of origin and the place of dwelling and is often viewed as a space of unsettlement, clash and overall disturbance.

Arjun Appadurai in “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy” denies any singular or uncontested meta-narratives to approach any social process but rather talks of multiple reference points (Appadurai, 1990, 296-97). And this holds all the more true in case of diasporic studies considering its vastness and the complex negotiations of intense relocation as well as dislocation, assimilation and dissimilation, renunciation/enunciation/denunciation as the diasporic is constantly interrogating, juxtaposing and reconciling. Thus, diaspora is never static. Also, it is not a homogenous whole. The traits in the form of polarities intensify its complexity all the more as the individual is dealing with contradictions such as acceptance and rejection, attachment and alienation, home and homelessness, and so on. The complexity lies not just within the diasporic individual but within the diasporic communities existing within a
nation. This is due to the various ethnic groups entering the host country not only from different corners of the world but also varied cultural groups from the same native origin. As already mentioned, not only do the diversified nationals form individualistic groups but immigrants of common nativity too carry along the diversity practiced in the homeland to the adopted land. This creates diasporas within each diaspora owing to the various permutations and combinations taking place within various ethnic factions. On the basis of various paradigms associated with diaspora, we have another division comprising of psychological diaspora, social diaspora and cultural diaspora, each having its own dynamics.

Thus, to theorise any study under the umbrella of diaspora becomes a challenging task. One needs to categorise everything associated with it in terms of historical, sociological, individual and various other positions and this brings us in confrontation with numerous ironies and paradoxes. It is a state of cultural reconstruction leading to further and more sophisticated articulations of identity, as manifested in community, nationhood, and also larger global contexts. It is important to remember to perceive diaspora space at all times exploratory, fluid and dynamic so that intersections within histories, pasts and futures, do not congeal into rigid boundary-laden states.

Critical studies that are increasingly projecting diaspora as a dynamic force usually study it through paradigms of hybridism, duality, multiplicity, pluralism, paradox, polyphonic multiculturalism, cosmopolitan citizenry and cultural exogamy. When so many dimensions go into characterising the diaspora, it attains unprecedented discursiveness. It creates its own distinct interspatial space, which stems from the encounter of cultures, both the host and the guest, but eventually generates its own poetics. This space is often identified as ‘the third space.’ Edward W. Soja refers to ‘third space’ as a “tentative term that attempts to capture what is actually a constant shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances and meanings” (Soja, Intro. 2). He goes on to add that this ‘third space’ has everything ranging from “subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimagined, mind and body, consciousness and unconsciousness, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history” (Soja, 57). Thus, the ‘third space’ comprises of both the social and the historical. It is a temporal space without any pre-defined canons and is marked by the dynamics of negotiation. It is a space of
openness and there is no scope for contouring or absolutism. Homi Bhabha denies the space any definite entity just as he denies definite history to nations or any definite negotiations. He writes:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorise cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation (Bhabha, 1994, 2).

Thus, being a space of constant mutual exchange, there is absence of any definite paradigms. It is a mid-way space signifying both the specific as well as the general. As Bhabha explains:

The pact of interpretation is never simple an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ‘in itself’ be conscious (Bhabha, 1994, 36).

The second-generation diaspora literature is predominantly replete with the experience of being caught in-between the ‘third space’ which is the space of negotiating two disparate cultures to reach congeniality. This again is an arduous task as the ‘third space’ is constantly nourished and nurtured by the bi-culturalism built in a diasporic situation, yet it has its own configuration.

**DIASPORA AND IDENTITY**

Identity crisis is one of the first things that an immigrant faces on landing in a new land. And Zygmunt Bauman opines that identity cannot be anything but problematic, especially because of its dis-embedded nature. Hence, it keeps the diasporic individual in action at all times. A diasporic’s condition in a new land experiencing a sense of being lost and having gone astray may be compared to Bauman’s definition of pilgrims. He writes: “For pilgrims through time, the
truth is elsewhere; the true place is always some distance, some time away. Wherever the pilgrim may be now, it is not where he ought to be, and not where he dreams of being” (Bauman, 20). Bauman takes the analogy of desert to represent the object of desire and its limitless area signifying loss of all identity. He describes the contended Protestants as “inner worldly pilgrims” who could make this desert come to them in contrast to the hermits who go to it. Pilgrimage, according to him, then is necessary to “avoid being lost in a desert; to invest the walking with a purpose while wandering the land with no destination” (Bauman, 21).

Ashish Nandy defines diaspora as journeys that alter the cartography of the self (Nandy, 2001, 52). Diaspora signifies an experience and since besides crossing of geographical boundaries, a leap from one identity to another takes place; it is a spiritual/cultural/social transition as well as transformation. Jasbir Jain explains thus: “Two systems of knowledge and two sets of cultural influences construct identity and the socio-economic reality of both the societies confronts the self”. When an immigrant lands in a new place, he enters it with his inherited identity. But as his identity is confronted by new social, political, economic and most importantly cultural factors, the inherited identity is then pluralized. This stage of pluralisation is more often described as “unresolved” because it is a situation in which the diasporic is torn between his needs on one side and his longings at the other along with minimal possibility of the two congregating. The role of linguistic scatteredness, rupture and discontinuity in creating the translation of identity in new idioms, thus attain utmost significance in this situation. A better life in a foreign land is chosen over the environment of one’s root culture within the homeland. And therefore, the simple process of re-location is replaced by the knotted dislocation, signifying the disagreeable effects on identity associated with it. Though the native is away from his homeland, yet the place of origin never let goes of its hold on him. There is a constant bondage—emotional as well as cultural—that the diasporic individual feels at all times in his conscious as well as unconscious mind.

The native continues to be haunted by his root culture and though he is out of his country of derivation, it is this bonding that provides a cushion for adjustment abroad. He is a foreign national whose identity is self-marked by virtue of his nativity. The individual despite being a member of a pluralistic society and carrying plural identities with him becomes the universal, as all boundaries become fluid and the diasporic learns to fit into the adopted society with or without the structured native cushion. There is revisiting of the homeland, of the
history and heritage of the native land in this third space. And the ‘third space’ is also the space of self-evaluation wherein the diasporic evaluates his beings and categorises the characteristics that constitute his make-up. He also realises his limitations and shortcomings. Thus it is a process of merging the identity of the individual with that of the community in which he lands. There is an enormous cultural change and this leads to constant adjustments in order to mould oneself with a new society and try to locate oneself. With one foot in the old and the other in the new, the diasporic evaluates his being and categorises the characteristics that constitute his make-up. He also realises his limitations and shortcomings. Thus it is a process of merging the identity of the individual with that of the community in which he lands. There is an enormous cultural change and this leads to constant adjustments in order to mould oneself with a new society and try to locate oneself. With one foot in the old and the other in the new, the diasporic becomes a centre of constant activity, both pleasant and unpleasant. He carries with him anxieties, attitudes that seem to be contradictory within their own selves. Thrust into a world that he is not prepared to handle, a constant conflicts marks his identity. Instead of double consciousness in relation to diasporic discourse, at times there emerges the diverse consciousness, which is open-ended and ever expanding incorporating multiple identities both similar as well as contradictory acquired with passing experiences.

