



Bharati Mukherjee: A Writer of Indian Diaspora

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Abstract

Diaspora can occur spontaneously or as a result of other events. A catastrophe, expulsion, or forced relocation away from war and persecution are all possible. Additionally, dispersal can be triggered by both coercion and choice. Diasporas can arise in response to both cumulative and ad hoc crises. Numerous people travel to host countries in order to earn money, study, or work, get married or other reasons, frequently in the midst of a great deal of conflict. This is the reason for the diaspora's diversity. All cultural interests, tastes, cuisines, music, sports, and poetry are comparable. The history of the world has played a critical part in the history of migration and cross-border living.

Bharati Mukherjee is an established Indian diasporic writer who has placed herself among the mainstream American writers. Being of Indian origin, she presents Indians as protagonists in her fiction. Her novels generally narrate stories about Indian immigrants who struggle to settle in an alien country. Mukherjee is a "once-diasporic," or "ideal immigrant," who is "changing her own self." While it is true that the immigrant has a positive perspective of the country in which he lives, his attitude is conflicted and he lives as a "split self." The modern Indian diaspora is a significant element of global culture and wields considerable influence. The diaspora culture is also gaining prominence on the Indian subcontinent. This is unmistakably true in terms of its material culture. It has become the benchmark for everything good in large cities.

Key words: diaspora, migration, people, culture, travel, immigrant.

Introduction

Using the term "diaspora" to talk about writers who left their home country either forcibly or voluntarily is a new thing in the 21st century. It's used to talk about how these writers wrote about things like nostalgia and alienation and how they also wrote about things like multiculturalism and how they looked at British literature in a new way. Literature, history, geography, culture, and so on are all parts of this field. 'Diaspora' is a term that is becoming more and more popular. It means people from any country or a group of people moving away from their home country. They move from their home country to a country that is free because they want "work, research, and freedom." This makes them "an ambassador and a refugee" in the new



country. Culture is defined as "one shared culture, a kind of collective "one true self," buried within the many other more surface or artificially imposed "selves" that people who share a similar history and ancestral origins have in common. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* by Stuart Hall is about "the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes that make us one people," or the sense of "oneness," as he points out in his book. These migrants show a world that is both geographically and culturally dislocated. As a result of this, there is a conflict of culture called biculturalism and multiculturalism that happens when two different cultures don't get along. If you're an emigrant or an exile, you feel like you've lost something. You want to get back to where you came from, no matter how much salt you'll turn into. Our physical separation from India almost always makes it impossible for us to get back all of the money and things that were taken away from us when we were away. In short, we will make up imaginary cities and villages, not real cities and villages, but imaginary homelands, imaginary India's of our minds, which we will build.

Historical Background

Historically, the term diaspora was used mostly to refer to the dispersion of Jews from their home country. It also meant the other two classical or traditional diasporas, like Armenians and Greeks. William Safran said (in *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Home and Return* 83-84) that, "In this case, diaspora was used to describe the exile of the Jews from the Holy Land and their spread across many parts of the world". Toloyan talks about classical and traditional diasporas. He says that "a diaspora was thought of as a social formation spawned by catastrophic violence or, at the very least, by coerced expulsion from a homeland." Next came colonisation in other nations and among foreign host communities, and finally generations of survival as a distinct community that fought hard to maintain or develop new identities that preserved its distinction from other groups were the culmination. However, today it is different. The term doesn't just refer to groups like the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians. It also refers to groups like voluntary migrations, political uprooting and moving of populations, global communication, and transportation.

The word 'diaspora' is now used to refer to people who have been forced out of their homes because of politics, people who live in other countries, and people who are from different ethnic and racial groups. As the term has spread over time, its meaning has been changed to fit the different intellectual, cultural, and political agendas it has been used for. There are many Indians living in the United States. They come from "half a dozen religions...seven different regions of India...nearly a dozen castes." They spread out their roots in "several soils, drawing nourishment from one when the rest dry up." During the journey from home to the world, Homi Bhabha



