

A Glimpse of Diaspora in Indian English Literature

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Abstract

Diaspora is of Greek origin, it is employed to define the obligatory dislocation of certain group of people. Pursuit for self, homesickness for ancestors, feeling of guilt is continually existing in the psyche of writer. In a broad sense it is used to exhibit those who identify with a "homeland", but far away from it.

Keywords: Homesickness, colonial impact, nostalgia, migration, autobiographical elements

Diaspora is one of the most absorbed term in the literary world because around 25million Indian people live in abroad. This has established a resilient global community. Therefore we can say that India has got second position in the literary Diasporas world. It is very essential to responsive with the specific meaning of diaspora. This term shows displacement of community into another geographical and cultural county. It means diaspora is dislocation of tradition, culture and way of living life. There are few peculiar emotions which are connected to diaspora and diasporian literature: the feeling of detachment from their homeland, diasporans frankly talk about their homelands and they even speak in favour of good customs of their homeland. They have big proud of their original customs too.

The term 'Diaspora' is really perplexing and its writers are a kind of spokesperson of a migrant and a diplomat where they seriously try their level best to do justice to both. Being a migrant, they look for safety and security and as an ambassador they favour their aboriginal conventions and culture. In the works of Diaspora writers we observe the anxiety and rootlessness and the protagonist's trust to erect a self-identity and be something on their own on the foundation of intrinsic talent is prevailing in the writing of such creative thinking.

"Migration always implies change: the change involves the risk of losing one's identity. Whilst the migration recognize him/herself in his/her new image, the people around him/her do no accept his/her otherness. Therefore, s/he is compelled to face everyday life through a continuous oscillation between reality and dream" (Dwivedi 2)

It is very clear for a reader that diaspora means away from the land which is filled with fragrance and variations in style of living, behaviours, conventions and festivities are involved. The diasporians are unable to enjoy and feel the small joys and experiences of their homelands. The other essential source an ardent reader can notice is more of psychological nature, it means the term diaspora can be studied through psychological side too. Since last tenner Indian diaspora writers have become centre of attraction. Indian diaspora writing or immigrant writing subjugates the most valuable status between countries and cultures. It has great profit in writing diaspora which connects entire world. Diaspora writing has various peculiar features which involve identity, nostalgia, motherland, immigration and native land, multicultural background.

The literature of Indian diaspora covers extensive learning of literature as well as additional artistic texts of the Indian diaspora. This is vital share to Diasporic theme in general. The theme is related to pain, stress, Worries and identity. Diaspora motivates us to think deeply on the subject of 'migrant identity'. The diaspora writers have provided more and mors significance to literature by their great works which enabled and enriched English literature.

The emotions and experiences of being far away from their much love and more so esteemed land is directly or indirectly noticeable in the writing of the writers of Indian origin so far as Indian writing in English is involved. In the range of novels this covert emotion is more than evident in the writings of V.S.Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Meena Alexander, Amitav Kumar, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nairis, Anita Rau Badami, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth, Kiran Desai to name a few. It becomes very important here to examine some key works of such prominent writers.

Jhumpa Lahiri is one of the most celebrated diaspora writers. Her novels and short stories are the best way to observe diaspora in detail. She says there is exchange between migrants and their sacrifices. They acquired healthier life style, have plenty of facilities, wealth but for attaining all such luxuries in life they have lost their dignity and own identity.

Shashi Tharoor and Jhumpa Lahiri who are in the position of second generation Indian Diaspora writers have realistically revealed immigrants' lives in U.S. They are successful not only in exhibiting lives of first generation immigrants in U.S. but also second.

V.S.Naipaul is immensely known for his sad and pessimistic themes were awarded Noble Laureate. His .He has openly condemned the newly liberated countries and person's sense of individuality in *The Mimic Men*. Naipaul has attracted the attention of his readers on the issues of post-independence complications like impoverishment, caste system, deserted areas of hygiene and sequestration by society in his novel "Area of Darkness".

In *A House for Mr Biswas* Naipaul shows how an individual counterattack or defeats the obstruction and in immigration. In modern society we are also frustrated and psychologically disturbed.