Thus, identity becomes the core issue in any exploration of diaspora, especially diasporic identity that is composed of various factors and sub-factors. Mishra identifies diasporic identity with hybridism, “cross-cultural and contaminated social and cultural regimes” (Mishra, “New Lamps for Old,” 71). The usage of the word ‘contaminated’ only perpetuates the complexity of combining pluralities in the singular self of the diasporic being who efforts hard to root himself with the out-of-reach native land that dominates his unconscious or subconscous memory. Not only is the diasporic identity multi-layered but also, based on the history or circumstances leading to immigration, as well as the dual responses to this situation there are various identity groups in diaspora.

Despite the diaspora being a shared experience yet the individuals make up for distinctions within. These individuals as ambassadors of their nativity in adopted lands are also simultaneously refugees, searching for stability and their negotiations with the adopted land are not uniform. Secondly, each diaspora member has his own history. And both these states would determine the kind of response that would emanate from the diasporic space. Members of the
diasporic community are referred to by different names based on the criteria of judging their individualistic positions in terms of geographical as well as psychological displacement. Bauman in his essay “From Pilgrim to Tourist” (Bauman, 26-32) has given an interesting classification of postmodernist travellers that helps in understanding the diversification of the diasporic class. He mentions four categories, namely the “strollers”—a totally non-serious lot of the creators who not fearing the penalties of the creation, simply enjoying the pleasures of life with no torments attached. Secondly, there are the “vagabonds” who keep all options open and therefore avoid fixations. Thirdly, the “tourists” who are out for a new experience and the strange is not perceived as threatening. And lastly, the “players” who are the ones to take risks, playing one game at a time and none of the game affecting permanent consequences. Such distinction denies the possibilities of homogenising the diaspora as a simpler experience of immigration described in terms of movement from one place to another. Here are some categories within diaspora:

**TRADERS:**

Traders comprised the class of diasporics in the earliest phases of diasporic movements. They travelled with greater amount of freedom as compared to the other types of diasporics for the purpose of exploring trade prospects in new lands. Major attractions included Europe and the Gulf. Matrimonial alliances and better economic prospects often tempted these traders to stay back in ventured lands.

Indentured labourers: The most prominent type of diaspora in the era of the Empire comprised of indentured labourers. In the period between 1820 and 1920 with the abolition of slavery, people from colonised lands were transported to other colonies as Caribbean, Mauritius, Jamaica, Surinam and Fiji to work as indentured workers on sugar plantations. They were sent for a fixed period of time but many of them continued to stay behind tempted by better prospects in comparison to their homelands. These diasporics have had both good and bad experiences. Having been subjected to discrimination and deprivation, this class was aware of its distinct identity in the new surroundings and therefore emphasis was on preservation and insulation rather than on assimilation.

**EXILES:**
Described as a state of being forced out of or expelled from one’s homeland, exile in diasporic studies is often considered as a natural derivative of diaspora. For thinkers as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha the poetics of exile lies in the interplay of the centre and the periphery that the diasporics are engaged in. Said makes a basic distinction between exile and expatriate. While the former has been described in terms of a forced experience, expatriation is referred to as a matter of choice. Said ascribes exile with mixed identities leading only to uncertainties when the writes that “exile, unlike nationalism, is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being” (Said, 360). Negative paradigms are assigned to the term “exile” as a state of deprivation and separation. In its initial sense, diaspora of Jews was described as that of exile because the Jews were expelled from their homeland to venture in places only to encounter further adverse conditions that denied them a stable settlement. Not only were they homeless but ripped off their native possession. In the modern sense of diaspora, the term applies to state of the diasporics bearing separation from their homeland at all times and living in places they fail to identify with. They could be referred to as “resident aliens,” a term Gayatri Spivak uses to refer to the diasporics experiencing shuttling rather than mediation and caught in a state of being a part of both worlds yet not being “quite of them” (Spivak, 2002, 48).

REFUGEES:
Refugee diaspora is the class of diaspora resulting from movement owing to world wars and natural disasters. This shelter-seeking class was relegated to mass camps on the borders of the host countries. Faced with compromising living conditions, these refugees had not only left their homes but were without the same in new places. In the absence of many privileges of preservation the refugees were rather in the struggle for survival. They were caught in a nowhere situation.

EXPATRIATES:
Expatriate is a generic term used to refer to those who are citizens of some other country but residents of another. It is generally accepted that this act of going away from the homeland is voluntary rather than forced. Edward Said believes they have lesser contact with the homeland since the movement is a matter of choice. In times of globalisation the expatriates are
often perceived as happily displaced communities who have managed to make the adopted land their home and yet retain contact with the ethnicity in easy and more universal terms. These various categories based on the different circumstances leading to various diasporic conditions, are marked by varying degrees of dislocation. The extent of dislocation ranges from happy relocation to complete uprootedness. While for some immigrants, moving away from the homeland is a matter of choice and the attitude towards the adopted land is comparatively receptive, in other cases if the movement is forced or circumstantial, there is resentment and an irreconcilable pull is felt within. In order to study the degree of dislocation one needs to consider the negotiation exercised between the diaspora and the homeland. The extent of dislocation experienced in the diasporic situation is largely dependent on the the conflict built in diaspora. This conflict can have either positive or negative implications but it is a necessary condition for the diasporic existence. These conflicts essentially ethnic by nature are largely due to conflicting interests in the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres. How conflicting interests are managed by ethnic groups with the society becomes the determining factor. In the positive sense, this conflict can act as a source of motivating the diasporics in their struggle for survival in an alien land and, thus leads to better adjustment in both cases of migration—voluntary or forced. Whatever may be the circumstances under which a diasporic is forced to go away from his own country, the motherland will always be a subject of a diasporic’s thought process at a more obvious or subconscious level and the reality of native land and its changing circumstances cannot leave the diasporic unaffected. In addition, the nature of bonding that diasporics share based on ethnicity also affects the extent of dislocation. This bonding becomes all the more important as the collective consciousness it entails binds the members of a particular diasporic community. Sometimes it is the finding of the common cults that keeps them from being totally detached and assimilation becoming easy. While at other times there is deliberate creation of native emblems that give the comfort feeling of the motherland.