thinks about how people from different cultures come together in places like ghettos and cafes in cities. He calls these "gatherings of exiles, emigrants, and refugees." They are in a process called "disintegration," and their search for a centre is hampered by a diasporic space that is not the centre but the land of the margins, which have pushed their home cultures to the outside. The West, which is still the place where people are recognised and judged, is still the place where these people go. In the words of Salman Rushdie: "I've been an immigrant most of my life. I started off being an immigrant from India into England, then from England into New York. The foreign correspondents and journalists who write for the Special Granta issue have focused on India, with other contributors from the West like Nirad Chaudhuri and Ved Mehta and from India like R.K. Narayan, UrbashiButalia, and Mark Tully. The Special Granta issue also includes work from Indian writers like R.K. Narayan. They have made a big difference, which makes their voice a little more representative of India. V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, and Amitav Ghosh are just a few of the best English-language writers from India who have lived outside of the country. Salman Rushdie, Naipaul, and Bissoondath are all diaspora writers.

Indian Diaspora and Bharati Mukherjee

Indian writer Bharati Mukherjee was born to a Bengali Brahmin family in the city of Calcutta, where she lived. She married a friend from Canada, Clark Blaise, who became a journalist and a professor at the University of Iowa in 1963 after they met at the same university. People who have moved away from their home country write books about them. This is how it works: She lived in Canada from 1966 to 1980, and even though she was born in India, it's still hard for her to forget who she is. She says it's like "cloaking myself in my own Brahminical elegance."

The Indians of today have been able to connect with their family members all over the world to build their local, international, formal, and informal networks, so they can help each other in many ways. People's networks are made up of a lot of different things. They make regular phone calls and visits, write letters and send remittances, use the internet, send and receive videos of family events, and more. The New Diaspora has a strong relationship with family and friends in India, but the majority of the Old Diaspora hasn't been in touch with the country in a long time. In the older times, people became "Jahaji bhai" during their long journey by ship to far-off places, which made them close because they were on the same boat. Indenture labour was a new form of slavery that the British colonialists came up with. The working and living conditions under the indenture system were shocking and disgusting. In fact, they were so bad that Indians who were under the indenture system had an irreversible impact on many parts of their social and cultural lives. Still, they were able to keep some of their culture alive even though there were



many bad things going on. Indo-Fijian Indians and subcontinental Indians had a social distance that could be seen because of changes in the culture.

They didn't go back to India after the indentured system was abolished, so they lost all of their personal links to India. The Indo-Fijians were separated by two oceans from their homeland, but even though they kept religious and cultural affiliations, they didn't use them in their daily lives. The Indian diaspora communities that were formed during the colonial era were not allowed to see even their own family members who worked on different plantations, let alone the transportation and communication tools that were available at the time. On the other side, post-colonial emigrants benefited by not only being professionally trained, middle class, and Anglophone Indians, but also from having enough money to frequently visit and connect with their home land. Travel, transportation, communication, information, and the Internet have made a huge difference in the growth of transnational networks and virtual communities. As time and space get smaller, the local comes back to life in a global context. It also causes people to feel a range of emotions, including fear, nostalgia, anger, exile and trauma, as well as the need to adapt and connect with people around the world, on the one hand, and the desire to connect with other people from all over the world, on the other. This has an effect on the next generation because of the stories people tell each other and their parents in the family and in their communities.

With a population of about twenty million people, Indian diasporas are making a big difference in the countries where they live. Entrepreneurs, labourers, instructors and researchers, innovators, doctors, attorneys, engineers, managers, and even political leaders are among those who fall under this category. India is proud of each and every member of the Indian Diaspora who has maintained his or her Indianness throughout their lives. An Indian who lives outside of India is a winner in his own way, and as he does well, India too does well. All members of the Indian Diaspora have one thing in common: they were born in India, they know their cultural heritage, and they have a strong desire to return to India.

India has been home to people from all over the world for a long time, and they have always been able to adapt to their culture, language, economic, and social status naturally. This has made it easier for Indians to get along with people from other countries and cultures. Indians have brought with them a long history of adaptability to the countries where they have lived. Unique to Indian Diaspora, this adaptability is the most important thing that helped the Indian Diaspora spread across 110 countries of the world.

Today, the Indian diaspora is more prosperous than before and its involvement in India's development is increasing.



