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**The Identity Crisis in Indian Women Diaspora Writing****Dr. Pankaj D. More**Assistant Professor
Department of English,
Late Dattatraya Pusadkar Arts College,
Nandgaon Peth, Dist. Amravati**Abstract**

Diasporic literature focuses mainly on themes like discrimination, cultural shock and reverses cultural shock, problems in adjustment and assimilation, Orientalism, identity crisis, alienation and displacement, dilemma, depression, hybridity and generation gap. Immigrants who caught up between the native land and the adopted land have to face the problem of identity. They have a sense of dislocation and separation. Immigration is a process that involves uprooting and replanting. Indian Diasporic women writers have raised different issues and aspects of immigrant's lives. They raised their voices for the rights of migrated Indian women and highlight their sufferings faced in abroad. This paper throws light on identity issues through the mouth of the protagonist who gets success in bringing about social and cultural change by presenting her condition in the society. The problem of identity is associated with the human sense of belonging. Thus an exploration of a woman's identity is a recurring theme of Indian Diaspora women writers.

Keywords: *displacement, dilemma, immigration, protagonist, exploration***Introduction**

Migration has become a universal phenomenon in the current world. Immigrants, the people who come to live permanently in a foreign land play a significant role in this process. A diaspora is the group of people who are living away from their original homeland and share common experiences. Diasporic literature is generally referred to the literary works done by

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immigrants. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin in their postcolonial studies, define 'diaspora' as 'the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions'. In the universal Diasporic literature. Diasporic Indian English literature has gained much credits during the last few decades. There is a significant place for Diasporic Indian English fiction in portraying mainly about Indian diaspora in a wide span. Inspired by the vast spread of migration, Diasporic literature gained prominence in universal literature in a backdrop of post-colonial context, simultaneously developing with post-colonial literature. (Ashcroft)

The salient characteristic of Diasporic literature is that it is not based on any theory or philosophy but on the life experiences of immigrants. It creates emotional heaven to its diaspora by discussing their own physical and emotional conflicts. Diasporic literature focuses mainly on themes like discrimination, cultural shock and reverses cultural shock, problems in adjustment and assimilation, Orientalism, identity crisis, alienation and displacement, dilemma, depression, hybridity and generation gap. In the early times, emigrants were more or less illiterate. Their illiteracy was the reason of their nostalgia. The outer migration where the whole tribe moved away creates racial, cultural and linguistic confusion. This becomes a great hurdle in the formation of a national culture. Immigrants who caught up between the native land and the adopted land have to face the problem of identity. They have a sense of dislocation and separation. Immigration is a process that involves uprooting and replanting. So they have a feeling of rootlessness. The major quest in an immigrant's life is a search for roots. The notion of in-betweenness fuels a desire in the immigrants for a place to call their own. This is the main reason for the preoccupation with home in an immigrant. Home becomes for an immigrant 'a mythic place of desire – a place of no return'. (McLeod)

Today, migration and immigration has become a famous phenomenon among Indians as well. In addition, many people are aware of cultural diversity and migration as a result of

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globalization and technical development. English education in India which commenced during the colonial period and continued through the post colonial India has now become eminent among the majority of Indians. Thus the Diasporic Indian English literature is significant in conveying the experiences and mentalities of Indian diaspora to the readers of English Literature. There are two types of Indian immigrants portrayed in Diasporic Indian English literature: Indians who immigrated from India to countries like Mauritius, Surinam and Fiji as labourers to work in sugar plantations during the colonial era and Indian who immigrated to western and middle-east countries in search of a better standard of life. In other words Indian diaspora can be classified into two kinds. (Hirimuthugoda)

1. Forced Migration to Africa, Fiji in the eighteen or nineteenth century.
2. Voluntary Migration to the United States, United Kingdom, France or other European countries for professional or academic purposes.

The writing of Diasporic Indian has attained very high standards as literature in all its forms. Associations and gatherings of Diasporic Indian English writers worldwide create many opportunities to discuss review and improve their literary works. This literature is flourished with the common experiences of Indian diaspora such as problems of adjustment, discrimination, identity crisis, hybridity, nostalgia and alienation.

Makarand Paranjape differentiates two distinct phases of diaspora as the Visitor Diaspora and Settler Diaspora. The Visitor Diaspora consisted of disprivileged and subaltern classes. As an earlier time, the return to homeland was next to impossible due to lack of proper means of transportation, economic deficiency and great distances. V. S. Naipaul represents to this Visitor diaspora. He remarkably portrays the search for the roots in his novel 'A House for Mr. Biswas'. The Settler Diaspora is the result of man's choice and the inclination towards the material gains and professional interests. Salman Rushdie is the representative of this diaspora. His novel 'Midnight Children' is the most popular in the world. Thus Diasporic Indian writers can be grouped into two distinct classes. One class (First Generation)

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comprises those who have lived a considerable period of time in their motherland and now are trying to adapt into new contexts after immigration. The other class (Second Generation) comprises those who have been bred since childhood outside India. It means that they represent the descendants of first generation immigrants. Kamala Markandaya, Amitav Ghosh, Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Vikram Seth, Meena Alexander, Sunetra Gupta, Vikram Chandra, Hari Kunzru, Sameena Ali, Kalyan Rai, Raja Rao, Anurag Mathur are some of the prominent writers of Diasporic Indian English literature. (Paranjape)

Among these writers the female Indian writers has more subtlety and sensibility in their portrayal of Indian immigrants in their fiction. They have contributed immensely in the growth of Indian English literature. Women writers of the Indian diaspora too have carved a niche for themselves. They include writers like Kamala Markandaya, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukerjee, Anita Rao Badami, Gita Mehta, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc. who have made place in the world literature today. It is much important to note that most of the women writers of Indian English literature actually lived abroad. Indian Diasporic women writers have raised different issues and aspects of immigrant's lives. They raised their voices for the rights of migrated Indian women and highlight their sufferings faced in abroad. This paper throws light on identity issues through the mouth of the protagonist who gets success in bringing about social and cultural change by presenting her condition in the society.