Another factor that determines the experience of displacement is the generation of diaspora that one belongs to. On entering a new land the immigrant is at first trying to assimilate the new in order to not only begin afresh but also to be accepted by the host country. This is the stressful period marked by constant accumulation and elimination and at times also insulation. While forming a larger identity of one’s own self, many a times it is this adjustment marked by sacrifices and surrender at certain points that makes for the complexity of the diaspora as it
exudes a range of responses. Some of these responses may be coinciding while others representing the polar extremes of diasporic response. Hence the varying degrees of dislocation. The first generation usually experiences strong feelings about the country of their origin. Though these individuals have moved away from the homeland physically they never let go off the emotional ties with the land of their origin. So strong is the tie that it interferes with the process of bonding with the host land. They live in a state of unending alienation and cultivate estranged attitude towards the land of their habitation. A migrant with strong native values feels the absence of somewhat conservative cultural structures that does not allow him to root himself. Only the prospects in the adopted land are favourable, for everything else, he looks back at the homeland. In such a case, nativity holds all the succour for strength. And sometimes this brings them even closer to the native heritage than they were earlier. Despite the movement for better prospects and adjustments in new society the gap always persists, especially for the first generation diaspora. They never reach the state of absolute relocation and there is a constant engagement with reality. The constant flux between forward and backward is tormenting at times.

From the second generation onwards ties with the homeland get gradually replaced by those with the adopted country as it does not remain “adopted” for the diasporics, but rather becomes their own, even if in parts. In this case, even though the realisation of a cultural difference remains yet it is not a stumbling block in the smooth functioning of life. It becomes a part of the sub-conscious memory at a more latent level. And while the diasporic is aware of his origin, yet he continues to move ahead with the social-cultural set-up of the adopted land through constant negotiations of accepting, rejecting and giving up all together. But this is not an easy task, especially at the beginning. Globalisation here is an important event, especially in times now, as it has produced what may be known as “universal men” who are no longer constricted to a small world but are constantly engaging themselves with the process of becoming worldwide beings. Bhikhu Parekh in his article “A Commitment to Cultural Pluralism”, writes about globalisation as responsible for dual effects—generating homogeneity as well as greater freedom for preservation of heterogeneity, which promotes cultural resistance, and rediscovery of indigenous traditions, in order to preserve one’s own identity.

Arjun Appadurai remarks that globalisation that comes with modernity is though largely a positive phenomenon but not for the immigrants as it entails “worry about inclusion, jobs and
Because of its very nature this globalisation cannot be tapped through recourse to the past. Moreover, in the postmodern times diaspora even though located outside, has become an essential part of the land of origin and this makes settlement all the more arduous. A two-way process exists wherein on one hand, the diasporics are being affected directly or indirectly by the homeland and on the other end, there is the homeland being constantly affected by it. In certain cases there is an ambivalent yet balanced attitude towards the homeland in the sense that the diasporic misses his roots, yet is not troubled by his separation from them. He wants to be a fully recognised part of the foreign set-up and at the same time have the freedom to claim his nativity.

Also why the diasporic had moved away from his homeland is another important factor. It determines the nature of movement, whether it is preferred or circumstantial. If the immigrant goes by will, there is greater scope of adjustment as compared to the situation in which circumstances force him to leave his own motherland and move into an alien country. In the former case, the diasporic has nothing to lose in a nation, which gives him greater opportunities for personal betterment and at the same time freedom to wrap himself in his personal heritage. People moving in from the cosmopolitan cities of their native land and settling in a cosmopolitan atmosphere abroad are perhaps less uncomfortable comparatively. They succeed in making this miscellany a way of life and are happy by having managed to locate the commonality in diversity, championing all dissimilarities. A section of critics believes that the voluntary act of moving away is in itself a justification of uprooting oneself by choice and therefore there is rarely any permissible room for crying foul when individuals land in a situation they chose to be a part of and things do not go as planned.

Other factors include the attitude of the host country towards the diasporic communities in it, particularly the racialism and discrimination that diasporic individuals are subjected to in the adopted land. Diasporic attitude is also greatly affected by the extent to which the host country’s system supports the rule of equality and justice; provides fundamental liberties and opportunities to progress to the outsiders. How well does it accommodate the different ethnic groups within its own larger system and/or give them enough space to exist as they are. Reasons of discontent can vary from prejudices to culture shock and so on. Identity crisis is reached when diasporics remain labelled as natives of another land, a land that fails to recognise them as its own. Despite the recognition of a common ethnic identity, all diasporics do not share a common
fate outside. Some do quite well by integrating their adopted life with the inherited while others fail to do so despite all efforts. This may be due to personal reasons such as experiencing strong ethnic hold and subsequent refusal to subject oneself to any form of alteration or sacrifice or racial discrimination. In the latter case, this immunity to cultural and social changes results in inability to merge with the host country and this further strengthens the ties with the native land all the more. There is a sense of absence of relativity or any association and this realisation of loss and deprivation, which intensifies when efforts to find a home in new lands fail. And therefore, the host country is put under rigorous critique. It becomes difficult as an outsider to place personal experience in a familiar context. Hence, alienation results.

**INDIAN DIASPORA**

The Indian diaspora that has its own spatio-temporal dimensions just like any other diaspora, refers to the people of Indian origin who have migrated to foreign lands from the territories that comprise the Indian republic. This standard term also includes the descendants of these expatriates under its ambit. The Indian diaspora, is significant as a sizeable number of Indians (approximately 20 million) are spread across the globe, constituting an important and in some respects unique force in world culture. Being the largest diaspora in the world, it has a significant global presence along with a history that dates back to the Buddhist era or even further back to the time of the Indus civilisation. Today as we see mobilisation at its peak in India, Indian travellers constantly toss between the country of their dwelling and the nation of their derivation. This builds up the significance of diaspora that provides India with whole new dimensions for reinterpreting itself.

Though a majority of critics date the seeds of Indian diaspora to the time when Buddhist missionaries from India travelled to new lands, especially to Ceylon and Southeast Asia under the Indian rule of Ashoka in order to spread the message of Buddhism, but history proves that at all times, trade has been a moving factor behind Indian emigration. The trajectory of Indian diaspora can be divided into three phases—ancient, medieval and modern. The ancient phase generally refers to the movement of Indian labourers and craftsmen as well as others desirous of exploring avenues in new lands, and thus migrating more freely with the opening of trade routes
in the Mediterranean. But some of the Indologists trace the history of Indian diaspora to remote antiquity and assert that the genesis of Indian diaspora can be traced to the times of Mahabharata, followed by the establishment of Indian colonies abroad at the turn of Christian era, while some historians date the beginning of Indian diaspora to third millennium B.C. when Harappan and Indus traders began moving to Mesopotamia.

