

# A General View of Indian Diaspora

K. Venkata Lakshmi, Research Scholar, K.L.E.F Deemed to be University. A.P

Dr. M. Sandra Carmel Sophia, Professor of English, K.L.E.F Deemed to be University. A.P.

**Abstract** - Indian diaspora has a history of about a hundred and fifty years extending over four generations of writers coming from a multi-lingual and mono-cultural platform. The period from 1990 to 2020 has seen the emergence of a huge body of immigrant writers trying to carve out their own milieu with its specific historicity. Indian Literature in English during the four generations, has contributed widely to a range of genres. The literary texts show a lot of scope in connection with theme and perspective, though there is not much innovation in technique and other aspects. There is a distinct contribution in various nuances and shades that a multi-cultural literary platform like Indian Diaspora inevitably offers.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, immigrant, writers, milieu, historicity, genres, themes.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The first efforts in Indo-Anglian Literature emerged in the nineteenth century with the most noteworthy contribution was made by the first Indo-Anglian novelist and poet who pioneered Indian writing in English and established an international reputation for herself. She is none other than Toru Dutt who made a mark in the literary landscape of Indian Poetry at the very age of 21. The author of two novels one in French and the other in English, a couple of collections of poems and several Bengali and French poems translated into English, Toru Dutt out beat her contemporaries who included Tagore (1861), Manmohan Ghose (1869), Aurobindo Ghosh (1872), and Prem Chand (1880). All these writers were polyglots who wrote in more than one language and their work has received international critical acclaim. Hence the widespread movement of people from one land to another particularly to foreign lands reveals how migration has influenced the Diaspora writers who have laid path for the progress of Indian English Literature in general and Diaspora Literature in specific.

## II. DIASPORA WRITERS-A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

The Writers of Indian Diaspora have been holding the focal point of interest of over the last few decades because of their remarkable contributions in terms of content and themes. Earning. Diasporic or immigrant writing involves search for identity, feeling of nostalgia for the lost culture or home, familial and marital relationships problems of being uprooted from the native land /culture, challenges of multiculturalism, etc. One undeniable fact about these writers was their genuine appreciation of western literature and culture. It has exerted a very strong influence on the writers. Hall states:

*“Diasporic identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are*

*subject to the conscious play of history, culture, and power.” (Questions of Cultural Identity,235).*

Multiculturalism as a vital aspect of Diaspora Writing dominates the writings of authors. The very feeling of being a stranger in the foreign land creates loss of home and thereby quest for an identity of diasporas. The idea of a home outside the native/motherland questions belongingness of the migrants. Coupled by the co-existence of multiple cultures, the Diasporas begin to question their very existence in a foreign country.

## III. INFLUENCES ON DIASPORIC LITERATURE

Of all the foreign rules in India only two have made their mark and influenced our culture is the Muslim rule which extended from 782 AD to 1700AD. As a result, a greater part of one community have become an integral part of Indian population and culture. They have brought a distinct and highly impressive blend to the culture of the subcontinent and become the hallmark of the ongoing social transformations. It has remained one of the best-developed and organized civilizations which has influenced many aspects of modern social and cultural life all over the world.

After independence, there is a marked change in the attitude, tone, and literary ambience of the Indian Diaspora. India as a nation was aroused by a newfound energy, a vibrant wave of new hope and vision – and for the first time in many centuries the Indian subcontinent felt young and there was a surge of new thoughts and emotions. This positive outlook reflected in all aspects like politics, civic improvements, and cultural affairs.

The period from 1947 to 1965 was replete with optimism and a lively spring of creative energy and an efflorescence of years of suppressed desire for the taste and essence of nativity. The euphoria of huge feeling of new-earned freedom lasted clearly for two decades and spread to all sections of the society. However, the dream did not last too

long. The class differences and unequal and unfair distribution of opportunities and natural resources were causing disdain and frustration which were brewing unnoticed. These gradually encouraged a political polarization and gave birth to the socialist and communist movements which over a period culminated in the rise of the Naxalite movement that pitched the moneyed classes and the rising bourgeoisie against the underprivileged. This confrontation soon precipitated into social unrest. A much disillusioned and disheartened people were forced to search for new opportunities and the mismatch between the aspirants and the openings created immense tension and oppression.