Identity becomes a core issue in any exploration of diaspora, particularly diasporic identity that is made of various factors and sub-factors. This Diasporic identity is multi-level. It is also based on the history or conditions leading to migration. This experience of dislocation is based on many factors like globalization, the reasons of shifting and approach of the host country towards the Diasporic community. There are other factors like dress, language and social-cultural environment that deepen the problem of identity after migration takes place. Racialism and discrimination are the important problems faced by migrants. The uprooted

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immigrants faced varied situations, problems of rejection and acceptance. The problem of identity is associated with the human sense of belonging. Thus an exploration of a woman's identity is a recurring theme of Indian diaspora women writers. They portray the predicament, joys and sorrows and mainly the issue of identity of men and women of Indian Diaspora in the alien land. They view women from a women's point of view. Through the images of immigrated women they have successfully achieved equality and defied patriarchal norms.

Kamala Markandaya is considered to be among the first few Diasporic female Indian writers. She was born in Maisoor in 1942 and later immigrated to England. Her novels offer a sensitive picture of the theme of east-west encounter and identity crisis. Her novel 'The Nowhere Man' (1972) deals with the identity of a male protagonist Srinivas. He is oppressed by the discrimination even after living about thirty years in England. He lives in dilemma as he can neither accept Indian nor England as his homeland. One of the most prolific writers of the Indian diaspora literature, Anita Desai is a veteran in the writing field. She is one of the first Indian women who took up writing as a serious business. She was born in 1937 in Dehradun and immigrated to England and America respectively. Her novel 'Bye Bye Black Bird' (1971) portrays the immigrants who are in search of their identity in another land.

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the famous Diasporic Indian female writers who was born in 1940 in Kolkata and later immigrated to America. She has spent much of her career exploring issues involving immigration and identity with a particular focus on the United States and Canada. Her novel 'Wife' (1975) depicts the frustrated middle class Bengali wife Dimple Das Gupta in New York. The novel is a classic example of the study of the theme of identity crisis. We witness the transformation of a modest, conventional Indian wife to the murderer of her husband. Her fantasies about a high standard of life in America catastrophically shatter after the immigration. She becomes the victim of mental trauma which leads her to commit murder. In contrast to her novel 'Wife', the naive, dependent female protagonist of novel

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'Jasmine' wisely uplifts herself to be an independent, brave woman after the conflicts she faced in an unfamiliar context. The writer discusses here the life of Jyoti, the protagonist of the novel. Later her husband changed her name. He called her Jasmine instead of Jyoti. Changing anyone's name means changing her identity. She experiences not only physical but mental violence. This influences her life and forces her to reborn as a different person. (KulKarni)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the most significant woman writers of Indian diaspora literature. She brilliantly portrays femininity in its vivacity. Born in Kolkata in 1956, she immigrated to America and came into spotlight as a female writer. Her female protagonists are memorable and real representations of Diasporic Indian women. Her award winning novel 'The Mistress of Spices' (1997) portrays an Indian girl Tilo who works in spice shop in Oakland, America and helps other immigrants to resolve their problems with the magic of her spices. Divakaruni's women characters represent vivid identities of Diasporic life like marginalized, rebellious, docile, traditional and modern in all her novels. She has flourished her novels with the elements of magic realism. Her 'Sister of My Heart' (1999), 'Arranged Marriage' (1995) and 'One Amazing Thing' (2010) all deal with these different identities.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a second generation Indian American who was born in London in 1967. Her parents were immigrants from the state of West Bengal, India. Her first novel 'The Namesake' (2004) is considered to be one of the best fiction written about immigrant life. The novel later adapted to a movie version by director producer Mira Nair in 2006. The movie starred Irfan and Tabbu gained much attention worldwide. In this novel Lahiri has successfully engaged aspects like the generational gap between the first and second generation immigrants, conflict of east-west beliefs, cultural displacement, nostalgia, loss of identity and despair.

Kiran Desai is one of the most celebrated writers in Diasporic Indian English literature. She was born in Chandigarh in 1971. She immigrated to England and then to America with her

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mother and noted writer Anita Desai, who inspired her towards literature. Her novel 'The Inheritance of The Loss' won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. In this novel she subtly portrays the life struggles of Indian diaspora as well as the aspects of globalization, racial intolerance, terrorism and multi-cultural societies.

Conclusion

It is appropriate to say that Diasporic Indian English fiction is an important genre depicting the experiences and mentalities of Indian diaspora in a broad sense. Being the representatives of the Indian diaspora, Diasporic Indian female writers are successful in portraying of enduring and self-sacrificing female protagonists who search for their true identity. The works of these writers have a sense of universal experience of immigration. These writers have given expression to their creative urge and have brought credit to Indian English Fiction as a distinctive force.

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