Then came the second phase of the medieval times when European imperialism further aggravated the movement that had already begun in the ancient era. Trade took Indians to East Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. The rise in Islamic conversion also perpetuated Hindu emigration for the purpose of propagating Hindu culture. But it was mainly under the British rule that Indians starting crossing the borders into new lands in more numbers as indentured labourers, a term used for referring to those who during the British rule in India went overseas, especially in other British colonies across the globe as labourers on contract basis in return for a pay. These were popular then as the global working class of the British Empire and they formed the nursery of the modern Indian diaspora. These people dispersed over different corners of the world and remained there procreating further generations of diaspora. Caribbean was a major attraction for these indentured labourers in light of the abolition of slavery in the mid-19th century and the lack of available labour there. Most of these labourers continued to stay behind long after their contracts were terminated.

The modern era that began twentieth century onwards saw a steep rise in emigration and Indians, forming a major chunk among world immigrants, especially due to the lure of other industrially-advanced nations. And in temporary times this is generally referred to as the “new diaspora,” which pertains to postmodernist diaspora of advanced capitalism in contrast to the old one of the ancient and medieval eras comprising diasporas of indentured labourers, slaves and traders. The new diaspora to a great extent inherits its diasporic identities from the previous diaspora. The preferred destinations for Indian immigrants in the medieval and the modern eras have been America and the UK.

America has a long history of receiving Indians into its fold. Vinay Lal traces the history of Indians moving to the United States to the time when about a hundred years ago, peasants from Punjab landed on the west coast of America to work in lumber mills and agricultural fields. And soon Indian students followed, some imbued with the Indian freedom spirit and indulging in political activities in America for the sake of their homeland. This particular section nurtured
strong native sentiments and the fearlessness to express the same even in a foreign land. Their efforts to establish themselves smoothly in America met with opposition there. And then started the game of discrimination, beginning with the Immigration Act of 1917 to restrict Asians from entering the United States and later depriving natural citizenship to anyone there other than “white.” Indians couldn’t own land and by 1914, the number of Indians in California had gone down considerably. But then again 1940 onwards, things began to improve and then almost twenty-five years later America witnessed the regularised entry of Indian professionals.

Today Indians live in large numbers in America. They live as an integral part of the American society as doctors, politicians, writers and so on. Traces of racialism still exist but largely things move on smoothly. The American society has slowly learnt to accept sharing its land with immigrants and making them a part of the American set-up. India and Indianess are now no longer a thorn in the American eye. In fact, there is a growing popularity of Indianess among the Americans in the form of food, healthy way to life and so on. Yoga for instance has become part of routine of everyday American life. However, this is not to say that all Indians settled there are well suited with the American way of life, as problems of maladjustment do still persist.

Another place that attracted Indians widely was the UK where Indians continued to migrate even after the Indian independence for a better living. Despite abolition of Indian indentured labour in the British Empire, Indians never ceased to emigrate. Through sheer perseverance, labour, and thrift, and most significantly by a calculated withdrawal into their culture, these Indian colonies successfully earned for their children better economic futures. In fact, these Indian colonies came to capture the trade and commerce of their new homelands. By 1970, there were perhaps 10 million Indians living outside of India. With passing time the British culture has now weaved the Indian culture into its system and given the Indians avenues to create a comforting environment with scope for mutual exchange. In countries like USA, UK and Canada one finds a multicultural system in operation owing to mass immigration from different corners of the world. Various ethnic societies exist together in multi-cultural environment, sometimes competing with one another for survival. The United States of America is considered the strongest example of groupism that revolves around variance and clash to survive in a competitive environment.
Thus mapping the common routes of Indian immigration in particular, it is largely established that in the modern/postmodern era the Indian diasporics usually settle in lands that are open to mass immigrations such as USA, Canada, Africa (though not the preferred destination for many Indians today), UK, and therefore an immigrant finds himself in a country of immigrants. Indian diaspora is a complex whole with documented trajectories but its movement has not been a continuous one. The new diaspora of advanced capitalism did not immediately follow the old diaspora of classical capitalism. Indian diaspora is like any other and consists of individuals that carry with them the diasporic imaginary, which signifies the idealised and desired situation. The homeland is the fantasy revolving around the memory of separation from it. And more that this trauma is felt, the greater is the assertion of native purity by reproducing images of the homeland. And this further aids in becoming powerful voices in the politics of the homeland, besides that of the adopted lands. However, the approach of the diasporics to homeland is different from those of the natives.

The older diaspora consisted mainly of indentured labourers who went to South Africa, Trinidad, Fiji, Canada, America, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. This diaspora is also referred to as diaspora of exile. It was strongly grounded in nativity and thus immigrated in with them a sense of loss and weight of nativity. This was followed by documentation of their entry into the respective host nations, strengthening the realisation of having moved our of the homeland. Carrying the baggage of nativity with them these diasporics created their own familiar world within the new surroundings and thus 16 ained exclusivity. Highlighting the importance of the old diaspora. Vijay Mishra states:

This diaspora has been seen as a powerful source for diasporics discourses of disarticulation (abandonment, displacement, dispersion, etc.) as well as a ‘site’ for the rearticulating of an intercultural formation through with global migration, the positioning of identities, the nature of bourgeois subject.......... May be interrogated (Mishra, “The Diasporic Imaginary”, 1996, 426-7).

There was a sense of collectiveness as all carried documented identities, ate the same food and experienced similar living conditions outside. These people formed their own ghettos in new lands with such assertiveness that they became a prominent fraction of the host country’s landscape. They created familiar structures under the new conditions and within its precincts raised their offsprings nurtured with such strong native values that they formed their own
imaginary homeland. And this imaginary homeland often got disrupted when confronted with the reality of the native land. Thus critical attitude towards the homeland resulted.

The new diaspora is the diaspora of globalisation and mobility. Its members live in two worlds simultaneously. Consisting of members who lead hyphenated lives, this diaspora makes its presence felt in the world. It is hyphenated as the self is not identified with any of the two nations in absolute—homeland and adopted. It is a part of multiculturalism taking nourishment from both the adopted as well as the native land. Mishra points out that the new Indian diaspora “incorporated India into its bordered, de-territorialised experiences within Western nation–states” (Mishra, “The Diasporic Imaginary”, 1996, 434). Even though the self’s problematic, the return to homeland is impossible. This the space of hybridity.

Thus both the old and new Indian diaspora revolved around the “essentialised narratives of exile, homeland and return” (Mishra, “The Diasporic Imaginary”, 1996, 441-2). Whereas “the old Indian diaspora replicated the space of India and sacralised the stones and rivers in the new lands”, the new diaspora, on the other hand, “also retreats into its religious texts and draws strength from its priesthood when it finds the discourses of marked by similar challenges, the biggest of all being racism in different forms. Nevertheless, both the diasporas have formed their own strategies of negotiation.