The diaspora writers have expressed their feelings for native land. They talked about various issues of migration, rootlessness, racial exploitation, identity crisis. But on the other hand these writers are faithful when they present the positive side of their dislocation. They say we experience some bright side of being migrated. As a migrant they have great advantage of having a double angle of being able to knowledge several traditional manners. This benefit of migration assists diasporic Indians to deal with the problem of double identities.

Salman Rushdie is widely read for his *The Satanic Verses* in which he employed the technique of magic realism. By this technique he has approached the metaphor of migration. Rushdie is well known for his controversial works. In the midst of dispute and violence his *The Satanic Verses* was published. But this work was banned in many countries. Even the then Pakistani president announced against him death sentence. But we cannot deny his inventive subjects and his way of frank speaking on immigration and divine estrangement.

Vikram Seth is an Indian novelist and poet. He is widely recognised for his fiction *A Suitable Boy* which presents the post-independence situation. This novel has some special themes like financial and social problems in Indian society; a Hindu mother who desperately wants an appropriate son in law for her daughter. The novel achieved great success for its highlighted most striking issues like land rights, inter caste marriages and identity predicament. Some critics and reviewers find its resemblance with Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

Meena Alexander was well known poet who has been

admired for her poems internationally. She was an Indian poet, writer and scholar would live in Allahabad. She was brought up in India and Sudan. She has written various collections of poetry, literary memoirs and works of fictions, essays and literary criticism.

Her distinguished novel is *Nanpally Road*, published in 1999. It is moving and lyrical. This novel is remarkable because it truthfully presents contemporary India, a great struggle of woman to reduce together her past. The middle part of the novel is pathetic for it shows how the woman was gang raped by the police. After this heinous crime, people lose their temper and burn the police station. This middle part of the novel show the bitter reality of our modern India.

There is no doubt to say that colonization has great impact on our mind. Our way of thinking, attitude, behaviour, conduct and perhaps sensibilities all are not ours; but they are influenced by hybridity. V.S.Naipaul has very clearly explained to us Caribbean identity in which "roots" have been erased and new thoughts and opinions established. Even Salman Rushdie's *Shame* is an apt instance of Colonial impact.

It is rather exciting to know that every diasporic writer has personal feeling of disruption which becomes clear to us when we read/ see their interviews. In their interviews they have frankly revealed their homesickness.

Sandhya, the protagonist in the fiction *Manhattan Music* of Meena Alexander, is presented thus: 'She[Sandhya] kept returning to her childhood home, a house with a red-tiled roof and a sandy courtyard where the mulberry bloomed' (41).

Sandhya's return to her childhood home arrests one of the central themes in the Indian diasporic literature. Past memories of the 'native' country haunt the spaces of exilic writing.

The great affection and love for our native land does not vanish or fade even after being rather far and for quite a long time. This fact can be noticed in the international cricket matches or other sport events taken place abroad. We see NRI or people with Indian origin come excitedly to support India. They shout slogans and waves flags to boost Indian teams in spite of the fact that they have settled in abroad to earn their bread and butter. But without any hesitation and fear they support Indian players which are an evident of their homesickness and love for their original land.

Even in movies we can see the feelings of diaspora and Indianans in a very striking and poignant manner. To

quote a few names: Dharam Karam, DDLJ, Namastay London, Patiayala House, Veer Zara, etc.

A few Hindi songs capture the diasporic feelings and Indianness in a very unique and touching manner. The instances are obvious:

Hai preet jaha ki Reet sada main geet vaha k gata hoon, bharat ka rahanewala hoon bharat ki baat sonata hoon. (Dharam Karam)

Ae mere pyare vatan, Ae mere Bichede vatan, tujhpe dil kurban. (Kabuliwala).

There are some political instances also which witness diasporic feelings. For example Mr. Parvez Mushraff, the then president of Pakistan longed to visit his ancestral house in Punjab, India. On his visit to Pakistan by Mr. L.K. Advani, during the BJP regime, wished to see his ancestral place of stay.

These and various other events which compel us to muse over the diasporic subjects in them. There are large

numbers of diaspora writers who have presented various themes like migration, homesickness, colonial impact, identity in connection with diaspora literature. The diaspora writers have covertly and overtly expressed their homeland conventions and their attachment for homeland through their works. Hence we can say that diaspora literature is filled with personal emotions of writers. The term Diaspora has great significance which has contributed a lot in Indian English literature.

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