The New Pioneers: Bharati Mukherjee

This paper briefly discusses the various stages of Bharti Mukherjee's life, from expatriation to immigration and her literary career, which culminated in the publication of *Jasmine* (1989) and *Desirable Daughters* (1990). These two novels have been written from the perspective of the Indian diaspora. Immigration, as contrast to colonisation, is a widespread movement of individuals or families that do not constitute a coherent whole or relationship. It is mostly a peaceful movement in which inhabitants of a foreign country are granted unrestricted access to a modern state with which they come to terms on their own.

Her two novels and a memoir, *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, co-written with Blaise, were released during that time period. Her published writings, such as *An Invisible Woman*, and short stories, which she eventually incorporated in *Darkness*, criticised this discouraging approach. Mukherjee's literary model is V.S. Naipaul, a Caribbean novelist with an Indian Brahminic heritage and a method of dealing with themes of native values and Western ideology that many post-colonial critics find intriguing. Both writers write about immigrant identity.

Mukherjee's depiction of diaspora is an emancipatory story about how to change yourself. She emphasises how her characters have changed for the better as a result of immigration in her work. She gives her characters a power that makes them strong and helps them get through the changes in space, time, and culture that happen in her stories. They go through a process called assimilation, where different cultures and ethnic groups come together to form a new culture. This makes them true pioneers in the truest sense of the word.

Bharati Mukherjee's Selected Novels

In the novels of Bharati Mukherjee, all her women characters are women on the periphery of society in which they have chosen to spend their lives; they are all immigrants and new ones at that. Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* emphasizes the need to reinvent and redefine the notion of 'home' and the notion of 'identity' from an immigrant's perspective. When it came to Bharati Mukherjee's mother, she was a quiet but strong person in the lives of the girls. As a child, Bharti Mukherjee lived in a very close-knit family (*Days*, 228).

Bharati Mukherjee's second novel, *Wife* (1975), was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. It looks at a more complicated side of the theme of immigrants. It's about the lives of middle-class people. It deals with a Bengali woman who is married and moves from Calcutta to New York.



Conclusion

It's clear from a close look at Bharati Mukherjee's novels and short stories that she has a strong sense of "ethnic identity," even though she's dressed up in "Brahmanical elegance" to hide it. The fact that she married and had two assimilated sons with a white man doesn't make her feel any less of an outsider, and like V.S. Naipaul, she thinks of herself as a "writer on the move." V. S. Naipaul is always on the move, and he always lived in "a house" but never in his "home." People who travel the world and write about the whole world in this state are either "a permanent refugee" or "homeless."

Bharati Mukherjee later decided not to use Naipaul as a model. Instead, she used Bernard Malamud, who wrote about minorities and their pain and suffering. Malamud has taught her how to get over the idea of being "the other" even though she comes from a different cultural background. If Malamud's characters are poor people like shoemakers, tailors, and bakers, Bharati Mukherjee's characters are immigrants who are doctors, technocrats, university professors, businessmen, and women who want to move up the social ladder. They think of themselves as "the other," "the marginalised people," and people with "lost origins." That's not what Bharati Mukherjee says. She says that she is "an immigrant American," not "an Indian who has moved away." When Geoff Hancock asked her about writing "North American English about immigrants in the New World, she said she was proud of it from Jane Austen to Walt Whitman's world. She moves to Calcutta because she wants to live in a place where both people are happy. A lot of Bharati Mukherjee's time is spent thinking about things that don't happen to people who were born in the United States. She fights for the whole country so that people from Asian countries or other countries with different "colour" don't have to be called "settlers." So, she is always called "an Asian American" or "a woman of colour," not "a mainstream American author."

Today, we live in a world where people are questioning what it means to be "Indian." This includes people who are Dalits and tribal people; women who are gay and lesbian; people who are LGBT; and people who aren't Indian at all.

Now, we have a federal view of a polyphonic India that includes the essentialist, often orientalist, conception of India that came from Colonial-Indological and nationalist discourses, as well as a mosaic of cultures, languages, and worldviews. Critical discourse about the diaspora often makes India seem like an exotic, eternal country that the diasporic writer sees through their own eyes. But a lot of Indian writers writing in other languages are telling stories about different imagined communities and alternative nationhood.



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