Diaspora is a constant challenge to its members as evident in Mishra’s reference to the diasporic community of Indians as complex and internally fissured”. The biggest challenge is that of living with the realisation of being cut-off from the homeland and thus pain becomes a permanent accompaniment though in different forms and degrees. Diaspora being heterogeneous, diasporic responses cannot be dovetailed into a singular thought system. The play between the margin and centre being in itself problematic, there are basically two broad aspects of diasporic response that emanate from this space. Kapil Kapoor while referring to Panini’s concept of “apadana karaka” (Kapoor, “Theorizing and Critiquing Indian Diaspora”, 35-36) and Bharata’s rasa theory, talks of diaspora in terms of separation as one goes away from his own country to another. There is pain involved. The most important rasa, he says, is that of Karuna (anguish) that the diasporic has to undergo besides indifference, apprehension, depression, painful projection and other. There is movement from one culture to another, which makes the implications of such transition all the more problematic. All these pains together bring him to the
realisation of being homeless. Thus the challenges of diaspora revolve around the homeland, adopted land and the negotiating ‘third space’.

Diasporic literature is a useful resource to study the both the challenges of diaspora as well as the strategies of negotiation, as it chiefly speaks of diasporic experience at various levels—place, language, customs, myths, beliefs, geographical displacement, the combat with the gap, changes adopted and constraints. It tries to express the sense of “Otherness” felt by the diasporic writers extending it to the likes of them. These writers not only expose their own homeland to the natives of their adopted lands but also provide a whole range of their diasporic experience to the homeland. This literature makes up for important socio-cultural study. Non-fiction being closer to reality becomes a strong parameter for diasporic study as the idea behind non-fiction is to present reality or an idea that has left an impression on the writer, and on which he holds a perspective that the would probably propagate through words. It is this motive, which makes it all the more significant. The reality is the feed and the writer treats the facts as he likes.

Vijaysree, while analysing South Asian immigrant women’s writings, states that immigration of a woman is an extended from of exile from her own home. For these women, survival is the crucial question and here means struggle against the hostility of the new environment. And female diasporic literature deals with this survival in its various forms—i) Physical survival which involved a need to stay alive ii) Cultural survival, which means belongingness to group iii) Social survival in the form of acceptance by society iv) Psychological survival for retaining one’s sense of well-being in an alienated environment and lastly v) spiritual survival, which involved developing a sense of integrity, overcoming despair and alienation (Vijasree, 132).

These writers reflect the living experience, especially the challenges faced in new lands. In a study of South Asian immigrants women poets, it has been observed that in their writings from the space of bitter experience, the attempt is to reach an imagined congruity. The literature thus pictures the effort put into relocate oneself. The literature reflects largely the dividedness experienced in the process of doing so. This is the dividedness between the two nations involved, dividedness within the individual and dividedness between the individual and his adopted land. Trauma and mourning is supreme in Indian diaspora according to Vijay Mishra.
Diasporic literature can be categorised according to the era it belongs to as well the kind of responses towards the homeland that is communicates, Jasbir Jain in “The New Parochialism” has categorised diasporic literature into two types. According to her:

While the pre-Independence India writer abroad worked through nostalgia, memory and a possible dependence on Indian philosophy, creating a mythical past from them or alternatively a return to India and a redefining of the self within the trope of patriotism (Seeprasad Naipaul, Raja Rao, Shantha Rama Rau and the Westernised India intellectuals like Nehru fall into this category), the writer of the post-Independence period works through other constructions which can be broadly categorised as: (i) exotica (ii) history (iii) fantasy (iv) collision and (v) use of a third space.

Diasporic literature is thus evocative of the generated two possibilities of responses. The works coming out of the ‘third space’, today form a potent part of native literature of acclaim and this literature become not only an important source of visiting and redefining India but also of re-exploring it from whole new dimensions that have not been touched as intensely by indigenous writers. Therefore, it becomes necessary to take it into native considerations in order to obtain comprehensiveness of the native.

Alienation is the first condition that the diasporic encounters in the new land. This alienation is felt on various accounts with reasons entailing both internal as well as external ones. Internal reasons include rigidity of attitude and refusal to accept major changes while external factors pertain to the treatment meted out to the immigrants in the host country, the biggest challenge of all being racialism. Be it America the UK, in both these countries Indians have been time and again subject to racialism in varying degrees. Though the situation was louder earlier than it is now, there is largely a sense of non-belonging that diasporic individual experience. A poem by the diasporic Sadhu Binning entitled “No More Watno Dur” cited in In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts, elicits the estranged state of diasporics who have lived nameless lives and have lost all identities through leading mechanical routines. The diasporics move on huddled as sheep as evident in the lines below:

  We forgot the strawberry we picked........
  We forgot the crowded windowless trucks
  In which like chickens we were taken there........
They undergo discrimination, disappointment and there is pain of losing the hold of inheritance in their successive generation. Everything is in tatters as Binning writes further.

We forgot the stares that burned through our skins
The shattered moments
That came with the shattered windows……..

Engrossed in the process of earning livelihood. Binning writes that these people have forgone their “selves” and even before any realisation, they have been embodies in new identities. And these new identities are faceless as expressed in the lines below:

Multiplying one with twenty-five
Our pockets feel heavier
Changing our entire selves
And by the time get off the plane
We are members of another class…..

Thus Indian diaspora is constantly involved in expanding and redefining India and Indianness. It members are engaged in constant construction and deconstruction to root the self and when an irreconcilable cultural crisis is reached on account of failure to become part of a much larger alien culture, the misery only increases. The outsider facing plurality is caught in a double experience at all times-one of being weaned away from the homeland and other of the being placed in a new country and alienation stems from futile experimentation of letting go off the old identity and incorporating a new one but in diaspora the centre always stands problematised. A poem by Satendra Nandan from Lines Across Black Waters with a section called “Travelling Into A Far Country” highlights the extremity of pain resulting from a life in an alienated land. Initially the landscape is devoid of meaning and everything seems like a definite construction symbolising mechanisation of life. Nandan writes that “….Saddening the landscape/
An empty line to twenty-four rooms/ Each eight by twelve feet” The search for a better life in a new place results in landing in a hell. Life loses all meaning and one simply exists, detached or course, caught with detachment of course in a repetitive cycle of life:

Homeless I had come in search of paradise.
This house of hell was now all mine.
Survival is a life sentence,
Routine becomes a spiritual ritual…..
Cultural disparities shock the diasporic again and again as the individual is unable to acknowledge the uniqueness of adopted culture with a set of values of its own. And ultimately he laments, “God what a system……”

Entailing a life lived on the borders of marginality, the diaspora lacks centralisation and fixities. In an article entitled “The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures”, Bill Ashcroft writes of the alienated diaspora thus. “…The alienating process which initially served to relegate the postcolonial world to the ‘margin’ turned upon itself and acted to push-that world through, a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as non-centric, pluralistic, and multifarious”. The root foundation becomes the moot concern, as these people living on dual peripheries being the reconstruction of cultural assertions. Thus, unsettlement results.

