

Aspects and Ultimate Goal of Indian Women Writers in Diasporic Literature

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Abstract

Recent Indian women writers of Indian Writing in English deal with liberty for women, voice against child marriage, suppression of women in the patriarchal society, etc. The works of Indian diasporic writers' style, literary form and technique attract the readers. Their writings cover all parts of the world who struggle because of nostalgia, rootlessness, adaptation, and loss of identity. Diaspora writers such as Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Desai, Meera Syal etc. write about the inner conflict of South Asian immigrant women who suffer because of discrimination, cultural shock, identity crisis, alienation, displacement, depression, hybridity etc. during their stay in the alien land. They make their voice heard around the world from the feministic point of view of the predicament of immigrant women protagonists. Their unique literary style and autobiographical elements helped them to achieve global recognition in the literary field. These writers have achieved International repute for their unique writing style and pattern. They tried their best to capture the mind of immigrant South Asian women and the power of assimilation into the new soil.

Keywords: Indian Diaspora women writers, cultural displacement, identity crisis, feminism, hybridity.

Feminism is the term that has been used by the women novelists who for women's liberty and self-identity. Indian Writing in English novels of diaspora women writers reflect on the reality that in the present age women have realized that they are not helpless and are not

dependent. Indian women writers explore the feminine subjectivity and apply the theme that ranges from childhood to complete womanhood. Through their novels they spread the concept of feminism and women empowerment.

Diaspora is a word that is referred to any community of particular nation living outside its own country. More than 20 million people of Indian origin have spread across the world in more than hundred and ten countries. Most of this dislocation is by choice and exile is not necessarily something that creates torment. However, there emerge challenges, aspirations and anxieties in people who migrate to a new land because of the new environment and the cultural barriers they face in the alien country. Especially the first generation immigrants always have suffered from a sense of nostalgia and they hold fast their cultural, religious and linguistic identity. Therefore, to uphold their identity is their main concern. Hybridization and marginalization are major concerns to diasporic women writers.

The experience of acculturation involves stress, anxiety, depression and feelings of marginality. Immigrants often suffer from discrimination and prejudices from the outer world which troubles their mind psychologically. They become targets of prejudice and discrimination on account of various psychological factors that affect them in various ways that are unimaginable. These include group favoritism towards one's group; competition for positive social identity; social influences from schools, parents, peer groups etc., social structural differences like class differences; displaced hostility, frustration from a powerful body to the powerless minority; dominating personality; differences in socio-cultural norms etc.

In spite of the modern laws, the discrimination and racial prejudices are still prevalent in the alien society which is unbearable for the newcomers to adapt. Media also play a negative role in maddening biases against minorities by giving biased coverage about the minority groups.

An important medium through which negative impression about the minorities can be reduced is literature. Diaspora Writings is the literature of the migrants expressing their experiences and sense of displacement and loss of social constructs like nation, ethnicity, race, culture, language etc. The Diasporas lose the unique bond among members of the same race, nation and ethnic group share. They experience social isolation, culture shock, mental stress and homesickness during their migration.

A wide variety of women writers have emerged during 1970s. With their unique writing style, they have evolved out a literary genre and diasporic concept which made them famous among other writers. The themes and their inimitable writing style helped them to achieve international status and universal recognition. Many women writers have written on the problems women faced from childhood to complete womanhood and a few writers have added the

autobiographical elements as the basis of their writing. Through their writings, they raised their voice against child marriage, equality, dowry and widowhood in the earlier days. The motto of their writings is to uplift the status of women in the Indian society. All the Indian women writers focus on the contemporary social situations which exist in the society. Their writings mainly exhibit and explore the real status of women in Indian society. Predominantly, after the emergence of the diasporic women writers, the inner turmoil and sufferings of women's psyche are more clearly understood by everyone.

Prominent writers such as Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni share experience of the Indian culture, tradition and heritage common in their specific Indian ethnic group. The creative writing of these writers is realistic and reliable. These writers have provided insight to the readers and created awareness and spirit to women about freedom of thought and action.

Divakaruni's novels focus mainly on women's liberation and also insist on the importance of women education which supports them to stand boldly in all circumstances. It also discusses on the mutual help among the women who strive for their life and identity. Her novels speak on the various aspects of women ie women in love, women in family and society, women in the alien soil, their troubles and adaptation and their bravado of survival. Her novels realistically showed the cross cultural experiences of womanhood and their assimilation, their struggle between the two worlds and culture.

Lahiri's novel discusses on the various aspects of women who encounter different problems in the alien land and the process of acculturation in the alien soil. Women survival of native culture, longing for the homeland, their boldness to fit into the alien society is the major theme in her novel.

All the novels of Anita Desai present the predicament of married women who suffers endless trial and tribulations in the society. Her novels focus on the complexity of human relationships and human condition. The central point in her fictional world is man woman relationship and the theme of sex and marriage, their alienation from the society. Her women protagonists live on their own way, independent and live in fantasy world.

An emerging important goal of Diaspora Indian Women writers seems to be to go beyond the label of Diaspora Writers to get the universal acclamation as Creative Literary Writers, whose works are universally relevant, irrespective of ethnic or other differences of the background of their protagonists and story content and method of narration. For example, even though Bharati Mukherjee's writings contribute more about South Asian immigrant women problems and the transformation of women in the new alien soil, she also rejects the idea of

being called an immigrant writer. She likes to be known as ‘mainstream American writer’. She has moved from aloofness of expatriation to the exuberance of immigration.

Mukherjee’s personal experiences are depicted in her novels which cover India, Canada and the United States, and her novels focus mainly on the theme of dislocation, alienation and assimilation in the new milieu. Most of her women protagonists move away from their cultural environment to an alien land and try to adapt to the new environment with lot of struggles in their life. They try to take control over their destiny by crossing cultural boundaries. They are more adoptable, survivor and ready to face the challenges and hardships in their life.

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