### **Emergence of Women Writers**

Several women writers have voiced their concerns and they constituted a major portion of Indian writing in English. Writers like Anita Desai, Sashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, more recently Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jhumpa Lahiri produced a series of works that concentrated on the struggles and travails experienced by women in the relatively tradition-bound post-colonial period. They set in motion certain economic policies that had a baffling effect on the class structure and redefined the size and potential of an emerging middle-class intelligentsia. Some of the Indian diaspora women writers who made inexplicable contribution to Diaspora Literature are-

Bharati Mukherjee was an Indo-American writer born in Kolkata, but she moved to University of California, Berkeley where she penned short stories and fiction. She considers herself an American writer marked by violent expression of split self. Her writings are not just transference of textual spaces, but she creates a counter-discourse that is geographical, spatial, and differential. Mukherjee makes it clear in her works that by assimilating new culture, and imbibing the qualities of adjustment, the immigrants can conquer the agony of exclusion and alienation.

Meena Alexander is a versatile writer and lauded poet from Allahabad. She had diasporic experiences of living in India and Sudan and her works are marked by the features of uprooting, exile, migrant memories, separation, sense of loss, etc.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is another esteemed novelist from India. The central focus in her writings is the experiences of South Asian Immigrant and her works portray India and the United States as important for survival. Her fiction has been translated into many languages.

Anita Rau Badami is domiciled in Odisha, India, but at present living in Canada. Badami has engraved a unique position among contemporary writers of Indian Diaspora. The central motifs of her writings are tensions in the family,

the generation gap, battle between modernity and tradition, and the cultural gap that emerges when Indians move to Canada. Badami highlights the significance of values such as love, dignity, composed positive attitudes, and the need for understanding life with all its ups and downs.

Shauna Singh Baldwin is an Indo-Canadian American novelist who developed the themes of cultural exchange and exile, involving a variety of narrative strategies. For her life is an exploration of alternative modes of adjustment. For Baldwin, writing is an act of self-education and self-exploration. To Baldwin, the voices from within add to the richness and diversity of culture in her works.

Anita Nair is an Indian English author born in Kerala, India. Her works project the conditions of women in a male chauvinistic society. She expresses her stories with solidarity, and humour.

### **Distinct Features of Women Diaspora writings**

The women diaspora authors have been contributing tremendously to diaspora literature and their works are termed as very strong in both content and form. The women diaspora writers have focussed on the range of reasons-economic, social, political, and other circumstances-responsible for large scale migration to distant lands, and this eventually determined their writing which today embodies their struggles and challenges. Their writing is marked by a treatment of subject matter relating to women and unique styles in novels and short stories which have gone beyond the realm of patriarchal writings.

Their works have specifically centred on issues and concerns pertaining to women across the globe women and define the borders of ethnicity, community, class, and race. The distinct writing style in their works exhibits a new literary genre and diasporic concept which has been making them remarkable with their male counterparts. This has helped women diaspora authors to be showered with global recognition. The autobiographical elements in their works have added more colour and substance to Diaspora Literature. Their works are representations of their voice against all kinds of hegemonies-child marriage, gender injustice, dowry, and widowhood. The vision in their fiction is to raise the status of women to a higher plane of living. By displaying the real status of women in their respective societies, the diaspora women writers highlight the angst and psyche of women. Hence it is inevitable that there is a dire necessity to speak or write about Diaspora women writers as they possess scholarship, creativity and novelty of thought to express in written form of literature and this will eventually aid both men and women to re-examine and re-evaluate their gender identities to reassess and reconsider their futures.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

The works of Diaspora writers have given them the credit of being pioneers in establishing the tenets and scope for an

emerging diasporic ambience. The women writers have explored new areas of cultural sensitivity which makes them stand apart from most other writers of their generation. Women writers have supplemented the diaspora writings with their rich and colourful backdrop to project to the world the tale of women's resilience and adaptability. The strength of diasporic writing lies in the pain that oscillates between "tradition and modernity, past and present, or peripheries and cosmopolitan life," (Ponzanesi, 2004, p.12). The shared experiences of culture, tradition, and heritage common to their specific ethnic group of these writers is realistic and reliable as their works provide insight to the readers in creating awareness to women about their freedom and rights.

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