Caught between tow worlds, two cultures and often languages, the expatriate negotiates a new space. Therefore, an anxious sense of dislocation is characteristic of this space. Coming to terms with the loss of homeland for indefinite and trying to locate the home in present circumstances leads to anxiety and helplessness. The individual, ways from the familiarity of his native surroundings is faced with that is the complete opposite of familiarity. For instance, Sujata Bhatt is a first generation diasporic poetess who still identifies Indianness as her true identity. Language for her is a mere physical mode of expressing. She does not identify it as voice of the inner being. Therefore, though rooted in Indianess, he writes in a foreign language and thus her writings reflect the predicament of duality or divideness as discussed earlier. These dual inflections in her writings explore the ideas of identity and the charting of locations, speaking largely of the root causes alienation outside.

STRATEGIES OF NEGOTIATION-

When theorising diaspora, focus must be laid on the usual strategies—that of assimilation, insulation, alienation, indifference, resistance, rejection, and the like—that have underlined Indian diaspora in its negotiation with both the memory of home and the outcome of globalisation. Thus all diasporic individual cannot be expected to respond to changed circumstances uniformly. The politics of negotiation determines the multi-layered spectrum of responses to the diasporic space, and varied parameters exist in order to study these negotiations.
Diasporic existence becomes an ambivalent situation leading to various possibilities such as finding both the homeland and the adopted land together as desirable or both as undesirable or any one of them as desired while the other is ignored or rather dislike all together. This defies the taken for granted notion that the homeland is always preferred over the host country. Since quite a few critics consider diaspora as an individual experience, therefore, there is a need to take individual situation of diasporics into consideration before making any sort of generalisations. And this process is replete with constant anxiety because of the multifarious alternatives associated with this state. These alternatives, which from the characteristic traits of diaspora, make it very complex.

It would be apt to take into consideration the fact that the Indian diasporics have never been able to totally slash their connection with Indianess even if relocation in new lands has been satisfactory. Bhabha while emphasising the role of diaspora for the homeland states that the experience of diaspora is one of the most significant sources of the most valuable lesion. This very diaspora gives us the psychopathological foundation of culture. Diaspora literature is a part of this process of relocating, assimilating, redefining and reconstructing. This literature makes for crucial reading in the strategies of negotiation as well. Thus when a writer’s own life and voice replace the recollected past of the embded home with the contemporary culture of the new home he attains some kind of global/transnational imaginary. In such a case, assimilation and affirmation rather than nostalgia become the focus in the writing. Also in the present technological environment. The remote homeland is clearly more accessible too and thus diasporic subjectivities may be more multiple and heterogeneous. For the writer of the diaspora then, homeland is not so spatially and temporally specific and the focus therefore is on a transcendence of national and cultural borders to attain what may be terms as truly multi-culturalism. This strategies/tools/ mediums of diasporic negotiation could be as follows:

Assimilation: The indentured labourers though labelled as slaved of the British were, however allowed to isolate themselves with the freedom to practice their own culture in the adopted lands, mainly Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific and later also their own religions. They were allowed to retain their Indianness in these foreign lands but then there was always a section of them that did not mind giving up its roots and dissolving all previous identity in order to assimilate into the new society. These diasporics have lives there for so long that Manas comments that “they have no living memory of India, and the principle relations that these
Indians have is, and performed must be, with members of other communities, namely Africans”. Indians are doing reasonably well in Trinidad where they are flourishing as businessmen and politician. Vinay Lal adds that these Indians humanised the landscape, tilled the soil, and put the food on tables: they are the great-unsung heroes and heroines of the diaspora. Despite the presence of a certain racial divide there, Indians could not be stopped from Indianising the Caribbean landscape through Indian cuisines and restaurants, elections, establishing domestic colonies and so on. The diasporics try to equate their position through reinvention of the motherland in modified form so as to not to disturb the equilibrium of the other society. And there are cases wherein this reinvention is more convenient than the inherited forms. He further adds that Indians by their very nature are adaptive and this makes it all the more easy for them to adjust to new cultures. Life seems to be the most normal and concerns of alienation and nativity seems to be missing. The themes covered in such cases revolve around relationships, family, love and other related issues.

A poem “For the mother of my love or for the love of my mother” by an Indian residing in Chicago depicts contentment in its highest form. The world is reflected as blissful and desirable as the poet claims that she is living a life of zest, love, strong ties, and romance with nature. There is no contradiction as the rules are hers and she simply treads on holding on to her own faith and inner strength and life seems right as expressed the lines below:

Loving arms and kind brown eyes
You welcome me with the loveliest smile.
Made me feel a part of you
Even though the bond was oh, so new….
Your special day, we pray for you
Brings everything you heart wants so true
joy, happiness and peace at heart
contentment within may never depart.

Such writers belong to the category of well-adjusted diasporics with reasonable amount of satisfaction. The native land does not have that strong a hold on the writer’s imagination and there is no sense of being away from where one belongs and neither there is a sense of having lost something.
Ghettoisation: According to Mishra, the old Indian diasporas were diasporas of exclusivity because they created relatively self-contained little Indians in the adopted loads. It is but natural that the members of a particular diasporic community are bound to bond based on certain consideration of association but in the Indian context, myths and legends too are quite important elements of alliance. As the historicity of the native land is secretly felt, Ramayana and Mahabharata come to play a major role in constructing the diasporic mindset and therefore such sources become important factors when diasporics attempt to express their unity outside India. These form part of the indefinite definition of India, which cannot be weeded out of the diasporic mind and are a source of strength, belongingness for first generation diasporics and a space of constant construction and deconstruction for the successive generations. Even after having spent so many years abroad they remain native at heart. This is the state wherein the immigrants is happy with the adopted land yet one does not give up his attachment with the native land and its reminders. The individual manages to live comfortably with two distinct cultures.

Sunil Kothari has made an interesting observation on the various aspects of Indian diaspora by taking under study a group of Indian immigrants located in different countries of the world who have established classical Indian dance forms as a platform to establish common ethnic identity. They are also using such platforms as a medium of passing on their native heritage to the successive generations and the results are satisfactory. Kothari terming it as an act of building a platform for binding Indian diasporics together, mentions that the popularity of Bharatnatyam abroad “has led to subtle shifts in meaning and context and a whole new sociology of the form is needed to grasp the complexity of its specificities. The diaspora of Indians who have settled abroad practising, performing and teaching classical dance forms have added to the complexity”.

Remembering: Then there is the other type of situation wherein the homeland retains a stronghold on the subconscious mind of the diasporic but at the same time one learns to attune himself to the new environment. In this situation, the diasporic sometimes realises his nativity all the more than he did when he was physically present in the homeland. The distance draws him even closer and the homeland is elevated to a higher pedestal. It is not a desa but a darsahana as Raja Rao mentions repeatedly in most of his writings: In the context of Indian diaspora, it is generally maintained that members of the older diaspora has stronger connections with the native
land. Even as they crossed boundaries the link was maintained and usually it became only stronger. India dominates the imagination at all times. The diasporics keep turning back to the homeland-its sacredness, rituals, culture, and thus adopt various families symbols to help them freeze the image of the homeland in their being. They carry with them these symbols of nativity in order to strengthen their own indigenisation in alien surroundings.

In “Travelling Into A Far Country” Stendra Nandan portrays the longing to return to the homeland as memories of the past mixed with cultural/traditional undertones backon. He writes:

…I began to hallucinate:

It was a joyous return
In the childhood courtyard
Cool and life giving mud walls…

Like Krishana with his playmates (Nandan, 312-17).

Even if the case is not as extreme, a certain amount of emotional attachment remains, as these expatriates never let go off their native identity as an emotional buffer. The Indian heritage is then looked upon as a haven in a seemingly alien culture. At the same time, there is struggle against the set norms of the society and attempt is made to create one’s own definitions. Strong images of the native land, when carried into the land of habitation, become all the stronger and this disparity leads to nostalgia. One becomes sensitive towards the land of roots as the efforts to successfully negotiate in the diasporic space fail.

Amitav Ghosh is a first generation diasporic. He is placed largely in the ‘third space’. His works mostly take their plots from the native source. The first novel The Circle of Reason is not only located in a small village in India but the English language itself is interspersed with the colloquial; the three sections are entitled “Satwa: Reason,” “Rajas: Passion” and Tamas: Death”. These titles signify the simultaneous presence of the native and the adopted. The second novel, The Shadow Lines, is autobiographical in nature while being hued with the theme of East meets West. This makes the diasporic expression more universal thematically, as Rushidie explains in Imaginary Homelands that a writer who is out of the homeland and cut off from his language feels the loss of the same in an intensified form. He is confronted with the conflict between his past and the present and this may enable him to speak properly and concretely on a subject of universal significance and appeal.
Rushdie despite being out of India, and visiting it rarely, can still reproduce the essence of Indian reality in his works. As one reads Salman Rushdie’s essay “Imaginary Homelands”, it is evident that Rushdie seems to be suffering from nostalgia and a sense of loss as he misses the Bombay city, his home. The present is definitely field as alien: “But the photograph tells me to invert this idea: it reminds me that it’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time” (Rushdie, 1997, 102-107). He feels that the homeland still has claims on him. Reality is in the past and the life outside at present but a fantasy. There is a desire to glorify the lost past, reclaim his history. But at the same time this reclaiming in the form of writing can only create imaginary homelands. In reality the anguishing gap remain. The past becomes inspirational and becomes a medium for the treatment of the present. Therefore the homeland created is a possibility of the reality. Strain has to be applied as one is trying to not let the outside reality of an alien world disrupt the imagination. But even then this imagination is fragmented, something gone forever.

Fragmentary picture for Rushdie is significant because when total recall is not possible these fragmentation become evocative of symbolism. He writes that the shards of memory in the form of remains make the mundane extraordinary and therefore they become all the more significant. India is ever in his imagination. It is an idea to be explored again and again and deconstruct and subsequently redefine. A.K. Ramanujan has also resorted a strong Indian aesthetics in his writings in both form and content. In A Flowering Three and Other Oral Tales From India, he brings to us the classics of Indian literature as well as devotional poetry. The Telegraph describes it as a poignant swansong. Ramanujan has taken pains to collect tales that belong to different regions of India, in their nearest originality with the usage of literal words (“Atte” the Kanad words for mother-in-law; “gindi” for studded cup) so as to render his works an essentially Indian flavour. In the “A Story and a Song”, there emerges the Hindu belief in transmigration/transformation of the soul while “The Kingdom of Foolishness” refers to all-important Hindu concept of the theory of Karma. In Folktales From India, Ramanujan gives untold stories representing the multiple and changing lives of Indian tales. He writes, “What you can truly say about India you can also say the exact opposite with equal truthfulness” (Ramanujan, 1992, intro.). All his worlds together are reflective of the great Indian tradition through their references to Sanskrit sources like Panchatantra, Pali Jatakas, Hindu or Jaina Puranas: animals, Gods, demons and so on. These writings are a form of expressing reverence
for India. Thus there are as many strategies of negotiation as there are different diasporics. These negotiations depend largely on the history behind diasporas as well as on the prevailing conditions of diasporic experience.

**RELATION OF INDIAN DIASPORA WITH INDIA**

India, Indianness and the relation of the Indian diaspora with the homeland and the adopted words largely feed the narratives of the Indian diaspora. On the one end we see feverish nostalgia, possessiveness about the Indian landscape, icons, myths and cultural ethos eliciting the sense of “distinctiveness” that builds a comfort zone, then there is also the other diaspora which brings us the confused anger on being unhinged from the native environment. In this case the diasporic becomes over-critical of his Indianness.

In the former case, there is an attempt not only protecting the native culture but also propagating it further. The diasporic belonging to this category chooses subjects and symbols that help him eulogies India in all its richness and inheritance. India becomes the land of goods, of traditions, values and is subsequently a source of pride. Every icon reminiscent of Indianness becomes grand. And a sense of Indian perfection is makes this diaspora blind to critical assessment of the realities of India. India is then the land of Ramayana, Gandhi and the freedom struggle, In the other case, nativity is at times blamed for making the diasporics victims of bigotry and maltreatment abroad. This then makes nativity more a source of exasperation rather than pride. Here the tenacious strings of emotional and cultural bonds fail. There is an over-critical attitude towards one’s “indianness”, as the only sources of strength in the alien world fails the diasporics. Be it political, cultural or the social fabric of India, it all comes under rigorous scrutiny. In their attitudes towards India we come across unpleasant and somewhat harsh description of India and its reality is approached from a totally a historical point of view. Every detail comes under scrutiny and often the diasporic visitor feels lost and even scared in the chaos of his own land. Learning of native reality comes at a price of dismantling of the previously held notions and reconstruction. Writer V.S. Naipaul belongs to this category. Naipaul was stunned by the reality of India, especially with the lack of vitality and richness in life that he expected of the vast Indian heritage, passed on him.
Makarand Paranjape (Paranjape, 167) comments that Rohinton Mistry who belonged to the class of immigrants that came directly from the subcontinent since 1960, does not suggest of nostalgic tones in his works. *A Fine Balance* and *Such A Long Journey*, Rather Mistry, according to him, is lamenting the tragedies and the lacking of India. Thus such literature, according to him. Becomes a legitimisation for leaving the homeland. Paranjape comments that such diaspora is actually a plea for the more receptive and assimilated treatment in the adopted lands.

In some cases, the diasporics try to maintain their dual identities by participating in native activities alongside their adopted roles. This is the category that has negotiated the two spaces more or less successfully and therefore even though India is referred to both in terms of its reality and the imagined, the idea is neither to lash at its reality not elevate the imagined. But rather there is a maintained approach. For instance, writer Anita Desai while teaching in Massachusetts is simultaneously a member of the Advisory Board for English in New Delhi.

That all kind of equations go characterising the relation that Indian diasporics share with India. Ranging from over-involvement to partial to complete renunciation. In all cases the relation is un-ending and the diasporics are constantly involved with the homeland either to reaffirm this Indianness or prove their disowning of the same.

**DIASPORA LITERATURE -**

Based on the broad spectrum of the global history of Indian diaspora, it is clear that to define its diaspora or any other diaspora for that matter is not merely a linguistic or physical task but one needs to include metaphoric, psychological, cultural and range of other parameters into consideration. Owing to the contradiction inherent in the diasporic discourse, the complexity of diaspora experience is intensified all the more.

Diasporics are in an constant flux owning to the complexities of life that they are surrounded with. There is a constant activity of adopting and discarding revolving around memory, return, strangeness, desire to integrate, transience, desire for permanence, a sense of belonging and embedding. Due to this they involve both the nations concerned in their complication whole and both these nations cannot but give due importance to the call of these diasporics as they contribute in a major way to the developmental and progressive activities of
both. In one scenario, own culture is pursued while giving due recognition to the culture and norms of the new society. This is an easy preposition with little possibilities of complexity of any sort. But then there is the other case when carrying one nation into another becomes enough reason for diaspora to be problematic and intense. This is all the more if the immigrants feel they have landed themselves in a position of no return.

The best medium of study and theorise this diversity is the literature penned down by the diasporics themselves, which is now an important voice in the globalised nature of Indian Literature, Edwin Thumboo states that diasporic literature reflects what the writer yearns for. And if this yearnings if for the homeland and what is symbolises along with the aspirations that the writer has for its future, then his works echo unquestionable reverence for the native space or at a more rational plane, There is concern for the motherland’s state and the path it should adopt for the times ahead. Literature thus medium for connecting to the native space-the richness of its history, culture and the present. Indian diasporic literature has significant readership all over the world. It becomes but necessary to analyse the picture of India as sketched by it. Due to the bi-fold aspect the diaspora, we encounter a multiplicity in the presentation of India in the diasporic writings – a sort of plurality of “Indianness”. Possibilities arise of analysing nativity as a glorious, mythical, mythical entity to a traditional junkyard.

A favourite subject that diaspora tend to cash in on is native politics. These political issues may be related to either the past including the colonial experience or to the contemporary situations. Again there are two possibilities; either the writer tries to narrate the reality or he recreates the same with interpretation that signify the analysis and scrutiny of the same. The diasporic literature speaks of new trends in writing as distinct from the conservative native writings. This literature enjoys greater degree of freedom from native constraints and therefore indulges in experimentation in all form—be it language, themes and the treatment of the subjects. From the revival of the traditional or even ancient Indian ways of written expression on one hand by writers such as Raja Rao and Ramanujan, there is also application of contemporary innovative writing in the works of young writers such as of Meena Alexander and Jhumpa Lahiri. New diaspora is basically self-validating with emphasis on diasporic experience while the earlier writing were engrossed in themes of nostalgia, uprootedness and reminiscing the ethic ways of life left behind.
However, some critics question as to how justified is the presentation of the imagined in the diaspora literature as these diasporics are not in touch with the reality of the homeland. Diasporic writers usually stand as individuals who see the native land as outsiders. But since diasporic literature mainly derives its inspiration from the native land hued by the experience of the writer himself in the adopted land, the themes explored in this literature become significant as Salman Rushdie mentions in his essay “Imaginary Homelands” (Rushdie, 1997, 102-07) that distance from the homeland provides whole new angles to enter the reality of the homeland.

Amitava Kumar has written an article on Salman Rushdie, questioning the homogeneity in Rushdie. He state that Rushdie is a fine example of the complex and significant diaspora that a writer from this space signified. He writes:

I agree that “writers like Rushdie” or “not like Rushdie” continue to be categories under which most hack prefer to slot Indian writers. But isn’t this a short-coming and shouldn’t we be critical of this habit? To begin with, Rushidie’s own writing is populated by diverse voices. His heterogeneous influences range widely from writers like Kipling to Desani to Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Gunter Grass. There are, in fact, many Rushdies. Should we not be more discriminating when we treat that name as a fixed highway sign on a giant board saying “Bombay” or “London” or “New York”?....... And don’t the writers who have emerged in Indi in the past two decades deserve more than what is given them when we treat them as clones? Yes, it is true that the writers who followed in the wake of Rushdie were inspired by his example, but it is important to take serious note of the different directions in which their work has gone. Their work, I believe, is a creative comment on Rushdie and his extraordinary output. Today, it is impossible to reads any new work of Rushdie without also bringing into the discussion the new works by those who are patronisingly regarded as his literary offspring.

A lot of diaspora literature stems from postcolonial experience, therefore knowledge of postcolonial literature can further aid in understanding the diversity of Indian diasporic literature. The following article summarises the main engagements of colonial literature: while the extent of colonial empires has indeed been vast, Post-Colonial literature is not simply an account of history’s great conquests. Instead, it is a discussion and dissection of the effects of colonialism: migration, slavery, oppression, resistance, representation, difference, and responses to dominating discourses. A worldwide phenomenon, Post-colonial literature will continue as long as imperialism exists be it cultural, economic, or militaristic. In the context of a heterogeneous
society, where the colonised often coexist with their formed colonisers, Post-Colonial writers attempt to reassign new ethnic and cultural meanings to marginalised group. Of course, the irony is that the majority of Post-Colonial literature is written in the language of the dominating culture, within borders determined by a government that has long since abandoned the colony. Still, Post-Colonial literature attempts to construct new identities against these outwardly imposed borders. It is not a literature of victimhood, but rather an assertion of power, a reclaiming of experience. In work by Jamaica Kincaid, Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe, and others, readers hear both cries of loss and proclamations of birth. The new culture that emerges is a hybrid that is neither pale mimicry of its conquerors, nor a complete return to the past. Post-Colonialists do, nonetheless, engage the past in careful examination. The past becomes a sites of purity, a source of strength for a people in need of a contemporary model. It is also a site of investigation, a point of reference that makes the cultural stakes clear. Achebe’s “Things Fall Apart,” for example, considers these conflicts, examining how existing tensions within indigenous tribes allowed European imperialists to take control. As the conflicts between ruler and subject, mainstream and marginalised, oppressors and oppressed are played out, the true calling of Post-Colonial literature becomes clear. Not only a celebration of the suppressed “other”, it is also a challenge to the dominant culture. In the end, Post-Colonial literature question out concept of established authority—perhaps leaving the mainstream more changed than the marginalised.